

AGR ACTION

OCTOBER 2013

Brothers move into a new AGR house on the University of Nebraska campus

Kappa Chapter has finished building its new house on the University of Nebraska campus, and brothers there are all but moved into their new home.

Roger Wehrbein, president of the Kappa Foundation said they have been raising funds for the last 10 to 12 years and the house cost between \$2.8 million and \$4 million to build. Kappa



Chapter closed its old house in May 2012 so Heartland Contractors could begin the demolition and construction.

The decision about whether to renovate the old house or rebuild the house from the ground up was not easy, Wehrbein said, but the fraternity's board officially made the decision three years ago.

The newly built house now has multiple amenities, including air conditioning.

"We didn't have air in the old house, and we obviously wanted to put that in the house," Wehrbein said.

A secure kitchen, which will be locked unless the cook is using it or during meal times, was added as well

as a fire sprinkler system.

"The house (is a) concrete and steel building," Wehrbein said. "It should be more fireproof as well as having sprinklers in it."

The members also tried to make smaller decisions to make sure the

house lasted longer. For example, tile flooring was chosen over other alternatives. Wehrbein said they chose tile

floors because they are easier to maintain and will last longer.

Another small addition to the house is the hanging steel beds.

"Instead of bunk beds, we have steel beds suspended throughout the ceiling so that (the collegiates) have room to do whatever they need," Wehrbein said.

In addition to the house itself, Kappa now has 53 parking spots that are a combination of street parking and personal parking.

The new, modern house will help ensure that brothers of Alpha Gamma Rho have a home on the Nebraska campus for years to come.

Information courtesy of The Daily Nebraskan

Peek into this issue...

A new Fraternity house for Kappa Chapter...

Kappa brothers get settled into their new home on the UNL campus.

The Ferguson family keeps the AGR tradition alive on NMSU's campus



All male members of the Ferguson family who have studied in an area of agriculture have been a member at Alpha Lambda.

Get your AGR membership discount on GEICO auto insurance...

AGRconnect Course Update...

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AGRconnect Course Update - The Brotherhood Program

The latest AGRconnect course has been posted, and we want to hear your feedback!

This course is an in-depth description of the Brotherhood Program, and consists of five modules summarizing the extensive Brotherhood Program manual. The course is organized as follows:

Module 1: Basic Program Outline

- Invitation
- Orientation
- Big Brother Ceremony
- Initiation Ritual
- Guided Study Program
- Chapter Meetings/Activities
- Five Orders
- Semiannual Brotherhood Vote
- Annual Chapter Retreat
- Graduation Ritual

Module 2: Quality Control

- AGR Covenant
- Quality Committee
- Semiannual Brotherhood Vote

Module 3: New Brothers

- Orientation
- Guide to Conducting a Big Brother Program
- Being a Big Brother

Module 4: Bonding

Module 5: Upper Class Programming and Brotherhood Program Resources

- Overview of Upper Class Programming
- Program Modules
- All Chapter Program Modules
- The Five Orders
- Five Orders Grandfathering
- Recognition and Sanctions

For a chance to win your choice of several AGR prizes, sign into AGRconnect and complete one of the five Brotherhood Program modules between now and the next issue of AGR Action. Send a comment about your experience to

Sarah Nadler, communications coordinator, at sarah@alphagammarho.org to be entered.

If you experience any problems using AGRconnect, call the Home Office at 816-891-9200. We look forward to hearing your feedback!

Brotherhood Program - Module 1 (01:05 / 09:45)

ATTACHMENTS EXIT

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Basic Program Outline - Part 2
Summary
Brotherhood Program - Module 1 Assessment
Congratulations

Brotherhood Program Overview

What is the purpose of the program?

The AGR Brotherhood Program concentrates on the growth and development of each individual collegiate member by encouraging excellence in:

- Scholarship
- Leadership
- Social responsibilities
- Agricultural professionalism

Get the Alpha Gamma Rho membership discount on your auto insurance with GEICO

Isn't it time you treat yourself to something special? Give yourself the gift that keeps on giving and contact GEICO for a free quote on auto insurance. As a brother of Alpha Gamma Rho, you could qualify for an exclusive member savings discount, which means you could be saving even more money on auto insurance. And best of all, those savings come with 24-hour customer service and fast, fair claim handling. For your free quote visit geico.com/greek/agr or call 1-800-368-2734. Don't forget to mention



your AGR affiliation to find out how much more you could be saving. Your completed quote will also help benefit Alpha Gamma Rho!

Strong agricultural connection keeps the Ferguson family 'tradition' alive

Matthew Joel Ferguson says the only reason his great-grandfather William Wilson Gallacher was not a member of NMSU's Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity is because the organization did not exist on New Mexico State University's campus when he graduated in 1908 with a degree in engineering technology.

But, since the Alpha Lambda Chapter of the Fraternity was mobilized in 1951, all male members of the Ferguson family who have studied in an area of agriculture have been a member, starting with Joel's great-uncle William Henry Ferguson who had Pin No. 18. It is worthy to note that though William Gallacher was not a member of AGR, while at-

tending New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (which later became NMSU), he lived in the boarding house that later housed Alpha Gamma Rho.

Joel, a fifth-generation rancher majoring in engineering technology, (like his great-grandfather), says the shared interests among members and the sense of community is what keeps bringing his family back to NMSU and to AGR.

"It sounds cliché, but my best experiences so far at NMSU have been connected to AGR," he says. "During the school year, I live at the fraternity house on campus and there is usually someone around to help you out with anything you need. We all really try to help each other out."

Whether it's helping out a fellow friend with a dead car battery or homework, or hosting a fundraiser or handling horses at the Equestrian Center during competitions, Joel says AGR members always try to put a fun and positive spin on anything they are doing.

Including Joel, there are 10 members of the Ferguson/

Gallacher family who have been initiated into AGR, just on his paternal side of the family. Of those 10, five – including his father, Wallace Matthew Ferguson – have held the title of Noble Ruler.

Most of the Ferguson/Gallacher family was raised and continue to live and ranch in Lincoln County, around Carrizozo. Joel's family ranch raises primarily Red Angus and Hereford cattle.

In the early 1900s, NM A&M was the closest place for the Ferguson family to receive an education.

"It's always been really important to my family to get an education and it made sense for my great-grandfather to receive his

college education at New Mexico State," Joel says. "That is the place he decided would be the best for him."

For himself, Joel believes the path he has chosen will help him be a better rancher.

"To be a rancher, you have to be a jack-of-all-trades," he says. "You have to be the mechanic, the electrician and the plumber. You have to be all these things wrapped into one and engineering technology teaches you all of those things."

Joel says there has never been pressure from his extended family to continue the "tradition" of attending NMSU, but it just seems to have worked out that way. "New Mexico State is the natural choice for us for a university to attend in the state," Joel says. "It offers courses in fields we are interested in, which are mainly agriculture, engineering and education. We've all really liked NMSU and we're proud to be Aggies."

Information courtesy of Panorama, New Mexico State University Alumni Magazine



The Ferguson family has a strong tradition of attending NMSU and being involved in Alpha Gamma Rho.

Do you speak agriculture?

Article courtesy of Iota alumnus, George H. Roemer.

Roemer was initiated by Iota in 1967.

As many AGR brothers in the bond of agriculture know, or will know, agriculture is an international language, passion and quest for much of the world's population. As someone who has enjoyed the opportunity to experience "hands on" agriculture on four continents and in more than half a dozen countries, I can personally attest to this phenomenon.

My most recent experience with this has been in Afghanistan working with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A part of the Department of State, this is the US government agency that distributes, monitors and supervises the foreign aid disbursed to specific countries by the US Congress. Currently, Afghanistan is the largest single recipient of US foreign assistance.

During three one-year tours of duty, I served two and a half years in the field at Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and six months in Embassy Kabul's Office of Agriculture (OAG). Field responsibilities included: monitoring \$25 million worth of projects and programs (hydroelectric power plant reconstruction, irrigation rehabilitation, internally displaced persons housing and teacher training), engaging Afghan government officials on development and agricultural issues, facilitating USAID programs meant to improve budgetary flow from the central to district units of government, meeting with agricultural extension agents and advising civilian and military colleagues on basic agricultural matters. Best of all field experiences was walking through acres of Afghan fields, looking at crops and



George H. Roemer wearing his protective gear while working with Afghan wheat farmers.

livestock, and meeting face-to-face with farmers.

Since Afghanistan is a war zone, none of the above is easy to do. Living on fortified military bases surrounded with thick barriers topped with razor wire, heavy weapons in guard towers for protection and many soldiers carrying loaded fire arms is routine. Even the American Embassy is a fortified compound. In the part of the country where I worked, it is not unusual to experience "incoming" rounds of gunfire, mortars or rockets. Sometimes, a suicide borne IED (Improvised Explosive Device) is detonated near a base hoping to breach a wall or injure base occupants.

While seemingly formidable and daunting, it is possible to adapt to the requirements of security and still do your job. The professionalism and dedication of the American soldiers assigned to protect us is outstanding. That I returned safely to base after more than 260 missions "outside the wire" is a testament to their effectiveness. We learned to work together as a cohesive unit, allowing us to accomplish many mutual goals. Best of all, I was able to instill in them some enthusiasm about agriculture.

Afghan farmers are more like their American counterparts than one would think. In many discussions on farms and in fields, I was told that commodity prices are always too low, the weather is always too hot or too dry, and the government doesn't seem to care enough about farmers. Sound familiar?

Though through our common "language" of agriculture there are many similarities, there are, of course, differences as well. Afghan farmers plant and harvest all their crops

Do you speak agriculture? (cont.)

by hand. Some do use tractors to till the soil and mobile, tractor powered threshing mills do the final separation of wheat, their primary crop. Most Afghan farms average around one half acre in size. Cattle, camels, sheep and goats are widely kept as "mobile bank accounts" and used to aid cash flow. Only 6% of this Texas-sized country is arable; most land is mountains and desert. Much of the land is overgrazed, barren and eroded.

Since Afghanistan gets only 13 inches of rainfall per year, irrigation is required to grow most crops. Afghans have developed a unique system of water retention and irrigation called "karizes." These vertical shafts, some 40 feet deep, are anywhere from 50 to 100 feet apart and are connected by an underground horizontal shaft following the lay of the land. There may be several shafts or dozens of shafts in a single system. There are dozens of systems in each area. Water is diverted into these shafts and tunnels from mountain streams or spring runoff. It is brought to the surface during the summer months for irrigation to complete the crop cycle.

Wheat is the most important crop in Afghanistan. Eighty percent of an Afghan's daily caloric intake is from wheat in the form of "nann" – a flatbread that looks similar to a pizza crust. Rice, corn, cotton and numerous vegetables are also grown in abundance. Almonds, raisins and pomegranates are important high-value crops that are being reestab-

lished in the country. Livestock are used for meat, milk and labor. Generally speaking, many larger ruminants are underfed, under-watered and wormy. Smaller ruminants like sheep and goats fare better, but have high neonatal deaths. Poultry are everywhere and used for meat and eggs.

More than 80% of the Afghan population is directly involved in production agriculture, yet the country still needs to import almost 40% of its food. As well as Afghan farmers do with what little they have, there is room for improvement. Several observations I made and continually pointed out to my nonagriculturally-inclined colleagues included: planting corn in straight rows (most corn is broadcast spread resulting in poor grain yields), returning organic matter to the soil (Afghans glean every last flake of straw and grass from their fields for cooking and heating), soil testing (only two labs in the country test soil and Afghan farmers tend to over-fertilize), and where are the earthworms? There are no earthworms in the soil except near major rivers. Speculation is that this is due to their having nothing to eat.

My favorite quote while in Afghanistan is "a country cannot have an industrial revolution until it first has an agricultural revolution." Afghanistan's agricultural revolution is sometime in the future. Let's hope our work and investment there will help Afghanistan begin anew.

Upcoming events...

Nov. 6-7, 2013:
National Board Meeting
Columbus, Ohio

Jan. 17-18, 2014:
Recruitment School
Kansas City, Mo.

Feb. 14-15, 2014:
Leadership Seminar
Memphis, Tenn.

Feb. 21-22, 2014:
Leadership Seminar
Kansas City, Mo.

Feb. 28-March 1, 2014:
Leadership Seminar
Reno, Nev.

March 7-8, 2014:
Leadership Seminar
Philadelphia, Pa.

March 21-22, 2014:
Recruitment School
Kansas City, Mo.

Aug. 1-4, 2014:
National Convention
Indianapolis, Ind.