

# Business network needs to connect with new members

By Timothy Bower  
Staff Writer

**DULUTH** They've known each other since before World War II. They've worked side-by-side building docks and facilities on property they've owned since 1952. Now the older members of the Kappa Alpha Psi business fraternity are looking for a few more young backs to help them take care of the property their group owns, and to whom they can pass it on some day.

"Long-range, we've got to have some younger members take over for us old guys," said Julius M. Lennard, who helped found in 1938 the fraternity offshoot that now owns a 12-acre lake on 57 acres near downtown Duluth.

Neither their land nor the organization are governed by the fraternity, but their group consists of Alpha Kappa Psi members and the land is set aside for use by all fraternity members, regardless of age or school. School fraternities sometimes have their "rush" parties in Duluth, said Lennard, who, as "house manager" serves the function of a general manager of the property. The organizers of large parties pay nominal fees for using the facilities — it's free to smaller groups of 10 or 12 accompanied by a member of Alpha Kappa Psi.

The core group members pay

\$175 per year toward paying taxes and maintaining the land while a second group of associate members pay \$200 per year. The number of associate members — who aren't allowed to vote on items affecting the organization — usually runs about even with the number of regular members.

At one time, the group — chartered as a building corporation, separate from the fraternity — had about 100 regular members, Lennard said, but the numbers now have dwindled to about 50.

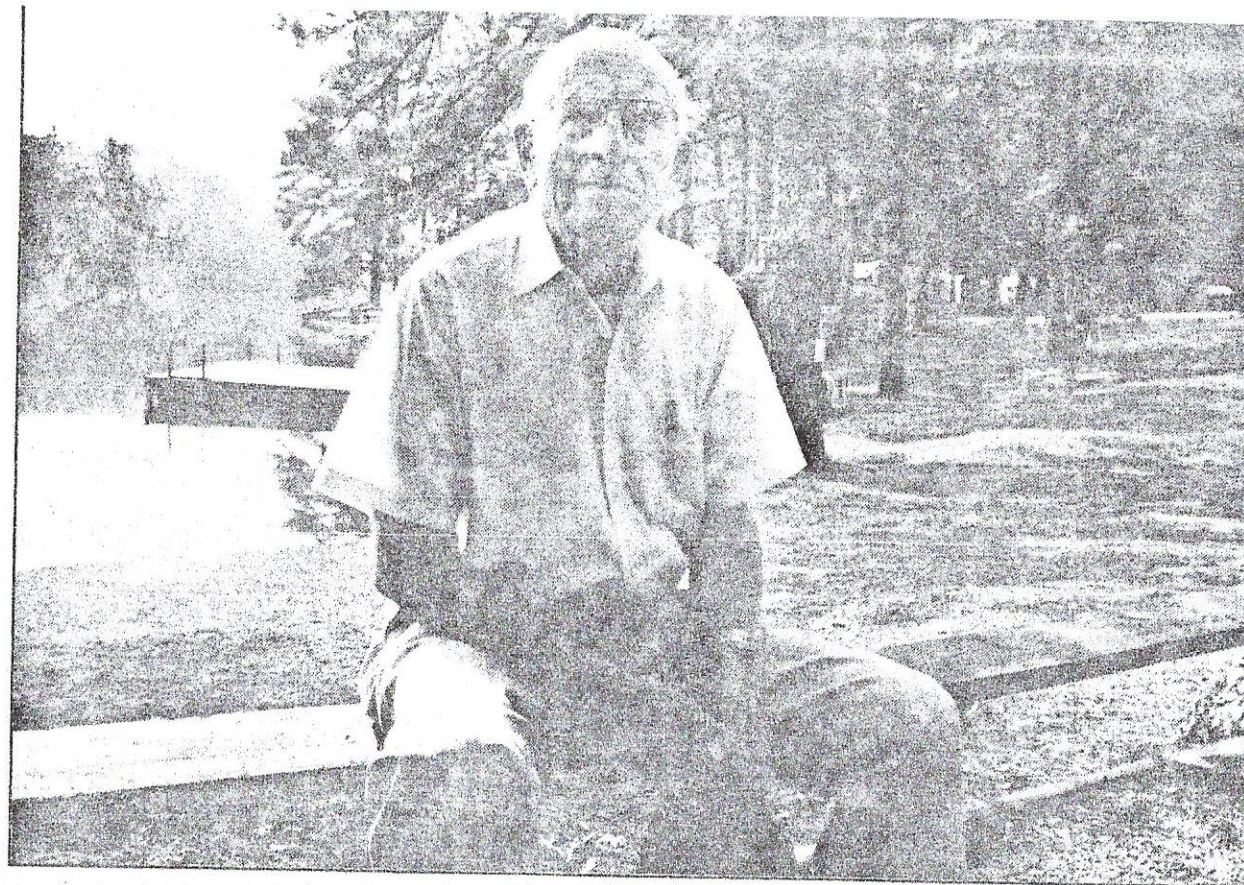
"We've lost some to death, some have moved away, some are in nursing homes," he said.

That's not to say all the members are in their 80s or approaching them. Ages range from people in their 20s on up to 80 and 90, he said. About 15 people who were around in the beginning still attend meetings and visit the lake.

When they get together, the people in the founding group who've known each other almost 60 years have much to talk about.

Alpha Kappa Psi is a fraternity with a membership of about 80,000 people nationwide who use the brotherhood to build business ties, network to advance their careers and to learn about new business trends. In fact, Lennard got the job he kept for 43 years with Coca-Cola through the fraternity.

The guys in their 80s generally aren't looking for career advancement anymore, but they still enjoy



Staff Photo: Timothy Bower

**Julius M. Lennard sits next to the 12-acre lake in Duluth owned by a group of Alpha Kappa Psi members. The fraternity is looking for younger members to assume control of the group-owned lake and adjacent property.**

each other's company and may like to advance their fishing techniques on the lake.

And it's not necessarily all business for the younger members either. Some of them like to drop a hook into the water or spend the weekend on the property that's somewhat of an island of solitude in a sea of congestion.

Some people even keep their personal campers near the banks of the lake to make sure they have a place to snooze should they want to stay the weekend.

Looking for people to whom to pass the property and the leadership of the building corporation shouldn't be too difficult — 57

acres with a lake just off Buford Highway is valuable property. Land developers have approached the leaders of the group several times over the years, but Lennard said they always turned the developers down. Those in control of the acreage want to see it remain scenic and serene; they don't want to see a strip shopping center built there.

But times have changed, Lennard said, and people today don't have the resources to put into such a recreational venture.

"The young people have a real problem this day and time — everything costs so much," he said. "They don't have the time

and money to support a project like this."

In the meantime, while the search for younger members continues, Lennard spends much of his time making sure the land and the clubhouse on it are properly maintained.

Two or three times a week, he makes the drive from Atlanta to Duluth to do a little work and a little relaxing. The trips over the years, he says, have helped keep him young.

Alpha Kappa Psi members interested in joining the Duluth group may write to Lennard at 2381 Creek Drive, Duluth 30136.