



**Making Better Men**  
AGR 2nd Century at NDSU

# Fireside Chatter

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VOLUME 1

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**Donors from the 60's and 70's take the Lead!**  
*See Donor Roster*

## Points of Interest

- Campaign has reached \$455,000 in three months
- Campaign Committee led by Gregg Halverson '71 is focusing on leadership level gifts before contacting all alumni
- Bill Finley '70 will lead the General Campaign once the campaign reaches \$1 million plus
- Don Schwartz '57 to coordinate memorial or tribute gifts to the campaign effort
- Gifts of commodities are a viable and desirable gift alternative
- Matching gifts can double or even triple individual donor support

## Quiet Phase Update: Campaign Reaches \$455,000!

How can you be quiet about raising \$455,000 in 14 weeks? Despite the great news, the campaign is still in the silent phase as we attempt to raise 60 to 70 percent of our \$1.75 million goal.

"Our tally to date is certainly a strong endorsement of the project's merit and an overwhelming tribute to the hard work of many volunteers," says Gregg Halverson '71, Campaign Committee Chair. "But our work is far from done. We've only heard from 38 alumni! We have yet to reach out to the entire brotherhood. That day will come. Today the Campaign Committee is focusing on those folks who have the capacity to give a gift of \$10,000 to \$250,000 or more who

will inspire others to give generously to this effort. Once we get well over the million dollar threshold - with success within our grasp, we'll open the flood gates and reach out to all Epsilon alumni in our General Campaign!"

### Bill Finley To Lead General Campaign

Bill Finley of Fargo, ND has agreed to be General Campaign Chair of our 2nd Century Campaign. He will recruit and coordinate the troops necessary to lead the second phase of the fundraising effort. Already selected to coordinate memorial gift efforts is Don Schwartz, Class of '57.

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## Congratulations Jack Dahl and Dale Anderson!

Jack Dahl '51 and Dale Anderson '59 were inducted into the Epsilon Hall of Fame March 15th at the 95th Founders Day Celebration. They're also new donors to the 2nd Century Campaign.



## Quiet Phase Update (continued)

“At stake is our house and leadership position on campus and in the agriculture industry. If we want AGR to continue for future generations of young men, we will need the support of the entire chapter. Expect more news as the campaign develops this summer.”

—Bill Finley '70



Bill Finley – General Campaign Chair

## Is There a Silver Bullet For Recruitment?

– Brant Bigger '00

Improving our membership recruitment program is a top priority for Epsilon Chapter. Undergraduates, House Corp. and other alumni volunteers are actively engaged to “beef up” our current efforts, learning from each other and the Home Office on what’s working and what’s not at NDSU and other AGR chapters across the country.

One thing we know for sure is there is no silver bullet. I’m referring to a single strategy that will fill our chapter house to overflowing. It’s going to take a 365-day a year program – conducted on campus and off – that harnesses the combined energy of undergraduates and alumni. That’s right, you did hear me right: “undergraduates and alumni.” Right now alumni outnumber undergraduates by 40 to one. We cannot expect these young men to shoulder the entire membership burden for a social and professional organization that defines our Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity.

While we define and fine-tune our recruitment strategy, we already have determined pressing needs that once addressed will enhance our overall efforts.

I’m referring to the physical deterioration of our chapter home and our ability to extend scholarships to needy students. By themselves they are not the solution to improving our numbers. But as part of a comprehensive plan, they will help position AGR at NDSU on solid footing.

We encourage every member of Epsilon Chapter to be part of the recruitment solution by generously supporting our capital campaign, and being the “first contact” with young men of promise in your communities. Remember we’re not limited to recruiting just ag majors, but students interested in pursuing agricultural careers.



Brant Bigger –  
House Corp. President

## Gifts of Commodities Are Welcome

*Consider making the greatest impact imaginable by giving a gift of commodities to the 2nd Century Campaign! For more information, contact Bill Harbeke, Campaign Coordinator, at 701/277-9681 or email at goldieb@juno.com*

### Charitable Contributions of Farm Raised Inventory

While contributions of raised commodities to your favorite charitable organization could provide additional tax advantages, the timing and method of transfer are critical to meeting the requirements of the tax-saving provision. The best time for most grain farmers to take advantage of this tax-saving provision is after the end of the tax year.

To a non-profit charitable organization, there is no tax difference between the receipt of cash or an equal value of commodities. However, if you are a cash basis farmer, there can be a substantial difference in the tax consequences resulting from the donation of cash or raised inventory. A tax advantage results from the fact there is no income recognition by the farmer-donor upon the gift transfer of inventory. The IRS has ruled the gift of raised farm commodities by a cash basis farmer represents a transfer of an asset rather than the “assignment of income.”

The donor must:

- reduce the basis of the inventory (which for a cash basis taxpayer is zero) or,
- reduce any un-deducted expenses related to the commodity which has been gifted. Tax practitioners are interpreting this language to mean any related costs deducted

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## “Following My Father’s Advice” – Allan Johnson ‘68

Remodeling the house at Epsilon Chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho is important for several reasons. First, it’s a payback for the wonderful experiences I had while an undergraduate at NDSU and living at 1303 North University Drive. Living in the AGR House while going to college was a terrific experience in learning to get along as part of a group, providing leadership when asked or needed, and to be a part of something that even at that time we knew was special. What was a very pleasant surprise to me was to later realize how important AGR was to me because of the network of AGRs all across the country who I crossed paths with in my professional career. Whenever someone identified themselves as an AGR, whether it was VT, IN, IA or CA, there was something unique about the new relationship. Those relationships with other AGR brothers have grown into friendships equal to or even tighter than my college friends.

I know many of you probably are asking why invest your hard earned money into a house for someone else

to live. That answer for me is easy and should be easy to understand for anyone who knew me in college. You see I was a bit of a late bloomer. I know many of my AGR brothers still wonder how a “four quarter pledge” ended up becoming the Grand President of Alpha Gamma Rho, President of the largest Ag Publishing Company in the country, and later the Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development at USDA. The career path was primarily a case of working hard, being a little lucky and in the right place at the right time, and leveraging what I learned at AGR and NDSU. The Grand President election is a little harder to explain other than getting swept up by great brothers from across the country who pushed me to get involved and provide leadership on a national level at an important time in our history. It was one of my most memorable experiences.

My father taught me to give back more than I received. If you borrowed someone’s car, bring it back with a full tank of gas. If someone has done a favor for you, buy them dinner at a res-

taurant nicer than they would go to on their own. Giving more back to Epsilon and AGR than I received will not be possible, because they have given me so much. But, I can give back to provide the opportunity for some other young man to reach dreams that he cannot even imagine today. And I can also ask my fellow Epsilon brothers to give back as partial payment for the wonderful relationships they built being a part of AGR and living in a terrific house that was our college home. This is not about us, although those of us who donate will be appropriately recognized. This is about the young men we don’t even know yet who are just entering high school and will be attending NDSU in a few years. This is about providing them with the college home and fraternal experience that will be as good as the one we enjoyed during our college years.



Allan R. Johnson '68, Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary, USDA Rural Development

### Gifts of Commodities Are Welcome (continued)

in a tax year prior to the year of the gift will not be adjusted. For example, donating corn in 2001 that was produced in 2000 avoids adjusting 2000 production costs.

For farmers who use the standard deduction instead of itemizing, the charitable contribution of inventory removes this potential income from taxation. Further, whether you use the standard deduction or itemize, if your farm income is less than the self-employment earnings cap, the

charitable gift of inventory will also reduce your self-employment tax liability. Thus, farmers gifting inventory to charities reduce their liability for federal and state income taxes and possibly on self-employment taxes.

The following are key factors for effective tax savings from charitable gifts of inventory:

- ✓ you must be a cash basis taxpayer;
- ✓ you must have materially participated in the production of the commodity;
- ✓ gift prior-year production to pre-

vent the reduction of undeducted production expenses, and title and control of the commodity must be transferred to the charity.

The direct transfer of raised inventory to a charity can provide for a substantial tax savings. However, the “i’s” must be dotted and the “t’s” crossed! Therefore, the review of this strategy with a tax consultant is advised.

—Parman Green, Farm Business Management Specialist

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*“We are at a crossroads where something has to be done. A band-aid won't do it. I feel committed to pay back some of what AGR has done to get me where I am today.”*

**Carl Larson '62**

*“I feel that it is important to upgrade the house just as we must upgrade our homes. We want to keep our house up to date to give future generations the benefits that we all have had.”*

**Earl Mariferen '54**

