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January 16, 2009  
Volume 3, Issue 1

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## It's a Wonderful Life

Dear Brother Turconi,

A very Happy New Year from the staff at Acacia Fraternity!

I personally enjoyed the holiday season but, unfortunately, missed one of my favorite Christmas traditions this year - viewing the movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Filmed and released in 1946, the movie was by no means an instant success. Flash forward to today and it is considered one of America's top 10 movies of all time. Given the popularity of the film over the years, it is safe to assume that you have probably seen it as well.

Reviewing the articles in the *Triad* and this issue of *The Crest*, I couldn't help but think of Frank Capra's movie title - *It's a Wonderful Life* - as a most fitting introduction.

Considering the news headlines - economy, employment statistics and military conflicts - it's easy to think life is anything but wonderful.

But amidst the sour headlines, Acacia has enjoyed its best fall in twelve years. I can't pinpoint one specific reason for this year's success but can attest to the fact that several programs are making a difference. Chief among them is *Cornerstones*, our membership education initiative, better and more enhanced programming, and focusing on the recruitment of a more values-driven student by promoting our core beliefs: virtue, knowledge and truth.

Lastly and most importantly, our improvements and successes can be largely attributed to a loyal and hard working staff and volunteers from across the continent. I want to extend my deepest appreciation and thanks to the International Council and Board of Directors of the Acacia Fraternity Foundation for their tremendous support and guidance, to our scores of volunteers at the chapter level and, finally, to our loyal and growing donor base. Considering the financial issues the economy is currently facing, I am especially thankful for your continued loyalty.

In a memorable final scene from *It's a Wonderful Life*, a note is written to George from his guardian angel, Clarence. In the note, Clarence

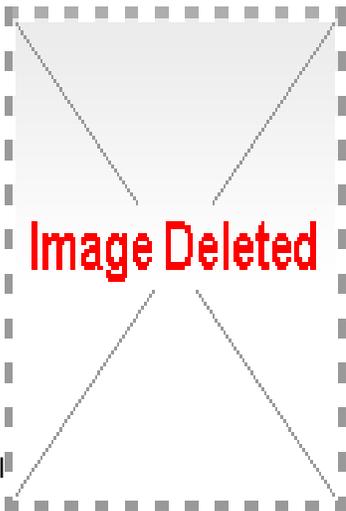


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writes, "No man is a failure who has friends." This same quote holds true for Acacia. No organization can fail when it has the support and dedication of its brotherhood and friends. As a fraternal association, we are based on this brotherhood and friendship - 48,000 and growing.

My best wishes for the New Year.

Fraternally,



Darold W. Larson  
Executive Director

### Acacia Embraces New Communications Strategy

Digital media and communication has become an ever-growing part of our lives in the 21st century, and Acacia Fraternity is embracing the new paradigm in its 2nd century. Our strategy begins with revamping our current efforts -- you can check out the newly redesigned, full-color Triad magazine before it hits the mail this month: [Triad online](#). Acacia Headquarters has also begun to take a more active part in assisting chapters with their print and electronic publications. On the digital front, Acacia is developing a strong online community through Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and even Twitter.



Our Facebook page is the primary hub for Brothers of all eras and regions to strengthen the ties of friendship through discussion boards, multimedia sharing, and expanded headquarters resources. [Click here to join the group!](#) If you don't already use Facebook, it's really simple to [set up an account](#).

The [LinkedIn group](#) is comprised of Acacia alumni engaging in career and professional networking. In addition to alumni-to-alumni networking, our goal is to open this valuable resource to our top undergraduate members. Active participants in the *Cornerstones* program will be able to connect to Career Development Mentors through this online community. Not a LinkedIn user? [Click here to set up your account](#).

YouTube is an online video service that we are using to share video content -- we have a brand new recruitment video online right now. You don't need an account to use the site, just visit <http://www.youtube.com/acaciafraternity>. Twitter is a real-time short messaging service that people use to follow news and updates from friends. Keep posted on what's going on at Acacia Headquarters by visiting <http://www.twitter.com/AcaciaHQ>.

We would like to know how Acacia Headquarters can best serve you through these channels. Please let us know what you think! Email Michael Pastko, Director of Communications, at [mpastko@acacia.org](mailto:mpastko@acacia.org), by phone at (888) 345-1904, or reach us via Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, or Twitter!

## 2008 - The Year in Review

As we look back on the past year, Acacia Fraternity has reason to show pride. Acacia is growing; the membership development program, Cornerstones is expanding to more chapters; philanthropic efforts have increased; Acacia Headquarters staff growing to better serve the needs of the fraternity; and a successful 55th Biennial Conclave, to name a few.

The growth of Acacia in 2008 has been an exciting time for all involved. To start the calendar year, Acacia colonized a new group on the Louisiana Tech University campus. The first group of men was initiated in early spring. The colony continues to thrive and looks forward to chartering in 2009. During the spring 2008 semester, plans were made to recolonize at Washington State and Colorado-Boulder during the fall 2008 semester. Both colonies initiated their first classes in December 2008. To cap the year, Acacia Headquarters was contacted by a student group at Purdue University-Calumet interested in starting a new chapter of Acacia. With the blessings of the International Council and the approval of the University, Acacia will begin that colonization effort in early 2009.

*Cornerstones: The Membership Development Program of Acacia Fraternity* is in its second full year now. Nine chapters have been working on the program with an additional six chapters and colonies to begin implementation in spring 2009. Those chapters that have utilized the program have seen increases in their recruitment efforts, campus involvement and alumni relations, to name a few. If you are interested in learning more about the program or would like to volunteer, please contact Patrick McGovern, Director of Membership Development, at [pmcgovern@acacia.org](mailto:pmcgovern@acacia.org) or at the Acacia Headquarters office at (317) 872-8210.

In summer 2008, Ken Ayers joined the Acacia staff as Development Director. Ken's past years of experience will help better serve our alumni and donor base. We are excited to have Ken join the Acacia family and look forward to his future with the Fraternity.

The 55th Biennial Conclave and Leadership Academy proved to be one Acacia's most successful conferences. The Conclave, held at The Brown Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky, was appropriately themed, "Raising the Stakes". With over 200 active and alumni brothers and 100% chapter participation, the event confirmed that there is a bright future for Acacia Fraternity.

As we close the books for 2008, we thank each of you for your support and dedication to Acacia. We look forward to the coming year and hope to share many more successes with you.

## Living our Motto of Human Service

Acacia's motto of Human Service is being practiced more and more by our chapters. New and innovative ideas are being organized and implemented benefiting worthy organizations in our communities. The Acacia Claus Holiday Toy Drive was embraced by more chapters in 2008 than in previous years. Our chapters are also producing events that get them out into their communities rather than relying on solicitations from parents or other campus organizations. In honor of the efforts of many of our chapters, ten Acacia chapters were recognized at the 2008 Conclave for Human Service Programming.



The 2008 Acacia Claus Holiday Toy Drive proved to be a successful event once again for Acacia Fraternity. As the annual event grows, so does the number of chapters participating. As we finalize the outcome for this 5th annual event, we are finding that more than half of our chapters participated in the toy drive, or some other equivalent. If chapters are not able to participate in the event, many are donating their time to agencies, such as the Salvation Army, to prepare and deliver donations to needy families. In the coming years, we anticipate that all Acacia chapters will be participating in Acacia Claus with thousands of dollars of toys being donated to worthy organizations in our communities. Great job to our brothers that participated this year!

## Scalise Elected to U.S. House of Representatives



[Stephen J. \(Steve\) Scalise](#), *Louisiana State '86*, was elected to a full term in the U.S. House of Representatives in the November election. He had previously won a special election to fill Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal's vacated Congressional seat in May 2008. Scalise won that election with 75% of the vote against three other opponents.

Scalise attended Louisiana State University where he earned a Computer Science degree and a minor in Political Science. He started his political career as an undergraduate, serving as Speaker of the Student Government Association.

Steve and his wife, Jennifer, reside in Jefferson with their daughter, Madison Carol.

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

***For more information, please visit us at [www.acacia.org](http://www.acacia.org).***

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