

A Crazy Idea?



The New Theta Kappa Fundraising Plan

*Bill Geddy, Fundraising Chairman
Georgia Southern*

Just before Theta Kappa's (Georgia Southern) annual Homecoming plan began to solidify in 2000, a group of alumni began reviewing the events, meeting agenda, and, of course, the annual fundraiser for the alumni chapter. Faced with the ongoing battle for the hearts and pocketbooks of its alumni, the group struggled with generating ideas that would emulate the success that only 12 years earlier had allowed the chapter to raise the funds to build a new chapter home.

This might not seem to be a formidable task for chapters with 50, 75, or 100 years of heritage. But for Theta Kappa, which was founded in

1970, initiated its 250th brother in 1986, and had several long recruitment droughts with single digit initiate classes, this was a challenge.

Fortunately, during a three-year period, 1986-89, the alumni and undergraduates rallied for a string of 30 plus candidate classes resulting in the initiation of almost 100 brothers. This brought the undergraduate membership close to 90 men. Everyone on campus started taking notice of Sigma Nu. Thanks to a core group of alumni and undergraduates, in 1988, the chapter was able to raise the funds necessary to start construction of the first house on the new Greek Row. This served as the

springboard for every other chapter to become organized and build their houses. A few years later a magnificent 20,000-plus square foot concrete and brick posted patio was added to the home.

Unfortunately, the undergraduate chapter began experiencing the cyclical ups and downs in membership, which resulted in financial struggles for the chapter and Theta Kappa House Corporation. By August 2000, most involved agreed that something had to change and change radically. The alumni had tried dues, raffles, begging...just about everything to raise money. Several alumni even stepped up to make past due pay-

ments on the mortgage note. The alumni determined that a new plan had to be developed which would meet specific goals (see sidebar).

Eventually, a new idea developed and while it was initially thought to be a “crazy idea,” several alumni realized that it could work! A few key alumni initially volunteered to support the plan financially.

The plan called for twelve teams of alumni and undergraduates to be formed - one for each month of the year. Each team captain would agree to guarantee \$2,500 from his team, payable on the first of their month for the next five years. The House Corporation would use these contributions to pay down the principle of the mortgage and establish a reserve fund for maintenance and repairs. Additionally, the chapter would continue to pay its normal lease payments during the implementation of the plan. Crazy idea...yes, but it can work!

During the Homecoming 2000 activities, the alumni agreed to implement this new plan. Everything got off to a great start when a brother volunteered for October and a group stepped forward to take November. In a short time, ten teams had captains. The alumni agreed to recruit the remaining two team captains, plus find additional alumni to recruit for teams needing additional members. Alumni were also recruited to help the team captains meet their goals.

Each team captain committed to raising \$12,500 over the next five years, 2000-2005. They based this commitment on their own personal

finances and the knowledge that many of their fraternity brothers would help them meet this commitment. Members were asked to remember their collegiate days and reflect upon what those times meant. Then, they were encouraged to join one of the teams. The teams established their collection schedules, some paying \$10-\$20 monthly, while others paid \$2,500 annually.

At Homecoming 2001, we had our first measurement of the success of the new plan. Tony Fair, a long-time fundraising advocate and chapter advisor, unfurled a simple, yet persuasive, chart showing that the House Corporation had paid off \$31,649 in principal on the mortgage in 2001 as compared to a mere \$6,943 in 2000. At the same time, there were some notable renovations made to the home. Simply put, the new plan proved to be a “crazy idea” that was working.

The campaign has now been running a little over 18 months and is working rather well. There have been a couple of bumps, but whenever they arose additional alumni have become involved and joined the team in need of assistance. Theta Kappa has turned the corner, and is well on the way to retiring the mortgage note. The campaign has been a success because it is a grass roots plan. As more alumni join the campaign, we will either accelerate the retirement of the note or accelerate the repairs and improvements. It's working for us and I think that it can benefit other chapters too. ❖

The Goals

- Eliminate the lengthy discussions of finances and dues at Homecoming, thus transitioning back into an event that people would enjoy.
- Establish a program that everyone would support and feel good about.
- Reopen communications with alumni (newsletters, directory, etc.).
- Raise money for on-going repairs and improvements to the chapter house and grounds.
- Pay-off the mortgage and burn the note at Homecoming in 2005.

A Special Thank You to the Theta Kappa Brothers

“This ‘crazy idea’ has taken root and provided a solid foundation for our chapter. Thanks to all of our dedicated brothers and for those yet to come. We welcome your involvement in helping to make Sigma Nu the best chapter at Georgia Southern!”

- Bill Geddy

*Crazy idea...
yes, but it can work!*

THE ^Δ DELTA

O F S I G M A N U



Christopher Reeve joins the men of the Epsilon Xi Chapter at Ole Miss for the Charity Bowl



THE Δ DELTA

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Sigma Nu Fraternity, Inc.
9 Lewis St. • P.O. Box 1869
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Phone: 540.463.1869
FAX: 540.463.1669

www.sigmanu.org

Editors-in-Chief

Brad Beacham (Texas Christian)
James A. Owens (Charleston)

Managing Editor & Art Director
Jason R. Guyton (Coastal Carolina)

Graphic Artist
John Sanders (Middle Tennessee)

Copy Editor
Barbara Hunter

Contributors

Brad Beacham (Texas Christian)
James A. Owens (Charleston)
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Sy Hughes (Lander)
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Noah Borton (Southern Utah)
Jeff Feighner (Florida State)
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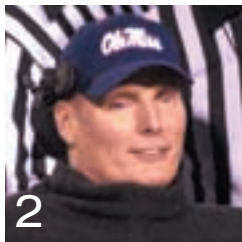
e-mail: SigmaNuHQ@aol.com
Address Changes
please e-mail to:
SigmaNuHQ@aol.com

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Epsilon Xi Chapter at Ole Miss holds its annual Charity Bowl. This year they raised more than \$85,000 for the Christopher Reeve Foundation.



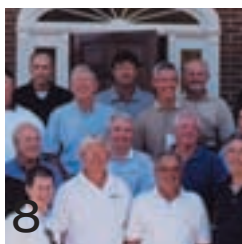
The Greatest Sigma Nu Football Coaches

From Alabama's Legend, Paul "Bear" Bryant (Alabama) to Troy State's Larry Blakeney (Auburn), Jay Langhammer reviews the greatest Sigma Nu football coaches in the game.



A Crazy Idea ... That Works

Theta Kappa at Georgia Southern has started a campaign to raise money for the chapter home. And it is a plan that is just crazy enough to work!



Grand Chapter Highlights

Excelling with Honor...Attendance soared at the 60th Grand Chapter in Toronto as Brothers and their families gathered to celebrate and share Sigma Nu fellowship and Brotherhood. An overview.



A Donor's Profile

Tom Lofton (Butler and Indiana) and his wife Betty make the largest single gift received by the Sigma Nu Educational Foundation. Find out what inspired them to do so and how their gift will benefit the Fraternity's educational mission.



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