



# SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF GREEK HOUSING

## NEWSLETTER

*Volume 9, March, 2003*

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### News from the SPGH Board Meetings

#### **ELECTIONS**

The following people were re-elected to the Board; Karen Lang-Kummer, David Bechtel, Cara Augspurger, Stasz Gorski, Duane Frichtl, Carol Miles, John Seiler and Ellen Swain. Rod Reid was elected to replace Terri Carr who has resigned. The following officers were re-elected for another year: Karen Lang-Kummer, President; Cara Augspurger, Vice-President; Duane Frichtl, Treasurer; and John Seiler, Secretary.

#### **CHAPTER HISTORIES**

At the February Board meeting Frances Becque was approved to work with Ellen Swain at the University of Illinois Archives. Her hiring is a continuation of the Board's goal of writing chapter histories to be a part of the Archives Student Life Collection with an emphasis on Greek Life and Culture. Frances Becque has a B.S. from Syracuse University in Syracuse, N.Y. and an M.S. in Higher Education from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale where she is

presently a Candidate in Educational Administration. She is also the National Archivist for Pi Beta Phi as well as Director of Fraternity Education. Ms. Becque will be working this semester on at least two chapter histories, probably including the Pi Beta Phi Illinois chapter.

#### **NEWEST MEMBER**

Phi Mu-Nebraska has recently become a new member of the Society. They are the second member from the University of Nebraska. The Society Board welcomes them. Please note the article in this newsletter about their rehabilitation project. We are pleased to be able to help them.

#### **EXCUSE THE GOOF**

Correction: We are sorry to have misquoted the Kappa Delta House corporation board. They were NOT (as of November 2002) seeking historical status from the City of Urbana as was reported in the Fall newsletter. We regret the error.

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# Illinois Farm House Makes \$126,000 Capital Investment

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**Article contributed by Jeff Beavers,  
Farm House.**

Eighty years ago, a first-class stamp was \$.02, the U.S. population was 112 million, Illinois and Michigan were NCAA football champions (8-0-0), *Time* magazine debuted, and the vaccine for whooping cough was developed.

Also in 1923, the Illinois Chapter of FarmHouse Fraternity was 9 years old, and the house at 809 W. Pennsylvania, where FarmHouse would eventually call home, was brand new. Now, 80 years later, the house remains, but the original slate roof no longer stood the test of time. Over the past couple of years, many leaks had developed from missing and damaged slates due to wind and weather, and patching and repairs no longer held. Too, the inlaid gutters leaked and caused additional damage to the soffit areas.

## **What to Do:**

Given the situation, the Alumni Association Board felt there were 3 options and fully explored them all, including: 1) replacing the roof with fiberglass shingles until a more significant replacement could be done, 2) replacing the roof with synthetic slate, or 3) replacing the slate with new high-quality slate that would provide another 80-100 years of life.

## **Exploring the Options:**

It was anticipated that the chapter house would undergo significant remodeling within the next 10 years, as repairs and upkeep are costing the Association nearly \$45,000 per year. Furthermore, to tear down the current chapter house and rebuild a similar house would have required the Association to gain two additional adjoining lots because of new city zoning requirements. At this time, the adjacent lots are not available for purchase or trade.

Gutting the house is also a possibility, but expanding is limited. The house has already nearly maximized the allotted square footage given our property size. Thus, if we completely remodel the house, it is likely that the roofline will not change or change insignificantly, and thus any improvement made would likely be long-term.

Furthermore, replacing the roof with fiberglass shingles was a short-term fix that was also not tax-deductible or a project that eligible for support from the Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing. To be eligible for SPGH support, any structural changes must preserve features of the property that are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

Finally, although synthetic slate would offer the appearance of real slate and be easier to install, this product has only been on the market approximately 10 years and does not have the proven life that real slate offers. Too, synthetic slate was estimated as costing an additional \$10,000 over real slate.

## **The Decision:**

Throughout the past many years, the Association has always prided itself on making quality capital improvements and thus decided, given all the facts and options and the immediate need for repair/replacement, to select real slate replacement and awarded Renaissance Roofing from Belvidere, IL the project.

Work began the week before Thanksgiving and was completed on January 10<sup>th</sup>. It included replacement of all shingles on the older areas of the house and limited replacement on the newer side of the house. Most all of the inlaid gutters and copper downspouts were also replaced, as was any water-damaged decking and trim. Upon completion the final investment was nearly \$126,000.

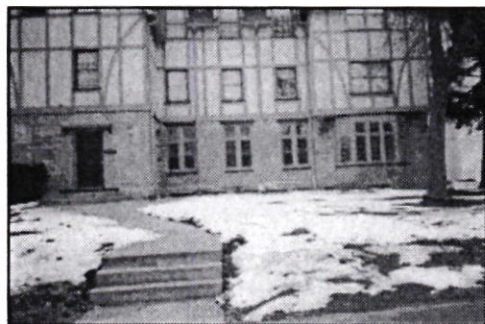
Fortunately, over the years, the Association has invested nearly \$250,000 in a building fund from chapter rent and alumni contributions. To date, nearly \$85,000 of the fund has been used to finance the project. The balance has been funded by the Association's annual budget and Phone-A-Thon contributions from Illinois FH Alumni.

An additional fundraising campaign may be launched to help replace some of the funds taken from the investment accounts and that will be needed in the near future for additional repairs and projects. One idea that is currently being discussed by the board would include selling the nearly 1,000 original roof slates from the chapter house that were salvaged in the replacement process. Each slate could be etched or laser printed with text or a design.

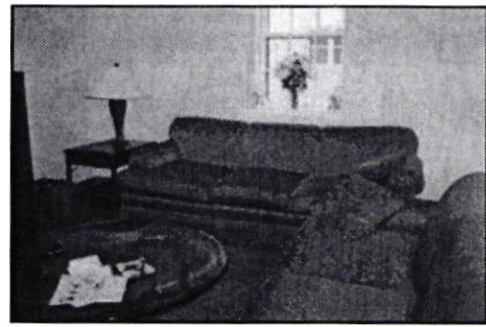
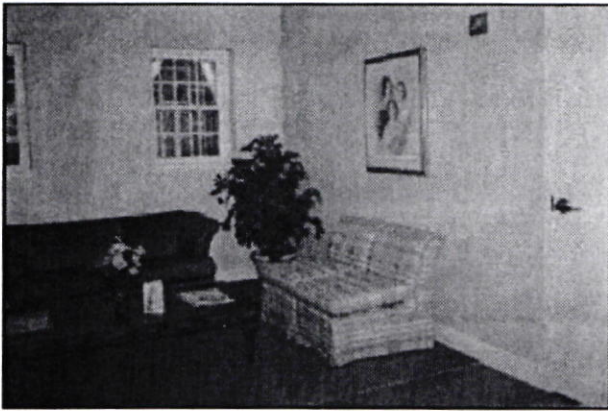
For now, a new slate roof and copper gutters will serve as a reminder to us all of the strength of the Illinois Chapter of FarmHouse Fraternity and of the commitment alumni have made for more than 80 years.

## PHI MU A BEAUTIFUL TRANSFORMATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

About five years ago, Duane Frichtl and Rod Reid from the Society Board traveled to Lincoln, Nebraska to meet with the ATO chapter there to inspect their ongoing renovation projects. While there the ATO alumnae and some officials from the University of Nebraska set up a meeting with several other Greek organizations who might need our organization's help. One of the fruits of that meeting has been the lovely rehabilitation of an empty Greek chapter house into a new home for the Phi Mu collegiates. The chapter house is within the thematic historical district on the Nebraska campus and thusly the Board of the Society has been able to approve a large grant for Phi Mu.



As you can see from the pictures, the new home for the Nebraska Phi Mu chapter is beautiful. The Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing is pleased to be a part of this outstanding chapter house renovation. We look forward to continued relationships with the Greek community in Lincoln. And, the Phi Mu chapter is to be congratulated for their successful project.



## New Relationships

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The Society Board is exploring a grant with the ATO chapter at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana. The Chapter there is considering the removal of an addition, as well as, some significant renovations to the original chapter house which is on the state of Indiana list of historic buildings.



## SPGH

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