

# NY DELTA DOINGS

NY Delta Chapter of Pi Beta Phi at Cornell

Fall 2021 newsletter

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## LEADING AND LEARNING WITH PI PHI

by **Lauren Espinal, Chapter President**



*Chapter President Lauren Espinal '22*

This past year has been a thrilling and challenging time to be chapter president of NY Delta. Last semester, it was unsafe to interact in group settings due to the pandemic, so we conducted our events socially distanced or remotely. This semester, almost eight months after we initiated our newest member class, we had our first in-person chapter meeting since February of 2020! It was exciting and relieving to be with all of our members in person, and I immediately felt that nothing had changed. Reflecting on these feelings and my term as chapter president, I notice how the Pi Phi values have impacted me as a leader.

Our executive board stepped into uncharted territory in January; Cornell's campus COVID-19 policies changed by the week. It was precious

for our leadership team to remember the importance of integrity and unity during this time. Our members mirrored our actions, so we learned the meaning of being role models for our chapter at such an unpredictable time. And our members learned a lot, too; most grew to understand how our actions affect the chapter and greater Ithaca community. We focused on learning how to respect the boundaries of our members and other students through the pandemic, which has taught us how to be more empathetic in the future when life is "normal."

As an individual, this year as president has not only made me more confident in my ability to lead, but it has also made me more sincere. I believe that I have grown as a communicator. I am no longer afraid to ask questions to my advisors and propose new ideas, a skill I have applied to my professional and academic life. I have become more organized and better at delegation, making sure to reach out to others when I need

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## SENIOR REFLECTION

by **Alison Landry, Director of Leadership**

I distinctly remember calling my mom after the first round of recruitment and telling her, "Mom, I love Pi Phi... I think this is where I am meant to be." It sounds cliché; however, it was just the beginning of the amazing memories I would make and the friendships that would last me a lifetime.

Walking into a house of so many new faces, I remember grabbing onto Leah Snyder, who I only knew briefly at the time, for our Bid Day celebrations. Little did I know, Leah and I would be living together for the next three years. Living in the house my sophomore year brought me so close to all the girls in my new member class and I was able to form so many strong connections with girls who

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*Lifelong friendships started here with Leah Snyder '22 and Alison Landry '22*



# ROUNDIN' UP THE PHINEST

by **Hannah Goldstein, VP Recruitment**

With COVID-19 still affecting the Cornell community, informal recruitment this semester proved to be a bit of a challenge. We struggled with wanting to meet everyone while managing the obstacles of preventing the potential spreading of the virus. Thankfully, this semester, we were able to use a hybrid of Zoom and in-person events to meet over 150 potential new members (PNMs).

Initially, we hosted two Zoom open houses where our chapter and the PNMs had a chance to meet each other and chat. From there, we held a few rounds of coffee chats. Each coffee chat was one-on-one and gave the PNM and the sister a chance to get to know each other better. The sister and PNM decided whether the coffee chat would be virtual or in person, thus minimizing the risk of spread while trying to obtain a sense of normalcy with our informal recruitment. At the end of informal recruitment, we were blessed to introduce 14 more sparkling women to Pi Phi.

We then collaborated with Panhellenic and Cornell to coordinate an enjoyable and safe bid day for the new members in the spirit of getting our new members even more excited to be a part of our sisterhood. It rained this year on Bid Day, but the energy and excitement from our sisters generated a warmth perfect for welcoming our new members.



*We happily welcomed our newest MC to join us on the wild ride of being a Pi Phi this Fall Bid Day*

We decked out the house in a cowgirl theme, inside and out. With a huge banner outside our house rightfully reading, "Roundin' up the PHInest," we were able to properly and joyfully greet our fall MC '21! Overall, despite the challenges that COVID-19 posed, the recruitment team, with the support of our executive board and involved members, successfully and safely met some amazing people and happily added them to our home at NY Delta.

## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS



**ALEXIS  
ANDERSON**



**JULIA  
BRANIGAN**



**ANAISA  
CESPEDES**



**PEPPER  
DOYLE**



**MIRA  
HARRIS**



**DELANEY  
HARTNETT**



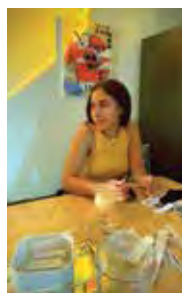
**TERESA  
HUANG**



**LAUREN  
KAHM**



**GIANNA  
MORALES**



**ANNALISA  
PISCITELLI**



**LILY  
SOETER**



**SAMANTHA  
SURDEK**



**SYDNEY  
WAN**



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were all so unique and intelligent.

Most importantly, I found girls who had the same values and goals as me, leading me to establish close friendships with Pi Phis in my engineering classes (thankful for Cassidy and Sophia). Along with that, I participated in fun events including Pie a Pi Phi and Tacky Formal. Being on the other side of recruitment brought me closer to the older member classes, and I felt even more connected to Pi Phi. My first Bid Day as an active member was almost as exciting as my own Bid Day, as my friend from home, Henley, joined Pi Phi.

Although my sophomore year was cut short, I was still able to look forward to living with my three friends I met living in the house, Kathy, Hannah, and Leah, when we returned for our junior year. Even though junior year was mainly virtual, I was still able to hold onto what was so special about Pi Phi. Some of my favorite memories from that year include celebrating my roommates' 21st birthdays, dressing up in my hotdog costume for virtual recruitment, and my little, Annelie, and I bringing Kaitlyn into our lineage.

As my senior year begins, I feel even more excited about being in a sorority that has brought me so much support. I love sharing my positive experience with all the member classes and showing them how Pi Phi has become my new home at Cornell.



*Meaningful connections started on Bid Day 2019 with Vivian '22, Kaela '22, and Lauren '22*



*Cassidy Cao '22 and Lauren Espinal '22 enjoying the Ithaca snow outside of 330 Triphammer pre-COVID*

## PI PHI PHILANTHROPY

**by Matilde Cardoso, VP Community Relations**

For the first time since the beginning of my term as VP of Community Relations, I can confidently say that I have made a difference in the women's lives in the NY Delta Chapter. This past October, we organized a Pie a Pi fundraiser with Pi Kappa Phi, a fraternity on Cornell's campus, to raise money for our respective philanthropies. We expected to reach \$600, or \$300 each at most, but our goal was almost doubled with a total of \$1,026!

Everyone reading this newsletter surely knows the power and genuine goodness that comes with a donation to Read Lead Achieve, but the power of Pie a Pi Phi goes beyond the gift. Since March of 2020, there had been so few sisterhood events or fundraisers in person, and everyone was itching to do something fun while the sun was still gracing the streets of Ithaca. So, we figured Pie a Pi Phi would be a great way to raise funds for Read Lead Achieve and morale! And so, it did.

Women from all member classes visited the house to help paint our 10 eight-foot-tall pie boards and even more showed up at Ho Plaza for two days to participate in our good-natured pie-ing.

Although this was not the first philanthropy event that I'd been so lucky to help plan, it was the first that gave me a taste of what it would have been like to be involved in philanthropy that no longer required us to be behind a screen. Pie a Pi Phi gave me fiery hope that the new normal is better than okay, and it made me realize that no matter the nature of the situation, my Pi Phi sisters will be there to support me and each other for a great cause.

As our term comes to a close, the community relations team also hopes to hold a book drive for migrants in detention centers in Upstate New York and continue engaging in worthwhile and necessary conversation through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) presentations during chapter. When it comes to generating ambitious philanthropy and DEI plans, I confide in my chapter's ability to give feedback and support to create increasingly captivating events.



*VP Community Relations  
Matilde Cardoso '23*



*Three Pi Phis and one Pi Kapp crack a smile moments before a delicious disaster!*



## 330 TRIPHAMMER ROAD AFTER THE PANDEMIC

by **Kaycee Arias**

Living in the Pi Phi house has been a better experience than anything I expected, considering we're at the tail end of our first pandemic. I thought that living in one house with 30 other girls would require us to be more isolated and obtain many restrictions that would not let us bond with each other as sisters. Thankfully, that has not been the case. The experience of moving into the house and living in it has exceeded my expectations. Everyone is cautious, of course, but we are lucky enough to eat dinners together and spend time with each other in the common areas of the house as if we've known each other for years.

At 330 Triphammer, you'll see sisters coming back from a brisk early morning run, lounging in hammocks in the backyard, and watching the sunset from the picnic table outside with some of Chef Dickyi's delicious food. Speaking of Chef Dickyi, her presence in the house plays a key part in living in. Apart from preparing



*Kaycee, Incoming  
VP Community  
Relations*

our mouth-watering meals, she inspires us and shares her motherly guidance whenever she gets the chance. I often find myself lingering in the kitchen with her cooking and entertaining concerns about my future career. Even though Dickyi doesn't live in, we count her as part of the Pi Phi family because her radiant and positive energy helps keep our stressful college lives afloat.

From what I've heard about living at 330 Triphammer last semester, communication in the house is also better than I expected. We care to text in our GroupMe if someone's package has come in the mail or if washing machines are available. Although it may seem small, communicating these things help create trust and care for one another, both aspects crucial to fostering sincere friendship.

In many ways, living in the house is beginning to look like it did before the pandemic. But, if it weren't for our support for each other, Chef Dickyi's presence, and our desire to make the best out of these four years, we would not be able to grow



*Celebrating Cornell Homecoming in the 330  
Triphammer backyard*

and maintain the strong bonds we Pi Phi sisters hold.

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help. Before I filled the role of president, I often tried to complete tasks on my own. I quickly learned that our executive council is instrumental in keeping our chapter running smoothly, and I would not have been able to lead without the help of the entire team.

Most importantly, I have become a better friend. The ability to empathize and interact with women from different backgrounds urged me to be more conscious of my actions in my everyday life. I am more intentional in understanding the personal challenges that the people around me may be facing.

Due to the pandemic, many people have been unable to maintain meaningful connections with others. I am lucky to have been both a member and leader of Pi Phi during this time. The genuine friendships and connections I have made in our chapter show me that I have support no matter the circumstances. In turn, I grew to truly understand that leading by example does not just apply to following the rules but also to being a sincere friend to those around me.

When I first came to Cornell, I didn't know if I wanted to join a sorority. Then I (thankfully) joined Pi Phi, and ironically, I insisted that I would not want to be president. Looking back three years later, I couldn't have asked for a better experience as both a member of a sorority and as chapter president. The lessons I learned and the relationships I formed are invaluable, and I am proud to be a leader of NY Delta.



*A chilly Bid Day at 330 Triphammer, spring 2021*

## CHAPTER HOUSE CORPORATION "DOINGS"

Welcome to our Chapter House Corporation "Doings" news corner!

Our privately-owned home on Triphammer Road was opened in 1956. Chapter House Corporation (CHC) helps to oversee the maintenance and finances of our lovely home, working closely with our house director. Our director so fondly known as our "house mom" is **Katie Compton**. Katie is a Virginia Theta Pi Phi from Washington and Lee University and has been our director for over eight years. We are so fortunate to have Katie on board working diligently with CHC and the sisters living in the house.

The treasurer of CHC is **Susan H. Murphy '73**, who has been fabulously and seamlessly overseeing the integrity of our "home away from home" at New York Delta Pi Beta Phi since 1978!

We are so grateful to have benefitted from the support of many New York Deltas over the years with financing, renovations, and fundraising. Most recently, **Lori Allen Utter Hamor '84** and **Cheryl Kessler '84**, who were once roommates, have joined

efforts with Susan and Katie to facilitate an architectural and engineering assessment of the home's need for maintenance and capital improvements.

We were able to obtain a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority which administers the Green Jobs – Green New York (GJGNY) loan fund to finance energy audits which helped us to defray some of the costs in preparing a one-to-five-year improvement plan.

The really good news from the architectural and engineering firms is that our house is in good shape. It is, however, aging! Along with aging comes larger-scale maintenance and updating. We need to make necessary repairs, replace windows, and upgrade the electrical system, to name just a few of the pressing matters.

All of this doesn't come without a heavy price tag. We approached Pi Phi's Foundation House Corporation (FHC) to assist with structuring an endowment fund for a Chapter House Improvement Program (known as a CHIP) and we are in

the beginning stages of formulating a campaign. This process may take six to eight months of planning but eventually, contributions made to the CHIP will be tax-deductible and any of our expenses to fund qualified educational areas of the house (such as the study room, chapter room, living and possibly dining areas, and including but not limited to roofing, windows, and gutters as they protect these areas) will be reimbursed from the CHIP!

Please stay connected through "Delta Doings" or our website at [pibetaphi-cornell.org](http://pibetaphi-cornell.org) to read about our progress and how you may contribute to the CHIP. Of course, gifts made directly to the New York Delta House Corporation of Pi Beta Phi are always welcome and appreciated, and continue to defray some of the more immediate and non-reimbursable costs including our communications with you.

We are also looking for other sisters to volunteer, work with us on CHC, and spearhead a fundraising committee once we hit the ground with our campaign. If you are interested in volunteering, please email us at [alumnaarecords@pibetaphi-cornell.org](mailto:alumnaarecords@pibetaphi-cornell.org).

## ALUMNAE SHARE THEIR NEWS

**Ann Coyne '58** tells us that she is "enjoying retirement here in Ithaca at Kendall with lots of other retired professors. None of my family has been sickened with COVID. However, my son Tom died in his sleep on December 21 of a seizure disorder that started about two years earlier. We finally had a grave-side service for him in June, when everyone was vaccinated and could travel to Nebraska."

"Life has been shockingly kind to me since my husband's death in 2019," writes **Barbara Wood Gray '58**. "That loss and our shared pandemic year provoked and produced a book of poetry, which seems to be striking a chord with people in our demographic. I have been doing poetry readings at senior communities in the area, which are more about the people at the gathering than they are about the book. It seems we all have a song to share."

**Dale R. Johnson '58** writes: "My husband, Dick (Cornell BA '58, EE '59), and I are still functioning. We do some traveling, play some bridge, enjoy our two grandsons: Spencer (18) and Luke (17). Our son and daughter-in-law live in Orange County. Daughter K.C. (Cornell '85) lives in Virginia

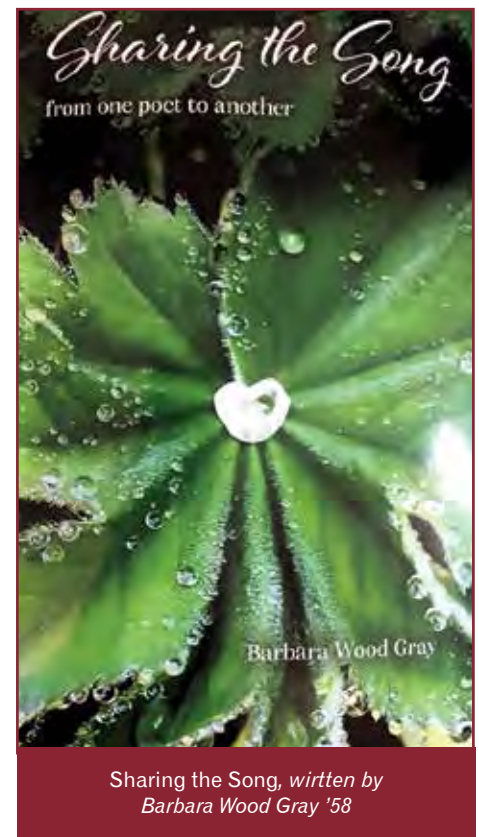
Beach, Virginia. I stay in touch by email with sorority sisters **Ann Steffen Bradley '58** and **Lois Pape Dam '58**.

"Love to hear from you all, writes **Dorinda A. McNamara '58**. Get in touch with her and let her know what you're up to.

**Susan H. Murphy '73** reports: "In July, **Sherri Koenig Stuewer '73**, **Mary Antenan McIlroy '72**, **Wendy McKee Wuest '74**, **Gerry Serotte '74**, and I celebrated 40 years of vacationing together with our families. We now are three generations, and as we have done many times in these 40 years together, we spent a week in Hilton Head, South Carolina. We toasted our beloved **Linda Krause '73** (deceased in 2002) and remembered her with a drink, pink golf balls, and new floats. Our years together in 330 Triphammer created a lifetime bond that now is shared by our children and is being created for our grandchildren. Pi Phi will always have a special place in our hearts."

"My husband retired in April 2020," writes **Deborah L. Fister '74**, "which was supposed to begin our house repairs and

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Sharing the Song, written by  
Barbara Wood Gray '58



# ALUMNAE SHARE THEIR NEWS

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update so we can move to North Carolina. COVID put a damper on that. However, I joined Janssen's 3B clinical trial to see if two doses are better than one, so we will see. Travel is on hold for now. I am eager to go to Finland to see the arrival of our seventh grandchild. The sixth (another boy) arrived in April. I was thrilled to help with the older kids. We had a ball; however, I wanted to change my name from Dana! I miss them and am able to do much more than I thought."

**Diane Wright Hirsch '74** retired in January 2019, just in time for COVID. "So, my expectation of what retirement would be was substantially altered. We had a small Zoom gathering of '74 Pi Phis after being inspired by our '73 sisters (**Maryterese Pasquale '73!**). If you weren't included, please email me at [j.hirsch@snet.net](mailto:j.hirsch@snet.net). We hope to try again in the fall and would welcome all from the class of '74!"

"Big couple of years for me," writes **Shari Hammel '86**. "After I survived breast cancer, a fractured shoulder, and the death of our beloved cat, Cinderella, my husband Steve and I decided to pack up and leave Brooklyn, New York. We found ourselves in Charlotte, North Carolina, in our brand-new beautiful home in November 2019, just four months prior to the COVID lockdown. After trying an ill-fitting job and gaining a new design credential in January 2021, I finally found my favorite position ever. Being a design consultant at Ethan Allen is a fun, challenging, and rewarding job, just perfect for what I like to think of as my "last gig"! I get to meet new people every day and to combine their ideas with my skills, bringing the design to life in my 2D and 3D drawings (and ultimately furniture and decor for their homes for them to love and enjoy). Would love to hear from my sisters: class of '86, lived in the house 1985, and know how and what you are all doing!"

"Just when I thought we were done with college tuition payments, they're starting up again," exclaims **Kimberly J. Bixler '91**. "Our children graduated from Cornell in 2020 and 2021. After a 30-year gap, I've enrolled in graduate school and started fall 2021. Not going into business, which I deferred in 1991, but NYU Tisch's Musical Theater Graduate Writing Program. I'm going to write musicals! Moving from LA

to NYC! Please keep in touch!"

"Retirement is going well for us," reports **Bev** and **Wally Plachta**, house parents from 1978-'82. "We enjoy traveling. Wally and I were in Portugal when COVID-19 really took off. Getting home was an experience. As we are some of the younger-aged retirees, we get tapped for a lot of things; it is fun and rewarding. So... upon our return, we jumped into volunteer mode in our community. We manage the local thrift shop. It is volunteer-based and all revenue goes back into the community. With distanced learning in place, lunches were provided to kids in our rural community on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. We assisted with the distribution and delivery from the end of the 2019-'20 academic year, throughout the summer, and through the 2020-'21 academic year. Senior meals were offered on Thursdays and we helped with that. We were also part of a committee to establish mini food pantries for our residents in need. Foodbank deliveries were brought to our rural community so we help there as well.

At Christmas, we were Mr. and Mrs. Claus for the traditional fire department "parade," which consisted of five to six vehicles. We were on a sleigh, of course. The fire trucks go up and down just about every street in our community, and it is done over two evenings. Santa would be proud. Neighbors nominated us for the 2021 Jefferson Award, and we were one of six winners from the eastern shore. This was humbling (see [delmarvalife.com/Jefferson-awards](http://delmarvalife.com/Jefferson-awards)).

COVID has given us the opportunity to reconnect with "our girls" on Zoom. Thanks to **Debbie Scaia Golick '82**, more than 20 of us get together once a month-ish. Even the houseboy, Jay, gets on! What a joy it is to see everyone and how proud we are of their accomplishments. **Glynnis Tihansky '82** sets the agenda and generally has thought-provoking discussion topics. Such fun! And amazingly, no one has aged! We see Kristi Bleyer '82 down here in Nanticoke when she visits her friends. **Mary Jo Santelli Moyer '82** lives in Lewes, Delaware, so we meet up periodically with her and her delightful husband, Bob. **Maureen Leahy Trowbridge '82** and Craig visited in October 2021 for the Seagull Century Bike race. Friends made at Cornell Pi Phi last a lifetime, and we have been honored to be part of the journey."

## deceased

We regret to announce the deaths of:

**Corinne Edith Bales '44**

**Harriet P. Wood '46**  
December 27, 2020

**Nancy Yost '48**  
July 5, 2020

**Ruth Hilary Silman '90**  
June 30, 2021

## STAY UP TO DATE WITH NY DELTA!

Another school year is over, and AAC and House Corp. are proud of how the chapter worked through an unusual year. **We're excited for the future, and have some changes coming to this Delta Doings newsletter!**

Starting in fall 2021, we will only be sending hard copies to those who graduated before 1995. Anyone who graduated 1995 and after will be receiving virtual newsletters in the form of an email with a link to our NY Delta alumnae website (check your spam folders in case it goes there!).

This summer, please make sure to **update your contact information with the chapter**, both mailing address and email address. You can do this two ways:

1. fill out the news form included in this *Delta Doings* mailing; or
2. update your information online through our NY Delta alumnae website at: [www.pibetaphi-cornell.org](http://www.pibetaphi-cornell.org). You can get a username reminder and reset your password by clicking on the links at the top right corner, and once logged in, you can update your profile, also in the upper right corner.

Thanks for keeping your information up to date!