Brothers,

The 2012-2013 school year was an exciting time for SigEp Penn Theta. We are proud to report that our chapter is as strong as ever and continuing to strive for excellence in the Carnegie Mellon Greek community and beyond.

In exhibiting our continued goal of excellence in academics, the brothers of SigEp achieved a GPA of 3.30 for the Spring 2013 semester, the highest of all fraternities on campus. We demonstrated our commitment to bettering the community around us by completing a total of 842 collective hours of community service. We continued to have a strong presence on campus, with 83% of our brothers being involved with at least one campus organization. Our involvement in Orientation was also evident, with 5 brothers serving as Orientation Leaders, 15 as Orientation Counselors, and brother Andy Biar as a Head Orientation Counselor. We are proud to be continuing SigEp’s reputation as the most excellent men on campus.

And of course what would any year be without endless effort poured into the Big Three of Booth, Buggy, and Greek Sing?

For Booth this year, we chose a theme of “Up” to go along with the overall Carnival theme of “Fractured Fairytales.” Coming off of a great performance last year with our Spongebob booth, we wanted this year’s booth to be even more ambitious and impressive. Our booth chairs Winston Avil, Will Misitano, and Rick Shanor started planning early.

This year’s booth consisted of an amazing exterior, featuring house siding, a porch, and a waterfall representing Paradise Falls, along with a number of balloons attached to the chimney.

The interior of the booth was just as impressive. Visitors entered the booth, and were welcomed by a Carl figure, along with a detailed living room straight from the film. This room also featured the game, where visitors navigated the house from the suburbs all the way to Paradise Falls. Those who navigated successfully earned an “Ellie Badge”. The hardware for the game mimicked what was in the film, as you had to drive the house using...
an antique coffee grinder attached to an old TV. After climbing up the exterior stairs, visitors found themselves inside of a jungle, featuring real plants, a Russell figure, and Kevin the Bird. The final room put visitors in “The Spirit of Adventure”, where they had the opportunity to take a photobooth-style picture, with these pictures being used in a time-lapse video.

All of the planning and effort paid off, as we earned not only the first place trophy for Fraternities but also the People’s Choice Award, along with recognition from the Information System Department for the Most Innovative Booth.

As always, booth this year brought brothers together, teaching brothers important construction skills and the importance of our cardinal principle of diligence, as many brothers put their heart and soul into this booth.

Furthermore, in a new initiative we hope to continue in future years, brother Andy Biar put together an impressive full-length documentary following the story of our booth from its creation all the way through tear-down. The documentary can be viewed at http://youtu.be/dPBguBjDEkM. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have!

Much effort was also put into our Buggy program this year, and our unflenting effort has taken SigEp Buggy to a whole new level. This year we managed to not only retain the title of top fraternity, but also earned an impressive 2nd place overall and 3rd place in design competition, entering Barracuda (2009).
Raceday 2013 was an incredibly exciting time. All the pressure came on day two, as in usual Pittsburgh fashion rain caused the cancellation of all men’s day one heats. Due to some unfortunate disqualifications on day one our Women’s A team and Men’s C and D teams were not able to roll this year. This was no deterrent however, as our Men’s A and B teams came out in full force on day two. In less than ideal weather circumstances, our Men’s A team had an incredibly impressive time of 2:09.643, bested only by SDC A (2:04.987) and followed closely by PiKA A (2:10.298).

Despite Kraken (2013) not being able to roll on raceday because of driver qualifications and a crash on truck weekend, the year proved to be a great success. Kraken will definitely be rolling next year, and we hope to have it perform as SigEp’s new top buggy. Next year, under the supervision of Buggy Chair Harley Montano and Head Mechanic Richard Barber, SigEp Buggy will continue to better itself. We feel confident saying that SigEp Buggy is no longer knocking on the door of the top three teams, but rather we are a top contender, with the biggest trophy in the history of Carnegie Mellon’s Carnival traditions within our grasp.

We are also looking forward to renewed alumni support for the Buggy program. Brother Peter Edge (’10) has been leading the alumni effort to establish a recurring donation fund, the proceeds of which would be dedicated exclusively to the Buggy program. We are incredibly grateful for this and are excited to see the long-lasting significant impact this could have for our Buggy program! As always, if you are interested in contributing to this effort or other ways to support the chapter, please contact Vice President of Communications Matt Schallert at communications@sigepcmu.org.

Greek Sing is always a night of tough competition and great fun, and this year was no exception. With our partner aKDPhi, we mounted an intense and moving production of Baz Luhrmann’s Moulin Rouge. Fitting tangos, rock ballads, betrayals, slapstick, true love and - finally - tragedy into only thirteen minutes was an incredible challenge, but the result was a sight to behold. The audience was stunned by the performance, and the performers in the show enjoyed the experience even more.

Brother Taylor Rawley drove the show with his incredible vocal performance as Christian. Alp Erbug delighted the crowd with his portrayal of The Argentinian in the show-stopping Tango de Roxanne. The sets by Brett Perl and Eric Mackie were also a sight to behold, allowing three plots to play simultaneously in order to mirror the fast cuts of the original film.
Although Moulin Rouge ends in Tragedy, SigEp ended the night triumphant, winning the fraternity philanthropy award for raising over $4,000. Our efforts combined with those of the other Greek houses on campus amounted in $74,000 being raised for The Children’s Institute, and we couldn’t be more proud. Next year we plan to double our contribution, raising over $8,000 in support of Institute. We are also excited to have one of our brothers, Kevin Karol, serve as one of the overall chairs for Greek Sing 2014.

Our accomplishments in the Big Three weren’t our only highlights this year. SigEp had an impressive showing at this year’s Greek Awards. Our outstanding efforts and performance over the last year were recognized and we took home awards for Outstanding New Initiative, Outstanding Campus Involvement, and Chapter of the Year. In February, members of our ExComm drove up to Connecticut for this year’s Carlson Leadership Academy, where we won the AVC Operational Excellence award for working closely with our AVC. Finally, we were fortunate to have three undergraduate delegates and two members of our AVC attend Conclave 2013 in Dallas at the end of August.

In order to make sure we continuing building a house of leaders and excellent men, Vice President of Recruitment Harley Montano and his recruitment cabinet began planning early in the summer for Rush and the Balanced Man Scholarship. The BMS program continued the momentum it gained from it’s revamp last year, including a formal banquet featuring guest speakers from the CMU community and beyond. All of our recruitment efforts paid off, and we were excited to have welcomed 16 new brothers in the Fall 2013 Sigma class.

With so many of our brothers doing incredible things in their lives, we'd like to highlight some of them. This newsletter’s Brother Spotlight is on brother Brett Perl, a current 4th-year Architecture student, who joined the house this past year:

It started with something simple; a line of people waiting in the sun. As we walked down one of the main streets in Haiti it was an odd site. The line went on and on, and we decided to follow it in order to see what all the commotion was about. When we got to the front of the line we found a large room that was empty except
for a teller and a single customer. All these people were waiting in the hot sun to go to the bank, rather than waiting inside in the cool shade.

As we saw the customer sprint out of the bank and wave the next person in we suddenly realized what was happening. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the people of Haiti were terrified to wait inside where they might be trapped, and instead endured the blistering weather out of fear.

It was then I realized that although there were many volunteers working to rebuild the infrastructure in Haiti, there were major social ramifications which were not being addressed. That’s why I think the initiative our recycled water bottle furniture initiative is so essential. By training those citizens with disabilities to make usable furniture, we are not only giving them a job, we are also giving them a purpose.

I have been fortunate enough to receive a great deal of support in my work. This summer, I’m working with a corporation in Pittsburgh that is also working with plastic bottles in Haiti, this time turning them into thread that can be woven into clothing. With all these initiatives to improve the lives of those less fortunate, on top of an extraordinarily demanding major at Carnegie Mellon University, it may seem odd to some why I would devote what little time I have left to life in a fraternity, as opposed to sleep.

However, just as there is much good that we can do for the people of Haiti, there is also a great deal we can learn from them. Although they face great adversity, the sense of community in Haiti, and their ability to work together in order to overcome their challenges, is incredible. In the United States it is rare to find any community that can match it. That’s what I’ve found in SigEp.

I have seen and experienced the depth of compassion the brothers of this fraternity have. Every one of them will bend over backwards to help someone out whether they’re having academic problems, trouble with relationships, or just need a break from the hectic day to day life of a CMU student. Fostering a spirit of charity and community in myself and those around me is as valuable an investment as the time I spend helping those in Haiti. I am proud to be a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, and know that it will help make the world a better place, and lead me to be a better man.

No matter how busy we are, we always love hearing from you, our alumni! If you’d like to get in touch with the chapter please contact our Vice President of Communications, Matt Schallert, at communications@sigepcmu.org. Also be sure to visit our website at http://sigepcmu.org. We’ve spent a lot of time recently creating new content to highlight all of our amazing accomplishments, specifically with the intent of keeping you all informed about what’s going on with the chapter!

As always, we appreciate your support of Penn Theta in any way. As mentioned, if you’re interested in learning more about the new Buggy fund, or any other ways you can help the chapter, feel free to reach out to VPC Matt Schallert (communications@sigepcmu.org).

Don’t forget to check your emails for details regarding our 15–year anniversary reunion on December 7th, 2013! More information can be found at http://sigepcmu15year.com/.

In VDBL,
The Brothers of Sigma Phi Epsilon