



Mountaineer Pike

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Newsletter of the Alpha Theta Alumni Association of Pi Kappa Alpha

A House

A fraternity house is such an integral part of any fraternity that it is doubtful that one can survive without the other. We understood that back in the 1960s even though Alpha Theta had survived very nicely with an old wood-framed Victorian that was hardly competitive with the great stone structures of Fraternity Row.

Sure we loved the old house on 36 Campus Drive, but that love came with the time and experiences we shared with her and not from the fact that it was an impressive architectural display. Other fraternities on campus may have picked up pledges by virtue of their beckoning mansions, but the Pikes had no such luxury.

Still, we not only survived, but at one time, could boast the largest membership on campus. And we were proud to point out that we had gained that distinction “on our own” with no help from a Tudor, Elizabethan, or Colonial. Yet the warnings were ominous. We needed to relocate (we owned prime property that was waiting for us), and we needed a nice new house to ensure our future. The active brothers at that time worked hard with National to make the new house a reality, and many of us were fortunate to see the fruits of our labor before departing Morgantown in the late 60s.

The fraternity enjoyed some great years in the new house at Belmar. In fact, during the 80s and 90s, Pi KA was one of the top fraternities on campus. Not quite 40 years old, the house on Belmar now sits as an abandoned memorial to what once was, and National cannot afford to keep it in operation. The damages were just too extensive.

Now comes the question of selling or keeping. The future of Pi KA on the West Virginia campus hangs in the balance. Of course, selling the house doesn't mean that Alpha Theta has no future, just as keeping the house hardly ensures a successful resurrection. But, realistically, a repaired and renovated house seems the surest method of pumping new life into the chapter we all loved. National has already determined that it cannot accept the losses now associated with the house on Belmar. Selling to another fraternity or to the University or to a commercial enterprise or even private investors will cut those losses. A new Alpha Theta colony would have no attachment to a house which bears no memory. We would be truly starting from scratch. Of course one option does stand out as an ideal condition--and that's for the brothers to buy the property. The investment that was made way back in the 60s was based on effort and hard work. Now an investment opportunity exists that would truly ensure the future of Alpha Theta. Of course there are numerous factors to consider before making such a move, but on the surface, the investment would seem sound. The campus and its fraternities are a certainty, and the property on Belmar overlooks both. It is, in anyone's imagination, a prime location. It's an idea worth thinking about, but the time is short. Whatever happens will happen soon.