

# ny delta doings

NY Delta Chapter of Pi Beta Phi at Cornell

Spring 2014 newsletter

## 2014-2015 Executive Board

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**VP Communications**  
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## Meet Our New Chapter President

**By Alaina Skalski '15**  
President

My name is Alaina Skalski, and I am the new chapter president of the New York Delta Chapter of Pi Beta Phi. I am from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and a junior government major in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell. I am also a member of the club field hockey team, and I work for the Johnson Graduate School of Management Alumni Affairs department. I am fortunate to be very involved in the Greek community and look forward to an exciting year as president!

Before holding the position of president, I was the policy and standards board chair. It has been great to see the efforts our chapter has made over the past few years in a variety of areas. Our chapter has been making great strides to increase quality membership and philanthropic initiatives. We are also working to bring about a stronger emphasis on fraternity and chapter traditions.

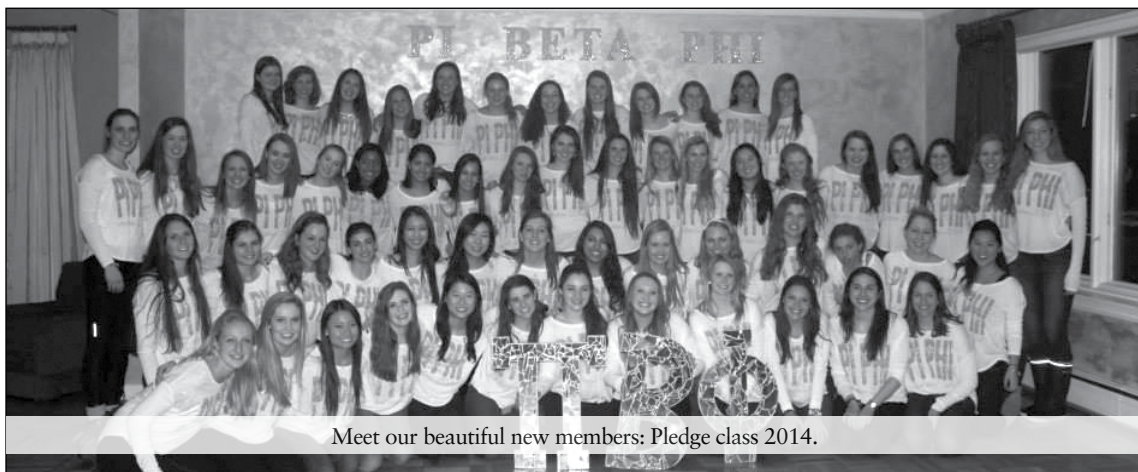
In January, NY Delta participated in formal recruitment once again. We worked very hard to find 58 amazing new members, and we are ecstatic to welcome them into our chapter! These new members were initiated on February 22 and attended their first full chapter meeting the next day! We are so excited for the years to come with these ladies.

The success of our chapter is due to its wonderful members. We pride ourselves on always embodying the core values of Pi Phi: integrity, lifelong commitment, honor and respect, personal and intellectual

growth, philanthropic service to others, and sincere friendship. Our members are also backed by a passionate executive council. This group of women has already been working very hard to provide the best experience possible to all of our members. Our goal for Pi Phi is to create the greatest positive impact on our community. None of this would be possible without the support of our exceptional Alumnae Advisory Committee, Chapter House Corporation, and local alumnae.

In February, Caity Wischermann '16, our vice president of event planning, and I attended the Uniquely Pi Phi Leadership Academy in St. Louis, Missouri. Christine Lam, one of our AAC members, was also in attendance. It was an excellent weekend, where we learned a great deal about Pi Phi and how to be successful leaders. I was able to meet many other chapter presidents from across the United States and Canada. We discussed the different events and activities that our various chapters hold. It was a great way to get some new ideas! We also celebrated the things that bind us all together, our membership in Pi Phi and the fraternity's wonderful traditions. Another topic we covered at the academy was leadership. It is through strong leadership that our chapter can succeed. We discussed what it meant to be a good leader and how to apply this to Pi Phi. Overall it was an exciting weekend!

So far during my term as president, I have learned a lot and enjoyed leading such a wonderful organization and group of women. I look forward to a great year!



Meet our beautiful new members: Pledge class 2014.

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## Living in 330 Triphammer Road

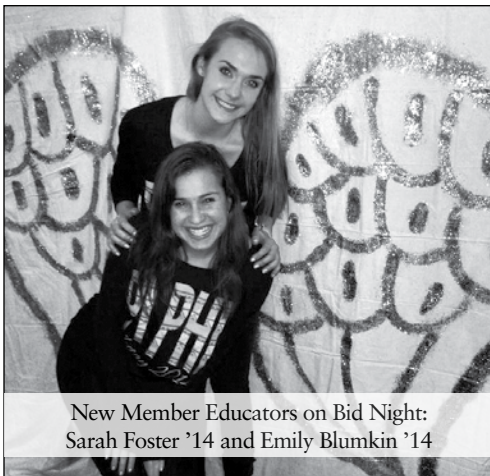
By Alexandra Fisher '16

Formal recruitment won me over. I loved the people I met at Pi Phi, and I knew that this was the place for me. By the time I decided to live in the house, I was apprehensive. I barely knew most of the women and living with nearly 40 of them every day seemed a little daunting for someone who was so apprehensive about joining a fraternity in the first place.

Living in this house has had a hugely positive impact on my sophomore-year experience. This is the first time I have ever lived in a house before. Having a backyard, neighbors, and a huge and welcoming living area is extremely special to us and makes us feel like one huge tight-knit family. Since we own our house, I was able to customize my room and paint a mural. This allowed me to transform my room into a true reflection of myself.

There is also the food. We pride ourselves on having the most incredible and skilled chef on campus (and quite possibly in the world). Dicky Dolker is most certainly a mother figure for the entirety of NY Delta. She accommodates every person's dietary needs and makes special dishes regularly for vegetarians, vegans, and gluten-intolerant members. She takes special care to make porridge when we are sick, to know every person's name, and to make soup on the coldest days, which is common in Ithaca.

Best of all, living in the house has allowed me to become even closer to my pledge class. Coming to Cornell, Greek life was never even on my radar. Joining Pi Phi and being in this house has put me in contact with more than 40 amazing people with different talents, interests, and backgrounds all living in one place. We pick one another up when we are down, encourage one another to work harder, and remind one another to fit in time for a little bit of fun. Best of all, I have met and befriended people I would have passed by on my way to class. And I have Pi Phi to thank for that.



New Member Educators on Bid Night:  
Sarah Foster '14 and Emily Blumkin '14

## New Member Educators Reflect on Their Experience

By Sarah Foster '14 and  
Emily Blumkin '14

Feeling an immediate connection to one another when we met during recruitment freshmen year, our friendship quickly blossomed after we found one another accepting our bids to Pi Beta Phi on Bid Night. Spurred on by the opportunities Pi Phi has given us, we have taken on many adventures together including "playing house" with 50 of our closest friends while living in-house sophomore year, navigating through a semester together in Europe, and becoming city slickers in New York last summer. Now, it's time for our next escapade, raising our very own brood of Pi Phi new members. This semester, we welcomed 58 amazing new members to the New York Delta Chapter and put together an enriching and busy new member period full of sister speed-dating, Cornell Outdoor Education workshops, and lessons of Pi Phi's heritage.

As we prepared to initiate our newest sisters on February 22, we could not have asked for a better experience. With the help of our sophomore counterpart, Megan Tschirch, we've had the pleasure of getting to know each incredible new member. We have athletes, women from around the world, and even a set of identical twins. We hope that they have enjoyed the experience getting to know one another as much as we have.

Being new member coordinators not only

reminded us of the rich history of Pi Beta Phi, such as its founders and traditions, but has also reminded us of the reasons we love Pi Phi so much. It has not only given us wonderful, endearing relationships and resources, but treasurable memories as well. Our experience as new member educators reiterated our deep connection with our chapter. When we graduate in May and transition to alumnae status, we know that we will have a home at Pi Phi for years to come. From the relationships we built as new member educators, we are so grateful that there will always be a familiar and friendly face at Pi Phi for us.

As our newest sisters take on exciting adventures of being fully initiated members of Pi Beta Phi, we will also continue taking on our own new and unique experiences, together yet again.



New Members on Bid Night: Paige Wolcott '17, Abby Brown '17, and Olivia Matticoli '17.



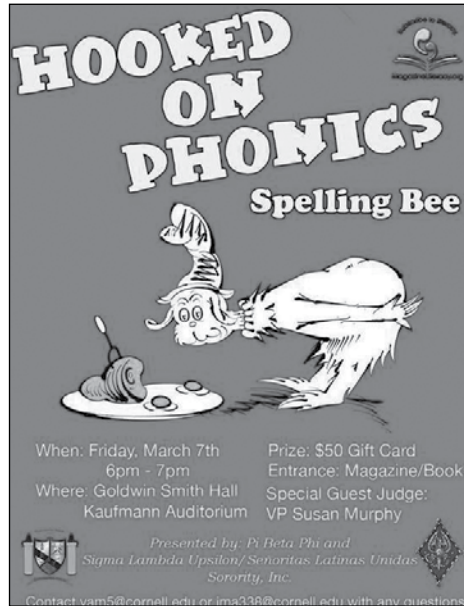
Our gorgeous living room was decorated during recruitment.

# Touching 1,000,000 Lives by 2017

By Julianna Apuzzo '15

This semester, our chapter is using philanthropy as a tool to not only give back to our community, but also to bond with our sisters and connect with other Greek organizations on campus. We are focusing on improving literacy in the Ithaca area while simultaneously working on projects that show our dedication to other important causes such as fighting cancer, supporting wounded soldiers, and donating blood.

To fundraise for First Book and the Literacy Fund, we will be hosting our famous Pi Burger Phry late-night food stand in Collegetown during the last week of classes. A favorite event among sisters, we sell burgers, fries, baked goods, and—if we're lucky—fried Oreos across the street from Collegetown Bagels. We promote Pi Burger Phry heavily on campus and always have a constant crowd of friends and strangers support us throughout the night. We hope to host another large event on campus this semester, so plans are in the works to have a kickball tournament called Angels in the Outfield. We hope to have teams from Greek and non-Greek organizations participate, and possibly open up the tournament to younger kids in the Ithaca area.



We are working toward the fraternity's goal of touching 1,000,000 lives by 2017 by volunteering at local schools. We are continuing our relationship with the East Ithaca pre-school, where we visit on a semiweekly basis to help with arts and crafts and read to the children. The children, whose ages range from 2 to 5, are always excited to see us and light up when

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# The Life of a New Member - PC'14

By Simone Klein '17

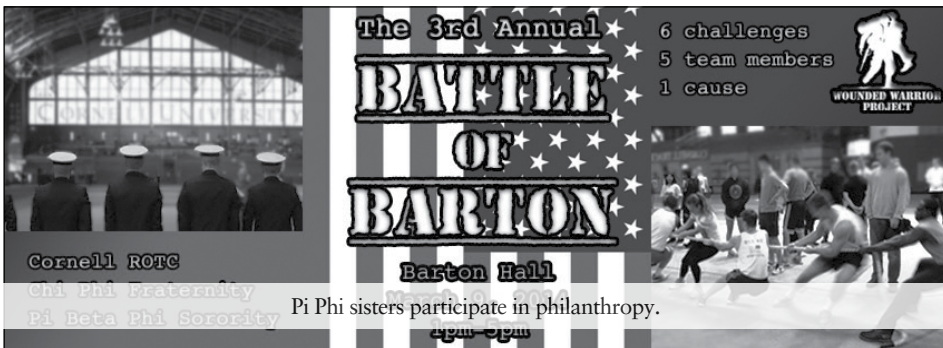
Growing up, I always knew I wanted to join a fraternity, even though no one in my immediate family had been a Greek. As I set off for recruitment, I had no concrete idea of what I was signing up for, except of stories of fictional characters such as Elle Woods. Though I had no specific expectations, I knew what I was looking for: strong bonds of friendship and a great support system. I found all of that and more at Pi Beta Phi.

After the anxiety and exhilaration of recruitment, Bid Night was a huge relief for everyone. We waited outside Balch Arch not knowing where we were headed or who was coming to get us, but all jittering with excitement because we knew that from this moment on, regardless of what happened, we had one another. When PC'13 came to pick us up on Bid Night, we were bombarded with neon posters, silly string, and painted car windows. We drove around campus blasting songs while singing and dancing before arriving at our new home. There, we began getting to know one another as a new member pledge class and were presented with our glorious Bid Day shirts! Soon after, we were off to The Nines to do the one thing that all Pi Phi sisters love: eating food!

After Bid Night, we were brought together for a series of events during the four-week new member period. We participated in all sorts of activities ranging from bowling to casino night, but the most important was the new member retreat. It was at this event that we really came together as a pledge class. After learning about Pi Phi values, we put them into practice by honoring one another and treating one another as lifelong friends and sisters.

The importance of the new member period doesn't lay in the activities themselves, but everything that comes in between them. It's about having someone to help you with your homework or tell you how to get home from the Commons on a Sunday night. It's about having someone to paint nails with or cheer you up when you go through a break up. Being in Pi Phi means that you have 200 members to watch *Frozen* with, go to Yogurtland, sit next to in lecture, get a meal with, or simply turn to when you need a friend.

Being a newly initiated member, I know that there is so much more ahead. As for right now, I know that the new member period has been a great opportunity to really connect with my pledge class, participate in common activities, and discover what Greek life truly means to me.



# Strengthening Our Bonds of Sisterhood

By Sarah Zdunczyk '16

I am this year's alumnae relations chair. Within the past three years, we have had some major renovations to our house (and that includes the addition of a tire swing in the backyard!).

Furthermore, the two newest pledge classes in the chapter have been working on a project to try and trace their lineages as far back as possible, which allows many of you the opportunity to meet the youngest member in your lineage!

Traditionally, most of us only get to meet and connect with a few members of our

lineage during our time at Cornell. This project will end that gap, and allow our members to learn about their rich Pi Phi past. As a way to extend our lineage trees beyond just a few generations, we hope this project will create greater bonds between all Pi Beta Phi members. No matter the years spent apart, we all share a bond that is unique and everlasting to Pi Phi. In the next few years, we hope to strengthen our relationship with alumnae and make you all a more integral part of our chapter!

Please feel free to email me with any questions you have about the chapter (sbz23@cornell.edu).

# our alumnae share their news

**Margaret B. "Midee" (Belknap) Smith '42** belongs to the Prayer Shawl Ministry at her church and to date has made 456 shawls. One of them went to a tribal chief in Africa. Midee is expecting her 15th great-grandchild in August! She was proud to receive her 75th-year membership certificate. Write to Margaret at 10513 Gorman Rd., Laurel, MD 20723; or send email to [monga2042@verizon.net](mailto:monga2042@verizon.net).

"I am retired, a widow, grandmother, and great-grandmother," reports **Beatrice M. (Watson) O'Connell '48**. "Since I do not have the stamina required for formerly enjoyed physical activities (golf and bowling) I play Bridge, do crossword and jig-saw puzzles, and read a great deal. I enjoy time with family and friends, social events, etc." Reconnect with Beatrice by writing to 1581 Third St. NW, New Brighton, MN 55112.

"Jack and I enjoy good health and we volunteer in our community and church," writes **Betty (Meng) Howell '51**. "We travel using Road Scholar (Elderhostel) trips. Our most recent one was 'On the Road' trip to Portland, Oregon, and down the Oregon coast to the California Redwoods and Crater Lake. Our daughter, **Jenny (Howell) Pritchard '82**, moved to a smaller home in Durango, Colorado. Her new address is 410 East 7th St., Durango, CO 81301. In January 2014, we had lunch with **Betsy (Zobel) Hannah '51** and her husband, Jesse, in Sarasota, Florida. We see **Marybeth (Weaver) Ostrom** at least once a year when we return to Ithaca for the class of 1951 annual meeting. She lives at Kendall in

Ithaca." (289 Ashford Ave., Tonawanda, NY 14150; [jandbhowell@verizon.net](mailto:jandbhowell@verizon.net))

**Dorothea (Crozier) Warren '52** reports, "Here in Tucson each winter I enjoy meetings of the 'Catalina Pocket of Pi Beta Phi.' Spring and summer we are in Austinburg, Ohio (near Cleveland). I'm still writing and working with watercolors. I had an engaged visit from Beta Anderson (Plantations staff); am hoping to steer class council (1952) there for meetings." ([rivbirch@windstream.net](mailto:rivbirch@windstream.net))

**Janis (Peet) Thomsen '53** retired in June 2010. She lives at Woodland, a CCRC retirement community, and loves it. Let her know if you're interested in living there, too (100 Woodland Pond Circle, Apt. 412, New Paltz, NY 12561)!

**Jean (Jensen) Remington's ('54)** husband, James, wrote: "Jean has dementia and is now in Healthcare at Cedarfield, a retirement community. She still participates in local Pi Phi alumnae club events as much as possible." Get in touch with Jean by writing to 2300 Cedarfield Pkwy., Apt. 263, Henrico, VA 23233.

"This was the year we finally made our trip to China," writes **Martha (Bentel) Lovell '56**. "I have always wanted to see the area where my dad spent his early career on the Yangtze River patrol in the 1930s. We also had an amazing land tour. It was an amazing trip." Write to Martha at 5032 Frontier Ln., Roseville, CA 95747; or send email to [mjhlovell@comcast.net](mailto:mjhlovell@comcast.net).

"I was thrilled to pin my pin on my granddaughter, Karinna Browning, 60 years after I

joined Pi Phi," writes **Percy (Edwards) Browning '56**. "I am busy working with nonprofits, singing with Cornell some—I have another grandchild from a different family graduating this May from Cornell." ([peb24@cornell.edu](mailto:peb24@cornell.edu))

**Kristi Bleyer '82** is thrilled that her daughter, Katrina Johnson, was recently initiated as a Pi Phi at the University of Virginia (Virginia Epsilon). Kristi works as a civil rights attorney for the federal government in Washington, D.C., and lives with her family in Annapolis, Maryland. She and **Jill Flack '81**, **Naomi (Gelzer) Kettler '82**, **Martha (Garcia) Cairnie '81**, and **Sarah (Murray) White '81** have been meeting for lunch in D.C. every January for many years to share holiday cards from other NY Deltas! Send postal mail to Kristi at 979 Phillips Dr., Arnold, MD 21012.

**Katherine DiPastina '13** recently got engaged to Chris Leyen (Cornell '13)! Send congratulations to 650 Penacook Rd., Contoocook, NH 03229; [kdipastina2013@gmail.com](mailto:kdipastina2013@gmail.com).

**Alexandra Okula '13** has been working at an oral surgeon's office during her gap year before dental school. She is also still playing some soccer until school starts again! Catch up with Alexandra at 10 Lillian Pl., Farmingdale, NY 11735; [aro34@cornell.edu](mailto:aro34@cornell.edu).

## deceased

*We regret to announce the deaths of the following alumnae:*

**Margaret (Von Paulsen) Mabbs '43**  
October 6, 2013

**Nancy (Barone) Stockdale '45**  
December 3, 2013

**Kathleen A. (Reilly) Gallagher '46**  
January 1, 2014

**Elizabeth W. (Wait) Geidel '47**  
December 31, 2013

**Shirley N. (Nagler) Coulter '49**  
November 20, 2013

**Katherine W. Wolf '54**  
December 10, 2013

**Susan (Jobses) Thatcher '60**  
January 12, 2014

**Casey D. Cadile '95**  
June 13, 2013

**Maxine P. Dean**  
January 4, 2014

## Touching 1,000,000 Lives by 2017

*(continued from page three)*

they see that we've come to play for the day. This semester, we're also very excited to re-implement the Champions Are Readers (CAR) program. In March, we began going to a first-grade class at Belle Sherman Elementary once a week to work with students during reading time and do fun literacy-related activities to foster a love of reading. As a bonding event, we will be crafting bookplates to be donated to First Book during the Fraternity Day of Service on Dr. Seuss's birthday.

In addition to volunteering at schools, our chapter is also very committed to having a strong philanthropic presence on campus. We partner with many other Greek organizations

to foster wonderful relationships while working for great causes. We partnered with Sigma Lambda Upsilon, a multicultural Greek letter sorority, for a Hooked on Phonics Spelling Bee on March 7 to collect reading materials that were donated to Magazine Literacy, a charity started by a Cornell alumnus. We also had a team at Cornell's Relay for Life on April 11. We will be hosting a blood drive along with Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity later in the semester. Additionally, we teamed up with Chi Phi Fraternity during their Battle of Barton event on March 9 to raise money for the Wounded Warrior Project. We're eagerly anticipating our new relationships and first-time events, as well as our favorite annual philanthropy events.