



# The Sig House

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Board of Grand Trustees - Fall 2005

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## Chapter House Checklist

Each year, Sigma Chi house corporations are charged with life/fire safety and maintenance of the chapter house. Due to the customarily "intense" lifestyles of the active brothers, the facilities often experience a higher degree of wear and tear. Keeping up with these tasks in a consistent way is extremely important. Take the time to perform the following each year:

**Life & Fire Safety.** The highest priority of all for a house corporation is to provide a safe environment for the residents. Here is a list of common life and fire safety issues that chapter houses should review:

- Fire Alarm System.** Inspected and certified in good working order by a qualified contractor.
- Fire Sprinkler System.** Inspected and repaired annually by a qualified contractor. (If your chapter house does not have fire sprinklers, contact your Grand Trustee for further information and resources.)
- Smoke Detectors.** All in place and working, especially in sleeping rooms. (Replace battery operated detectors with hardwired.)
- Exit Signs & Emergency Lights.** All in place and functioning properly.
- Fire Egress.** All required egress windows and doors meet fire code. All hallways, stairwells, egress doors and windows are clear of obstructions.
- Fire Extinguishers.** All are in place and have been inspected and recharged as needed within the last twelve months.
- Housekeeping.** No accumulation

of trash, clothes or other flammables.

- Kitchen Range Hood.** Steam cleaned within the last 6 months.
- Central Heating System.** Furnace or boiler has received an annual inspection and repair by a qualified contractor. Furnace/boiler room is free of storage (boxes, furniture, flammables, etc.).
- Fire Doors.** Fire rated doors in all locations required by fire code. All hardware (crash bars, hinges, knobsets and closers) working properly.
- Stairwells.** All hand rails in place and stairs in good repair.
- Flammable Storage.** All flammables (cleaners, gasoline, etc.) are in proper containers and fire code rated storage.

**Maintenance & Repair.** Keeping the chapter house in good repair is essential to preserving liveability and attracting and retaining brothers who appreciate high standards.

### INSIDE

- Bathrooms.** All fixtures are working properly. No evidence of mold.
- Carpet/Vinyl.** No tears or seam separation.
- Electrical Outlets/Switches.** Intact and working properly.
- Furnace/HVAC.** In good working order.
- Furniture.** In good serviceable condition.
- Hot Water Heater/Boiler.** Flushed to remove sediment and working properly.
- Kitchen.** All equipment is working properly.
- Lights-Interior.** All working properly including light bulbs.
- Plumbing.** No leaks.

## OUTSIDE

- Broken/Missing Glass.** All window and door glass is in good repair.
- Concrete Safety Repair.** No tripping hazards.
- Entry Door Locks.** All locks are in good repair.
- Roof.** In good condition; no torn, missing or broken shingles.
- Fire Escape Stairs.** In good repair and free of obstruction.
- Roof-Gutters & Downspouts.** In good repair and running clear (test with hose if necessary).
- Siding & Trim.** In good repair, caulking around windows and doors in tact.
- Paint-Exterior.** No cracking or peeling.
- Lights-Exterior.** All in good working condition including light bulbs.

**Curb Appeal.** Looks matter to the city, college, neighbors, rushees and pledges. To encourage self respect, pride in the chapter house and to make it attractive for actives and pledges, the following should be done weekly:

- House.** Cleaning to remove trash, vacuum, mop, dust, clean kitchen and bathrooms. (This is also a fire safety issue.)
- Grounds.** Yard and parking lot free of trash and debris. Bushes and trees are pruned. Lawn is regularly mowed and watered.

Doing a chapter house walk through to address these specific issues is extremely important and should be done at least twice a year. Performing this checklist will help develop your To Do List and keep the chapter house in good and safe repair.

## New Grand Trustees

Four new Grand Trustees have assumed office in 2005.

**Robert O. (Bob) Schock** is Senior Vice President and Director of Property Management for The Yarco Company in Kansas City, Missouri. Bob holds a Certified



Property Manager (CPM) designation from the Institute of Real Estate Management and the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation from the CCIM Institute.

**Richard E. (Rich) Hronek** is Superintendent of Summit Academic Charter Schools which specializes in serving ADH and higher performing autistic children (Asberger Disorder). He currently oversees development of new schools in Massachusetts and Florida. He has over 37 years in education administration. He lives in Avon, Ohio.



**Richard L. (Rich) Thompson** is CEO of Regenesi, a consulting firm that specializes in homeowner association management. He is an expert in long range financial and maintenance planning. Rich is the editor of The Sig House newsletter and lives in Portland, Oregon.



**Scott Parks LeTellier** is CEO of Big League Dreams Sports Parks, developer and operator of amateur recreational sports facilities. He lives in Palos Verde Estates, California.



*For biographical and contact information for these and other Grand Trustees, go [www.sigmachi.org](http://www.sigmachi.org) then Members, then Housing, then Grand Trustees.*

## Timely Reminders

**Chapter House Security.** Chapter houses can fall victim to break-ins, burglaries and vandalism during quarter/semester break. Frozen pipes and fire are also concerns. Remind the residents to practice normal "vacation" preparations including:

- Take all valuables home.
- Lock all doors and windows.
- Leave exterior lights on (with timer if possible).
- Leave some interior lights on with a timer during the evening.
- Verify the fire alarm and security alarms are operational.
- Notify campus security and police that the chapter house will be unoccupied (from date to date)
- Have Quaestor secure cash, checks and house credit cards.
- Adjust heat to prevent pipes from freezing.
- Turn all portable heaters, computers and appliances off.
- Stop newspaper and mail delivery

**RMF Insurance.** Confirm timely payment of premium(s).

**Alumni Events.** Confirm dates and send invitations to both active chapter and alumni for alumni events (Homecoming, Chapter Anniversary, Initiation, etc.)

## Brother Landlord

House corporation members find themselves in conflicting roles. As landlords of the chapter house, there is the obligation to enforce rent payments and proper maintenance of the facilities. As a Sigma Chi brother, there is an obligation to mentor and advise and be a "strong arm to lean on". Doing both well at the same time can be difficult.

As a landlord, there are ongoing challenges: rent revenue is usually inadequate to pay for all the usual operating costs of insurance, maintenance and major renovation. Those issues is exacerbated by high level of wear and tear on the facilities.

The landlord role puts house corporations in the unwelcome role of rule enforcers and collection agents. While some do the job begrudgingly, others avoid conflict which allows collections to mount and maintenance to mushroom (literally!). Those that landlord chapter houses well are definitely made of "sterner stuff".

But the active brothers need much more

than a kick in the rear. They need the perspective of mature and experienced Sigma Chis who can point them the way to go as men and brothers. It's one of the true strengths of the fraternity that allows older and younger men to enjoy a common bond.

So how can house corporation members take advantage of this conflicted relationship of landlord and brother? Let's count the ways:

**Get Acquainted.** Knowing the active brothers on a personal level will produce enormous dividends. When there is a personal connection, there is a higher degree of accountability, responsiveness and respect.

**Get It in Writing.** The criteria for living in the chapter house should be clearly defined in plain English and in writing. (See the sample "Live In Agreement" at the end of the newsletter). While the Live In Agreement is essentially a rental agreement, it reinforces the fraternal obligation aspect as well. Having such a document establishes the expectations and consequences for non-compliance from the get-go and helps eliminate disputes.

**Encourage Communication.** While actives like to be self sufficient, most 18 to 21 year olds lack the life experience to deal with complex maintenance, relational and organizational issues. The smart ones will welcome constructive input, especially when it's not done in a condescending or paternal way.

**Identify & Promote Leaders.** Within each active chapter, there are individuals that bear the traits of leadership (academics, enthusiasm, confidence, command respect, etc.) It's important to identify who these men are as early as possible and encourage them to run for office.

While it's often said that the cream rises to the top, this isn't necessarily the case at active chapter. Encouragement from a mature brother can make the difference whether the candidates are the best or the worst picks.

**Problem Solving.** From time to time, Active Chapter is faced with difficult situations involving individual members who are struggling with personal or academic issues that impact the well being of the entire chapter. Undergraduate brothers often have difficulty with confrontation or can underestimate the ramification of these problems.

House corporations can help by assisting in the confrontation and getting specific plans and commitments for change. These "defining moments" will demonstrate the power in partnering with older brothers in problem solving. More importantly, this course correction may make all the difference whether a Sigma Chi survives college or even life. We owe it to our brothers to do what we can to help.

**Make Regular House Calls.** Visiting the chapter house several times each month both during the week and on weekends keeps you informed about activity both good and bad. Try to catch them doing the **right thing** like cleaning up, studying, mowing the lawn, etc. Praising specific actions is extremely meaningful to those who receive them and reinforces the positive things active chapter is doing. In an age where focus often falls on fraternity troubles, this will be a welcome balance.

Consider holding your house corporation and alumni chapter meetings at the chapter house. If the actives know you're coming, they will often make an extra effort to tidy up. That's a good thing for them and for house corporation.

Regular visits to the chapter house will also give you a chance to spot repair or maintenance issues. Generally, the sooner these problems are identified, the cheaper they are to fix.

**In the Final Analysis.** Even if you wear the two hats of landlord and mentor, both can be successful. Protecting the viability of the chapter house will ensure it's there for many future Sigma Chis. Mentoring the active brothers will benefit their

experience in the chapter house and life as Sigma Chis. This is a win-win that works!

## We're Here to Help

Your Board of Grand Trustees is here to assist Sigma Chi house corporations in a myriad of ways. Besides many years of service to Sigma Chi in various capacities, there is almost *500 years* of combined professional expertise in such things as real estate development, property management, project administration, politics, maintenance, renovation, insurance, tax planning, accounting, construction, fund raising, legal, education, housing, risk management and more.

While each Grand Trustee is assigned specific provinces to oversee, this combined expertise is available to all house corporations. The key to tapping this gold mine is to contact your province's Grand Trustee with a specific request for assistance. If your request is out of your Grand Trustee's specific area of expertise, other colleagues will assist in providing real solutions.

Give us a try. The Grand Trustees are here to help.

### Our Thanks

The Grand Trustees extend their heartfelt thanks for the dedication and assistance of Chris Moran, Sigma Chi Director of Housing. Chris is invaluable to achieving our goals and purpose. Contact him at:

Sigma Chi Fraternity  
1714 Hinman Avenue  
Evanston IL 60201

Email: [chris.moran@sigmachicago.org](mailto:chris.moran@sigmachicago.org)  
Phone: (847) 869-3655 x227  
Fax: (847) 869-4906



# Live-In Agreement

IT IS THE GOAL OF SIGMA CHI TO BUILD MEN OF CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY. IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF EACH ACTIVE SIGMA CHI TO SHARE IN THE CARE OF THE CHAPTER HOUSE BY SUPPORTING THE COST OF THE HOUSE OPERATION AND BY PARTICIPATING IN MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING.

RESIDENT \_\_\_\_\_ CELL # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ SS # \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSE WORKS** All Actives and Pledges must participate in House Works for a minimum of 2 hours each week. House Works include trash removal, vacuuming, mopping/waxing, window washing, dusting, bathroom cleaning, kitchen cleaning, grounds cleanup and other tasks assigned by the House Manager. Participation in House Works is mandatory and may only be excused by the Consul or House Manager under special circumstances.

**ASSIGNED PARKING** Parking places are assigned according to a seniority system established by Active Chapter. All vehicles must be in good repair and regular use.

**PETS** No pets may be kept on the property.

## RESIDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Keep room, House and grounds safe, neat and clean.
- B. Use facilities in a manner for which they were intended.
- C. No structural modifications may be made without written consent from the House Corporation.
- D. Abide by rules enacted by the University, Sigma Chi International, House Corporation and Active Chapter.

**ROOM ASSIGNMENT** The Consul, Quaestor and Magister have assigned rooms; other rooms are selected according to a seniority system based on the total number of semesters lived in and initiation date.

**MEAL SERVICE** Breakfast and lunch are served Monday - Saturday, dinner Monday - Thursday plus Sunday. All live-ins are required to pay for a full meal service.

**DAMAGE BY RESIDENT** Damage to the House and grounds will be repaired professionally and charged to Resident. Invoice is due and payable within 10 days.

**TERM OF AGREEMENT**  Fall Semester  Spring Semester If Resident continues to live in subsequent semesters, same terms and conditions apply, subject to change with a 30 day notice.

## PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay Semester in Full** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + \$25 service charge. Must be paid in full by the 5th of the first month of the semester
- Pay Three Installments** Three equal monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ + \$25 service charge (\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total**); Due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, October and November of Fall Semester and 5<sup>th</sup> of February, March and April of Spring Semester.

**SECURITY DEPOSIT:** \$200 is payable upon move-in and refundable within 30 days of move-out. Deduction may be made for room and meals, damage repairs, fines, late fees and other reasonable charges.

**LATE FEES & COLLECTION PROCEDURE** All past due balances will include a 1½% per month finance charge

1. **10 Days Past Due** A late fee of \$25 or 5% of the balance, whichever greater, will be added to the balance and a **10 Day Notice to Pay** will be issued with copy to Parent/Guardian.
2. **30 Days Past Due** A **10 Day Notice to Move** will be issued with copy to Parent/Guardian.
3. **60 Days Past Due** House Bill will be turned over to a collection agency, additional costs of collection added and membership in Sigma Chi processed for suspension.
4. **180 Days Past Due** Membership in Sigma Chi processed for financial expulsion.

**WHERE TO MAKE PAYMENTS** All payments should be made payable to \_\_\_\_\_ and delivered to the Quaestor at \_\_\_\_\_ on or before the date due.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ON BEHALF OF THE HOUSE CORPORATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
RESIDENT