

# GAMMA CRESCENT

GAMMA CHAPTER OF ALPHA GAMMA RHO FRATERNITY AT PENN STATE | SPRING 2019

## INSIDE

- 2  
GAMMA CHAPTER  
AND WHAT IS  
“AGRICULTURE”
- 3  
YOUR GIFTS MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE
- 4  
CHAPTER REPORT
- 4  
FOUNDER’S DAY  
TAILGATE
- 5  
CHAPTER WINS  
INTRAMURAL  
CHAMPIONSHIP
- 6  
ALUMNI UPDATE



## GAMMA CHAPTER HEADED IN RIGHT DIRECTION More Alumni Support Needed to Keep Up Momentum

There are lots of exciting things to announce as the spring semester concludes. The undergraduates have the top GPA in all of Greek life, the third largest chapter on campus, and are now officially the largest AFP chapter in the country! The chapter’s budget is back on track, and other than a few house cleanliness issues, the current group is a bunch of responsible young leaders. Things are trending up for our chapter; there is a lot to be proud of!

While things are going well on the collegiate side, our current weak spot as a chapter is our alumni involvement. We doubled our alumni turnout for Founder’s Day—which was a blast, but we still haven’t crossed that 20 alumni mark. A lot of us just don’t go back to the house at all, so we’ve set it up so you, as an alumnus, can get involved remotely from any part of the country and help just the same as someone there in person.

If you are able to get involved in any capacity, please do so. At the very least, please sign up for the active alumni emails so you can be kept in the loop. Just reach out to me, and I’ll add you. Being involved as an alumnus is pretty fun and not a large time commitment like it was as an undergraduate.

Fraternally,  
**Jon Tabolt '06 (F1522)**  
Alumni President  
(267) 568-4790  
jonathan.tabolt@gmail.com

P.S. Check out our new website at [www.agrgamma.com](http://www.agrgamma.com). We have old house photos throughout the eras in the “History” section, and we would love to add yours!

## Gamma Chapter and What Is “Agriculture”

Over the past several years, many alumni have asked why Gamma isn't full of agricultural men. We answer this by reflecting on how the agricultural industry has changed.

The traditional agriculture industry continues to streamline. Consolidation continues with basic manufacturers of seeds, equipment, etc., while at the farm level, and consolidation continues as smaller farms increase in size as retirees and non-profitable farms exit the industry. During this consolidation, IT on the farm grows. Data analytics and automation in agriculture drive this change. Fertilizer, hybrid seed, and biotech shaped the past 100 years and IT will shape the next 20-30 years.

PSU has changed to keep up and lead the trends in agriculture. Today, finance, IT, environmental, and legal factors all play a huge role in the agriculture industry.

The Freedom of Information Act allows us to see how the entire university and PSU's College of Agriculture has changed.

### 2018 Enrollment

- 1,947 total ag undergraduates at PSU
- 1,560 ag undergraduates at main campus all four years
- 671 (43%) males are ag
- 74 (11%) are ag and Greek affiliated
- Four ag houses at PSU
- Four to five ag male freshmen available to join a fraternity per year

Gamma Chapter needs 35-40 young men to live in the house to stay fiscally viable. The new rules pertaining to Greek life at PSU have had a significant impact on recruitment. Local apartment leases are now signed in September, a year in advance of when the student moves into the apartment. Bottom line: we can only start recruiting second semester freshmen who will not move in until they are juniors because of these impediments.

To keep the house full, we need 80-100 members (101 brothers in fall of 2018), which is well above the statistics shown for 18 ag males. The other ag fraternities at PSU are struggling with membership.

- Alpha Zeta - 22 members (co-ed)
- Delta Theta Sigma - 19 members
- Tau Phi Delta - 12 members

AGP National is seeing similar trends at other campuses. Gamma Chapter is in a unique situation compared to other AGP chapters and the PSU ag fraternities in that we have many non-ag guys already involved. AGP National has been talking with recruiters from the traditional agriculture businesses, and they are struggling to find non-ag people to fill their positions. Gamma has been struggling for a way to bring more agriculture background and to improve undergraduate job placement. Having a good relationship with these recruiters can help Gamma men get placed versus other undergraduates. We are currently working with National and these recruiters to help fill these needs.

Now is not the time to be disappointed that Gamma is not full of agricultural men. Gamma is keeping up with agriculture's changes. Our membership has the highest all-Greek GPA and is above the all-university GPA. Our focus is to develop and implement programming to help educate our young men on agriculture and present opportunities in the agriculture industry. This education will make them ag, not by yesterday's definition, but by today's evolution.

We need your support in recruiting fine young men who achieve the best grades on campus and then get jobs in agriculture. More importantly, we want you to be proud that they wear AGP letters on their chests!

## John Shearer '48 (Γ586) Shares His Gratitude for AGP

“Alpha Gamma Rho, Finest in the Land.” This is the first line of one of our fraternity songs and I hope that the active brothers are still singing it whenever they get together. We had several good songs which we sang nearly every evening after dinner during those great years of 1948 to 1951.

Alpha Gamma Rho has always meant a lot to me; and it still does, even after I have passed my 90th birthday. We learned many things then: how to accept the differences in each other; how to be good stewards of our house; how to run a business (the operation of the house); how to plan and enjoy many dances and get-togethers; and so much more.

Being an AGP even helped me to get a job with Penn State in 1955. After graduating in agronomy, I farmed with my parents for four years. During that period, I married my Penn State sweetheart, Pauline Kriebel (we are still married after 65 years). For various reasons, Pauline and I decided to leave the farm in '55, and I was immediately hired by Penn State to become a county agent. I loved my 38 years then in Penn State Extension. It was hard work with many long days. No two days were alike. It was a challenge: creating new organizations; attending countless meetings; getting that weekly news column done on time; getting radio programs out to five local stations; visiting farmers, fruit growers, and homeowners to help solve their problems; developing budgets for county commissioner approval; and supervising a support staff of four to eight people.

I thank AGP for helping to make this possible. As I've said many times: My fraternity life helped as much as my classroom studies for a successful career.

Fraternally,  
**John Shearer '48 (Γ586)**

John retired from the Penn State Cooperative Extension Service 25 years ago after serving for 38 years. He and his wife, Pauline, live



at Menno Haven, a great retirement community in Chambersburg, Pa. John is happy to no longer mow the lawn or snow shovel at age 90!

# YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We are truly thankful to the 61 dedicated alumni who contributed \$6,345 to Gamma's annual campaign in 2018. These brothers, along with our other generous alumni who have given since the beginning of our annual campaign in 2012, recognize the importance of securing Gamma's future. Although we have lost many of these brothers during those years, they understood the importance of brotherhood and ensuring that future members have the same opportunities that they were awarded during their time at Gamma.

2018 contributors are listed below in their cumulative giving level by initiation year. If an error has been made in recording the amount of your gift, please contact our campaign coordinator at (785) 843-1661. Thank you for your continued support!

## 1910 Founders Member

(\$5,000 and up)

John Z. Shearer '48 (Γ586)

## Gamma Chapter Member

(\$2,500 to \$4,999)

William H. Yerkes III '49 (Γ592)

## Pink Rose Member

(\$1,000 to \$2,499)

Wilbur L. Avril '61 (Γ819)

Brian T. Sarris '69 (Γ960)

Rick G. Steinmeyer '69 (Γ968)

Eric Wagner '83 (Γ1994)

Jon J. Schroer '90 (Γ1289)

Matthew Keil '00 (Γ1446)

## Common Bond Member

(\$500 to \$999)

Ramsey L. Frank '54 (Γ689)

Robert D. Heilman '56 (Γ717)

G. Richard Olmstead '56 (Γ715)

Richard Dommel '57 (Γ736)

Wallace Haulik '61 (Γ820)

Joseph Strite '65 (Γ889)

Timothy L. Strickler '66 (Γ894)

James Schneck '68 (Γ927)

Wayne Martenas '72 (Γ1022)

Scott A. Stewart '83 (Γ1191)

Derald Hay '99 (Γ1432)

## Friends of Gamma Member

(\$100 to \$499)

Alvin G. Leidel '48 (Γ555)

Russell M. Orner '49 (Γ584)

Boyd E. Wolff '50 (Γ626)

David Stabler '51 (Γ620)

John S. Whitesell '53 (Γ664)

John R. Akers '55 (Γ692)

Richard C. McDonald Jr. '58 (Γ746)

Richard S. Carpenter '59 (Γ774)

Frederick Davis '63 (Γ842)

Arthur Moeller '63 (Γ844)

Dale Whitenight '65 (Γ896)

George Myatich '69 (Γ965)

John P. Palmieri '71 (Γ995)

C. David Vogt '75 (Γ1061)

Dick R. Harkcom '77 (Γ1096)

Timothy J. Edmond '78 (Γ1113)

Alan E. Daum '82 (Γ1173)

John D. Merenick '86 (Γ1236)

Raymond P. Sheaffer Jr. '87 (Γ1251)

Peter W. Mozes '93 (Γ1329)

Jonathan T. Tabolt '06 (Γ1522)

## Alumni Member

(Up to \$99)

Gerald M. Lyter '59 (Γ763)

Laurence E. Spencer Jr. '59 (Γ761)

Rex R. Richards '69 (Γ949)

Kenneth Dietz '77 (Γ1103)

Robert A. Kurilla '82 (Γ1180)

Fred A. Ream Jr. '92 (Γ1320)

Brian M. Green '97 (Γ1400)

Corey Hudson, *Beta Alpha* '99

Benjamin D. Baker '06 (Γ1518)

Carl Anderson IV '05 (Γ1508)

David T. Winters '06 (Γ1523)

Steve Eckert '08 (Γ1540)

Robert Wierman '09 (Γ1552)

Jordan Rolon '10 (Γ1565)

Sean M. Sweeney '11 (Γ1587)

Matt Disanto '12 (Γ1622)

Michael Grzywacz '12 (Γ1617)

Bradley Nixon '12 (Γ1597)

Clay Swackhamer '12 (Γ1602)

Sarp Engelman '13 (Γ1651)

Michael Donohue '18 (Γ1806)

## Gamma Chapter Brothers Achieve Academically Congratulations, Dean's List Makers

Here is the list of brothers who have achieved a 3.5 GPA or higher for the fall 2018 semester.

Michael Doyle  
Carl Ramsey  
Patrick Schlupp  
Brian Walters  
Thomas Albertson  
Nicholas Perilli  
Colin Blewitt  
Danny Glickman  
Peter Nelson '18  
Riley Bakes

Adam Batz  
Nicholas Bhaskar  
Matthew Cavadas  
Sid Chandran  
Justin Connors  
William De Filippis  
Michael Dimarino  
Gavin Fiurelli  
David Gold  
Matthew Kimick

Cameron Leary  
Nicholas Litak  
Ethan Mahler  
Austin Marrazza  
Evan Martin  
Miguel Rios Moran  
Parker Mulholland  
Boney Patel  
Andrew Richey  
Evan Rooney

Alexander Shapiro  
Noel Sheridan  
Nolan Smith  
Benjamin Tannenbaum  
Casimir Wolanin

## GAMMA CHAPTER ADAPTS AND EXCELS WITHIN PENN STATE'S CHANGING GREEK LIFE

In the fall 2018 semester, Gamma Chapter achieved the highest GPA (3.36) among all fraternities at Penn State University—doing so while being the third largest fraternity at Penn State is a monumental achievement. “Compared to all Greek organizations, we ranked 12th out of around 60 active organizations,” reports VNR Scholarship **Peter Nelson '18 (Γ1795)**. “More than 65 brothers achieved a 3.0 or higher and six members scored a perfect 4.0 for the semester.”

Penn State Greek life has been under a microscope for the past couple years and likely will be for the foreseeable future. As fraternities struggle to remain standing, Gamma Chapter is very proud to act as a fraternity should, making better men.

However, the turbulent Greek life scene at Penn State has presented numerous challenges for Gamma Chapter. Our biggest challenge was filling the

house. One change Penn State has made is deferred recruitment, meaning that students cannot enter recruitment until the spring semester of their freshman year. This prevented freshmen from moving into our house their sophomore year as they had already signed an apartment contract before recruitment began. This spring 2019 semester, only 19 brothers lived in the house. In the fall, however, that number will jump to 45, including 10 seniors. As the setting Gamma Chapter exists in is constantly changing, we have to adapt. We have adapted and excelled throughout the many challenges thrown our way.

Fraternally,  
**Mitchell Muskatel '18 (Γ1798)**  
Noble Ruler

## RECRUITMENT YIELDS 19 NEW AGPs

This spring semester we had a very successful rush. After going through the whole process with zone days and open recruitment, we gave out 27 bids and received 22 acceptances. This is a high return and something we're really proud of. We're very excited for rush in the fall semester and hopeful for another great class and high acceptance rate.

This semester we welcomed 19 new members to Gamma Chapter, making us the largest chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho at 116 brothers. The new members are majoring in agriculture business, engineering,

economics, chemistry, and finance. We are beginning to use AGRconnect, which is a new education tool for new members created by Alpha Gamma Rho.

Fraternally,  
**Dave Patalano '18 (Γ1780)**  
VNR Recruitment

**David Uribe '18 (Γ1778)**  
VRN Membership Development

## Founder's Day Tailgate Brings Collegians and Alumni Together



### Chapter to Launch Mentorship Program in the Fall

Gamma Chapter celebrated Founder's Day a little differently this year, having the meeting over a phone call and then celebrating with a tailgate at the Blue and White game the following weekend. The goal of this change was to make Founder's Day more of a celebration of our fraternity that both the undergraduates and alumni could enjoy.

The tailgate went very well as we shared stories and laughs with alumni over the entire weekend. The tailgate could not have happened without **Kevin Wimpfheimer '15 (Γ1685)** and **Jon Tabolt '06 (Γ1522)**; thank you to them for the help over the weekend. Gamma Chapter is striving to boost overall alumni involvement by having events like these where alumni and the undergraduates can form actual relationships.

As a final point, at the beginning of the 2019 academic year, Gamma Chapter will be launching an alumni mentorship/shadow program, where members seeking professional help can be matched up with alumni in their potential industry, who may be able to provide them with advice and experience to help them on their path. More details on the program will be sent out at the end of the summer.

Fraternally,  
**Colin Blewitt '18 (Γ1793)**  
VNR Alumni Relations



## Red Tower Stairs in Need of Repair

In the first half of my tenure as VNR Maintenance and Operations, most of the job has consisted of keeping the house in working order and doing my best within budget constraints to update the appearance of the house. For example, over the course of two weeks brothers repainted the entirety of Great Hall and the adjoining rooms. Outside, new mulch was placed under the shrubbery surrounding the house to improve the appearance for Blue and White Weekend and Parent's Weekend. The mulch should keep its color for at least a year.

However, there are still many projects that need to be done that the Co-op and I cannot do alone. For example, the back steps leading into Red Tower have broken down from use and time (see photo). This repair is important to improve the appearance of the house and, more importantly, the safety of those using the stairs. If any alumni would be willing to donate and help expedite this process of improving the house, it will be greatly appreciated.

Fraternally,  
VNR Maintenance and Operations

## Gamma Chapter Wins Intramural Championships

Gamma Chapter had various successful brotherhood events this year, such as our alumni football tailgate, NCAA March Madness watch party, and Parent's Weekend. We have been active in the Greek community by offering our volleyball court to be used in one of the five annual Greek Week competitions between all Penn State fraternities and sororities. Hosting the volleyball tournament was a great way for Gamma Chapter to meet people in different chapters. We have also excelled in intramural sports, shown by our ultimate frisbee team and 3-on-3 basketball team coming away with championship wins this year.

Fraternally,  
**Aidan Donnelly '18 (Γ1782)**  
VNR Activities

## CAMPUS EVENTS CONNECT CHAPTER TO COMMUNITY

In my role of maintaining solid relationships with not only Penn State but also the State College community, we have done several activities contributing to membership development of the members of Gamma Chapter. In March, along with the women of Alpha Omicron Pi, we organized a puppy social. With Centre County Paws, several puppies came to the house and students were invited to play with the puppies for \$5. We raised \$730 at this extremely successful event. In addition, we sponsored a blood drive, ran an educational programming event with Stand for State, and participated in the Neighbor 2 Neighbor program. We had a 100% participation rate with our new members for the school's new member education program, which gives us excellent standing with the university.

Fraternally,  
**Danny Glickman**  
VNR Planning



## CHAPTER ETERNAL

**Donald Lerch '38 (Γ416)** entered Chapter Eternal on August 9, 2018, in Juno Beach, Fla. He was a former resident of Bethesda and Rockville, spending his working years as a farm broadcaster and agricultural commodities and trade consultant in Washington and internationally. He enjoyed golf and was a longtime member of Congressional Country Club and the University Club. He was married to Agnes Zimmerman Lerch for 63 years and is survived by his daughters, Marilyn Greggs and Donna Bangor, four grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

**Charles C. Wilson '49 (Γ591)** entered Chapter Eternal in August 2018. He was a member of Penn State's 1952 graduating class, earning varsity letters in football and boxing, all while living with and loving his brothers at Gamma Chapter. He was a resident of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

**William Kincaid '51 (Γ622)** entered Chapter Eternal in Keizer, Ore., on December 10, 2018, at age 89. After graduating from Penn State in 1952, he enlisted in the United States Air Force, from which he received an honorable discharge in 1956. He was a life member of the Masons, Shriners, and Penn State University Alumni. In addition to work and church activities, Bill volunteered with Meals on Wheels, Salvation Army Food Bank, Greenville Free Medical Clinic, and Shriner's Hospital.

**Alan Terwilliger '54 (Γ678)** of Hegins, entered Chapter Eternal on January 6, 2019, at age 85. He was an avid fan of his Pittsburgh Steelers and Pittsburgh Pirates. He served as president of Tri-Valley CAN DO; board member and chairman of the Greater Pottsville Industrial Development Corp./Schuylkill Economic Development Corporation; and was a board member and chairman of the Schuylkill County Industrial Development Authority. Alan served in the military and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1956. He was named the G. Earl Stephenson Distinguished Citizen Award in 1989 by the Greater Winter Carnival for distinguished and unselfish service given to the Greater Pottsville community. He was part owner and former president of Huntsinger Farms Inc.

**Fred Schank '61 (Γ821)** of Marlton, N.J., entered Chapter Eternal on September 25, 2018. He was 77. Fred was the beloved husband of Eileen (Galdo) Schank; the loving father of Donna Peterson (Adam) and Fred Schank (Courtney); grandfather of Emma, Caleb, Blair, Lucas and Elliott; and brother of the late Bob Giffin. Fred worked for PECO for almost 40 years.



**Gamma Chapter Alumni Association**  
**P.O. Box 102**  
**Mexico, PA 17056-0102**

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**ATTENTION:** *This newsletter is intended for alumni, undergraduates, and parents. If your son is still attending Penn State, he will receive a copy at the chapter house. If he has graduated, please send us his permanent address to update our records. Thank you.*

## ALUMNI NEWS

**John Whitesell '53 (Γ664)** moved to Homewood Retirement Community in Martinsburg. E-mail: [ppyjsmjw@gmail.com](mailto:ppyjsmjw@gmail.com)

**Laurence Spencer '59 (Γ761)** was one of 21 new inductees in 1958. To celebrate 60 years of brotherhood, Laurence and his brothers celebrated the occasion at the home of **Gerry Lyter '59 (Γ763)** in August 2018. Although some brothers have passed, the group was excited to reunite after all of these years. Email: [nbr1farmer@aol.com](mailto:nbr1farmer@aol.com)



*Pen Hallowell Jr. '73 (Γ1030) and Ken Gross '73 (Γ1024) caught their limit on the first day of trout season! Both are retired happily*



*Bill Yerkes '49 (Γ592), Nancy Yerkes, Trish Hallowell, Penny Hallowell '48 (Γ571), at Penny's 90th birthday party in Bucks County, October 2018.*



*In November 2018, Trish and Penny Hallowell (right) visited Howard "Bud" '49 (Γ594) and Marvene Swaverly at their home in Pottstown.*