



# SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON NEW YORK EPSILON CHAPTER

## Fall 2014 Alumni Newsletter



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Once again, another year begins for New York Epsilon with Workweek. This year, two veteran housemen, Lucas Rice (2014) and Paul Koetke (2015), took the reigns to execute a large number of fixes that had been building up over the last couple months. These projects covered a multitude of disciplines, including drywall repair on multiple floors of the house, adding lighting fixtures to the front of the house, attic and basement, another basement floor renovation, mortar repair, repointing bricks, a re-ramped, reorganized tool room and a lot of painting. While we didn't have a big, novel, project to do, I think the key success to this workweek, was in how we taught many of the younger brothers new skills. Each senior was paired with one or two new brothers, who either learned or furthered their experience in a certain trade. While a new project like a basement or walkway might be significant visually, having brothers who know how to do these valuable skills will pay off further in the long run. It took us a long time to see this, but we hope that it will continue between actives and even between alumni and actives as time goes on. The focus on this week was to pass on knowledge of how to fix the house, but a lot got accomplished during the process and we felt that we are in a good position to support the up-keep needs of the chapter house for many years to come here at 12 Myrtle Ave. **Phi Alpha, Lucas and PK**



Laying down the new mulch



Re-carpeting the stairs



Participants of the 2014 LAE/EC Retreat in York, ME

# 79th John O. Moseley Leadership School 2014

With all the recent changes SAE national has implemented this year, the 79<sup>th</sup> John O' Moseley leadership school might as well been the most controversial yet informative conference this fraternity has ever hosted and thanks to the James M. Joly Zeal Fund Scholarship I was able to experience it firsthand. This past March SAE national employed the True Gentlemen Experience, a four year learning initiative that is supposed to develop young men socially, academically and professionally so that they may become high functioning and educated adults as they enter the workforce and for their lifetime. Through this program however men seeking to join the fraternity do not undergo a traditional pledging program, where they develop first as uninitiated pledges then are, when the brotherhood feels they are ready, initiated as brothers. Rather men who seem to be fit to be an SAE and would be an asset to our order are given a bid and are initiated with all the rights and privileges of a brother within a 96 hour period, after which they began their learning and development. The idea behind the TGE was to eliminate the chance of hazing or a rite of passage.

This is where most of the controversy has arisen; chapters were outraged to hear that pledging has been cut from the ritual and speaking from our chapter specifically the majority of us were too; however the six of us from NYE agreed we would approach the week with an open mind. Needless to say tensions were high upon arrival onto the majesty of the sea, everyone was eager to hear what national had planned to try and sell their new product.

The first general session was an interview of T. Boone Pickens, one of the nation's most successful businessmen and a brother of SAE with Brad Cohen, our ESA. Boone Pickens shared some valuable tips from his work in the oil industry for success in business and life. After the session I found myself having a more personal interview with Mike Allison, the Coordinator of Educational Programs. He is on the board that was in charge of creating and refining the True Gentlemen Experience. I took a moment to pick his brain and get some answers about why national was making this drastic change. One of my questions to him was along the lines of, "There are chapters out there that are doing things right, developing great brothers while not hazing or killing anyone, why punish these chapters by making them change their program rather than holding the individual chapters that are messing up responsible?" He could tell I was speaking from the stand point of the former then the latter and gave me some insight on national's rationale. He compared national's decision to a decision that Starbucks a few years ago. In 2008 Starbucks had restaurants across the world making different qualities of coffee. Some shops produced great coffee while others were underperforming, not meeting the standard. So depending on where you lived or who you talked to Starbucks the brand as a whole varied. They felt it was unacceptable so the corporation decided to shut down retrain and rebrand almost every restaurant to make sure they were all putting out the same product. Mike went on to tell me the same concept can be applied to SAE, although chapters will have their individuality they wanted every chapter to operate within the same standards, to recruit and develop the right men and to rebrand SAE as the best fraternity in the world. Our conversation gave me some confidence in the system and helped me see the situation through a wider lens.

Another speaker that made a lasting impression on me was David Stollman, the co-founder and president of Campuspeak. His seminar "Buy in or get" taught us to work together as a chapter, and to be on the same page for all problems including employing the new TGE. Because if all the brothers don't agree with it, there will be no progress. He urged us to align of actions and our values to truly start living and breathing the true gentlemen. We have to lead by example to recruit the right guys and earn our letters every day. In terms of the TGE he kept emphasizing that with this new program they'll be learning for 4 years rather than just 8 weeks. Overall his speech and leadership school gave us great ideas for the chapter and the zeal to implement them. Thank you for this opportunity and I hope to help and influence the chapter in the coming years. *Daniel Abel '15*

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## A Message from the Loyalty Experience Educator

Due to the recent overhaul by the Supreme Council with regards to pledging, we at NY Epsilon had to make some changes to our member education program. The most pressing issue on the table concerned the new member education process. For those unfamiliar with the changes, men who receive bids from NY Epsilon will be initiated within 96 hours of signing said bid. This means that these men have all of the rights and privileges that the currently active brothers have. Your initial reaction to the news probably mirrors our initial reaction when we first got wind of the news. However, the brotherhood has collaborated for the past four months and has constructed a new member education program that matches, if not exceeds, the excellence for which our old pledging program was countlessly recognized. NY Epsilon has always put an emphasis on brotherhood camaraderie and personal growth, and we intend to continue to do so. The True Gentlemen Experience only aids us in our endeavors. We feel confident in the program and look forward to its implementation this fall. If you have any questions about the True Gentlemen Experience, feel free to contact Member Educator Paul Detwiler IV at [pdetwiler44@gmail.com](mailto:pdetwiler44@gmail.com) or Loyalty Experience Educator Matt Fenlon at [mattfenlon2@gmail.com](mailto:mattfenlon2@gmail.com), or to visit the website at [www.sae.net/tge](http://www.sae.net/tge). *Phi Alpha, Matt Fenlon '16*

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Find out more about The True Gentleman Experience at: <https://www.sae.net/tge>

# Alumni Spotlight: An Interview With Don Gillespie '11



This past summer, during an LAE retreat, I had the pleasure of getting to know an alumnus who has been very involved with pursuits both within the realm of SAE and out, Don Gillespie. Don came to RPI in 2007 and pledged SAE his first semester with a group of close friends from Nason Hall. Although he was originally just a Computer Systems Engineering major, he graduated in 2011 with a dual major bachelor's degree in Computer Systems Engineering and Electrical Engineering. Don was also on the RPI wrestling team for a few years.

While an active brother, Don was a very involved with the house. He held positions including Parliamentarian, House Manager, and Risk Manager. As House Manager, he was responsible for overseeing major renovations of 12 Myrtle Ave's roof and plumbing. In 2009, Don attended the John O. Mosely Leadership School in San Diego. He also lived in Austin, Texas for 8 months in 2010 with a fellow brother, Kevin Fort, as they both received co-ops with Advanced Micro Devices. Don's big brother was Justin Metzger and his little brothers were Luiz Moreira, John Hennessey, and Benjamin Clemence. Currently, Don is in his third year serving on the LAE board, describing it as a rewarding experience in which he gets to work with individuals who care about the house to give back to the house.

After graduating from RPI, Don moved to the Boston area to work for a healthcare electronics company called Vecna Tech. He stayed there for one year, working on several internal projects, before taking a job at Amazon as a Software Engineer on the Digital Products team in Boston. As a part of this team he played a significant role in the creation of the Amazon Fire Phone. Don was even relocated to Seattle for a few months to be a part of the launch team for the product.

In his free time, Don enjoys mountain climbing and competitive sailing. Of the types of mountaineering, he particularly likes ice climbing. While he was in Seattle, he scaled Mount Rainer in Washington. Since being introduced to sailing while in Austin, Don's two man team has competed in hundreds races and in many different types of sail boats. He sails year round, even though the waters of the Charles River and the Boston Harbor get very frigid in the winter months.

Don plans to continue both his professional and recreational endeavors. He said he still enjoys being an engineer and making products, and hopes to continue doing it. Don is also going to remain on the LAE board, and will keep on sailing and mountaineering. He is planning to go back to the west coast, particularly Oregon, sometime soon to climb a few peaks.

I would like to thank Don for his continued dedication to Sigma Alpha Epsilon and NY Epsilon, and for doing this brief interview with me. We all look forward to seeing him on Alumni Weekend. **Gary Liskovich '17**

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## Alumni Weekend Schedule — October 10-12, 2014

First, some of you have 10, 15 or 20 year reunions coming up. We would love to see you back! We will have an RSVP link up soon. Second, we have connected with Gene and Siri Joly, the parents of James Joly '99 who died in January 2011, who have committed to visit for the weekend. This would be James' 15th reunion. In addition to the normal alumni weekend events listed below, we will have several special events in conjunction with Gene and Siri's visit:

- A Remembrance of James for friends and classmates - early Saturday afternoon
- Formal introduction of Gene and Siri to the chapter during pre-dinner announcements and awards.
- Before dinner we will also have a presentation of special contributions to the James M. Joly Zeal Fund. We are asking for alumni special donations. LAE House Corporation will be matching donations up to a total of \$1,000.
- Gene and Siri will be attending a portion of the weekly chapter meeting early Sunday afternoon. The chapter is still aware of James' effect on the chapter and of his passing, but since it was almost 4 years ago, Gene and Siri and I agreed that now is a good time to tell the story directly to the chapter from his parents.

We look forward to seeing all of you October 10-12. You will see more on Facebook and an on-line RSVP should be available soon. You can find the RPI's schedule of events on the RPI website. See our tentative schedule below.

**Phi Alpha, Matt Jeffers '95 LAE House Corporation Board Member**

**FRIDAY NIGHT**—Check in and chill out

**SATURDAY**

11 AM - Alumni v Actives Soccer Game—Lower Renwyck grass field

12:30-2 PM - BBQ and House Tours

2 PM - Memories of James Joly with Gene, Siri, and those that James touched

3 PM - Annual LAE Shareholders Meeting—Elections to the Board—*we have one spot open for nominations!!!*

5-7 PM - Announcements, Awards, and Dinner at the Chapter House

7-8:30 PM - Alumni & Active Networking - Alumni share Fraternity & Life Lessons to help Undergrads prepare for job/co-op/life

**SUNDAY**

10 AM - 1 PM Brunch at the Chapter House (will Jerry Witter '82 cook again?)

1 PM - House Meeting - Gene and Siri Joly will attend the beginning of the Chapter meeting to share their story of James' passing

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# The Future of the 12 Myrtle Chapter House

Brothers, LAE and the Phoenix committee have spent considerable efforts to advance the major renovation/expansion of the main house. Many challenging steps are ahead of us, and NYEP will need significant assistance from our Actives and Alumni to be successful. However I would like to take the time to reflect and thank the members of the Phoenix committee and many other key Brothers for their efforts that led up to this milestone.

Over 20 years ago a visionary group of Brothers started the Lions Fund, with the sole purpose to invest in the Brothers of tomorrow. The Lions Fund has grown over the years by Brothers who have carefully invested and carried this important investment very successfully through several recessions. On more than one occasion I have heard an Alumni state that they wished the Lion Fund managers were managing their investments. Without the hundreds of Alumni who have donated over the years to Phonathon, the Lion's Fund would not be as strong as today.

This need we all feel for philanthropy, it is in our roots and what makes us NYEP. It is the foundation for our successes and I look forward to seeing all of us Alumni continuing to support NYEP. Several groups of Brothers over the past decades have performed detailed analysis of the house's structure, offering key guidance on what to repair or improve. This is a critical function as it clearly states what repairs/improvements to make while not wasting money on non-value added projects. Over the recent years I have seen a very mature and forward thinking group of not only Housemen but Actives overall. The values NYEP holds and practices on a daily basis are impressive.

The house men over the last several years have taken on an even stronger role of performing repairs to the house, often staying at the house during winter and spring breaks. These actions have made the house man budget consistently operate below budget. This savings has been set aside in what is known as a "War Fund", originally tasked with having a sufficient reserve to handle a massive unexpected repair, such as a boiler or roof. An interesting side effect of having highly dedicated housemen who are able to creatively achieve their goals while staying under budget is that the war fund has grown massively, and is likely on track to outpace the Lions Fund.

Looking at our current Phoenix committee we have a diverse group, with many talents ranging over a long span of our history. Lucas Rice is leading the group with so much Zeal that I think he's staying on for graduate work just to keep up the pace up on the project. Several new Alumni have joined the Phoenix committee only adding fuel to the fire. We need more talent, more input, and more finances to continue this critical task and look forward to many Phi Alpha moments from our Alumni.

*Phi Alpha, Kurt Spiegel '04, LAE President*



## Barker Champions Yet Again

As Sports Chairman, it is my pleasure to announce our recent successes in the intramural sports this past year. For the second time in the past three years, New York Epsilon emerged victorious in pursuit of the coveted Barker Trophy. With Matt Fenlon '16 leading the charge as sports chairman in the Fall, and myself in the Spring, we saw many successes in the several sports we participated in. ΣAE won the IFC championships in Outdoor soccer and Ultimate Frisbee. We also took second place in several sports such as IFC Billiards, Racquet Ball, Kickball, Volleyball, and Football. Markus Ricardo '17 looks to follow this past season up with another successful one as he takes on the role as Sports Chairman for the Fall semester. A strong rush could prove to be the deciding factor in the fate of this upcoming season, as several key players are graduating as seniors, and their spots will have to be filled. Hopefully there will be more good news in this sports updated by the time the next newsletter comes around.

*Phi Alpha,  
Chris Neumann '15*

## Phonathon 2014 Update

As of August 23, the results from phonathon look pretty good, even though the number of donors was quite lower at 113. On average the alumni donated \$156 and we deposited \$17,653. We are still hoping to get the numbers up to at least our pledged amount of \$22,500. We've sent out some reminder letters and "missed you" letters, so donations leading up to the fall Alumni weekend are sure to rise. If you'd like to make a donation online you can visit <http://nyepsilon.com/donate.php>. The phonathon is an important part of our operations for maintaining the current chapter house, supporting educational opportunities for the undergraduates, and saving for future major housing projects.

Thank you all for your help in sustaining the great New York Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Checkout the Top 10 Classes as of Aug.  
*Jerry Witter '82*

Top Ten Classes in Donations and Participation				
Rank	Class	Donation	Class	Participation
1	1995	\$1,618.56	1982	35.29%
2	1982	\$1,375.00	1966	33.33%
3	1988	\$1,200.00	1965	33.33%
4	1989	\$1,000.00	1978	30.77%
5	1994	\$850.00	1976	27.27%
6	1972	\$750.00	1983	27.27%
7	1983	\$733.00	1969	25.00%
8	2004	\$718.56	2006	23.08%
9	1970	\$550.00	2009	23.08%
10	1955	\$500.00	1966	23.08%