



Babcock Bulletin



The Official Newsletter of Babcock House March 2007

President's Message

*By Chris Sawyer '00,
Alumni Board President*

As you have seen printed here for at least the last few issues, we have a big celebration coming up. On April 14th we will be celebrating the 75th year of the Babcock House organization. It's a significant achievement for an organization to last that long. Babcock house is a tradition we should all be proud to be a part of.

With the current state of the organization, there is no reason we can't make it last for another 75 years and beyond. But for that to happen, we need the support of the alumni. Here are a couple great ways you can help support the Babcock House:

Join us at the celebration in April. Re-ignite some of your old friendships and help build new ones. Part of the draw of the Babcock House is our extensive network, which we can utilize to help the next generation find the right internships or make the right connections to get their careers underway. The current group of students is certainly one of the best yet, having achieved a house average GPA of just under a 3.5 this last semester. Who wouldn't want this group of hard-working and intelligent young people working for them? You are also encouraged to invite prospective students with you to the celebration, where they can learn about the great Babcock tradition.

Donate to the 75 for 75 Fund. It has been our goal for a few years now to raise \$75,000 in time for our 75th anniversary. We're not quite there yet, but with your support, we will reach that goal and be able to announce the great news at the celebration. While the students may not live in the original house, it is still far from new. Some recent upgrades include remodeling all of the bathrooms, updating the electrical capacity to meet 21st-century demands and providing internet connections in all rooms. But we're not done yet. Maintaining the house requires frequent care and upgrading. The next big project on the horizon is to remodel the kitchen to make it safer and more user-friendly. If you don't have the expendable funds, the House could always use donated supplies.

Let's all do our part to keep the Babcock House tradition going. I look forward to seeing you all in April!

Are You Up To The Challenge?

*By John Rozum '95,
Alumni Board Past-President*

It seems amazing to me that the 75th Anniversary is almost over. Plans have been in the works for several years to celebrate that 75th year, and it will all be capped with the April 14 Banquet, introduction of the Alumni Directory and completion of the '75 for 75' fundraiser.

My involvement in assembling the Directory has been an amazing adventure. I've had the privilege of compiling your House stories and memories along with photos, history, and of course hundreds and hundreds of Alumni contact updates.

The stories are amazing. From the origins of Bucky in the Basement (several versions!) to snow drifts in the bedrooms at the original House as well as various honors and impressive U-Aves, it is all in there. Alumni who left to fight in WWII and Alumni who went on to greatness.

The new Directory is one that you won't want to miss, with stories from your fellow Babcockers going back to the very first graduating class. Order your copy today. The plan is to have them available at the Banquet for those in attendance, and the rest will be mailed out. Please order yours by April 1 so we know how many to print!

While the Directory is exciting, I am hoping that it isn't the biggest news at the Banquet. I hope that we can declare a successful end to the "75 for 75" fundraiser, too.

Three years ago, the Babcock Alumni Board took on a huge challenge and began a remodel project on the House in order to address some major issues in the bathrooms and electrical system. We knew the financial end would be tight, but it needed to be done. The Board decided to ask our Alumni for help.

It was the first major House fundraising drive since the current House was purchased in 1963. Response has been great, but we need your help to push us over the top. We need to raise \$15,000 in the next 30 days if we are to meet our goal by the April 14 Banquet.

We can do it. Send your check made out to Babcock House, 1936 University Ave, Madison, WI 53726. You'll be glad you did, and so will future generations of Babcock!

This is the House that Babcock Built

Conclusion: “Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”

Author’s Note: This is the final installment of a multi-part series about the life of Dr. Stephen Babcock and the history of his namesake’s organization, Babcock House. References courtesy of the UW Archives and the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

By Craig A. Kohn, 2007 Steward

“Historic Babcock House, for 23 years a low-cost housing cooperative for College of Agriculture students, has been torn down,” read the opening paragraph in the 1954 Wisconsin Alumnus. The House had been quite successful in its first decade or so of operation, so much so that a second house was required to accommodate the increasing popularity. However, in 1954 the University had deemed the original house unsuitable and dilapidated, and reclaimed the structure in order to have it torn down to make way for the Peterson Building, which until recently housed the Bursar’s Office.

Duane “Dewey” Kraemer was probably in one of the most difficult positions a Babcock Steward has ever encountered. “While at ROTC summer camp, I received notice that the original Babcock House on Lake Street had been condemned, and was being closed,” Mr. Kraemer recently wrote, adding, “With the help of several of the Babcock members, we located the house on Clymer Street and leased it even though half of the rooms were already leased to other students.”

Unsure of if they could even fill half a house, they stuck to their guns and took the chance of keeping the organization alive. After the fall semester, they had the entire house on Clymer to themselves, and Babcock House stayed alive due in large part, once again, to the tenacity of the students.

However, Babcock House wasn’t fated to stay at this location long. Within a decade, financial arrangements had been made to purchase a nicer house at a new location - 1936 University Avenue, near the Old Dairy Barn where Dr. Babcock first performed his nutrition experiments over a half century earlier. With a large, statewide fundraising drive in 1963, the house was furnished and the membership swelled. It was here that the organization would remain, sometimes flourishing, sometimes struggling, but always with the same motivation in mind.

Over the next forty years, many changes would occur. One of the most controversial was the decision to go co-ed (the first in CALS but not the last) beginning in 2002. Despite some concerns, the house has benefited from this decision, and few if any serious problems ever emerged. On the plus side, the house now has a much larger population to draw higher quality members from, especially given there is near a 2:1 ratio of females to males in the College of Ag & Life Sciences alone.

Today, we find that the 2007 Babcock House is in many ways very different from that first house in 1931. As of press time, five women and 18 men live in a house with at least one (and more likely two or three) computers in each room. Each of these computers is hooked up to the fastest possible internet connection available from our server; this is becoming increasingly necessary as many classes require an internet connection for serious items such as homework, lectures, and quizzes. Quite frankly, the technology that exists in each room is a far cry from that of even five years ago. In fact, this author can remember a time when he was one of a handful of members to even have a cell phone. In short, many things have changed in 75 years, and are continuing to change at an even faster rate.

In many ways the 2007 House is very much the same as that first House. The governing structure inside the house has changed little; the President and Steward still fulfill many of the same duties, as do the freshmen members who still assist the cook. Of course some traditions have been lost, but many more retained, and some have even been brought back, such as the 1930’s tradition of giving a pie to every student who gets a GPA above pi (3.14 and above); 16 members received a pie this semester.

Babcock Story, Continued

In short we have seen a house that has changed in some ways and remains unchanged in others. Though sometimes controversial, the changes that have occurred were in many ways inevitable and necessary, and the House that we have today not only reflects an adaptation to changing times, but dedication to the overreaching desire towards preserving Babcock House itself. In the end, however, I believe that we as an organization are better for it.

The university has changed much over the past 75 years. Courses continue to become increasingly more demanding as the UW continues to lead the nation in research and academics. Out-of-state students make up a larger fraction of the student population each year, and the demographics of the average student continue to reflect greater wealth, more opportunities, and higher demands of the university in every respect. Simply put, the House faces a much different atmosphere than it did 50, 25, and even 10 years ago. What matters the most in the end though, is the underlying service of the Babcock House organization: to ensure that any student can achieve a world-class education so long as they are willing to work hard and study harder.

That said, so long as there are economic needs in this country, and so long as a good education is necessary for self-advancement, there will always be a need for an organization like Babcock House. Even more important than economics, however, is the personal wealth that a Babcock member gains in their own college experience through the chance to grow, mature, and learn from the experience of living in this House. The immense response to this upcoming anniversary alone is evidence of the impact that this organization has had on hundreds of individuals. There may come a time that this organization is no longer needed, but so long as there are dedicated students who need an affordable house and a home supportive of their academics and social lives, there will always be a Babcock House.

State Of The House

Craig Kohn, House Steward

Aaron Wepner, House President

The House is doing extremely well right now. The current members of the House are doing an excellent job of making the lives of the Steward and President easier. Most noteworthy in this case is the high cumulative GPA of the House from last semester. According to our recent tally, the House is boasting a 3.4 average GPA, the highest in recent memory.

However, the high GPA has not impaired the social activities of the house members. Another scheduled tradition on the horizon is our Spring Formal. Scheduled for the last week of classes, it has been decided that we will attend a Brewer's game and possibly visit the restaurant of our former cook, Barb, who moved on to open her own restaurant last May.

On a more charitable side, multiple House members will be participating in the Governor's Egg Hunt in about a month. In keeping with tradition, the House has made multiple donations to events and organizations such as The American Cancer Society, Badger Kickoff Classic (for Saddle and Sirloin), and the UW Tractor Team (of which a number of our members are involved).

Our recruiter, Laura, has been doing an excellent job, with a nearly full house for the upcoming year. This is well ahead of our normal recruiting schedule, and we are looking forward to a highly qualified class. In preparation, we will be electing the next year's officers in April. We expect to see a continued strong interest in the offices as we have in the past. Most notably, we will be selecting a new president and a new steward in the upcoming months as both current occupants will be graduating within the next terms. The high GPAs and leadership skills that we have seen lead us to believe that there will be a good showing in the months to come.

In the here and now, however, a lot of changes and advances have been made to the House. Most notably, due to the help of our chomper and "tech guy" (and incoming house member) Andrew Bernstein, we were able to increase our Internet speed from under 1 mbs (megabyte per second) to over 4 mbs while spending \$15 less per month. We also installed new phones on each floor, bought a House coffee maker (from which we drink an average of 30-50 cups per day), and our living room has a newly built coffee table.

Overall the House is running quite smoothly. We "older members" can remember plenty of times when much more input was required, and we expect that the current crop of members are helping to create a stable, productive, and entertaining Babcock House.

Thanks To The Following People for Contributing to “75 for 75” Since The Last Newsletter!

\$3,000

John Rossmiller, Beavercreek, OH

\$1,000

Kevin Brunner, Madison, WI

\$500

Dennis Campion, Champaign, IL
Joshua Duesterbeck, River Forest, IL
Stewart Johnson, Storrs, CT
John Zehren, Green Bay, WI

\$250-499

Brandon Boettcher, Fairchild, WI
Allan Bringe, Madison, WI
Chris Olson, Elkhorn, WI
James Schwarzhoff, Manitowoc, WI
James Voss, Madison, WI

\$101-249

William Becker, Newberry, FL
Thomas Cox, Arden, NC
Jeff Moldenhauer, Hartford, WI
Malon Heath, Eau Claire, WI
Ben Peters, Normal, IL

\$100

Joe Conlin, Columbus, WI
Matthew Glewen, New Holstein, WI
Ted Johnson, Star Prairie, WI
Harold Mezera, Junction City, WI
Phil O’Leary, Madison, WI
Paul Schoff, Madison, WI
Dave Thomas, Madison, WI
Doug Traastad, Westby, WI

\$75

Herbert Aleckson, West Salem, WI
Robert Hanson, Quinncy, IL
Al Jindra, Madison, WI
Charles Leonard, Lake Bluff, IL
Dan Nusbaum, De Pere, WI

\$25-74

Kevin Busse, Omro, WI
Warren Meyer, Milwaukee, WI
Russell Snuggerud, Holmen, WI

Who is the Babcock Alumni Board?

If you've got questions about the House, suggestions or would like to volunteer to serve on the Board, committee or special projects, please contact any Board Member.

Chris Sawyer, '00, President - 608-245-9490
John Rozum, '95, Past President - 608-831-5055
Timm Johnson, '72, Secretary - 715-248-3277
Jake Gall, '05, Treasurer - 262-483-4353
Mike Marr, '74, Director - 608-987-3096
Kevin Shinnars, '81, Faculty Advisor - 608-263-0756
Craig Kohn, House Steward - 608-238-7395
Aaron Wepner, House President - 608-238-7384

Feel free to contact the Alumni Board with any House questions you might have or to get more involved.

Your Donations Are Tax Deductible!

Remember that Babcock House is a not-for-profit organization and that your donations to the House are tax deductible. Please contact your tax advisor for full details!



Babcock House
1936 University Ave
Madison, WI 53726

Alumni Notes & News

Passing: Daniel Jindra (Animal Husbandry, '53), died December 2, '06. Dan was Babcock House Steward during the 1952-53 year and worked for Land O'Lakes in Kiel, WI for many years prior to retiring. The thoughts and prayers of the entire Babcock family go out his family.

Help Wanted: Anheuser Busch is interested in hiring more graduates from Wisconsin. Most desired majors are listed at their website under jobs. Check it out and send in your resume!!! Making beer is fun!!! Drinking it is okay too! Contact Carl D. Wiersma (Ag Ed, '78), Corporate Quality Assurance, Anheuser Busch Inc., St Louis, MO, email: kccastle@wildblue.net

Open House: During the 75th Celebration weekend (April 14 & 15), Babcock will be having an open house and invites all Alumni, family and friends to stop by and see what is new at Babcock and talk with the students in their home environment.