



# The Sig House

*A Newsletter from the Board of Grand Trustees*

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## Gathering the Gold

The Sigma Chi experience is much more than the chapter house. But the chapter house is an powerful component of the experience since it provides the stage where friendships are grown and the seeds of high minded values are sown. As with friendships and values, the chapter house requires care and renewal, all of which costs money...sometimes BIG money.

Every chapter house needs funds to renew, renovate and upgrade. Safety considerations drive the need for fire sprinkler systems, smoke alarms, up to code wiring, fire extinguishers and safe egress. Economic considerations dictate adequate insulation, energy efficient windows and efficient heating and cooling equipment. Recruitment considerations mandate an attractive and competitively priced housing alternative.

Weatherization and insulating work can sometimes be paid for through state grants or utility company rebates or subsidies. Search the internet for "weatherization programs" in your state for alternatives. Other types of renovation work generally require a private funding source. While private lenders may consider lending to a properly registered house corporation with adequate collateral and source of repayment, bank financing carries loan fees, high interest rates, short repayment terms and higher payments. By far, the best source of renovation funding is contributions from chapter alums.

Consider some statistics about fund raisers:

1. A 20-25% participation rate is very good. So, if you have 1,000 potential donors, you can expect only 200 to 250 contributions of *any size*. Do the math for your chapter.
2. 80% of all contributions will come from 20% of donors.
3. Your top 10 contributions typically make up 50% of the campaign goal.
4. The largest gift will be 15% of the campaign goal.

Being successful in gathering the gold requires a carefully executed plan which includes:

**Defining the Donor Pool.** Every house corporation should make having a complete and accurate alumni database a high priority. It is not only indispensable for raising money, it provides a mechanism for brothers to reconnect with other brothers. Sigma Chi Headquarters [www.sigmachi.org](http://www.sigmachi.org) can provide the information it has to begin the database building process. Since brothers move, databases are ever changing. This is especially true of many younger alumni who move frequently. Since the post office maintains change of address requests for six month, doing First Class mailings with "Return Service Requested" at least twice a year will capture many of those changes. Bottom Line: building and maintaining a reliable database is essential to fund raising and virtually every other successful house corporation endeavor.

**Wield the Web.** The vast majority of brothers have access to the internet and use email regularly. Use this fact to your advantage by hosting a chapter website. The cost is nominal and it's accessible 24/7. Post your database, newsletters, pictures and more. And gather and use email addresses to reduce mailing costs.

**Fund Raiser Theme.** Every fund raiser should be named. The theme should be carefully chosen, visionary and appeal to the heart because the heart is the key to the wallet. An example includes "Giving Back" which appeals to repaying the debt owed to Sigma Chi for a lifetime of value.

**How & When Funds Will Be Spent.** Along with a theme goes the scheme. All fund raisers need to have a dollar goal based on specific renovation projects systematically accomplished according to a schedule. It's okay to spread the work over several years if the projects are volunteer driven. If hiring a general contractor, most mid range renovations should be accomplished during the summer to avoid occupancy conflicts. If the work is more involved, temporary alternative housing for the chapter needs to be part of the plan.

**A Picture is Worth (well, you know).** Some alums may have not visited the chapter house for years, sometimes decades. A video on CD that shows the current condition and plans for renovation is very inexpensive to produce and distribute (\$5-7 each when done in-house). The video can be also be distributed by email in MP4 format and posted to the chapter website or Facebook page created for a fund raiser. Focus first on fond memories and then segue into the renovation and money it will take to keep the dream alive for future brothers.

**Identifying the Big Hitters.** This pool is less than 5% of your total number of prospects but will yield the biggest dollars by far. Most of those who qualify will be in their fifties or older so having

generational contacts who know who they are is vital. Once the Big Hitters have been identified, a personal visit is best even if that means long distance travel. Those Big Hitters that commit often know who the other Big Hitters are and may be willing to make personal calls to them. Don't forget to ask.

**Name Levels of Giving.** Most contributors want to know where they stand in relation to their peers. Brothers are competitive that way. Establish at least five levels of giving that allow the Big Hitters to hit big (like \$10,000 or \$25,000 or more) but still allow smaller donors to play (like \$100 and up). Name the categories for Sigma Chi symbols (Norman Shield, Jordan Standard, White Cross, etc.) or for chapter founders or achievers that are well known. Publish updated results on the chapter website and in newsletters.

**When to Announce the Campaign.** Keep the announcement under wraps until you have gotten commitments for at least half of the goal. *This part is critical.* If announced too soon, levels of giving and numbers of donors will be much smaller. When the campaign is announced with much of the goal already achieved and who committed it, others will be more inclined to contribute and match or out do their peers. Do not underestimate the power of this tactic. It is time tested and works.

**Keeping the Ball Rolling.** Once the campaign is announced, plan to communicate to the alums three or four times a year to show the progress and continued urgency to donate. A year end appeal in particular can be very effective since charitable giving deductions face a December 31 deadline.

**Don't Start Renovation Too Soon.** Even though the announced schedule indicates the renovation work will start on such-and-such a date, delay the start if insufficient pledges have been received. Starting too soon is a message to those that haven't contributed that you don't need their money. Put the responsibility for the

delay on those that haven't pledged. Tell them "this train can't leave the station without YOU on it".

Aside from the hard work and excitement that comes with a chapter house renovation, the rewards to those that participate cannot be understated. Fund raising and renovation projects give the house corporation board a series of positive long range goals to work on. As goals are accomplished, those that helped should be recognized for the effort in person and in public.

This is one of the best team building exercises there is. It gives others a desire to join a winning team. And it gives still other brothers a chance to show their financial appreciation for what Sigma Chi has meant to their lives. So, make plans to gather the gold that's waiting there to be mined.[IHSV](#)

## Grand Trustee Q&A

**Q** We pay our active chapter's House Manager to assist the house corporation with repairs and coordinating contractors. Is that acceptable?

**A** It's important for the house corporation to maintain a clear separation from active chapter for liability reasons. To that end, active members should not serve on the house corporation board nor should they be on the payroll. Likewise, the house corporation should not waive rent or pay fraternity dues on behalf of an active. Scholarships, on the other hand, are a permissible and well established method of accomplishing what you seek to do.

**Q** I attended the Grand Trustees' House Corporation Officers Training Seminar (HCOTS) several years ago and found it extremely helpful. Besides useful information, I'm inspired to improve our house corp. Are there going to be other HCOTS?

# Fostering a Culture of Safety and Responsibility

## Risk Management Foundation Provides

- Educational Resources
- Risk Management Services
- Insurance Services
- Guidance for Undergraduates, Chapter Officers, House Corporations, and Alumni Advisors



**Risk Management Foundation**

*Education • Prevention • Preservation*

[www.rmfeeducation.org](http://www.rmfeeducation.org)

*Let Us Help You Today!*

## Sigma Chi Fraternity's



Affordable financing options up to \$250,000 for Sigma Chi house corporations that own chapter houses

- Chapter House Purchase
- Life & Fire Safety Upgrades
- New Construction
- Renovation



*Ritual Regalia Loans up to \$5000*



For more information, contact  
**Ed Rammrath**  
[eramrath@rammrathrealty.com](mailto:eramrath@rammrathrealty.com)  
Phone 832.483.8676



**A**The Grand Trustees are developing a regional HCOTS concept that will offer two or more more geographically friendly locations. HCOTS is strongly and financially supported by our strategic partners Risk Management Foundation (RMF) and Constantine Capital, Inc. (CCI) which offer great programs and benefits to house corporations.

The HCOTS schedule will be communicated via email to all house corporation board members when available. [IHSV](#)

## Alumni Engagement Report Summer 2018

The Grand Trustees have met the goal of 120 Alumni Groups working their way toward being a more formal Alumni Chapter/Association.

Approximately 75% of the Active Chapters suspended in recent years did not have local alumni support. For this reason, Grand Consul Geddings asked that emphasis be placed on developing Alumni Groups in locations where there are Active Chapters. Having local and organized Alumni Groups can provide resources and guidance to Active Chapters that drift from Sigma Chi values.

In Fall 2018, more Alumni Groups will be forming as we reach out to Chapter Advisors, Grand Praetors and House Corporations to identify alums active in the chapter towns. In addition, we will develop alumni support for current and upcoming colony towns.

Social media sites have identified many Sigma Chi alums that are actively engaged but not formed into an Alumni Group. Alumni Groups can be listed in The Magazine of Sigma Chi that reaches 32,000 Life Loyal Sigs and attract more members to the Group.

The Grand Trustees encourage all alumni brothers to contact other Sigs to form an Alumni Group. You could, for example, form a group of your area chapter brothers, a business networking group or social group (sports, hiking, biking or other hobby).

For more Alumni Group resources, contact your Grand Trustee listed on Page One of **The Sig House**.

By Grand Trustee Bill Robinson [IHSV](#)

## Going Solar

The Epsilon Eta chapter of California State-Fresno now features a solar panel system paid with a \$177,338 donation from a chapter alum.

The system is expected to provide electricity to the chapter house for 30 years and consists of 135 panels mounted above the parking lot. It is expected to generate 97% of the House's annual \$17,700 electricity charges. The savings will pay-off installation costs in about 10 years.

The system will provide shade, improved security lighting and include two electric vehicle charging stations.

It was dedicated on August 4, 2018 to Sigma Chi Steve Heinrichs who passed away in 2016. [IHSV](#)

## CCI Corner

Constantine Capital Inc. (CCI) is Sigma Chi's mortgage lender for qualified house corporations. It can finance a variety of renovation and upgrade projects up to \$250,000 such as:

1. Chapter House Purchase
2. Life & Safety Upgrades
3. New Construction
4. Renovation Projects, and
5. Loan Guaranty

CCI's current requests, approved or closed loans:

<b>St. Thomas</b> (closed) Renovation	\$60,000
<b>Fort Hays</b> (request) New house bridge loan	\$200,000

Does your house corporation have a chapter house financing needs? Contact Chair Ed Rammrath at Ph 832.483.8676 or [eramrath@rammrathrealty.com](mailto:eramrath@rammrathrealty.com) [IHSV](#)

## Sigma Chi's Position on Alcohol

The conflict between each brother's voluntary commitment to live according to the values and ideals of Sigma Chi versus his behavioral patterns relating to the misuse of alcohol.

How is the issue affecting today's Greeks? The dangers of alcohol abuse have been well known for many years and have manifested themselves in tragic ways in the Greek-letter world. This has resulted not only in bad publicity for fraternities, but also in senseless deaths and permanent disabilities for individuals. Alcohol, directly and

indirectly, has ruined many lives. It is the obligation of all Sigma Chis to recognize and to deal effectively with the real and potential problems caused when alcohol use becomes alcohol abuse.

The Fraternity recognizes that a number of chapters have benefited from an alcohol-free living environment and pledges its support and educational resources to a chapter, house corporation or university that chooses to implement such an environment.

Sigma Chi is a values-based organization with a desire to educate its members and prospective members in sound risk management policies and the legal, responsible use of, or abstinence from, alcohol. Prohibition, historically, has not been effective, and the Fraternity has no intention of mandating alcohol-free living. However, the Executive Committee will continue to have the right to impose alcohol-free housing stipulations as a disciplinary measure for chapters which flagrantly or repeatedly misuse alcohol.

Where does Sigma Chi stand? The misuse of alcohol is conduct unbecoming a Sigma Chi. Consequently, the Sigma Chi Fraternity resolves to eliminate the misuse of alcohol by its membership, particularly among undergraduate and prospective members.

The Fraternity has several policies regarding alcohol use and misuse, including:

The Sigma Chi Policy on Alcohol and Drugs  
The Risk Management Foundation Policy on Alcohol and Drugs  
Host college/university alcohol policies  
Chapter bylaws

How is Sigma Chi addressing the issue? The Fraternity and Foundation have developed programs to assist undergraduate chapters in their alcohol education efforts and to foster true brotherhood. These include:

1. Crossroads values-based decision-making retreat
2. Province Conferences (RMF Case Studies)
3. Leadership Training Workshop
4. Individual chapter programs

5. Host institution programs

6. Interfraternal and other programs as applicable

However, the most difficult-yet essential aspect of true brotherhood is accountability. If we truly trust our brothers, then we are obligated to be open and honest with them. Consequently, we may be the only ones who are able to hold each other accountable in a positive, brotherly manner, with pure motives, to help one another improve.

Accountability must begin with the man in the glass. We must hold ourselves first, then each other, accountable to live by the ideals and values to which we each voluntarily committed. This includes holding ourselves and each other accountable if we misuse alcohol.

The primary structured accountability mechanism must be the individual chapter judicial board. Remembering that the actions of any one brother reflect on all of us, and that just one incident may affect the future of the chapter, the chapter judicial board must act promptly and fairly when brothers misuse alcohol. The courses of action that should be considered alone or in combination include:

1. Mandating counseling if there has been a pattern of misuse (most colleges/universities offer such services to their students at no additional charge)

2. Suspending social and/or other chapter privileges for a minimum of one semester (or its equivalent) along with financial remuneration for any damage

The second structured accountability mechanism must be local alumni, specifically the chapter advisor and his advisory committee from an operations perspective, and the members of the house corporation as the chapter's landlord or property manager. Possible courses of action could include:

1. Counseling (as noted for chapter judicial board)

2. Soliciting parental/guardian intervention and support

3. Evicting from the chapter house those deemed to be undesirable tenants

4. Building or remodeling houses without barrooms (prevention)

Both the individual chapter judicial board and the local alumni should utilize the Grand Praetor, the Fraternity's official representative in the province, as a resource for these deliberations and proceedings. **IHSV**

## We're Here to Help

Board of Grand Trustees is here to assist Sigma Chi house corporations in a myriad of ways. Besides many years of service to Sigma Chi in various capacities such as real estate development, property management, project administration, politics, house maintenance and renovation, insurance, tax planning, accounting, construction, fund raising, legal, education, financing, risk management and more.

While each Grand Trustee is assigned specific provinces to oversee, this combined expertise is available to all house corporations. The key to tapping this gold mine is to contact your province's Grand Trustee with a specific request for assistance. If your request is out of your Grand Trustee's specific area of expertise, other colleagues will assist in providing real solutions. Give us a try. **IHSV**

## 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  
5250 Avalon Blvd www.HugArchitects.com  
Alpharetta GA 30009  
Specializing in the design and renovation of fraternity housing.

**Reifsteck Reid & Company Architects 217.351.4100**  
Rod Reid rreid@rr-arch.com  
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. 832.483.8676**  
Ed Rammrath eramrath@rammrathrealty.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**  
Web-based billing and financial management service enables billing, collecting, budgeting, reporting, online payment options

**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.

### FOOD SERVICES

**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

**College Chefs**  
Jordan Wigton jwigton@collegechefs.com 217.369.7267  
www.collegechefs.com We provide trained professional chefs to prepare delicious meals and maintain a spotless kitchen.

### Culinary Consultants Purchasing Services

Stan Faulkner Support@infoccps.com 314.422.3407  
Brian Heider www.infoccps.com 847.566.7533  
National buying program exclusively for fraternity chapters with food programs. Instant cost savings with no major changes to existing food program.

### 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 623.428.0496

Amy Poklinkoski amy@greekkitchenmanagement.com  
www.greekkitchenmanagement.com  
Kitchen management company specializing in staffing, high quality food preparation, food allergy accommodations and exceptional customer service

### 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, enewsletters, fundraising assistance, donation processing

### Member Planet 888.298.8845

Patrick Terrian C 310.590.4413  
pterrian@memberplanet.com www.memberplanet.com  
Email newsletters and text messaging, chapter websites, member database, donation sites.

### Pennington & Associates 785.843.1661

Patrick Alderdice palderdice@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 361.450.0818**  
greekhs@gmail.com www.greekhouse.net  
Screen, interview and placement for chapter house directors.

*Do you offer a service for Sigma Chi house corporations? Email rich.thompson@sigmachicago.com with the details and get listed in the Service Directory.*