

Kappa Psi names new board in court-ordered election

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The new board of directors of Kappa Psi Upsilon fraternity, chosen Saturday during a court-ordered election, announced it will place the property at 37 Hillcrest Drive on the market. Current tenants of the house are being advised of the new board's plans to sell the house, and are being told to make other arrangements for housing. Alfred University alumni Thomas Kowalik, Randy Brown and Jay Witter won election to the board of directors of Kappa Psi. Kowalik said the new board will offer the property for sale immediately, with the intention of selling it to someone who "will be an asset to the neighborhood." He said the new directors are considering a restrictive covenant in the deed "to limit uses of the property," which is located in a residential neighborhood in the Village of Alfred. Kappa Psi Upsilon will reincorporate as an Alfred University alumni group. Proceeds from the sale of the house will be used to endow a legacy scholarship administered by the corporation for children and grandchildren of current Kappa Psi members, Kowalik said. Scholarship recipients may attend the institution of their choice. Kowalik indicated that the corporation will attempt to honor housing contracts with current tenants through the summer. He also said the new board will work with the University to house and archive the fraternity's historical items and memorabilia. Saturday's election of a new board brings to a close a series of controversies surrounding the former fraternity since the AU Board of Trustees voted in May 2002 to close all fraternities and sororities because of persistent violations of AU policies. While the University allowed fraternities and sororities in good standing to remain open during the 2002-2003 academic year, as long as they refrained from violating any policies and did not pledge new members, the previous alumni board declared its intention to keep the house open as a fraternity, pledging both AU and Alfred State College students. Kowalik and other alumni objected, and claimed that the previous board had improperly amended the by-laws of the organization in June 2002, making it nearly impossible to remove the directors from office. That touched off a dispute that ended in an Allegany County court ruling overturning the 2002 by-laws and ordering a new board election, which occurred Saturday. Alfred University had adopted a new policy in 2002 declaring that it would bring disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion from the University, against any student or group of students that attempted to organize a fraternity and pledge new members. In an apparent effort to circumvent that policy, and apparently with the full consent of the immediate past board of directors, the Kappa Psi members reorganized as "The Sidehill Dutchmen," declaring themselves to be a community service organization whose members - about 20 students from both Alfred University and Alfred State College - shared living quarters at 37 Hillcrest Drive. AU brought disciplinary action against its students who had declared themselves members of "The Sidehill Dutchmen," resulting in the AU students withdrawing from the organization. In the meantime, several residents of the Hillcrest Drive area brought complaints to the Alfred Village Board, claiming those living in the house were disrupting the neighborhood, citing loud parties, vandalism and intimidating acts aimed at their neighbors. Village police stepped-up patrols in the neighborhood in an effort to halt the incidents.