



The Sig House

A Newsletter from the Board of Grand Trustees

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Building Rapport

It's a bad rap. Fraternity houses are full of well meaning, well mannered members who are focused on their studies. They don't have loud parties until the wee hours of the morning. It must be someone else that is prompting the neighbors to call the cops. Right?

While house corporations and chapter advisors hope for the best, active brothers can use bad judgment from time to time and events like parties spin out of control causing clashes with the neighbors. Most of the time, the neighbors simply call the police to deal with it. The police, in turn, often make this information available to university officials who monitor such things. If the acts are outrageous enough, the local media make sure the whole community knows about them. What started as a good time can rapidly become a public relations nightmare.

While the occupant mix at a chapter house changes over time as brothers move in, move out and graduate, most of the neighbors remain the same. Some neighbors have very long memories and each time there is an "event" at the chapter house that causes them dismay, consternation or outright anger, it is added to their list of high crimes and misdemeanors. The result is cumulative: sins of past brothers are laid on the brothers of the present, guilty or not.

One of the biggest obstacles to overcoming bad press is the "island" mentality that active members can develop. This mind set is akin to "whatever happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas". But the chapter house is not in Vegas. When it's in close proximity to

working people, families or seniors, there is a thin line that, once crossed, is difficult to retreat from.

It's said that good judgment comes from experience and experience comes from bad judgment. Bad judgment by active brothers creates lasting animosity with the neighbors, university and community. Besides using better judgment in the future, what can be done to improve relations *today*?

Get Acquainted. It's much easier to stay angry at strangers than friends. Why not host an Open House and invite non-Greek neighbors within a two block radius? A mid week holiday event with hot apple cider and cookies will set the tone. Clean up the chapter house, decorate a Christmas tree and pass out invitations door to door. Use this opportunity to invite key university officials like the President, Greek Advisor and others that can help or hinder your cause. This kind of positive event will reap large and long term results in the public relations department. On the flip side, the brothers will likely be more considerate of the neighbors and lessen the likelihood and number of confrontations.

Lend a Helping Hand. In every neighborhood there are seniors and disabled who could use a hand with raking leaves, washing cars, yard cleanup or shoveling snow. Active chapter could spend a few hours on a Saturday afternoon roaming the area offering to help.

Do It Yearly. Rapport building needs nurturing. Positive events fade over time and every year there are new brothers that need to be introduced to the benefits of the exercise. Make it part of a

strategic plan to host annual events that leave good and lasting memories with the neighbors. Most will be much more forgiving of the occasional bad judgment.

2014 Annual Report

Each year, the Board of Grand Trustees gathers an easy-to-complete Annual Report from each Sigma Chi house corporation to maintain an accurate board roster and email addresses. With that information, we deliver **The Sig House** newsletter and the growing list of resources at www.TheSigHouse.org. Completing the Annual Report qualifies a house corporation to apply for the **Outstanding House Corporation Award** and **House Corporation Officers Training Seminar (HCOTS)**.

Forever Young

One area of continuing frustration for house corporations is the immaturity and bad judgment that periodically punctuates Active Chapter life. It's the same old story: A Quaestor's failure to collect housebills causes the chapter to default on rent. Some young brothers manage to pull a stunt that attracts the wrong attention from the police and university. Hazing raises its ugly head. Alcohol takes its toll with lasting and tragic results.

Yet, most of us were in similar shoes as undergrads. We made our share of mistakes as we tried on manhood for size. Like the boys in "Lord of the Flies", many of us made significant life changing decisions for the very first time as undergraduates. Some of us learned from our mistakes while others didn't seem to get it.

"The older I get, the better I was" reflects an attitude among some Sigma Chi alums. These brothers loudly decry the bad behavior of "kids these days". Time blurs memory of their own undergraduate days when actions and decisions were equally immature.

Sigma Chi always has been, and always will be a training ground for leaders. One of its core purposes is to improve

individual performance by teaching standards of truth and excellence. But coming to real understanding of those standards takes time, patience and maturity.

Young men do what young men do. Maturity comes from experiences with lasting impressions. When impressions aren't lasting enough, mistakes are repeated until they are. Thankfully, most young men are quick studies and don't require near death experiences to understand the way they should go.

Freshmen are particularly vulnerable since this is the time when most are out of the nest for the first time. Last year's high school valedictorian can easily become this year's college dropout when the folks are no longer around. Having an older brother that shows sincere interest can make a lot of difference in keeping these brothers on track. This is where older brothers can help. Getting to know actives and pledges on a personal level helps them to better focus on strengths and weaknesses.

Identifying and encouraging those with strong leadership potential is an important goal for a house corporation. Active chapters with strong leadership will be more successful and make the house corp's job much easier. If older brothers encourage key brothers into leadership positions, many disciplinary, financial and academic problems can be circumvented.

House corp should also encourage leaders and potential leaders to take advantage of the resources offered by Sigma Chi like Balfour Leadership Training Workshop (BLTW) and Horizons. Since most or all of the expense is covered, house corp only needs to promote the concept and assist with scheduling.

Remember when you walked into your first chapter house as a rushee? It was probably both intimidating and exhilarating. The Sigma Chi experience is a life long journey. It can seem at times that young actives aren't

learning much along the way. They can seem forever young and dumb. But their reality is not unlike yours. They have hopes and dreams. They respond to a caring and helping hand, the kind that house corporation mentors can provide.

2014 HCOTS

Each year, the Board of Grand Trustees host **House Corporation Officers Training Seminar** in conjunction with Balfour Leadership Training Workshop. HCOTS instructs board officers in topics like Fundraising, Corporate Governance, Chapter House Maintenance, Recruiting Volunteers and other topics related to house corp operations. Brainstorming allows attendees to exchange ideas.

This year, HCOTS will be held at Ball State University on July 31-August 2. Sigma Chi will pay expenses (room, board and travel) for 25 house corp officers. If you are interested in attending HCOTS, contact rich.thompson@sigmachicom to be put on the wait list. Formal registration will take place in May.

Jello & Kleenex

Like "Jello" and "Kleenex", the term "house corporation" has a generic meaning for some alumni groups that are operating chapter houses. The typical scenario is that a couple of well meaning brothers decide to take charge of chapter housing to raise money, sign a lease or buy a property. Voilà! A house corporation is born. That's all it takes, right? Hardly.

Corporations by definition are legal entities approved by state governments to operate for a defined purpose. Some corporations are formed to generate profit for the owners or stockholders (like Microsoft) while others are formed as "nonprofit" and all revenue is reinvested in the corporation's purpose. House corporations are formed under the "nonprofit" definition.

Since the goal of each Sigma Chi chapter is to live long into the future, having a house corporation that outlives the

volunteers that serve it is important for a number of reasons:

Continuity. House corporation members and officers may come and go but a corporate entity allows the purpose to continue on.

Limiting Personal Liability. Members and directors of nonprofit corporations are generally protected from personal liability, meaning protection for their own assets (money, real estate, etc.).

Legal Standing. Lenders and landlords require a legal entity to open bank accounts, secure notes, mortgage loans and leases. If there is no legal house corporation, individuals will be required to sign contracts and be personally liable for the debt.

Identity & Credibility. Corporations provide an identity which is valuable for fundraising and transacting business.

As far as the steps to incorporating, choose a name like “(Chapter Letters), Blue & Gold or White Cross House Corporation”. You should avoid using the name Sigma Chi as it is a link to the general fraternity which has no authority or control over the house corporation.

Incorporate with your state. Every state has a department in charge of this function (often called Secretary of State, but may vary). All states have internet websites that allow the transaction to be handled online. Using one of the internet businesses to assist in forming your corporation is unwise. One size does not fit all. It’s best to use a lawyer who regularly forms corporations.

- Hold an organizational meeting to elect directors.
- The directors elect officers from amongst themselves.
- Prepare and follow bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Open a bank account to handle funds.
- Transact business.

Incorporating your house corporation is relatively simple and inexpensive and provides many benefits. A house corporation in name only is no

corporation at all. It might even be construed as a partnership which can place every participant’s assets in harms way. Get legal and do it soon! If you have any questions on this process, contact your assigned Grand Trustee found on Page One of *The Sig House*.

House Corporation Resource Directory

ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES

Aynesworth Architects & Consultants 512.328.2272
G. Tim Aynesworth tim@aynesworth.com
PO Box 161434, Austin TX 78716 www.aynesworth.com
Architectural design and construction management.
Texas Registered Architect, Certified by National Council of Architectural Registration Board.

Hug & Associates, LLC 678.297.2929
Mike Hug mhug@HugArchitects.com
3010 Royal Boulevard South, Suite 250
Alpharetta GA 30022 www.HugArchitects.com
Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

Reid Studio Architecture LLC 217.390.7403
Rod Reid rod.reid@comcast.net
Chapter house renovation and construction design; collects data, analyzes project requirements, develops cost estimates; assists locating design and construction team members.

CHAPTER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Pierce Education Properties, L.P. 619.297.0400
Matt Maruccia, VP for Acquisitions
www.PierceEducationProperties.com National developers, buyers, owners and operators of student housing with specific expertise in Greek Housing acquisition, disposition, development, finance, etc.

CHAPTER HOUSE FINANCING

Constantine Capital, Inc. 816.300.0604
Bob Schock robert.schock.zo@sigmachi.com
Affordable financing to Sigma Chi house corporations for chapter house purchase, life & safety upgrades, new construction, renovation and loan guaranty

CHAPTER HOUSE RENOVATION & DESIGN

LAUNCH Interior Design 916.660.9856
David Leinberger C 916.769.2464
launch@starstream.net www.launchinteriordesign.com
New construction and renovation for cost effective and efficient design selections including paint colors, furniture, lighting, window & floor coverings and more.

FINANCIAL & DATABASE MANAGEMENT

GreekBill, Inc. www.greekbill.com 800.457.3816
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OmegaFi www.omegafi.com 800.276.6342
Chapter and alumni management tools to bill and collect dues and rent, manage rosters and records, pay bills and employees and file tax returns.

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Campus Cooks 847.309.1859
William Reeder wreeder@campuscooks.com
Comprehensive program: on-site cook plus management of staffing, payroll, food and supply ordering, menu preparation. www.campuscooks.com

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Brian Heider www.infoccps.com 847.566.7533
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Gill Grilling 443.822.0264
Brian Gill brian@gillgrilling.com
www.gillgrilling.com Equipment consultation & purchasing, Nutritional analysis, payroll, custom menus. Serving Maryland, Massachusetts & Alabama.

Greek Kitchen Management 623.565.8289
Justin Rolnick info@greekkitchenmanagement.com
www.greekkitchenmanagement.com Kitchen management program: staffing, ordering and food preparation. Cleaning products: cleaning chemicals, supplies & paper goods

FLOORING

The Carpet Company 541.484.5373
Daryl Egbert C 541.517.8820
daryle@thecarpetcompany.biz www.thecarpetcompany.biz
All major brands of commercial and residential flooring.

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATION

Affinity Connection 814.237.0481 ext 131
Greg Woodman greg@affinityconnection.com
www.affinityconnection.com Database management, website hosting/management, newsletter production, e-newsletters, fundraising assistance, donation processing

Pennington & Associates 785.843.1661
Patrick Alderdice paiderdice@penningtonco.com
www.penningtonco.com Capital campaign coordination, gift management, alumni relations programs, website development

The Laurus Group 770.903.3987
Bill Paris bparis@thelaurusgroup.net C 404.441.9630
www.thelaurusgroup.net Fundraising consulting specializing in capital campaigns, gift management, alumni communications, annual funds

HOUSE DIRECTOR SEARCH & SCREENING

Greek House Resource 512.836.7176
greekhs@gmail.com www.greekhouse.net
Screen, interview and placement for chapter house directors.

INCORPORATION ASSISTANCE

Grand Trustee Harvey Silverman 703.319.8806
harveyas@aol.com

Do you provide a product or service for Sigma Chi Fraternity chapter houses? Get listed in The Sig House Resource Directory! Email rich.thompson@sigmachi.com IHSV

Here to Serve

The Grand Trustees are available to assist house corporations in a myriad of ways. The eighteen Grand Trustees have over 700 years of combined professional expertise in areas like property management, project administration, politics, maintenance, renovation, insurance, tax planning, accounting, construction, fund raising, legal, education, housing, risk management and more. Give us a try. IHSV



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