

Seal & Serpent



Homecoming Meeting and By-Laws Amendments

Mathew Tabacco, '09, '10

This year, due to the Corona Virus Pandemic, the Annual Homecoming Meeting will be taking place virtually. I see this as a great opportunity to draw in participation from geographically distant alumni and those alumni who could otherwise not attend the full weekend's activities.

Considering the changing landscape and obstacles facing the Society, several amendments to the By-Laws have been proposed that will be voted upon at the meeting. Please note that the By-Laws were last amended in 1991.

The biggest proposed change is the decision to go gender-neutral. While electing to admit women as Active Members will change the Society, the Alumni Board believes that it is a change that is in keeping with our founding principles. The Seal and Serpent Society was founded to promote good fellowship among certain students of Cornell University, to establish ideals for newly entering students, to bind them together with a selfless spirit both in undergraduate life and life after graduation, and thus raise to a high standard their characters, morals, and scholarship. The Articles of Incorporation also state that the purpose for which the Society was formed was for social growth and improvement of the members.

The Alumni Board feels that while this is a major change, it is the natural progression. Women have become more involved and integral to the society over the years through "little sister"/"honorary sister" memberships. Additionally,

the decision to admit women is believed to improve our recruitment and sustainability. It is simply a win-win decision.

The amendments to the By-Laws generally include the following:

- Editing text to gender-neutral terms
- Editing grammar/typos
- Allowing for Society business to be conducted electronically
- Allowing for creation of committees as needed and as approved by the Board of Directors
- Removal of defunct committees
- Removal of the life dues option

The full text of the By-Laws with the proposed edits have been posted to the alumni webpage (SealAndSerpentSociety44.WildApricot.org).

Finally, I would like to send a big thank you to the many who have sent in their annual dues and special gifts. These gifts and a modest capital replacement charge to the active chapter is one way for us to gradually modernize components of an aging lodge. Special thanks to those recent grads who are finding a way to donate to the cause even as they start careers and families!

See you at the meeting!

SAVE THE DATE

Join us for our first Virtual Homecoming (BYOB) Saturday, October 10, 2020, 1:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern Time, (plus After Parties as long as you stay).

Event includes:

Pre-event waiting room, 15 min early: slide show and conversation

- Welcome and video/slide show of Lodge and Cornell
- Social Break-out Rooms by Decade (based on registrations)
- Recognition & Gratitude
- 2019-2020 Chapter and Board Accomplishments and Challenges
- Updates from Actives – life on campus during COVID, virtual rush
- Formal Board Meeting and Voting

- Reports, by-laws amendments, new board member election
- Virtual Social After Party room(s)

Please **REGISTER IN ADVANCE** at:

<https://tinyurl.com/SealHomecoming2020>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Also, please fill out a very brief questionnaire on how you would like to receive Society news at: <https://tinyurl.com/SnakeMailing2020>. You can also find the **Zoom** registration link on the Facebook group page (facebook.com/groups/SealSerpent) and on the alumni website: (SealAndSerpentSociety44.WildApricot.org)

Dial-in info: 646-518-9805, **meeting ID:** 943 9414 3752, **passcode:** fall2020 (Additional Zoom info on page 3.)

Seal and Serpent Society Opening to all Cornellians

Carr Ferguson '52

Women have been part of Cornell since its first class. They were quite intentionally included in Ezra Cornell's vision of a school where "every person" could find instruction in any subject. Seal & Serpent is distinguished as an entirely Cornell society. Our tradition of excluding Cornell women from full membership may have been excused in years past on Cornell's practice of providing separate living accommodations for women and imposing curfews limiting how long they could stay out at night. We may also have simply wished to conform to the gender separation long practiced by traditional fraternities and sororities. Our Society is not bound by patriarchal views of gender separation or provisions in national charters of fraternities and sororities. We are free to carry out in our Society Ezra Cornell's dream of inclusion.

The question remains, should we? For me, the answer is an emphatic "Yes!" Our membership should be the face of Cornell in every way. Women members should have full ownership of our Society and equal responsibilities with men in voting, office holding, choosing future classes of active members and sharing responsibilities for the Lodge. They and we all will be enriched in our conversations and

opened to points of view and aspects of the Cornell experience we need to know better. Open membership will foster friendships and loyalties within the Society across genders, offering the maturing, rounding experience of having worked with and learned from women in ways only the common enterprise of living, learning and advancing the Society together can provide. Will there be frictions and emotional entanglements? Probably, but there will also be broader preparation for what lies ahead after graduation, including group-imposed respect for rules of decent behavior. Would the Society become just a coop with a cook? Not as long as we maintain our pledge and initiation to a life of commitment to each other and our ideals. We would be a unique brotherhood/sisterhood, raising the possibility that the Society will appeal to many more first- and second-year students. A former dean of men once told me that if Seal & Serpent were to become "co-ed," we'd have more applicants, sometimes in groups, than we could sift through. "They'll be knocking the door down to get in," was the way he put it. Whether accurate or not, open membership in the Society will enrich members for the rest of their lives.

The Right Thing to Do

Michael Scott '20

Hello fellow snakes, my name is Michael, and I served as active chapter president in 2019. I am writing to you with great optimism because despite these divisive and unusual times, our Society has the opportunity to come together and take an important step forward by adopting the amended, genderless by-laws. I feel strongly that we should amend our by-laws to allow Seal & Serpent to admit any Cornell student regardless of gender identity because it is the right thing to do. I could make arguments about how opening the society to women would help recruitment, ensure the longevity of our wonderful organization, and aid the maintenance of our lodge; however, what matters most to me is that opening the Seal & Serpent Society to the membership of any Cornellian regardless of gender or gender identity is the right thing to do. I have personally gained so much the last three years from my time in the Society: lifelong friendships, invaluable lessons in leadership, and inspiring mentors to name a few benefits. It does not seem fair to me that someone should miss out on this opportunity because she was born of a different gender. Obviously, not every Cornellian may be the right fit for our Society. However, potential new members should be judged by the content of their character, not by the color of their skin, political ideol-

ogy, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Now, I have heard several concerns from both alumni and actives. Some alumni argue that it is unfair to open an organization to women when they joined a male-only organization. I understand why you would feel this way, but I ask you to recognize that the character of our organization does not have to change to include members of all genders. As the diversity of our membership has increased over the decades, I think we have seen the richness of our organization grow while maintaining the core values set forth by the first seven snakes: Character, Morality, and Scholarship. In November, I will be leaving the lodge and heading to Fort Benning to start my active duty service as an Infantry Officer. Just five years ago we witnessed the first female officers graduate ranger school, and now female soldiers are being integrated into all branches of the Army. If one of the most masculine and physically demanding professions can successfully integrate women into its organization, I have full confidence that our Society will flourish with coed membership. I ask that you all support the amended by-laws set forth by the alumni board at homecoming this year because, above all, it is the right thing to do.

Make a Gift

There are many ways to make a gift to the Society:

- A check (especially a big check) payable to Seal and Serpent Society and mailed to:
**John Cardone, 917 Crestwood Drive,
Alexandria, Virginia, 22302,
minimizes overhead fees.**
- You can use Zelle to make your gift. Send to:
cardonej@yahoo.com
- You can use Venmo to make your gift. Send to:
@John-Cardone-4
- Alternatively, our new website allows for gifts and payment of dues by credit card. One-time registration is easy! Check it out!
<http://www.sealandserpent.org/>

Estate Planning

If you have Medicare, you probably have done some estate planning. Have your beneficiaries changed, are your will, life insurance, stocks, bequests up to date? Did you include Seal & Serpent? Such bequests have provided critical support to the society. Please consider including Seal & Serpent in your plans. If you need assistance, please contact John Cardone (**cardonej@yahoo.com**).



"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE ZOOM!"

Don't worry, it's easy! If you are unfamiliar with Zoom please email Mat Tabacco at **MathewTabacco@gmail.com** and an Active Brother will reach out to walk you through the process.



Grand Brothers

Calling all Bigs! It has come to our attention that 'we' Alumni can do *sooo* much more to support the Active Chapter in non-financial ways. In order to continue our legacy and culture it takes deliberate effort! Alums need to be continuously available to the Active Chapter to share our knowledge and experiences. Therefore, the Executive Board is creating an Alumni mentoring program which we have named "Grand Brothers" (GB's) to bond our best and brightest Alums with the Active Brothers & Sisters - and especially our new NIBs.

You can volunteer to get matched up in three ways:

1. By Officer positions; Treasurer, Social, Rush, President, Steward, House Managers, etc. to answer & advise all questions the current Officers have for tips and best practices.
2. By Careers and Majors; Chat and mentor and help them figure out career choices in the world.
3. By Hometown; Provide a warm connection for social networking or local business community.

During your time in the lodge, you know how essential it was to have your Big watch your back or show your Little the ropes. As the Scroll says, time has no boundaries for the Seal & Serpent member. So offer your help and expect a call! For more information reach out to T.J. Costello at **tj@hierarchyarchitecture.com**

Please visit our website at:
sealandserpentsociety44.wildapricot.org.
This site is the best way to keep your address current for Society mailings and email notifications.



Help us stay connected.

Please join this site to keep your contact information current and gain access to the on line directory, blog, and other tools. The annual fee (\$35) supports this site and is applied to your Society annual dues.

SEAL and SERPENT SOCIETY

Honor Roll

Gifts starting April 15, 2020

Founders Society (\$1000 - \$4,999)

Carr Ferguson '52
Thomas Hurd '58
William Ryerson '60
Kenneth Wilson '69
Rob Cunjak '96
Michael Costello '09
John Cardone '85

Keepers of the Lodge (\$500 - \$999)

Sal Accardo '60
Stephen Shippee '84
James Moger '98
Menas Kafatos '67
Norman Brockmeier '60
Donald Bickert '51

Black and Gold (\$250 - \$499)

William Fine '65
Harlan Harrison '59
Matt McDonald '95
Richard Jones '54
Harry Blair '60
Perry Heidecker '72
Paul Blanchard '52
Carl Dattel '78
Jaroslaw Hepel '97
Stephen Kozerowitz '57
Mat Tabacco '09
Richard Brewer '92
Anwar Kashem '01

Black and Gold (\$250 - \$499) *continued...*

William Weber '65
Anthony Kochis '88
Arnold Jacobs '60
Benjamin Dole '61
Piers Barker '91
Wayne Darragh '84
Alvon Macauley '65

Centennial Society (\$130 - \$249)

Vincent Rogers '49
F. Landis Markley '61
Marshall McKusick '76
Harvey Pies '65
Barry Tepper '57
Gerald Muro '87
Terence Fraser '73
Rinaldo Figueroa '76
Mark Charlton '74
Allan Tedesco '66
Alvin Velazquez '00

Centennial Society (\$130 - \$249) *continued...*

Stephen Wexler '61
David Greenberg '05
Kevin Defontes '84

Other Gifts

Martin Terplan '51
Robert Fuchs '51
John Cutter '60
Mark Klopfer '88
Saif Rathore '96
Jim Dezzutti '74
William Pomper '68
Richard Moore '53
James Cassell '17
David Schell '73
Todd Kennedy '57
James Patton '67
Charles Marsarsky '75
Michael Martin '99
Samuel Tome '17

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Check out the Society's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SealandSerpent>