



Alpha Phi TIDEings

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALPHA PHI CHAPTER OF THETA CHI

SPRING 2009

INSIDE:

Undergraduate Represents

Alpha Phi

2

Alumnus Spotlights

3

The Birth of Big Al

4

The Camelot Group Reunites

5

HOUSE CORPORATION MAKES PLANS FOR CHAPTER HOUSE IMPROVEMENTS

- Chapter House improvements include new paint, roof, windows, carpet, and front doors
- Alumni work party will take place the weekend of May 15

The Alpha Phi House Corporation held a meeting at the Chapter House on January 31, and we voted to make some major repairs to the facility. Work should start after school is out and be finished by the end of the summer. After completing work on the columns, the remaining projects include a lot of new paint, a new roof, replacing old windows and carpet, new front doors, and a whole lot more.

We plan to host an alumni work party the weekend of May 15. More details on this will be forthcoming on our newly designed Web site (coming soon) and by e-mail. Please take advantage of this opportunity to reconnect with your alumni brothers and to meet the undergraduates.

Several weeks ago **John Crysel '76** and **Larry Kloess '77** organized a get-together at John's new condo-

minium next to the Flora-Bama in Orange Beach. Most of us have not seen much of each other in the past several years. That said, it did not take long to catch up. We were celebrating **Jeff St. Clair '78** and his promotion to CEO at Springhill Memorial Hospital in Mobile. It was a great and interesting event.

Several, but not all, showed the effects of age. If you were sitting with your back to us, however, and just listening, the conversation did not sound much different than it did 35 years ago. The themes were a little more mature (I hope), but it was the sound that would take you back—the sound of good friends enjoying each other's company as much now as we did back then.

As I get older, these connections become more and more important. We all want to know that we belong to

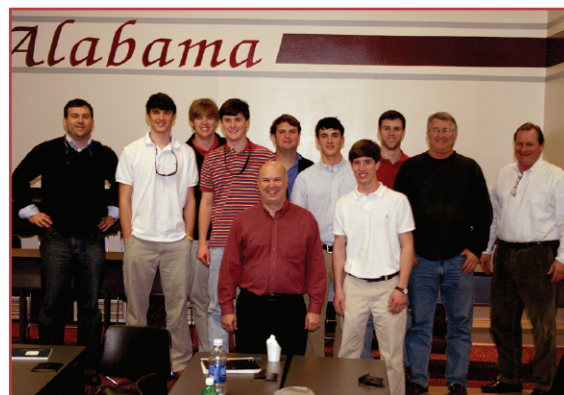
(Continued on page 2)

Alpha Phi Collegians Emphasize Leadership

The Chapter officers and members of the House Corporation met on January 31 under the guidance of **Wesley Wicker '79**. Dr. Wicker led us in a leadership retreat at the Ferguson Center. With his aid, my fellow officers and I have set the goals for our term.

Chaplain **Will Henry '10** and I traveled to Indianapolis to partake in the 2009 Deranian President's Conference. The gathering presented us with some great plans to initiate changes that we had discussed before the winter break. The first issue we decided to address was a lack of involvement within our Chapter. Based upon ideas presented at the conference, we instituted a system consisting of eight committees: brotherhood, public relations, housing and grounds, scholarship, risk

(Continued on back page)



Wesley Wicker '79 led the new chapter officers in a leadership retreat at the chapter house (above) on January 31. The undergraduates discussed goals and leadership techniques.

UNDERGRADUATE REPRESENTS ALPHA PHI ON UA CAMPUS AND AROUND THE WORLD

Harrison Pearl '09 was recently featured in a print advertisement representing the University of Alabama. The ad ran in the September 2008 issue of *Business Alabama* and several other magazines. In addition to its regular circulation, the issue was sent to 40,000 prospective students.

Harrison serves as an ambassador for the College of Arts and Sciences and was selected for the ad because of an 11-week research project he completed in San Perdo Sula, Honduras. While in Honduras, Harrison documented approximately 400 cases of pediatric HIV and created an epidemiological data presentation concerning the condition and severity of pediatric HIV in the area. He also set up several testing clinics in the poorest parts of the city using donated HIV tests.

Harrison's work concerning the study of mother-to-child HIV transmission was recognized at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists District VII annual meeting in Las Vegas in fall 2007.

Harrison is a senior graduating in May 2009 with a degree in biology. He plans to apply to South Alabama and UAB medical schools. Harrison is the son of Cam and Gray Pearl of Mobile, Alabama.

Theta Chi is very proud of Harrison and the positive example and representation that he has given our Fraternity! E-mail: harrisonpearl@gmail.com



Harrison Pearl '09 was recently featured in a print advertisement (partially shown above) representing the University of Alabama. He was selected for the ad because of an 11-week research project he completed in San Perdo Sula, Honduras.

HOUSE CORPORATION MAKES PLANS

(Continued from front page)

something meaningful, and at Alpha Phi we do. It is easy, and healthy, to slip away from fraternity life and move on about your business. It is a little harder, and just as healthy, to reconnect when time permits. If you have not yet reconnected, hopefully the time is now.

Finally, it is not too early to start making plans for the fall. You know that the atmosphere in Tuscaloosa will be electric, especially on October 24 and November 7 (Tennessee and LSU games). It is probably too much to ask for another undefeated regular season, but who knows? We look forward to seeing everyone at the house or on the Quad—stay tuned for details.

Fraternally,
Pete Mackey '78
House Corporation President
(251) 432-0612
psmackey@bcmllawyers.com

Web Sites

Undergraduate Chapter
<http://bama.ua.edu/~thetachi>

National Fraternity
www.thetachi.org

Catching up with Pete Derzis '75

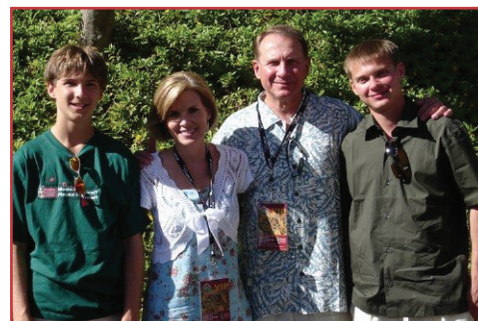
By **Taylor Bryant '10**

When you consider the achievements of the great men of Alpha Phi, **Pete Derzis '75** is a name that certainly deserves recognition. As an undergraduate, Pete served as pledge trainer and president. For his contributions to the Fraternity and the University, Pete was awarded the Reginald E. F. Colley Award in 1976 as the most outstanding undergraduate member of Theta Chi Fraternity.

Throughout his professional career, Pete has maintained the same level of hard work and dedication. After serving as the associate athletic director at UAB for 12 years, Pete moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1990 to embark on a new career as the head of ESPN Regional Television.

This division of ESPN is the largest producer of collegiate broadcast products covering the Big East and Big 12, and they will add the SEC game of the week in fall 2009. ESPN Regional Television owns and operates six bowl games, including the Las Vegas Bowl, Hawaii Bowl, and the PapaJohns.com Bowl. Pete's division also covers major basketball events in San Juan, Anaheim, the Disney World-Old Spice Classic, and is part owner of the Skins Game in Palm Springs and the Champion Skins golf events.

Pete and his wife, Kathy (Farris) Derzis, a member of Alpha Chi Omega at Alabama, have two sons, Nick and Will.



Pete, and his wife, Kathy, have two sons, Nick and Will. Pete is the head of ESPN Regional Television in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Successful Alumnus Considers Personal Relationships Most Important

Spotlight on Charles W. Allen '84

As a college freshman, **Charles Allen '84** was looking for a community and people who shared his values. "The University of Alabama had a very large Greek community, and being part of it made college life much more enriching and enjoyable. I have always enjoyed the camaraderie and fellowship of like-minded people, and Theta Chi certainly filled that void."



Theta Chi made a great impact on Charles during a formative time in his life. "The fraternity taught me the value of teamwork and learning to trust others. Serving as Recruitment Chairman and Vice President helped me learn valuable social and organizational skills, as well as important lessons about connecting with others, time management, and deep relationship building. Most of all, it taught me about interdependence and how the chemistry of a connected group could be greater than the sum of its parts."

Charles has lots of fond memories of Alpha Phi and the brothers, but some of his favorites include band parties, three-on-three basketball tournaments held behind the Fraternity house, the Camelot festivals, the out of town road trips to away football games with brothers, and participating in two successful fall recruitment campaigns. "Many of the greatest memories of my life happened as an Alpha Phi, and I will be forever grateful for them. The lifetime friendships and business relationships that started in that house will forever be special to me."

Charles earned a bachelor of arts degree in advertising, and he is CEO and chairman of C.W. Allen Group, a leading event marketing consul-

tancy in the North American exhibition industry. Charles is known as a pioneer in his industry and helped develop the event marketing segment of the exhibition industry. Charles is also the Executive Director of the International Economic Alliance, which works in conjunction with the U.S. Government and the United Nations to produce international economic summits and symposia which advance economic relations and global trade.

In 2003, Charles was honored by the University of Alabama's School of Communications as the Most Outstanding Alumni in Advertising. He has been a two time INC 500 honoree. In 2007, he received the International Innovation Award from *Trade Show Executive Magazine*, the exhibition industry's leading trade publication. Last year, Charles received the Distinguished Service Award from the International Association of Exhibitions & Events, the industry's governing association.

Although he has enjoyed many successes, Charles still feels that his relationships and time spent with friends and family is most important. "I must admit that I often feel like I've worked much of my adult life away. I'm genuinely looking forward to reconnecting with many of my dear Alpha Phi friends from our college days."

In his free time Charles enjoys biking, fishing, watching college sports, creating writing, and developing new entrepreneurial pursuits. He and his wife, Beth, have a 5-year-old daughter, Martha Elizabeth. They live in Hoover, Alabama.

JEFF ST. CLAIR '78 NAMED PRESIDENT/CEO OF SPRINGHILL MEDICAL CENTER

Jeffery M. St. Clair '78 assumed the top leadership position at Springhill Medical Center in Mobile. As CEO and president, he is the leader of the most technologically advanced, privately owned hospital complex in the area. Jeff served as hospital administrator and COO at Springhill for 15 years prior to his promotion. He previously served as Springhill's vice president of operations for eight years.

Jeff has a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama in health care management and completed his master's degree in health administration at Kennedy-Western University. He serves on the boards for the hospital and Springhill Health Services Inc.

Over the last several years Jeff played a major role in developing and designing the hospital's 96,000-square-foot heart center. He has led several other major projects on the Springhill campus, including the orthopedic surgery center, the eye, ear, nose, throat surgery center, two medical office buildings, numerous hospital expansions, and conver-

sions of major information technology systems. In addition, Jeff leads several patient quality initiatives to strengthen Springhill's efforts in maintaining a safe and healthy medical facility.

"I have been at this hospital for most of my professional career, and it is like a home to me, and the people are like family," Jeff said. "In the early years, I had the privilege of establishing several service lines so the local community could have a choice in the type of hospital care they received. It's always been important to us here to provide the same type of care we would want for our own family members. I plan to build on that reputation and make sure we can deliver that care in the safest, fastest, most compassionate manner possible."





The Birth of Big Al

Hugh Dye '80 Was First UA Mascot

Interviewed by **Bill Hendrich '79**

Q: How did you get interested in being the first Big Al?

A: I tried out to be a cheerleader in the spring of 1979 and hurt my knee in the semifinal round. That summer, Craig Cantrell contacted me and wanted to create an official UA mascot. He asked what I thought of the idea and if I would try out. I was not sure at first, but thought it would be a great experience. **Harry Woodard '79** was a varsity cheerleader on the squad that year and my roommate for three years. Big Al took up a lot of the space in our room because the uniform was so large.

Q: What was your favorite experience as Big Al?

A: I was selected to be Big Al in fall 1979, but it was not until December 1979 that the uniform arrived. After being selected, I organized a campus-wide name contest in September and the name "Big Al" won.

I picked up the uniform, which was created by Disney, at the Birmingham airport. I uncrated the costume and thought it best to try it on. It fit, and then I noticed a bunch of people staring at me, probably wondering what was going on. Then, a few small children started pulling the tail. I knew that I needed to get the costume off. I carried the costume to my 1979 Mercury Bobcat. I headed to Dothan and noticed that people were staring as they passed me on Highway 231. I stopped to get gas and noticed that the head had shifted, and it was looking straight out the back of my car—it must have looked pretty strange.

Q: What was your scariest experience as Big Al?

A: The costume was extremely hot. It only had one opening, the mouth. It had a heavy wool sweater, and the material was thick throughout the suit, causing the costume to be quite heavy.

I felt really weak at the end of the first half of the Sugar Bowl. As I took off the costume and put on my jeans, the jeans would not stay up—I must have lost about eight to 10 pounds. I was dizzy, and looking back I believe I was dehydrated. I remember drinking so much water and having no desire to eat.

Q: Did you ever interact with Coach Bryant when you were Big Al?

A: In the 1980 Sugar Bowl I laid down on the field and a reporter handed me his camera. I took a picture of Coach Bryant looking down at me—he grinned afterwards. Coach Bryant never really had a problem with Big Al, but he wanted to make sure it did not embarrass the University.

Q: Did you go to any of the national championship games as Big Al?

A: Big Al made his debut in the National Championship game against Arkansas in 1980. I had a great time. The players had a strange look on their face when they saw Big Al. There had not been a lot of publicity at the time, and they did not have a clue what it was all about.

Q: What do you think of the current Big Al?

A: After graduating, I suggested they have more than one Big Al due to the difficulty with the heat generated by the suit. They have done so, and it seems to have been a success. They now have scholarship money, their own locker, and people who assist with scheduling. Big Al has come a long way.

Hugh graduated in 1980 and attended law school at Cumberland School of Law at Samford University. He is employed at Alabama Power Company in Birmingham. He and his wife, Lee, have two children, Bryan (19) and Allen (18). They live in Vestavia Hills.



Hugh Dye '80 was the first Big Al. He held a campus-wide contest to pick a name for the UA mascot.



Hugh Dye '80 tried out to be a cheerleader in 1979 and hurt his knee in the semifinal round. Later he was contacted to try out to be the first UA mascot, and the rest is history. Hugh (above) and his wife, Lee, have two sons, Bryan and Hugh.



Harry Woodward '79 (above) was a varsity cheerleader at UA and was Hugh Dye's '80 roommate for three years. Hugh says that Big Al took up a lot of space in their room because the uniform was so large.

THE CAMELOT GROUP REUNITES

1970s Era Alumni Reconnect
and Plan Reunion for 2010

By **John Crysel '75** and **Larry Kloess '77**



1970s era alumni **Kenny Crow '78**, **Kenny Norris '76**, **Tony Atchison '78**, **John Crysel '75**, **Dave Pylant '75**, **John Ward '77**, **Steve Johnson '76**, **Mike Mann '75**, **Larry Kloess '77**, **Pete Mackey '78**, and **Jeff St. Clair '78** reunited in January. They are planning another reunion for 2010.

Pursuant to the great Christmas Eve e-mail sent out by our good friend and Theta Chi Brother **Dave Pylant '75**, several of us from the rowdy 1970s era decided to gather on January 9 for a couple days of good times at Orange Beach, Alabama. Plenty of barbecue, shrimp, seafood gumbo, and other good things were served. Being right next door to the Flora-Bama didn't hurt the party atmosphere, but alas, as we have moved through time we are now more of a kitchen crowd than a Flora-Bama crowd.

No less than 95% of our time was spent in the kitchen telling stories with 30+ years of embellishments and enhancements. Some stories, however, never changed, including the **Fulton Hamilton '72** car in the formal living room story or tales of the infamous **Roger Couch '76** work parties. It was great to let the years melt away as we were all taken back to a more simple and focused time in our lives. Some of us hadn't seen each other in more than 30 years, but being together was like being at Sunday lunch the day after a great band party. We picked right up and didn't miss a beat.

We have a plan to keep our more youthful moments alive and well for our group. In honor of our reunited brotherhood, we are revitalizing the Camelot Group and look forward to our next gathering, which is scheduled for the last weekend in April 2010. That's Mullet Toss weekend at the Flora-Bama, and we look forward to getting out of the kitchen and taking our good time next door so as to enjoy the sport of dead fish tossing, as well as the spirited adjunct activities that go with it. If you are of our era and still make for decent company we hope that you will plan on joining us.

Best Wishes!

Alumnus Holds World Record and Finds Success in L.A. Thanks to Alpha Phi Brothers

By **Lucas Elgie '05**

Former Alpha Phi Chapter President **Jim Patton '06** holds the world record for Longest Marathon Playing Grand Theft Auto IV, lasting 28 hours and one minute on April 29-30, 2008. The location of the marathon was in the studios of Bushleague.tv, where Jim works, and was part of a regular segment for Bushleague.tv, "24-Hour Game Review." Jim is originally from Birmingham and now resides in Los Angeles, where he is a writer and producer in the TV and film industry.



David Patton '05, **Jim Patton '06**, and **Lucas Elgie '05** at the 2008 Auburn game celebrating the score-board in the background.

Jim's writing career began after his junior year at Alabama when **Joe Bor-den '02** arranged an interview for him, and within three days Jim was working as the production coordinator for what he refers to as an "embarrassing, straight-to-DVD chick flick, *The Prince and Me 2: The Royal Wedding*." That summer Jim became familiar with L.A., and he and Joe have been writing partners ever since.

After graduating in May 2006 with a degree in telecommunications and film and a minor in creative writing, Jim worked as a script coordinator for three DIY Network shows: *Uncommon Threads*, *Knitty Gritty*, and *Craft Lab*, all which, Jim says, gave his friends and family plenty of reasons to give him a hard time. He has also worked as a production assistant for MTV's *Human Giant*, Comedy Central's *Showbiz Show with David Spade*, and on commercials for Subway, T-Mobile, Pepsi, 7-Up, Circuit City, Cartoon Network, MTV, NFL Network, Expedia, and many others.

In the fall of 2007 Jim started work as a production assistant on FOX's little-publicized, late-night show *Talkshow with Spike Feresten*, where he was given the opportunity to perform in sketches and get a few of his jokes on the air. Jim is now in his third season at *Talkshow* and is working as the researcher and a contributing writer.

In addition to *Talkshow*, Jim is as a writer, producer, and correspondent for Bushleague.tv, a men's humor Web site where the video game record was recorded. In his free time Jim has dabbled in standup, sketch, and improv comedy at the Upright Citizen's Brigade Theater. Joe and Jim have also written, produced, and starred in several internet shorts that have been featured on the sites FunnyorDie.com, MySpace.com, and Ebaum'sWorld.com. Most

(Continued on back page)

Collegians Emphasize Leadership

(Continued from page 1)

management, social, recruitment, and new member education.

Steven Mote '10 has taken time to develop our first e-mail system. It has already proven vital to our Chapter operations in terms of announcements and staying connected to each other. The executive council has also decided to hold Chapter meetings on Sunday nights instead of Wednesdays. Sundays permit us to have better attendance and more time to discuss Chapter business.

I received a telephone call from a woman with a local autism society who wishes to have two brothers from our Chapter mentor an autistic high school senior who earned a perfect score on his SAT and will be attending the University of Alabama in the fall. This presents a great opportunity, and we hope our brothers will provide camaraderie and uphold our great reputation with the University of Alabama and the Tuscaloosa community.

The future looks bright for the Alpha Phi Chapter. I am excited for what is to come and the new class of brothers that will arrive in the fall. For recruitment information, please contact **Michael Nix '11** at mknix@bama.ua.edu.

Fraternally,
Cory Vaughn '10
Chapter President
(615) 668-1090
cavaughn@ua.edu

Alumnus Holds World Record

(Continued from page 5)

recently they have been taking meetings with ABC, FOX, Comedy Central, and Sony in an attempt to sell a few pilots they have been working on.

When not working, the Alabama alumni like to gather around the largest TV they can find, fire up the grill, and watch the Roll Tide. Jim says he has enjoyed his time in L.A. but definitely looks forward to every trip back home. "I've had the opportunity to do a lot of very cool things and work with writers, directors, and comedians that I grew up admiring. I can honestly say that none of the things that I've accomplished out here would have been even close to possible without the friends I made in the halls of 501 Jefferson Avenue."



TIDEings

Alpha Phi Chapter of Theta Chi

P.O. Box 2824
Mobile, AL 36652

Address Service Requested

PSRST
FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LAWRENCE, KS
PERMIT #570

Attention: This newsletter is intended for Theta Chi alumni and parents.
If your son is still attending The University of Alabama, he will receive a copy at the Chapter House.
If he has graduated, please send us his permanent address to update our records. Thank you.

FROM THE EDITOR

Mike Sanders '78

As you have read, the House Corporation met with Chapter officers the weekend of January 31. I had a great time during the weekend visiting with **Pete '78** and **Russ Mackey 'YR**, **Fulton Hamilton '77**, **Anthony DiPiazza '71**, **Tom Griffin '70**, **Dru Horton '98**, Angela and **Gary Bryant '76**, Lynda and **Mike Case '79**, **Wesley Wicker '79**, and **Robert Baugh '79**.

The campus and undergraduates fascinate me with the changes that have taken place and changes to come in the near future. We socialized at The Bear Trap on Friday and Saturday evenings, and both nights proved memorable. The Theta Chis involved in the ownership of The Bear Trap have done an impressive job, and I recommend you visit it next time you are in town.

Anthony Montalto '78 and I had lunch with the Jefferson County alumni on Friday, February 6. The luncheon was organized by **Peter Lichty '85** and is held on the first Friday of each month at 12:30 at the Mariachi Grill in Vestavia. The luncheon was attended by **Steve Vickery '87**, **David Pugh '84**, **Jeff Barnes '85**, **Gregg Morrison '86**, **Jimbo Legg '85**, **Greg Champion '84**, **John Page '85**, **Dean Wiseman '85**, **Lawren Pratt '88**, **Shawn Lowe '89**, and **Jeff Culton '86**. We had a great time, and it would be nice if we could organize similar events in Huntsville, Decatur, Shoals, Montgomery, Mobile, Nashville, and Atlanta. Contact me if you are interested in organizing such an event for your area. I will be glad to publicize the event and generate a list of alumni in your area.

It is with great sadness that I mention the passing of Benny D'Amico on November 28, 2008. While Benny was not a member of Theta Chi, it was hard not to think of him as an Alpha Phi. Benny's sister, Angie, is married to **Dr. Tom Lewis '81** and his brother is **Frank D'Amico '84**. Benny was a great person and will be missed by all who were lucky enough to know him. He is survived by his wife, Kerry (Tohill), his daughters, Rachel, Nicole, and Kerry Ann; and his parents, Anthony and Annette.