

Traveller

The Alumni Newsletter

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No.1

Who's on FIRST?

This is the first Traveller of the current school year, and the first since last Fall. This is also the first Traveller to be created on a personal computer. And, this is the first Traveller to be mailed according to the information stored in the alumni records contained in Cornell Acacia's own database. Finally, this is the first Traveller to be totally produced and distributed by the Fraternity without assistance from any outside alumni service. We hope you enjoy reading it. Future issues will contain news which you will send us.

Steven L. Stein '73
Corporation President

Better Never Late

We anticipated mailing this Traveller in early October, but due to circumstances beyond our control, it did not go to press until November. We will strive to meet deadlines in the future. You can help by sending us news about you, your families, and any Acacians you have heard from or about. The sooner we get your news, the sooner you will see it in print. And please let us know what you think of the Traveller, and how we can improve it!

Thanks. And Happy Holidays.

The Editor

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FROM THE DESK OF THE VENERABLE DEAN

Now is not the time to mince words. This is the year that Acacia at Cornell sinks or swims. I know that you, our alumni, have been dealt the "sob story" for a number of years now, and that, perhaps the active chapter has cried "Wolf" once too often. The problem is that the active chapter never really seems to have believed the harsh words that it has spoken. That is, at least, not until recently. Over the past year, under the leadership of Michael Oates, the Chapter instituted a successful "standards" program and developed a sincere core group of dedicated men. Now, under my leadership, and with your support, we shall take in a sizable pledge class of good men. When a fraternity reaches the state ours has, it is time to make some hard decisions, and for the first time, the actives are willing to do so. It is too easy, however, to panic at a time like this, and not consider all the options open to the Chapter. Except for World War II, the brother tree of the Cornell chapter has remained unbroken for nearly eighty years, a tradition worth keeping. The national fraternity has suggested a reorganization for our chapter, and the Corporation Board has seemed willing. I tell you now that that is not necessary.

There is a point in the Cornell rush system, beyond which if you have too few brothers, it is impossible to maintain a good rush program. The contributing factors to this are the length of the rush, and the amount of competition given by the larger houses who have no trouble maintaining the high level of "rush activity" necessary for a successful rush. The answer may be, then, to exit the Cornell rush system in order to bring our numbers back across that threshold.

I don't rush blindly into this void "where no man has gone before." Seal and Serpent came back from the number of one, Sigma Chi Delta came back from seven, etc. I have spoken to members of the newly opened chapter of Acacia at London, and Dennis Rodriguez (939) has spoken to members of our Michigan chapter who were in much our position only a year ago. Many good ideas have come from these meetings as well as from our alumni, and from correspondence with our national president, Scott Valley.

The position we are found in now is not surprising. We faced rush in the fall of 1985 with only three "experienced" brothers, four hard working Junior actives, and a little bit of dead weight. This semester we will be powered by six "experienced" brothers and two enthusiastic new brothers. This house already has the highest participation percentage on the hill, so the prospects of success are good. It will not be easy, however, and we cannot have a "typical" Cornell rush. I propose a new rush for us to follow this year.

In broad terms it is a low-profile rush. The goal is to attract as large a cohesive group of young men as possible, and to initiate them by the end of January. It will not matter **who** these people are as long as they are a **group**. They will then be Acacia, with us, hopefully their friends, to guide them and train them through their first years. If this large, inexperienced group is not able to launch a powerful rush offensive in their first year, that will be all right. Like us, they will gain their experience, and have two years to use it. Then the house will once again be stable.

The current brotherhood had done too much in revamping the administration of the house, renovation of the house, and maintaining through the very hard times the existence of Acacia at Cornell to be laid by the way in a mindless reorganization. We need any support you can give us. The most priceless support that we could get is alumni participation in the key rush events. Please, take interest, the future of Acacia is at stake! Give us our wings, and I guarantee, we will fly.

ACACIA Corporation Report

The Acacia Corporation Board of Directors has, once again, survived a difficult year. The Fall '85 Traveler announced a new Chapter Advisor. Unfortunately, he resigned shortly thereafter, citing not having enough time to do justice to the position. And, repairs and maintenance to the house, begun in earnest after the devastating burst pipe in January 1985, have been halted due to insufficient funds to purchase necessary building materials. And, to add insult to injury, the Active Chapter was able to recruit a pledge class of four, and two of those de-pledged before initiation. With the brotherhood low in numbers (but not in spirit), rent was not always paid on time, due to lack of cash, and thus the Corporation's working capital is all but non-existent.

To put it bluntly, Cornell Acacia is in trouble. With the assistance of National, the chapter is undergoing a reorganization this Fall. We have a resident Graduate Advisor, George White (New Hampshire '85). If successful, the Rebirth of Cornell Acacia will be a reality. If not,

The Board has not been sitting on its hands while this has been happening. We have been working towards devising an effective Fund Raising Campaign, to raise sufficient funds to keep the house in good repair and to have a reserve to get us through the lean times ahead. The key to a successful fund raising effort is to have accurate records of who our alumni are, and where they live. For the past ten years, or so, the Student Management Corporation (SMC) has been in charge of our alumni records. However, their service costs money, and the accuracy of the files does not meet our expectations. So, I have undertaken the effort of computerizing our records on my own personal computer, and beginning this Fall, we will take care of our own alumni records, mailings, etc. To date, we have initiated 945 brothers, and all of these are included in our new computerized file. Starting with the SMC file as a base, my wife, Mary, and I have entered all data, using the Chapter Roll Book to account for all brothers. The Cornell Alumni Affairs Office has provided us with their information on all alumni who are known by Cornell to be affiliated with Acacia. This information has been used to update the information obtained from the SMC. Additionally, the National Acacia Directory helped to fill in some of the blanks. We have now completed the data entry process, and are ready to roll. We urge you to help us keep our records up-to-date, so please inform us of address changes you know of.

Jim Showacre ('50), Corporation Treasurer, ex-officio, has continued to donate his labor to fix-up the Chapter House. He has, almost single-handedly, redone three of the second floor bathrooms. This has involved, in some cases, completely gutting the room from floor to ceiling, plumbing included. However, as I mentioned earlier, our cash reserves have reached the point that we can not afford to purchase the materials necessary to undertake any more repairs or renovations. This is most unfortunate, since the labor is willing and able and free.

The Board will be contacting you in the near future to help put Cornell Acacia back on its feet. The Fraternity is only as strong as its Alumni support. Support need not necessarily be monetary. Material donations (flooring, carpeting, bedding, lumber, etc.) are needed. And, of particularly great importance would be the name of any potential brother who will be attending. This past year was my fourth as President of the Board. I do not wish it to be my last, and there is no one else seeking the office. I will take this opportunity to thank the others who serve on the Board and have made my job easier and worthwhile.

Ernie Schaufler ('48)Vice President
Jim Showacre ('50)Treasurer, ex-officio
Art Kulp ('42)Secretary
Kevin Ashman ('78)Director
Sam Morrie ('81)Director
Don Payne ('55)Director

If any of you wish to speak with me about the status of Cornell Acacia, please feel free to call me at home any evening (607 277-3125).

Corporation Financial Report

The 1985-86 fiscal year was a particularly difficult year for the Acacia Corporation. This was brought about by two things over which we had very little control. First, the active chapter was unable to pay \$4,825 of their rent, which left the accumulated rent arrears over the past few years at \$9,425. Second, the boiler for the main house could not be started last fall until it was rebuilt (\$3,581); the damage from boiling dry and not immediately shutting down. In addition, the return pipes to the boiler under the basement floor had rusted through. We had them re-routed above the floor back to the boiler (\$1,105), and in doing so were able to remove the "head knocker" between the foot of the stairs and the bar.

So far, the boiler insurance company has refused to reimburse us for the repair to the boiler. The dispute is whether or not the boiler controls, which failed to keep the boiler full of water and failed to shut off the gas when the boiler burned dry, are part of the insured boiler.

While we were waiting for the insurance money, we proceeded to repair as many of the second floor bathrooms as possible. When the money ran out, we still had two bathroom floors to re-tile to complete the repair of the three baths. There are still two shower stalls to install in the Center Room bath when funds are available. The two existing showers are still functional.

We have used some of the insurance money from the water damage (caused by the defective furnace) to completely repair the damage to the library, including the ceiling, sub-floor, carpet, paint, draperies, and light fixture. We have also replaced the tile floor and painted the walls in the kitchen and service hall. The damaged carpet in the cook's room was replaced and the walls and ceiling were patched and painted. The ceilings and walls in some wing rooms (damaged by leaking roof) were patched and painted as was the wing hall where the baseboards were also replaced. Extensive work in the wing bathroom remains to be done.

The cost of repairs was mostly for materials, and the money saved by providing our own labor allowed us to do other repairs not directly the result of water damage.

Due to the shortage of rent from the active chapter to pay taxes, insurance, and part of the boiler repairs, we had to use \$4,100 of the money from the water damage insurance. This left us short of funds to finish the bathrooms and replace the water-damaged dining room floor.

The accumulated arrears in rent from the active chapter is very serious for at least two reasons. One, the money is urgently needed to complete the repairs to the house. And, two, I don't know how the actives can pay the back rent. The active chapter needs serious financial assistance.

The following chart shows the income and expenses for the Acacia Corporation for last year. In most areas, the income did not meet expectations and the lack of funds prevented us from completing our budgeted repairs. What is the bottom line? We do not have enough funds in hand to pay an insurance bill in September and the big school tax bill in October.

Jim Showacre ('50)

Income for 1985-86				Expenses for 1985-86			
	Actual	Budget	Diff +/-		Actual	Budget	Diff +/-
Rent	10,175	15,000	- 4,825	Alumni Services (SMC)	690	2,250	- 1,560
Alumni Dues	1,700	3,000	- 1,300	Insurance	5,023	4,975	+ 48
Building Fund (Actives)	0	300	- 300	Taxes	7,138	7,170	- 32
Interest	537	450	+ 87	Safe Deposit Box	13	13	0
Building Fund (Alumni)	636	6,788	- 6,152	Maintenance	1,105	10,393	- 9,288
Sub-totals	13,048	25,538	- 12,490	Insured Maintenance	9,039	13,142	- 4,103
Beginning Balance	17,918	17,918	0	Boiler Maintenance	3,581	0	+ 3,581
Totals	30,966	43,456	- 12,490	Sub-totals	26,589	37,943	- 11,354
				Ending Balance	4,377	5,513	- 1,136