

February 1, 2017

Loyal Bill Johnson Birthday Club Brothers,

Excitement, the word of the year so far here at Kansas Alpha!!! If you haven't heard, a great deal of fun has been happening both with the Chapter Members and our physical Chapter House in the past 6 months.

During the long holiday break, right about the time when the last few undergraduates were closing up the house after a successful academic semester...a team of contractors laid siege to the formal first floor and began a MUCH NEEDED cosmetic facelift of our facilities. The following rooms got an extreme makeover: Formal Front Living Room, Trophy Room, Front Entry Hall, Women's Bathroom, Main Center Hall, Back Entry Hall and the 1st floor Men's Bathroom. Your House Corporation and Endowment Association engaged a contractor (Belfor Contracting Services) to do what may seem like a minor upgrade, but as we all know, a structure this size takes careful planning and consideration....plus we only had about 5 weeks before the undergraduates returned to our hallowed halls. Paint, trim, new wood floors, wood replacement and staining, ceiling grid and tiles, removal of wallpaper, some upgrades to the original 1960s plumbing and electrical components, stools, lights, fixtures, vanities....and the list goes on and on. I want to personally thank our House Corporation President, **Nick Reddell** for taking the lead and the endless hours he devoted to overseeing the enhancements. Without his vision and drive, this would've taken much longer.

Throughout the rest of the year, our NEW, but seasoned Housemother **Kaye Page**, is undertaking an overhaul of our formal furniture, lamps, pictures and accessories to make the first floor a HOME and not just a place to live. Thankfully, most of the quality furniture purchased back in the early 1990s is still in relatively good form, but she is having it all recovered/reupholstered and brought into the more modern times we live in.

I get the following question a lot when I run into Alumni, "Adam, why are we renovating, what's wrong with what we have? Our house is huge, beautiful, attracts top talent, etc...so why now?". The short answer, "they're right"....our house is huge, it's beautiful, well maintained and it does attract top talent...HOWEVER, times-they're-a-changing! In the past 10-15 years, and especially in the past 5 years, KU, Private Landlords and Private Developers throughout Lawrence have really stepped up their game in terms of housing options for the changing wants/desires of parents and students attending KU. The endless construction and housing changes in Lawrence are staggering, and to be honest, our dated décor and 1990s "country club" look and feel simply were not cutting it....in terms of Greek competition, in the past 5 years, Delta Chi, Beta, Sigma Chi, Fiji, Sig Ep and Phi Delt have undergone MASSIVE renovations of their structures. Over the next several years, we plan to upgrade the 2nd and 3rd floors of Phi Kappa Psi....stay tuned!!! The last thing I will say, without your generous contributions to the **BILL JOHNSON BIRTHDAY CLUB**, funding our endeavor on the 1st floor would not have been possible, so on behalf of our fiscal planning and finances....THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

You will be hearing more in the coming months from **Nick Reddell** (House Corporation President) and **Greg Smith** (Endowment Association President). Luckily, our sheer size (35,000 sq ft) and location of our house is somewhat insulated, but allows us to properly and effectively plan for the future. Your yearly Bill Johnson Bday Club donation, **DIRECTLY** impacts the physical structure and upkeep of our house and staves off problems when unforeseen expenses arise, the yearly upkeep and enhancements we have made over the years is directly tied to why we have stayed relevant all these years...**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU**, BJ would be so very proud...

A special thank you to **John Ziegelmeyer** and **Billy Santoro** for their continued dedication to the physical structure of our chapter house. John's presence in Lawrence is invaluable to Kaye, the chapter and the rest of the House Corporation board. I can tell you, without your support and annual contributions to the Bill Johnson Birthday Club, even the small projects would be difficult, and certainly the larger ones would be unrealistic and we would be unable to maintain such a fine physical presence on campus...**I thank you so very much for your continued support**...high, high, high.

The Chapter wrapped up an eventful Fall semester and after the grade report was released, what appears to have been a semester filled with studious activities. I'm happy to announce the Chapter had a **Fall 2016 overall GPA of 3.31**. The Chapter has definitely seen how much smoother life can be when everyone is working hard to achieve common goals and continue to be a positive influence on themselves and the KU Greek community. We on the House Corporation and here at the Bill Johnson Bday Club are so very proud of the direction **THEY** have chosen. In mid-September, Greg Smith and **Johnny Stephenson** (Endowment Association Treasurer), presented over \$11,000 in Grade Scholarship check to individual undergraduate Brothers, please join me in congratulating them...

In February 2017, after the boys returned to KU, 32 Pledges became Brothers in our humble fraternity...you will recognize a few last names from the legacy families. I have had a chance to meet many of them, wonderful additions to our Chapter Roll Call, you would be proud.

Now, on to Rush, the Chairs are doing a fantastic job this year, and with the ever-changing KU Greek rules about "when you can officially sign a candidate", we're happy they are narrowing down the best possible Pledge Class. Next Fall, the incoming Pledges (anticipate signing 40 pledges) will be joined by 30 Sophomores and 31 Juniors, along with 32 OHBs (Out of House Brothers) all led by Chapter President **Jacob Ferris**. If you have a potential Rush candidate, please contact House Corporation Alumni Representative **Ben Cohen** and the Chapter Rush Chairs IMMEDIATELY, spots are filling up fast. You will find their contact information below. If the past few years tell us anything, all incoming Pledge spots will be filled by June 1.

On Sunday, February 26, 2017, the **Wheat State Alumni Association and Wheat State President Greg Sims**, will host the annual Phi Kappa Psi Kansas Alpha Founders Day Brunch from 11am-1:30pm (guests welcome); link to online registration is attached in your email.
<http://gac.pkpfoundation.org/pages/services/founders-day-wheat-state-aa/>

If you, or anyone you know, is interested in setting up a scholarship, please contact Greg Smith or myself and we can make that happen.

The **Bill Johnson Kansas Alpha Birthday Club** numbers are a little down from last year....I encourage you to spread the word about our little club within a club. Last year, right at the end of December we hit 100 active members....I would love to surpass that this year. For those of you who have sent in your 2017 annual dues...THANK YOU so very much. We now have the ability to accept ELECTRONIC payments, you can either send a check, use PayPal or Venmo, the information is attached in your email.

On a final note, **Greg Smith** (EA President) and **Nick Reddell** (HC President) are always looking for great volunteers who would like to help in the direction of our Alumni **Endowment Association and House Corporation** respectively. Please reach out to them to participate....the minimal time commitment pays forward in many aspects and a job well done is always ensured.

Finally, if you ever need anything, please feel free to reach out, as a volunteer myself; I look forward to hearing from Alumni (besides my own Dad).

- Be on the lookout for an **Alumni Letter from Chapter President** Jacob Ferris and the rest of the undergraduates...coming soon to a mailbox near you (probably late Spring 2017)
- Look for the latest edition of **The Rag** featuring an update from Endowment Association President Greg Smith
- Do you have any referrals/recommendations for NEXT year's Pledge Class? Email me the name and contact information and I will make sure it gets to our House Corporation Alumni Liaison **Ben Cohen** and the Chapter Rush Chairs...KU changed the Bid Card/Signing Date rules this year

In the Bond,

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