



Alpha Chapter of Alpha Chi Sigma

ALPHA PARTICLE

To Bind. To Strive. To Aid.

University of Wisconsin - Madison • AXΣ • Spring 2023 Newsletter

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ALPHA CHI SIGMA NEW INITIATES

During the 2022-23 school year, the Alpha chapter welcomed 35 new pledges! 16 new pledges were initiated and welcomed into the brotherhood in the fall, and we have 19 pledges from the spring 2023 semester currently learning the fraternity knowledge. Alpha Chi Sigma has been growing consistently since the return to in-person learning, with our pledge classes growing larger with every subsequent semester for the past two years. Starting with less than 15 members, we currently amass a total of 40 active and temporarily inactive members— with many more on the way.



Fall 2022 Pledge Class



Spring 2023 Pledge Class

SPRING PLEDGE EDUCATOR REPORT | MATTHEW SCHICKLING

This semester, the pledges will participate in several meetings with weekly quizzes on the previous week’s fraternity knowledge. This will help prepare them for their final exam, which takes place during the week of initiation. The pledges— led by their two PCPs— have additional responsibilities of making dinner for all the

actives and themselves (pledge dinner), planning a social event with their class (pledge outing), and presenting an AXE position presentation toward the end of their pledging. Following these events and their initiation, the pledges will be welcomed into the brotherhood!



POSITION HOLDERS

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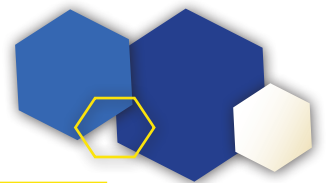
FALL 2022

MASTER ALCHEMIST - MITCHELL HAUSBACK
 VICE MASTER ALCHEMIST - ERIKA KAY-TSUMAGARI
 MASTER OF CEREMONIES - TYLER SLOAN
 PLEDGE EDUCATOR - RYAN QUINN
 RECORDER - RYAN GRANOWSKI
 REPORTER - DEEP KAPADIA
 ALUMNI SECRETARY - KATHRYN AGNEW
 CHAPTER TREASURER - HANG YIN
 HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER - DEVIN SCHULTZ
 WEBMASTER - PATRICK GRANOWSKI

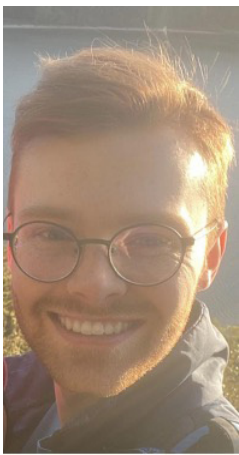
SPRING 2023

MASTER ALCHEMIST - RYAN QUINN
 VICE MASTER ALCHEMIST - DEEP KAPADIA
 MASTER OF CEREMONIES - SONIA SHAHZAD
 PLEDGE EDUCATOR - MATTHEW SCHICKLING
 RECORDER - JACK MERRICK
 REPORTER - LUCIA HYZER
 ALUMNI SECRETARY - AMALIA PETROPOULOS
 CHAPTER TREASURER - HANG YIN
 HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER - DEVIN SCHULTZ
 WEBMASTER - PATRICK GRANOWSKI

ACTIVE PROFILES



Ryan Quinn



Hometown: Austin, Texas.

Career plans: : Taking a gap year to work as a medical scribe and hopefully going to medical school next year. I am currently applying to medical school this semester. Doing this while working as a medical scribe, volunteering at the UW Hospital, taking classes, and being MA has been incredibly difficult. It's a rewarding challenge though. Working in medicine is incredibly rewarding for me because I hate to see people suffering. Even if all I can do is entertain a patient for a few minutes before their surgery, I want them to feel like they aren't alone. I know how isolating being in the hospital can be. All your friends are living their lives on the outside while you are fighting for your own. In terms of AXE- because of COVID, I never had any real friends in AXE when I rushed. I made a few along the way, but this semester I feel like it has been a lot easier. I don't know if it's just because I'm MA so people want to talk

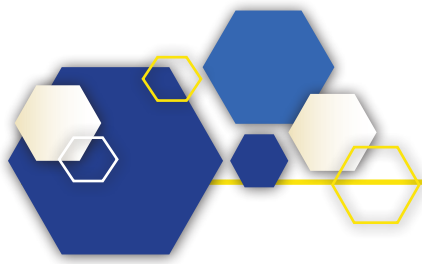
to me to power crawl their way to the top, but even if that is why, I'm grateful for the company. My favorite memory from AXE is probably just the conversations I have with all the ambitious people in the fraternity. Whether it's the last days of fundraising when we just hang out and sell a notebook or two, or at one of our social events, my favorite part has always been the people. I feel like when I leave AXE it will be in very good hands.

Deep Kapadia



Hometown: Atlanta, Georgia; but originally Mumbai, India

Career plans: Research. Post-baccalaureate/job after grad, then apply to grad school. I'm really interested in stem cell research! I'm the current Vice Master Alchemist, and also a part of the faculty relations committee (FRC), Fundraising, and Futures.



The short story about the Alpha Chapter Houses, and my perspective about it.

by **Jim Maynard A'06**

I am the chapter advisor for the Alpha chapter, and I have been since 2007– May 28th to be exact. I was initiated after I had worked at UW-Madison for about six years. As an adult member, I did not live in the chapter houses at all. I have some earlier connections to AXE: I helped out in 2002 for the Centennial Celebration, and I swear I tried to get invited to a party sometime in the fall of 1979. I lived in Stoughton, WI for years and liked to come up to Madison some weekends. Needless to say, I did not know the challenge, so, I was not admitted.

Instead, I got to know the people and the structure. I own a very old house and owned it at the time of my initiation. I had heard a lot of stories about the condition of the houses and did a good bit of work on the electrical system in the form of troubleshooting, not replacement. I know firsthand how much work it takes to get ahead of a building that has not been maintained as thoroughly as it has been worn out. I am partly to blame, as membership went up a bit and this only accelerated the rate of wear. I loved going in to “check on” the parties just to enjoy the ambiance. I also learned to DJ from Jay and Ben. Some of the best times of my life. I made some friends I treasure like Aaron and Jordan, Ben and Pony, Lina, Gwen and Jackie, Dmitri, Jake, Tom and Amanda, Mike, Nick and Ryan, Brad and Sylvia, Drew, Liz, Julia, Praki, and Tasha. There are so many more.

I wanted to help get them a new place. I learned through the membership how students and volunteers helped with the repairs, maintenance, and costs. I could see the wear and tear. Later, I found out that

almost every repair we had to make came with the additional cost of code compliance. I watched students grapple with the administrative details of running an organization. It is not easy for adults to manage it– much less so for students. The turnover, loss of institutional knowledge, and rigidity of the local authorities made it harder. Add that to the University bureaucracy and it is a huge lift for the actives. Not to say there were no other concerns; it seemed to me that there was not enough set aside for the houses. The reasons for this were not neglect, but compassion.

I looked into the records and I talked to alumni. The first house was purchased in 1925, and the second was added in about 1952. The 621 N. Lake St. house was built before 1895. I do not know when 619 was built, but I am sure the historic preservation society’s people in Madison can tell you. There was an attempt to build a new place sometime in the late 1970s, maybe 1978. There were property line issues with adjacent ownership. The funding structure was loosely a collection of faculty. The advisor and Alphacorp would simply ask alumni and parents to volunteer their time or money as projects arose. It worked well enough in the early days of the organization, but as the repairs got bigger and the regulations got tighter, the model started to fail.

In 2015, a water main leak on Mendota Court caused some erosion of the soil under the north wall of 621. Soon, we had to pay for giant iron support beams to hold it in place. They were temporary and meant to be compliant for about three years... the clock was ticking. Boiler failures started to get more frequent, and the danger and damage caused by freezing became riskier. It was not common in the early 2000s for students to spend breaks or the summer in the houses as was the norm in times past. Sometimes, if it got really cold, the risk of the boilers shutting down became greater. I would go check on them over winter breaks. I still feel like I failed the frat when I did not check them on a very cold day in the winter of 2019. I was there a

couple of days before and it all seemed all right. A week later they had frozen and piping from both the registers and the recently installed sprinkler piping had burst. This news was even harder to take because the sprinkler system was installed about two years previously with funds from yet another mortgage on 621. Now we had houses that were essentially uninhabitable, no way to rent rooms, and a recent mortgage to pay along with property taxes, water, sewer, and other services like trash collection. We talked about the possibilities in 2016 and 2017 before the “boiler incident.” We asked the actives, the alumni, and the faculty at the chemistry department.

The kids wanted a new “Mega House.” The costs to fully restore the two houses stood at 2.5 million in 2017. We dallied with FMG and Pennington— another fraternal

funds enterprise— but the problem of engaging the past alums remained: many of them did not want to tear down the old houses and they were not prone to act in any capacity. This condition started before I ever was initiated and this lack of connection is still far from resolved.

Even as late as 2020, there is no real consensus even in the face of the very real demise of the rental enterprise of the fraternity buildings. Desperate measures were considered and taken. It was not until the alums whom I had advised became professionally established that a real plan came to be. We paid the taxes out of our own pockets and we formed an executive committee to allow decisions to be made quickly. This committee had the authority to sign agreements and we entertained bids to develop the site, which is exceedingly desirable. We signed with Patrick Properties, a builder with experience in the campus area— but as great a step as this was, we were a long way from the goal of a new place.

We had real concerns about the historical status of the properties— the historical preservation societies in Madison are well-to-do and well-organized. They had immediate opposition to our project from the beginning. We had looked to grants and public funding to restore

but as a non-profit corporation, we were not eligible for much grant money. A committee for the project was created by the alder for District 8, Amol Goyal. The meetings were contentious and vigorously opposed by the historical preservationists, headed by Bob Klebba. After weeks of meetings, a report was filed on a Tuesday in December of 2021. The report was neutral in tone about the approval of the project, but the old version was immediately pulled and a new report was issued the next day— even less in favor of the proposal. A few weeks later, we met with the plan commission. We testified for over an hour as a group. Our proposal was denied with no debate. At this point, the odds of success dropped precipitously. We had already made some irrevocable decisions, like selling one of the houses to the developer. We had to pay off the mortgage but there might still be

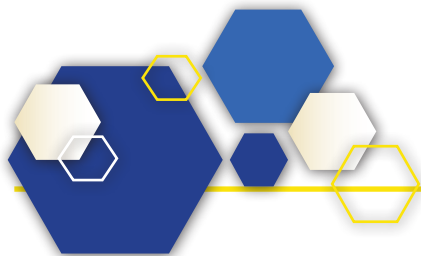


enough to remodel 619 to some extent... make it legally habitable at least. It would mean about half our units were no more, but at least it was something.

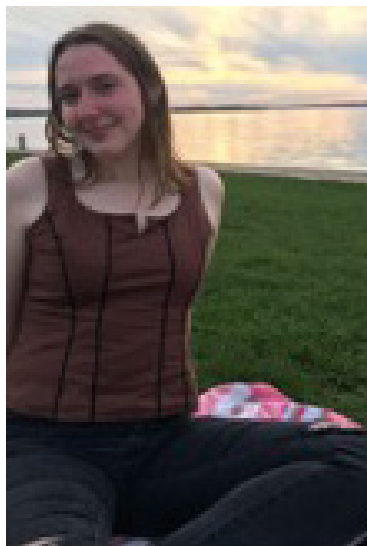
We appealed the decision to the full city council. We needed two-thirds of the present alders to vote their approval in order to proceed. We once again called thirty people to

testify in favor. We needed a miracle— and we got one with Juliana Bennett, the new alder for District 8. She was incisive, intelligent, and as sharp as an atomic force microscopy probe. She was asking excellent questions about consistency and fairness, student housing, and the death of housing in the campus area. It passed 16 to 3. The alder from my district sent me a nice congratulatory note about it and the long odds we overcame. I told him I asked for a miracle, and I got it. Now we have come so far. The building is going up!

All we need now, after all the hard work, all the worry, all the adversity, is money. This is the easiest task and the hardest task. It would be inconceivable to fail now. So let's not! Here is a document to get started. There are numerous ways to donate and some of them are tax deductible.



SEE THE WORK OF OUR ALUMNI!



Nicole Handerlein

Nicole, a current MPH Epidemiology student at Brown University, is also a Public Health scholar at the Rhode Island Department of Health and a Graduate Research Assistant at the Sokolovsky lab at Brown. She is in the STD Surveillance department at RIDOH and contacts providers regarding treatment information for people that test positive for STDs, as well as helping with a return-to-care project for HIV. For her research, Nicole works on a study that switches asthmatic smokers to e-cigarettes and measures changes in lung functioning and mood.

As an undergraduate at Madison, Nicole loved going to the Badger football games. She was also very involved in the chapter— she was our Fall 2021 Master alchemist, after all! *“AXS was a great way to meet friends, network, and acquire leadership skills. It truly is a bond for life and I am so grateful that I was able to have this experience during my undergrad.”*

She gives the following advice to current actives: *“Get involved in AXS and make the most out of your time in undergrad! Four years goes by quickly.”*



Sophie Abou-Rizk Cambridge, Massachusetts

Sophie, a Ph.D. student at Harvard University, is part of an environmental science and engineering program. She works in atmospheric chemistry research and studies the microphysical properties of stratospheric aerosols. Currently, Sophie is completing fieldwork for the NOAA/NASA mission ‘SABRE’ (Stratospheric Aerosol Processes, Budget and Radiative Effects).

During her time as an undergrad, Sophie researched atmospheric chemistry and absolutely LOVED the chem frat— especially the nights before initiation each semester. Sophie was a member of the fraternity during all four of her years at Madison, serving as MC, PT, and other various exec positions. Her advice to the current undergraduates is simple: *“YOLO!”*

“AXS has been a big part of my life. Not only did I meet some of my best, lifelong friends, but I was introduced to my future career. I met fantastic people who helped me in my chemistry and science courses and others who paved the way for me to join research groups and explore atmospheric chemistry.”



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