

# The Peninsular

*The Fall 2015 Newsletter of the Peninsular Chapter of Alpha Delta Phi*

## From Father to Son: A Lifelong Experience

Sean O' Leary P '91, joins us this month to share some thoughts on his college years, the impact Alpha Delta Phi had on his life, and what it means to have his son follow in his footsteps.

***Can you talk a little about your rushing process as a freshman? Was there a moment (or particular person) that drew you to the house?***

I was making the rounds to the fraternities near my dorm, South Quad, on the first Sunday of rush for the sole purpose of finding some food. We didn't have cafeteria service on Sundays back then so the fraternities all grilled out on the first day of rush. My roommate had introduced me to someone at ADPhi earlier who had grown up in his hometown, Steve Bliss, who was a fantastic guy. We connected really quickly and he did a great job of selling me on the fraternity. ***Does any particular experience stand out for you in your years as a Brother? Any memory that is still extremely resonant in your mind?***

Man, there are so many memories that remain crystal clear (more or less). Going with 20+ brothers to the 1989 Rose Bowl, followed by the experience of being on campus during the '89 Final Four. All those football Saturdays, numerous Centurions, date parties, carry-

ins, the hilarity of anything Mike Cook did, and most things Brad Brown said, especially during Initiation. I couldn't possibly list everything that I remember from those days, but each event involves guys who became my life-long friends. I love that roughly 20 of us still get together every summer for a golf outing and we text non-stop during games that we can't make in person. I feel very fortunate to have such great buddies. ***How did your time in Alpha Delta Phi prepare you for your future?***

Coming from a small town, I didn't have much exposure to people with different backgrounds (socio-economic, political, geographic, etc). We had roughly 80 guys in the house throughout my time in school and that allowed me access to so many different types of people, from whom I learned a ton. That exposure helped me develop skills that I've used throughout my career in a variety of ways. ***What did you study at the University of Michigan? How important were your studies to your future career as an entrepreneur?*** I received a BBA in Finance, but took a lot of classes in Psychology, too. I'm not sure that many classes specifically influenced me, but my time in the B-school def-

initely helped me understand what I didn't want to do. I was caught up in the '80's mania of making a bunch of money. I began to realize at Michigan that I needed to find a path that had different rewards such as having some control, working with interesting people, doing challenging and meaningful work, etc. ***Your son joined the house last year – was this something you***

***were expecting? What does your son being in the house mean to you?*** I didn't think he would as I heard "you lived HERE?" when I brought him and his sisters to the house when they were younger. He claimed that he was going to wait a semester before he considered rushing, so I was surprised when I learned that he was a pledge his first semester. It's definitely been a bit surreal to see him going through many of the same things I did, especially initiation. He's become pretty active (Vice President next semester) and I know he's anxious to get the actives engaged in doing their part to support the up-



Sean and his son, Evan

coming capital campaign. ***What are the starkest differences between the house when you were an undergraduate and now?***

There are some obvious ones such as the sand volleyball court in the yard, the lack of a chef and having both lunch and dinner prepared for everyone. I think the current group would really benefit from having their meals together as a group, especially dinner. We also had a large TV in the library with furniture that allowed us to watch big events together. The place looks pretty much the same otherwise, which is why we definitely need to spruce things up a bit!



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*The Fall 2015 Newsletter of the Pen*

## THE PENINSULAR

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jbarsen@umich.edu

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*Special thanks to  
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Peninsular Society  
Alumni Officers

**President:**

Jason Sparks P '02  
esparks56@yahoo.com  
(734) 330-4698

**Chairman, Capital  
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Art Nicholas P '85  
asnicholasjr@gmail.com

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Committee:**

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jphartwig@comcast.net

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Daniel Quandt P '84  
dgquandt@att.net

**The Peninsular  
Newsletter Editor:**

Edward McPhee P '12  
edwardmcphee11@gmail.com

**Other Board Members:**

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## Moving Forward

Brothers,

We hope everyone had a nice fall. Over the past year, we've shared updates on the planning efforts to prepare our house for a significant renovation. In talking with individuals in person, we realize there are some very specific questions that everyone has when it comes to these important endeavors. Below are additional details to help you understand the steps that we have been taking.

**Renovate vs. Rebuild?**

We spent extensive time discussing both options and ultimately decided renovating was our best path to 1.) preserve the historical significance of the house 2.) keep construction costs down, and 3.) avoid challenges and delays that would arise with the city of Ann Arbor. Plus, our house is structur-

ally sound – our architects/engineers assure us that our goals of providing a safe, comfortable and historically significant house for current and future members can be achieved by renovating.

**Renovation Plans**

After a formal RFP process vetting several highly-recommended architecture firms, we selected Quinn Evans, an Ann Arbor-based firm with strong credentials and experience renovating a fraternity house similar to ours.

Quinn Evans developed multiple concepts, taking into account our needs as a fraternity, the lifestyle of today's college students and city code requirements. The design that we've used for initial cost estimates was selected by a committee of alumni and vetted with active members. Please note that our design is not final and we



Jason Sparks P' 02, Sam DeBruin P' 11, Devin Smith P' 11, Austin Pytlowany P' 11



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## With Renovations: A Breakdown

expect to make adjustments to the plans once we get closer to the construction phase.

### ***The Funding Model***

Like with the architecture firm, we conducted a thorough RFP process to select Pennington & Co. – a fundraising firm specializing in Greek organizations. This firm came highly recommended by our International office, Michigan's Office of Greek Life and other fraternities on our campus who have worked with them.

As some of you are aware, Pennington has been hard at work on the feasibility study, a critical first step to evaluate our true ability to fund the renovation. Please note that the feasibility study does not mean we're definitely moving forward. While we're very encouraged by initial feedback, Pennington was clear that 73% of their studies come back negative with the recommendation not to move forward with a campaign.

### ***Other Financing Options***

We get a lot of "did you think of this?" type questions. The answer is "yes," — we spent several months researching and evaluating every possible option. This included meetings and calls with the university, banks and



*This fall's homecoming brought back dozens of alumni from many different decades.*

real estate firms, discussing a myriad of options, such as relocating to another location on campus, swapping properties with another organization, sale-leaseback possibilities, traditional financing plans and even turning the house into a real estate investment trust.

If we move forward, our best solution appears to be a combination of fundraising and a private loan to raise the needed funds. This is the same model used by the overwhelming majority of Greek organizations. In fact, our brothers in the early 1900's raised the present-day equivalent of \$4.8M to build our existing house, utilizing a combination of donations and a loan. Our goal is to complete the renovation with as little debt as pos-

sible.

### **How do we ensure that we're bringing in a strong group of actives to a newly renovated house?**

During the one school-year where actives would not be able to live in the house, we're proposing the use of a professional Greek recruitment firm to ensure we initiate a large, quality freshmen class to move in as sophomores. Our Wisconsin chapter recently used one of these firms to recolonize and recruited a pledge class of 39 guys. They didn't have a new house to showcase like we would, so we feel confident we can be very successful with this approach.

### ***What else?***

We've also been taking steps to better manage our current house, such as the use of a property manage-

ment firm to oversee all maintenance and repairs, and most recently, professional cleaning crews. These elements will be carried over to a renovated house to ensure we're protecting our investment in the long run.

As you can see, our alumni board and committees have been hard at work. We're extremely proud of the progress we've made, along with the realization that together we can all be part of building something really amazing to impact future generations of Alpha Deltas.

If you would like to get involved in any capacity, please reach out to Jason Sparks at 734-330-4698 or [esparks56@yahoo.com](mailto:esparks56@yahoo.com).

Xaipe,  
The Peninsular Society  
Alumni Board

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## Jared Feldman Continues Philanthropic Tradition of Alpha Delta Phi

By Paul Song P '18

In recent years, Alpha Delta Phi has improved its philanthropic presence on campus through the hosting of its own events and fundraisers as well as through participation of the undergraduates through organizations like Camp

Kesem and MStars.

This past April, Philanthropy Chair Jared Feldman P'18 coordinated addition of an Annual Spring Bake Sale to Alpha Delta Phi's philanthropic repertoire. While this event only raised \$700.00, it has jump-started the philanthropic spirit of Alpha Delta Phi — Feldman is adding yet another philanthropic event to Alpha Delta

Phi's schedule this spring to benefit the Veterans Administration Hospital.

Feldman exemplifies the philanthropic spirit of Alpha Delta Phi. An active student in the Ross School of Business, Feldman is experienced with planning events that seek to give back to the community, including serving as the Michigan District Service Chair for Circle K. Addi-

tionally, he participated in University of Michigan Dance Marathon, with his group raising the highest amount of all that participated in the event.

The Philanthropy Chair position is an apt fit for Feldman: "through this position, I am able to connect my passion for giving back to others with building meaningful relationships."

## Alpha Delta Phi Initiates New Fall Class

The Peninsular Chapter of Alpha Delta Phi initiated three new members this December. While the new class is small, the undergraduates are very excited about the class' potential.



Meet Ashok Dheenan. Hailing from Cincinnati, Ohio, Ashok is a sophomore majoring in Biomedical Engineering. In his free time, you can find him on the tennis court!



Yuanzheng Chen comes from Alpena, Michigan. Chen is a sophomore who majors in Economics and really enjoys fishing, not surprising for someone from the Great Lakes State!



This is Varun B. Patel, who comes to Michigan from Toronto, Canada. Patel majors in Electrical Engineering and minors in Economics. He aspires to become an entrepreneur.

Keep up with ongoing and upcoming chapter news and events at: <http://www.peninsularsociety.com>