



SIGMA CHI

ΣΧ

# The Sig House

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE BOARD OF GRAND TRUSTEES  
WINTER 2021 EDITION

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## ALL HONOR TO HIS NAME

**Harvey A. Silverman**

*July 9, 1946 - January 2, 2021*

Harvey was initiated into Sigma Chi's Epsilon Pi Chapter at University of Northern Colorado on May 9, 1965. He served Sigma Chi his entire life first as Consul, followed by Chapter Advisor, Alumni Chapter President, Grand Praetor (25 years), Grand Trustee (12 years), 49 Leadership Training Workshops as faculty, Sigma Chi Executive Committee and numerous House Corporation Officers Training Seminars.

He was inducted into the Order of Constantine in 1987, Sigma Chi's highest honor for dedication and service to the Fraternity.

A lawyer by profession, he used his talents to assist the Fraternity, house corporations and active chapters in legal challenges. He was a founding member of Sigma Chi Bar Association in 2008.

As leader of the Singing Sigs, Harvey was always in fine voice at Grand Chapter and Grand Council leading the Sweetheart of Sigma Chi for the latest International Sweetheart. He added to



the Fraternity's song catalog by writing "Brothers of the Blue & Gold". Harvey served as an Army Pilot and Naval Reserve Intelligence Officer and proudly sang "God Bless America" every July 4th in honor of his fellow veterans.

His lifelong service to Sigma Chi is unparalleled. He served in a manner that the Seven Founders would approve.

Harvey is survived by wife Peggy, daughter Melissa, son Todd, son-in-law Dave, grandson CJ and puppy Duffy.

If you have photos of Harvey that you would like to share, email them to Mark Burroughs at [mburroughs2@mail.com](mailto:mburroughs2@mail.com).

# DOING THE MATH

For most people, math is not a strong suit. Many even have trouble making change and balancing a bank account. And when it comes to geometry, algebra and calculus — forget it. But there are two basic math equations that speak volumes to how well or poorly house corporations and active chapters work together:  $R-R=R$  and  $R+R=R$ .

Translated into plain English,  $R-R=R$  means Rules without Relationship equals Rebellion. The house corporation that uses this approach stays distant and aloof from the active chapter except for collection and rules enforcement. Since actives are still maturing, they inevitably will make some immature decisions when it comes to financial accountability and care of the chapter house. With a detached house corporation, these bad decisions usually trigger a parental response. Angry phone calls or emails from the house corporation rain down on the officers, or a surprise visit tirade ensues with comments like, “This place looks like s\*&#!”

With the  $R-R=R$  equation, active chapter rebellion is predictable because young brothers carry a fair amount of pride and “I can do it myself” attitude. The rebellion may manifest itself openly or subversively. Open rebellion is in your face. Subversive rebellion is the smile of compliance followed with a failure to follow through. Whether open or subversive, the effects are the same. Either little changes or matters get worse.

$R+R=R$ , on the other hand, translates into Respect plus



Relationship equals Responsibility. When a house corporation takes the time to respectfully and regularly interact with active brothers about positive things, the tone of the relationship radically changes. Most young brothers have a desire for approval and a need to be appreciated. Take the time to find ways to compliment and encourage. Gush over recruitment successes and improved grades. Praise the latest house cleaning, charity fundraiser or renovation project.

Take this equation to a personal level. Ask questions like:

- Where did you come from?
- What are you studying?
- How do you spend your time?
- Have you thought about running for office?
- What about Sigma Chi is most important to you?

The answers to these questions are very important to the one being asked. Make those answers important to you as well. A closer relationship can be further developed through active/alumni social events, house corporation board meetings held at the chapter house, mentoring, attending initiation ceremonies, helping with Initiation Week, athletic event tailgates and other ways.

Be creative. These contacts should focus on nurturing the “brother” aspect of the relationship. These brothers already have parents and aren’t looking for more.

Another advantage of  $R+R=R$  is you can get a sense of who the potential leaders are. At the active chapter, the cream doesn’t always rise to the top. Some obvious leaders still don’t recognize they have the talent. An older brother’s encouragement could make all the difference.

Effective active chapter officers always make the house corporation’s job much easier because they will be more likely to enforce accountability. The better an active chapter governs itself, the easier the house corporation’s job is.

The beauty of this basic math is it takes much less time than the damage control house corporations deal with when things are in crisis. Use the  $R+R=R$  formula for success. Not only will you focus on positive outcomes, but you’ll also nurture lifelong relationships with new Sigma Chi brothers.

**IHSV**

## – SECOND AMENDMENT CONSIDERATIONS –

The United States Constitution provides says that all citizens may bear arms. Our chapters and brothers must also recognize the potential dangers that can arise from unintended consequences due to the presence of firearms or other weapons at a chapter house or chapter activity.

The Risk Management Foundation (RMF) and Sigma Chi Fraternity require that, at a minimum, chapters and house corporations follow the laws of the local jurisdictions, including campus, county, city, and state ordinances and regulations. In addition, RMF and Sigma Chi endorse the rights of house corporations to set more restrictive policies in local house corporation-owned chapter house facilities, including that the possession and/or use of firearms or explosive

devices of any kind may be expressly forbidden when warranted.

The negligent use of firearms or other explosive devices, especially any such use that causes damage or injury, shall be treated as a violation of the risk management policy.

Chapter leaders must take time to plan and review every chapter event, which must include evaluating the risk and potential risk of any activity. Should there be any doubt about a particular activity or event, chapter leaders should contact the Risk Management Foundation and/or Sigma Chi Headquarters.

*Adopted by the RMF Board of Directors, 18 November 2015*  
**IHSV**

## – BUILDING HOST INSTITUTION RAPPORT –

An important strategy for every house corporation to develop is to build a working partnership with the host institution. All too often, the only time a house corporation interacts with the university is when the active chapter has done something wrong. Why not cultivate a relationship based on something right? Establish a good rapport with key people in the administration and nurture those relationships regularly.

Start at the Top. A house corporation delegation should arrange meetings with the university president plus the vice president of Student Affairs or their equivalents. This meeting is both social and strategic. The goals are to become acquainted with the top administrators on a personal level, to express strong support for the university and to affirm the house corporation's commitment to managing the chapter house and discipline issues.

Specifically ask for the university's support of the Greek-letter system, which returns so much financially to the school. This is a fact for all universities that have a Greek-letter system. This point is extremely important, particularly when there is an undergraduate chapter discipline issue to deal with. If the administration focuses primarily on the undergraduates and not the long-term benefits of Greek-letter alums, the relationship will not be a happy

one. If, however, the long-term benefits lead, the administration will be more reluctant to kill the pipeline.

Extend Invitations. If the chapter hosts special events like a scholarship award dinner, invite the president/dean and vice president of Student Affairs to attend. This helps balance the view that Greek-letter members are nothing but trouble.

When Trouble Calls. Sooner or later, some out-of-control event will happen at the chapter house that calls for the house corporation to intercede. It is very important for the house corporation to take immediate action and communicate that intent to the university. This demonstrates the house corporation's resolve to manage all of its business, good and bad.

The rental agreement should allow eviction for violations of the law, university or fraternity policy. If the crime warrants and there is a repeat offender, evict him for the good of the chapter. If it involves egregious behavior (conduct unbecoming a Sigma Chi), alums can work with the Grand Praetor and aActive cChapter to suspend or expel the brother from the Fraternity.

Renew the Rapport. Nurture your host institution relationship each and every year by meeting with the pPresident. Ask how Sigma Chi can make their job easier. This sentiment will buy lots of points from

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someone whose job is huge and stressful. But also tell them what they can do for you as a valued partner. One hand washes the other.

Building good rapport with your host institution

will stand your house corporation in good stead when the storms of adversity blow. When the university is viewed as a valued partner instead of an adversary, storm damage will be more easily repaired. **IHSV**

## — GREEKS ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY —

A prominent researcher found that Greek-letter society members benefit from significantly more engagement than non-members. The study also shows greater gains in learning and more satisfaction with members' college experiences.

Dr. Gary R. Pike of Indiana University found that fraternity and sorority membership is associated with significantly higher levels of engagement on a number of measures, including high impact practices, collaborative learning, student-faculty interactions, perception of a supportive campus environment and discussions with diverse others.

For this study, Dr. Pike utilized National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) data to determine whether levels of engagement and learning outcomes changed over time. According to Dr. Pike, the NSSE is a good instrument to understand students broadly and fraternity and sorority members specifically. "Each year, approximately 700 institutions participate in that survey and we get complete responses from over 200,000 first-year students or seniors," said Dr. Pike. "It is a tremendously robust and representative data set."

Some specific conclusions include:

1. Fraternity/sorority membership also indirectly improved learning gains, acting through higher levels of student engagement.
2. Despite being less diverse than students in general, fraternity/sorority members reported higher levels of interaction with people different from themselves than did other students.
3. Membership in a fraternity or sorority is associated with greater involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities, promotes student learning and development, and promotes satisfaction with the college experiences.
4. The largest positive effects were generally found for first-year students, arguing against deferring recruitment until the second semester or second year.

5. The findings of this study indicate that fraternities and sororities are not antithetical to the values of American higher education.

"These results are clear. Fraternities play an integral role in helping new students successfully transition to college life," said Judson Horras, president and CEO of the North American Interfraternity Conference. "Public health restrictions have made students feel distanced and alone this fall, the online interactions among fraternity brothers have kept them engaged."

According to Dr. Pike, the collaborative learning effects were most dramatic for first-year students. He saw much higher participation and interaction with faculty in first-year fraternity members compared to first-year non-affiliated students. There was also significantly higher perception of a supportive campus environment for first-year fraternity members.

"The first year of college is a time of transition for students," said Dr. Pike. "Engagement during the first year, one of the research results that George Kuh and others have reported, tends to help students stay in college. It also positively affects their learning."

The study also found that while members of fraternities and sororities were more homogeneous than the general student population, they reported significantly higher levels of discussions with diverse others than non-affiliated students — including people from different races, ethnicity, economic backgrounds, religious beliefs and political views. Moreover, the relationship was strongest for fraternity members.

"There have been several studies, including mine, that find positive relationships between fraternity/sorority membership and student engagement and student learning. While specific findings on a scale differ from study to study, the overall results are consistent about fraternities and sororities having this positive effect on students' engagement in college," said Dr. Pike.

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# WINTER PLUMBING TIPS

The fury of winter can suddenly, without much warning, cause significant damage to your chapter facility. Unexpected ice storms, freezing temperatures, heavy snow falls, and powerful wind gales can cause devastating damage, including roof collapse, ice dams, frozen pipes, fires, electrical outages and flooding. Although great advances in weather forecasting generally give us some warning of winter weather watches and approaching polar vortexes

Winter weather-related property claims do not only occur at chapter facilities located in the northern locales., Even properties in southern areas not accustomed to freezing temperatures or heavy snowfalls can be at risk. In fact, chapter facilities in areas normally unfamiliar with severe winter weather have had some of the worst claims from frozen pipes and roof damage from freezing temperatures and heavy snows.

## Assessing Your Winter Risk

The best first -step to take in

preventing winter storm damage to your chapter facility is to assess the exposure. Begin by asking these questions:

1. Has the facility experienced any winter storm damage in previous years? If so, what precautions are needed to prevent a reoccurrence?
2. What is the potential for heavy accumulations of drifting or mounding snow on the roof top?
3. What is the primary exposed part of the chapter facility that normally faces prevailing winter winds?
4. What interior or exterior water pipes or fire sprinkler pipes are most exposed to freezing temperatures?
5. Is all recommended scheduled and preventative maintenance current on chapter facility heating systems, fire sprinkler systems, electrical systems, gutters, windows, doors, and roof?
6. Is snow removal equipment operating and ready for winter use?
7. Do you have a winter action plan in place should severe winter weather hit your area? Once you

have assessed your winter risk and vulnerability to potential winter storm damage, make sure your winter action plan is up to date and ready for implementation.

## Why Frozen Pipes are a Problem

Water expands as it freezes. This expansion puts extreme pressure on whatever is containing it, including metal or plastic pipes. Pipes that freeze most frequently are those that are exposed to severe cold, like outdoor water faucets, swimming pool supply lines, water sprinkler lines, and water supply pipes in unheated interior areas like basements and crawl spaces, attics, garages, or kitchen cabinets.

Also, pipes that run against exterior walls that have little or no insulation are also subject to freezing. A 1/8-inch crack in a pipe can leak up to 250 gallons of water a day, causing flooding, serious structural damage, and the immediate potential for mold.

Frozen pipes cause significant damage every year. Taking a few simple steps, may save you the

aggravation and expense. There are four common causes of frozen pipes in Fraternity facilities:

1. Quick drops in temperature
2. Poor insulation
3. Thermostats set too low or turned off
4. Windows or doors left open in bedrooms, bathrooms or common areas

Chapters should each appoint a weather monitor who will check the weather forecasts frequently and to be on the lookout for freezing temperatures, especially temperatures that are forecasted to be at least 10 degrees colder than normal for the time of year in your area. This is especially true during any period that the chapter facility is closed for winter or spring breaks or when occupancy will be limited.

— Leave interior doors open in rooms, cabinets, or closets that contain plumbing appliances, faucets and valves so that warm air can circulate through these areas. Make sure all exterior windows, doors and vents are closed.

— Check the insulation of pipes in your chapter facility crawl spaces and attic. Exposed pipes are most susceptible to freezing.

— Disconnect any outside garden water hoses from external faucets.

— Heat tape can be used to wrap pipes. Closely follow all manufacturers' installation and operation instructions.

— Seal gaps or leaks that allow cold air inside near where pipes are located. Look for air leaks around electrical wiring, dryer vents, and pipes, and use caulk or insulation to keep the cold out. With severe cold, even a tiny opening can let in enough cold air to cause a pipe to freeze.

— Use an indoor valve to shut off and drain water from pipes leading

to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the facility.

— During any subzero forecasts, allowing a trickle of hot and cold water might be all it takes to keep your pipes from freezing. Let warm water drip overnight, preferably from a faucet on an outside wall.

— Keep the thermostat set at the same temperature during both day and night. You might be in the habit of turning down the heat when you're asleep, but further drops in the temperature more common overnight – could catch you off guard and freeze your pipes.

### **If Your Pipes Freeze**

— If you turn on your faucets and nothing comes out, leave the faucets turned on and call a plumber.

— If your facility is flooding, turn off the main water valve.

— Never touch or use electrical appliances in areas of standing water due to potential electrocution.

— Try to identify where the frozen pipe is located. Frozen pipes often have frost on them, a slight bulge or crack or ice if there is a crack and water is leaking. If the blockage is located in a part of the pipe that is easily accessible, such as under a sink, it is easier to thaw than if behind a wall, ceiling or floor.

— Never try to thaw a frozen pipe with a torch or other open flame because it could cause a fire.

— Always begin the thawing process near the faucet then work your way down to the blockage. This way, melting ice or steam can escape from the faucet.

— You may be able to thaw a frozen pipe with the warm air from a hair dryer. Start by warming the pipe as close to the faucet as possible,

working toward the coldest section of pipe. Heat lamps or hot towels can also be used.

— If the frozen pipe is located in an enclosed area, such as behind a wall, above a ceiling or under a floor, and is not directly accessible you can try turning the heat up in the chapter facility and, cut an opening in the enclosed area to allow heat to penetrate. You can also try to use an infrared lamp. It is also preferred to call a professional plumber or sprinkler contractor if it is a sprinkler pipe that is frozen.

— If your water pipes have already burst, turn off the water at the main shutoff valve in the facility; leave the water faucets turned on and call 911. Make sure everyone in the chapter house knows where the main water shutoff valve is located and how to open and close it. Likely places for the water turn-off valve include internal pipes running against exterior walls or where water service enters a chapter facility through the foundation.

— If you have standing water, call a water damage remediation clean-up company immediately to prevent mold and further damage to your chapter facility.

— If the chapter facility will be closing for holiday winter or spring breaks during cold weather, always leave the heat set to a temperature no lower than 60°F.

*If your chapter house suffers flood, fire or storm damage, contact RMF's preferred contractor, ServiceMaster Recovery Management at 800.954.9444*

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# FROM THE ARCHIVES



*The Mu chapter house at Denison taken on June 12, 1950 during the 48th Grand Chapter in nearby Columbus, Ohio.*



*Attendees to the 17th Grand Chapter in Chicago are pictured on the porch in front of the original Omega chapter house at Northwestern University in August 1888.*



*(L-R) Dr. Peter Minetos (Chapter Advisor), Brian Asobrooks, Dr. Tom Ely (house Corp. President); are pictured cutting the ribbon during the Eta Xi chapter house dedication at Austin Peay on October 20, 1990.*