



# FarmHouse Focus

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## From the Desk of the President

Alon Blakeney



Hello to all of the alumni of the Mississippi State Chapter of FarmHouse. My name is Alon Blakeney, the

new president for 2008 and I wanted to take this moment to let you know how things are going at MSU FarmHouse.

Right before school started, I and three other officers attended the FarmHouse Leadership Academy in Kansas City, MO. It was a lot to take in in a short amount of time, but we all had a good time, and came away with some good goals and objectives for the coming year, as well as some ideas for recruitment.

We have been fortunate to start off this year by initiating seven new brothers recently in coordination with our annual alumni association planning meeting. I want to thank all of you who showed up and participated in the ceremony. We had worried that the freezing rain the night before might cause some travel problems, but the event was standing room only, and the parents and relatives in attendance thought the ceremony went very well.

Currently, we have 17 men living in our house, and four pledges for the spring semester. We are still actively looking for good

men, however, and have a list of nearly 20 men we are recruiting. I would like to ask that if you know of any young men you would like to suggest to us, please contact me or anyone at the chapter with their names and contact information.

We have several challenges we are trying to meet at the current time. Through the efforts of alum James Williams, we have been able to keep to a pretty tight budget, and remain in the black each semester. However, the small numbers in the house mean that we don't have a lot of money to play with, which has given us a great incentive to pull in more men to fill the house up.

We also have a challenge to improve our GPA's as well. Grades have been an issue for us for some time now, and when you have a small number of men, it does not take many bad GPAs to ruin it for the whole group. I have made it a priority that we address this issue and try to get us back to near the top in grades on campus.

As far as social activities, we are trying to do the best we can to build brotherhood on a budget. This spring we have Super Bulldog Weekend to look forward to, and we are in the process of setting up a committee to work with the alumni association to have some events here at the house to go along with the an-

nual alumni association meeting. I hope you plan to attend.

Getting back in touch with our alumni has been a big priority for the chapter. We hope these quarterly newsletters are helping some in that regard, but we hope to be doing some mailings here in the future as well. You can help us in this effort by emailing us any information you would like us to pass along via this newsletter or to International. You can send it to our Faculty Advisor, Dr. Brian McCann, at [brian@farmhouse.org](mailto:brian@farmhouse.org).

We are also hoping to address some minor repair issues that have cropped up at the house lately. We are in a facility that is approaching 17 years old, and its showing its age. I invite you to attend our work day on Saturday, April 5, 2008. Greg Flint, one of our chapter advisors and alumni in charge of housing issues is working up a list of things to accomplish, and more hands would definitely make things go faster.

I hope to have more news for you in our April issue of the FarmHouse Focus, until then I hope the new year treats you all well!



## Abbreviated Minutes of the Spring Planning Meeting



Prior to the beginning of the meeting, the chapter held an initiation ceremony for the seven new members that pledged from last semester. The ceremony was held in the dining room of the chapter house, and was standing room only, with many family members and alumni present.

- The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m., on Saturday, January 26, 2008, with 18 alumni members present as well as the active chapter and current pledges.
- The first topic of discussion was the long-term financial stability of the undergraduate chapter
  - The chapter stated that there are 17 members living in the house right now
  - Myles Carpenter noted that there was still some outstanding rent due to the Association from the fall of 2007.
    - The chapter acknowledged that they are trying to collect this money and made a list of who is still delinquent from last semester.
    - No rent money has been collected yet for the spring of 2008.
    - The chapter has made arrangements with Omega Financial, their current billing company, to bill for rent as well so that a record can be kept of who has paid and who as not.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** The chapter told Carpenter they will be writing a check for a portion of rent by next week (Friday, February 1, 2008).
- Carpenter also noted that the insurance adjuster had written him a check for repair of the roof due to hail damage. This had been deposited into the Association checking account.
  - The insurance check will only cover about 2/3 the cost of replacing the roof, thus the FarmHouse Foundation was consulted and it was discovered that nearly all of the remaining amount can be paid using the funds available in the tax-deductible Mississippi Foundation Account held in Kansas City.
  - **ACTION ITEM:** A motion was passed to use the funds in the Mississippi Foundation Account to cover the difference of replacing the roof, up to what is legally allowable.
- Martin Wilson is still owed money for his contribution that allowed for new air conditioners to be installed in the chapter house, and the others to be repaired. He agreed to put off reimbursement for the time being until the chapter/association is more fiscally stable.
- The second topic was the Spring Meeting of the Alumni Association (Founder's Day).
  - A reminder was made that the date was set for March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008, to coincide with Super Bulldog Weekend at MSU.
  - It was decided that some type of function should be organized for the alumni.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** The chapter has been tasked with developing a committee for Founder's Day. They will then report the members to Richard Strachan who will then assign someone from the Association to coordinate with this committee.
  - The discussion of a workday to help clean the house and do repairs.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** A motion was made to hold a work day at the chapter house on Saturday April 5, 2008. All alumni are encouraged to attend to help the Association board and chapter members.
  - Discussion was made about sending out a letter to alumni to let them know of the upcoming meeting, the financial situation of the chapter, and other news.
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Keith Remy and Greg Flint will author the letter and Brian McCann will mail it out to alumni.
- The final topic was elections to take place this spring during the March Association meeting.
  - Nominations will be needed to replace the President (Richard Strachan), Secretary (Robert Manning), and three directors (Strategic Planning – Scott Royce, Recruitment – Jimmy Shirley, and Building/Grounds – Dan Fox). [Those not up for election are VP – Robert Graham, Treas. – Myles Carpenter, Events Planning – Jessie Cornelius, Finance – James Williams, and Fund Raising – Pete Weisenberger]
    - **ACTION ITEM:** Pete Weisenberger will work with Ross Loftin member to develop a slate of nominations for the offices that need to be filled.
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Following the meeting, alumni and parents who were in attendance for the initiation ceremony previously were invited to eat a lunch catered at the house and organized by Richard and Rita Strachan.

# Congrats to Our New Legislators

Two Mississippi State FarmHouse Alumni were among several newcomers being sworn-in, in Jackson this January.

Mark DuVall is replacing Jamie Franks, who ran unsuccessfully for Lieutenant Governor and Donnie Bell replaces Bill Miles.

The freshmen say they are ready to get to work on education funding, the budget, and other issues.

"Well, for the next four years, I hope that we can continue the economic growth in Lee, Itawamba, and Tishim-

ingo Counties and the northeast region of Mississippi. I hope that by creating better paying jobs, that we can improve the welfare of all Mississippians," says (D) Mark DuVall.

"Education is going to be top priority and the economic development. Then four laning Highway 25 is very important to the district. Those are some of the major issues that I look forward to working on," says (D) Donnie Bell.

Duvall and Bell were among 6 new legislators from Northeast Mississippi.



## House Hooks Up

Brian M. McCann, Ph.D.

The Association board voted last Fall to pursue a contract with the University to wire the building for high-speed internet access. That work is currently proceeding.

Up until now, the chapter has been purchasing a DSL account through the local telephone company and using a router to

split the connection between wireless points and computers in the members rooms.

Understandably, splitting the connection that many times has led to much frustration and slow speeds.

The new internet connection will be hard-wired from the campus backbone, and will

offer T1 speeds in each member's room. There will also be wireless access throughout much of the house as well.

The cost, obviously, will significantly increase however. Previously, the internet bill was less than \$100. Now, the cost will be based upon the house occupancy, which has been

adjusted officially to 30 men. The total bill will be about \$345 a month for a total of \$4140 per year.

The house has committed to chipping in for the new costs, but with continues low membership, Advisor Dan Fox and a few other alumni have stepped up to cover the shortfall this semester.

## New Union Opens at Mississippi State

Mississippi State's Colvard Student Union reopened this spring, showcasing a sweeping \$22.5 million renovation able to accommodate a campus of 20,000 students.

With everything from Starbucks, an updated food court, student meeting spaces, and a Dawg House lounge (and that's just the first floor), the new union has something for students taking a break from classes or a large organization meeting.

"The union has historically been the center of campus," director of the union Eddie Keith said. "Now, we've expanded it for the needs of our university's growth."

With the union out of service since August 2006, campus leaders pushed for the renovation project to bring it in line with growth Mississippi State has experienced through the years. When the union opened in 1964, about 6,800 were enrolled on campus. With about 16,000 stu-

dents now, university leaders want enrollment to increase by 4,000 more students through incremental growth.

For MSU's nearly 300 student organizations, the renovated facility has about 17 meeting and conference rooms, along with a third floor auditorium that can seat about 90 people. This nearly doubles the meeting space available before renovation. With options to handle small or large gatherings, the union now has

space for a dozen or fewer and a ballroom that can handle up to 1,000 people.

Along with accommodating student meeting needs, the union also serves as home to the Student Association, Campus Activities Board, Music Makers, Holmes Cultural Diversity Center, and Greek associations. The second floor will even showcases an art gallery that will rotate exhibits throughout the semester.



## Alumni News Notes

**1989**

**Donnie Bell** was sworn in as a state representative to the Mississippi House.

**1997**

**Mark Duvall** was sworn in as a state representative to the Mississippi House.

**Barry Henegan** and his wife Stephanie welcomed their first child, Charlotte Henegan, at 1am on Saturday, January 12, 2007. Mom and baby are doing fine.



*Charlotte Henegan*

**1998**

**Billy Butler** has made the move back to Starkville. He took a job in December in the city that has allowed him to move back to State from

where he was in the Jackson metro area. He hopes to get more involved with the chapter now that he is local.

**1999**

**Will Gilmer** was elected to the Alabama Farmers Federation state board as the State Young Farmers Chairman.

## Make a Tax Deductable Gift Today

Don't forget, you can make a tax-deductible gift to the Mississippi Farmhouse Foundation Council through the International Foundation.

In order to do this, you can visit the following website, which has instructions on how to donate through paypal:

[http://www.farmhouse.org/making\\_gift.htm](http://www.farmhouse.org/making_gift.htm)

If you do donate electronically, please remember to choose "Foundation Council"

so that the funds will come to the Mississippi State chapter.

You can also send your donation to the International Office at the following address (please write for the MS Foundation Council on the memo line of the check):

FarmHouse Fraternity, Inc  
7306 NW Tiffany Spring  
Parkway, Suite 210  
Kansas City, MO 64153



## Conclave 2008 - Lubbock, TX

Don't forget to save the date! FarmHouse will be holding its 45th Biennial Conclave in Lubbock, TX in August of 2008.

Registration packets should be going out to all alumni sometime around March, but make your plans now if you can.

Stay tuned for more information in the Winter Issue of the FH Focus!



**FarmHouse Fraternity**

# What's Coming Up

Be sure to mark the following on your calendar:

**March 10-14** — Spring Break at Mississippi State University.

**March 28-30** — Super Bulldog Weekend. Mississippi State will be welcoming Georgia to campus to play a triple-header Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This is one of the biggest rush weekends for the chapter. There are ballgames will be held at 6pm on the 28th, 2pm on the 29th and 1:30pm on the 30th. On Saturday and Sunday, there will be BBQ and social activities at the chapter house for anyone that wants to join in. If any of you know of guys that are attending MSU or will be, bring them by the house.

**March 29** — The **Spring Association Meeting** will be held at the chapter house and will start at 10:00am. Dough-nuts, orange juice, and coffee will be available before the meeting. We will adjourn for lunch and have the banquet that evening at the house. Family and rushees are invited to come.

**April 5** — Work Day at the Chapter House

**May 2-3** — Graduation ceremonies at Mississippi State University.

**August 13-17** — FarmHouse International's 45th Biennial Conclave in Lubbock, TX.

**August 18** — Fall semester begins at MSU.

**October 6 & 7** — Fall Break at MSU.

**October 25** — Homecoming at MSU against Middle Tennessee State. The **Fall Association Meeting** will be held at the house starting at 10am. Dough-nuts, orange juice, and coffee will be available before the meeting. Please try to arrive around 9am to meet and greet before hand.

**Faith**

**Ambition**

**Reverence**

**Morality**

**Honesty**

**Obedience**

**Unity**

**Service**

**Excellence**

## Alumni Change of Address:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return To:  
FarmHouse Fraternity  
Mississippi State Chapter  
P.O. Box 6344  
Mississippi State, MS 39762



Spring 2008 Members and Officers		
Alon Blakeney	President	Taylorsville, MS
Daniel Wilson	VP - Finance	Hamilton, MS
Joseph Wilson	VP - Recruitment	Hamilton, MS
Jeffrey Garner	Dir. of New Mem. Ed., Total Mem. Ed., & Intramurals Co-Chair	Bay Springs, MS
Steven Loftin	Director of Alumni Relations	Redbanks, MS
Keith Barlow	Director of Administration	Meridian, MS
Matthew Berry	Director of House Operations	Raymond, MS
John Anthony	Director of Risk Management	Water Valley, MS
Ty Scott	Director of Scholarship	Sherman, MS
Ben Wait	Social & Brotherhood Chair	Etta, MS
Carson Dickenson	Community Service & Philanthropy Chair	Patuxent River, MD
Coleman Crigler*	Kitchen Manager & Intramurals Co-Chair	Starkville, MS
Brian Bullock	Chaplain	Clinton, MS
Joey Fortner*	Historian	Water Valley, MS
Kenny Houston		Oxford, MS
Mikey Jankovic*		Marietta, GA
Tyler Roberts		Water Valley, MS
Ryan Tucker*		Hamilton, MS
Bo Williams		Myrtle, MS
Daniel Fox	Senior Advisor	
Greg Flint	Advisor	
Dr. Brian McCann	Faculty Advisor	
Bruce Royce	Advisor	

\* Pledge

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