



March 24, 2009
Volume 3, Issue 3

Quick Links

[Re-engaging our Seniors](#)

[Iowa State Turns 100](#)

[The Price of Brotherhood](#)

[Dan Bassill, IWU '65](#)

[Join Acacia Online!](#)

**Donate to the Acacia
Annual Fund today!**



Re-engaging our Senior Actives

Dear Brother Turconi,

I recently returned from the Iowa State chapter's 100th anniversary celebration. I find these types of fraternal occasions extremely uplifting and motivating. At the close of this event we participated in the traditional "passing the gavel." This is one of my favorite parts of fraternity life. Perhaps you remember those days as well.

By custom a gavel represents authority and command for a presiding officer. Conversely, in the truest democratic sense, the tradition of "passing the gavel" is the great equalizer as it gives every individual present the opportunity and authority to speak his mind: to affirm a brother, praise the chapter, or even criticize the leadership.



As the gavel made the rounds, each brother made a personal statement, then closed his thoughts with the phrase, "Proud to be an Acacian." Those five words say it all. We are using the phrase at a time when we are celebrating our membership, and in a sense re-committing ourselves to "seeking the truth and giving the light."

With these thoughts going through my head, an alumnus came up to me and asked what I thought was our chapters' most serious problem. I replied, "senior leadership - we've lost our seniors." His response was most natural, "Why? What can be done about it, and how can I help?"

Why

We can't deny the facts: 1) The number of "inactive" members at the senior level has been rising at an alarming rate during the last few years. 2) Senior officers are a rarity. 3) Senior attendance at recruitment events, rituals and chapter meetings is poor. 4) Seniors routinely move out of our chapter houses into apartments. Apartment life is now considered a natural progression in the life of an undergraduate.

The senior leadership question was posed to the two Undergraduate Counselors who serve on our International Council. Their response was: 1) Seniors feel they have done their share of work. 2) Many grow

tired of the rah-rah aspect of fraternity life. 3) Problems exist with juggling grades, girl friends and career with fraternity life. 4) It is cheaper to live out (not true).

These problems didn't occur overnight - they began in the late '60s. Until that time, *in loco parentis*, latin for "in place of the parent," was the governing doctrine at colleges and universities. Over the years, a series of court rulings have lessened the oversight and jurisdiction of university officials. This, along with an ever-growing student population, has led to more housing options including apartments and newer dormitories with apartment-style living. It wasn't that long ago when undergraduates were required to live in a residence hall or recognized student housing - fraternities.

What can be done about it?

Is it possible to reengage our seniors? Yes, and we believe that part of the answer can be found within our new educational initiative, the Cornerstones program. Two years ago, our International President David Allen called Cornerstones "the continuous learning program of Acacia Fraternity." That's exactly what it is - a push to encourage our members to continue seeking personal improvement as a part of the Fraternity, beyond the formal education process in pledgship.



Cornerstones presents a framework in which our members continue their personal development under the mentorship of more experienced alumni. It also presents the opportunity for those senior actives to help guide younger members through the same learning process.

How can I help?

Cornerstones isn't just a four-year program. It is designed to seek out and reengage Acacia's greatest asset, our alumni. Whether 20 miles or 2,000 miles from the chapter, you can still play an integral role in the development of young Acacians.

There are a few ways to get involved - you can serve as a personal mentor to active brothers by volunteering as a Level Advisor, provide career guidance by serving as a Career Development Mentor (CDM), or provide financial support for chapter programming, leadership education, and scholarships. Level Advisors interact with undergraduates via www.gatesofsamos.org, a custom-built application to guide members through Cornerstones. CDMs get involved by joining the [Acacia Fraternity alumni group on LinkedIn](#), where over 500 brothers connect with select active members and network among each other. To learn about gift giving, please contact our Development Director, Ken Ayers, at kayers@acacia.org or (888) 345-1904.

Proud to be an Acacian!



Darold W. Larson
Executive Director

Iowa State Chapter Centennial

On the weekend of March 13, 2009, the Iowa State Chapter of Acacia celebrated the hundredth anniversary of its charter. The Iowa State chapter was chartered March 20, 1909 and, to date, has initiated 1068 brothers. The weekend-long centennial event reunited alumni and highlighted a strong history of the Fraternity and one hundred years of brotherhood.

An alumni dinner kicked off the weekend Friday night following an afternoon of visits to the active chapter house. For some alumni, this weekend marked their first return to Iowa State in as many as forty years. Brothers from different decades bonded through their experiences with Acacia.



View photos from the weekend on [Acacia Fraternity's official Facebook page](#). Watch a [video montage on YouTube](#).

"I was startled to see the variety of people of all ages, the camaraderie being exchanged and the enthusiasm. People probably didn't know each other but the common bond they felt made them comfortable and I think it was enjoyable. There will be memories from that gathering for many years," said alumni George Gross.

Following the dinner, guests gathered in Iowa State's Memorial Union for a history presentation. In honor of the centennial, George Gross, Harold Zarr and Jeremy Davis co-authored, "History of Acacia Fraternity at Iowa State University." The book compiled documents, pictures and memories that took nearly two years to complete. Each author spoke of their experience while completing the book and gave alumni a detailed look at the chapter's history.

"I was enthused to see how lively memories were and how different depending on what decade they occurred in. I looked forward daily to getting back to it. It drove me. It was a spark in my life that I needed," Gross said. "The point is, it was enjoyable for that period of time."

The schedule for Saturday started with a breakfast at the chapter house. Alumni were able to tour the house and share memories from their active years. Following lunch, the newly renovated library was dedicated.



That night, alumni and guests had the opportunity to take tours around the ISU campus or remain at the chapter house before the banquet. As part of honoring one hundred years of brotherhood, one hundred commemorative coins were made with the first five auctioned off in support of the chapter's scholarship fund. Over two thousand dollars was raised through this auction. The other ninety-five coins were pre-purchased by alumni and other guests.

Numerous awards were presented to Iowa State Acacians at the banquet as well. Chapter faculty advisor Stewart Burger was presented the Award of Merit.

In attendance from the Acacia Fraternity International Council were David J. Allen, International President, and Robert E. Roberson, International Treasurer. Headquarters staff in attendance were Darold W. Larson, Executive Director, and Eric D. Wheeler, Leadership Consultant.

"I thought it was really neat how the class of '61 had stayed together all these years and how much their experience here at ISU and Acacia had stuck with them. I hope we as an active chapter can learn from that," active Matt Zylstra said.

For the 62 alumni who made the trip to Ames, Iowa, along with their guests and the active chapter, one century of history at Iowa State ended while another began.

What is The Price of Brotherhood?

During this time of economic woes, we continually hear from our colleagues that fraternity membership is dropping due to the costs being driven too high, parents not making the money to pay the bills, or little Johnny having to work to put himself through school, to name a few. However, during the past year Acacia has seen a resurgence of interest in belonging to a fraternity. Recent statistics also show that many of today's college students are studying at institutions closer to home and this proximity to their hometown allows us the opportunity for even more growth.

Does it cost money to start and belong to a fraternity? The short answer is yes. Fortunately, the state of our economy is not deterring some groups from organizing and becoming successful. This year alone Acacia has successfully re-colonized at Washington State University and the University of Colorado-Boulder. Financially, it was accomplished through generous donations from our alumni and funds budgeted for such events.



Most recently we have been working with an interest group at Purdue University-Calumet to establish the first IFC fraternity on their campus. Once again, despite the economic decline, Calumet has seen an increase of new students to their campus and is attempting to offer new

and innovative practices to attract and hold these students. Offering Greek life is one such way, and Acacia is prepared to lead the pack!

Prior to the end of the fall 2008 semester, Acacia was contacted by a small group of young men interested in bringing a Greek system to the Calumet campus, but more specifically, they wanted to bring Acacia Fraternity to their campus. In preliminary discussions, there were approximately 15 potential members interested in this venture. Some of these men were transfer students from the Purdue campus or Indiana University and either had friends in the chapters there or knew of our history and background. Since that initial formation, the group now stands at 32, has secured student organization status on campus and is looking for suitable housing for the coming years. The university has been impressed enough with these efforts that they have asked for assistance from Acacia to establish their Greek system's growth!

What happens next? One successful colonization deserves another! We have been in talks with another interest group at Temple University. This group of 17 young men is eager and excited about the possibility of bringing Acacia to the campus. More information will be available in the coming weeks regarding this expansion.

If you are interested in participating in the Purdue-Calumet or Temple University expansion or making a financial contribution to help defray costs, please call Keith Bushey, Assistant Executive Director, at (317) 872-8210 or e-mail at kbushey@acacia.org. The Purdue-Calumet colony will be holding an informational meeting on campus on April 1, 2009, for anyone interested in attending. Please contact Keith for further information, time and location.

"I am an Acacian. I am Proud of it."

Alumnus spotlight - Dan Bassill, *Illinois Wesleyan '65*

That's a pledge I took in 1964 when I joined the Acacia Fraternity at Illinois Wesleyan. Through four years of college my participation in this fraternity helped me mature as a leader, and helped me expand my ideas of social justice and the way we can influence what happens in the world. I've stayed connected to the fraternity ever since and when I formed Cabrini Connections, Tutor/Mentor Connection, two of my fraternity brothers were there to help me.



One helped me with the legal documents of becoming a non profit, and introduced me to Judge Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, who came to speak to our kids in spring of 1993. Judge Marovitz became the catalyst for starting the Lend a Hand Program at the Chicago Bar Foundation in late 1993. This group has grown to become a major funder and advocate for volunteer-based tutoring/mentoring in Chicago.

Another helped me build a relationship with the PR firm of Public Communications Inc. During the summer of 1993 PCD helped me build the strategy for the T/MC, then from 1994 to 2002 they were the pro bono PR partner helping us communicate this strategy through the media.

Since 1993 we've been supported by many other members of the Acacia Fraternity of IWU and one was even a volunteer, resulting in one of our students attending and graduating from IWU in 2003. More than

\$50,000 has been contributed by these fraternity brothers and their family members, making this a commitment of time, talent and dollars.

Dan Bassill has a big goal: Every kid who walks through his door will be in a career of their choice by age 25.

ON TUTOR/MENTOR CONNECTION:

- The program has its roots in a tutoring program for elementary school students started by Montgomery Ward, the retailer whose headquarters were adjacent to Cabrini Green, in 1965. Bassill was an employee, and volunteered in the program, eventually becoming the leader in 1975. Cabrini Connections was formed in 1992, as an organization to serve students from 7th to 12th grade. The program now serves about 80 kids a year, with nearly 100 volunteers from all around the city. In addition to tutoring and mentoring, they also offer arts, writing, and video projects, as well as college and career counseling.
- While we started this program in 1993 to serve 7th to 12th grade teens, its roots extend back to 1965 when a small group of Montgomery Ward employees began to provide tutoring/mentoring to 2nd to 6th grade Cabrini Green kids one night each week. I joined that program in 1973 and became its leader in 1975. From 1975 to 1992, more than 3,000 kids and 3,000 volunteers were engaged for one to 25 consecutive years.
- We started Cabrini Connections in 1993 with seven volunteers and 5 7th to 9th grade teens and since then, more than 480 teens have participated from one to 7 consecutive years, along with more than 650 volunteers. These people are the most directly connected to the T/MC and what it does. Some of these volunteers helped us create the T/MC. They continue to help raise the money it takes to operate the T/MC and Cabrini Connections.
- One of the things we've learned is how difficult it is to motivate/discipline/reward people for taking the time to document what they do. This has been made more difficult by not having the funding to staff this project consistently since 2000 to innovate the enhancements that might have made it easier or more rewarding for people to document.

ON SOCIAL NETWORKING:

- There are so many different tools emerging that it's impossible to keep up, thus, you've mentioned many things that I'm not aware of. I'm not a techy person myself. I see concepts and see innovative ways to use them. However, until I find people with time/talent to put these ideas to work, they just remain good ideas.
- I think the growth of these social network circles creates a different problem and potential. There are more and more places where people can go to network and get information, while the time to learn and network online still is limited by a 24 hour day, and the other priorities that people have. Thus, if we're trying to draw on the wisdom of crowds, we're first going to need to figure a way to attract large numbers of people to places where we can draw upon this wisdom.
- Based on the current trend there will be dozens, or thousands, of places where you can go to network, learn, make a donation, be a volunteer, etc.
- It will be a challenge for people to figure out which SN sites are the most productive. Those who provide ways to do this may be

the leaders in the next stage of the growth of social networks. I predict a fierce competition among hosts, for the limited participation time that is available. I fear that this will benefit those who have the ability to innovate and the resources to put ideas in to actions.

Join Acacia Online!

Have you found Acacia online yet? You can find us on [Facebook](#) (over 1200 members!), [LinkedIn](#) (career networking with over 500 alumni), [YouTube](#), even [Twitter](#)! While you're catching up with old brothers and getting the latest news, please take a few minutes to update your membership record online.



Image Deleted

The size and accuracy of our membership database grows every week, but we need you to play your part! [Update your info now!](#)

Acacia Fraternity
8777 Purdue Road
Suite 225
Indianapolis, Indiana 46268
317-872-8210

For more information, please visit us at www.acacia.org.

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to communications@acacia.org by acacianat@acacia.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [About our service provider](#).



Acacia Fraternity | 8777 Purdue Road | Suite 225 | Indianapolis | IN | 46268