

GAMMA CRESCENT

GAMMA CHAPTER OF ALPHA GAMMA RHO FRATERNITY AT PENN STATE | SPRING 2021

BROTHERS GET BY IN A TOUGH YEAR

*Gamma Chapter Will Bounce
Back with Your Help*

Yet another unusual semester is coming to a close. As you can imagine, this has been a trying time for the undergraduates learning and operating in these conditions, as I'm sure all of you have struggled as well. Penn State has made this past year difficult on the students with conflicting requirements and burdensome measures on Greek life. As I mentioned last *Crescent*, the majority of the PSU student body caught COVID-19 very early last fall; the undergraduates estimated 85% of students contracted it by as early as October. The PSU student body skirted COVID testing to avoid mandatory 14-day social isolation, so the official Penn State statistics never reflected the reality of campus life. Our entire brotherhood had COVID very early on last fall within two weeks without any notable health complications, thankfully.

Meanwhile, the draconian measures placed on Greek life, plus mandatory costs for plexiglass and cleaning, have shuttered eight IFC fraternities this year alone. Our guys have been rock stars, following all rules while going through the proper channels to push back on the more ridiculous university and borough mandates. This year we've had a few parents pull their students from school, plus we've had increased operating costs. All that to say, we now have a lot of debt that we've pushed into the future. Any donations right now would give us a lot more flexibility and be much appreciated.

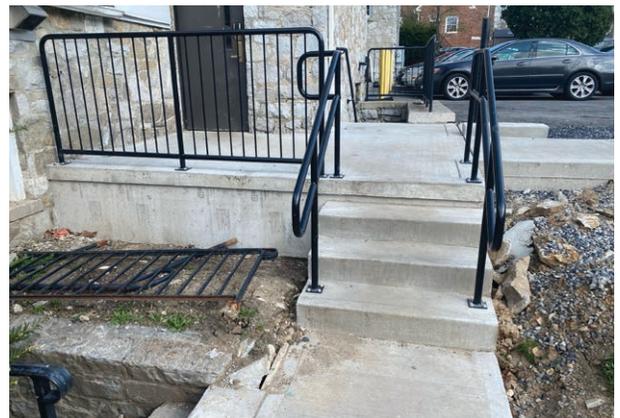
As you look through this *Crescent*, you'll see how great the brothers have done with recruiting this year, plus raising money for THON. Incredible stuff! I hope to see many of you by fall 2021, and as always, if you'd like to stay up to date or get more involved, reach out via email our contact us via our website.

Hope everyone is ready for a big Gamma Homecoming next fall!

Fraternally,
Jon Tabolt '06 (Γ1522)
Alumni President
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SIDEWALK UPDATE

In January, we completed concrete pours for the new chapter house sidewalk, followed by the new railing. Later in the semester we worked on a small retaining wall around a handicap parking space (not pictured), as well as topsoil and grass seed to clean up the area.



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ALUMNI UPDATE

Rob McLaren '15 Shares What He Learned from (and Brought to) Gamma Chapter

Growing up in upper-central bucks county was the perfect environment to match where Gamma Chapter finds itself culturally today. Buckingham, Pennsylvania, finds itself nestled between the state's great farmland and the fast-paced life of Philadelphia. There, I was able to find love for both ways of life, and I love to see Gamma Chapter benefitting from that same perspective.

I came to Penn State in the summer of 2015, and that semester I was lucky enough to get an early taste of state college life as well as ATP, because the house had been kept open for the summer. I knew after one July night in Great Hall that I had found a group of like-minded people, with whom I would find my footing in young adulthood.

As you all know well, time spent at 322 Fraternity Row passes much faster than it did back home with mom and dad. Before I knew it, I was standing at the last fire again, and this time I wasn't throwing anything

in it. In the four years I spent as a brother of ATP, what stands out the most is how much everyone changed together in that house. We learned how to become better men, both to each other and to our community. We also put together an encyclopedia of stories that all seem to start with, "I remember when..."

Nowadays, you can find me working my tail off as a young CPA on the audit side, but when my eyes aren't glued to a balance sheet, they're looking for the next getaway back into the great outdoors. As for what's next... well, that's the great question facing every man in his mid-20s. Please consider adding me on LinkedIn if you'd like.



Fraternally,
Rob McLaren '15 (Γ1701)
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GAMMA SPRINGS TOWARD SUCCESS

Chapter Breaks Record in THON Fundraising

Entering a new year with a new executive board, Gamma Chapter has stayed strong and full of excitement. With everyone being more accustomed to the abnormalities of a virtual semester, brothers adapted to the pandemic and still managed to go above and beyond.

This year, we had the privilege of welcoming a third THON child into our THON family. Even with a virtual THON, with dancers in apartments watching the livestream, we still broke our chapter record with our partnered sorority, Phi Sigma Sigma, by raising \$108,047 and placing ninth among all Greek organizations! An extra reward for the brothers raising over \$100,000 for the second year in a row was to bring back an old tradition: I agreed to be poled if we achieved this goal.

Despite recruitment being virtual and pushed back almost a full month, we still had great success in welcoming a class of 24 enthusiastic new members into our brotherhood. Once again, our brotherhood had an outstanding academic semester last fall, with a chapter GPA of 3.5 and 55 brothers on the Dean's List.

As a junior and Noble Ruler for my third semester, I have seen so much progress and improvement in all aspects of our fraternity. I would like to say that since I have been a part of Alpha Gamma Rho these past three years, brotherhood accountability has been at an all-time high this semester. The chapter house remains in great shape with more emphasis on respecting it, as well as more brothers holding each other responsible—not just the execs.

With all brothers understanding the reality of the many difficulties that all of Greek life has been facing, as well as the additional issues brought about by COVID-19, both financially and socially, Gamma Chapter recognizes that now, more than ever, we have to stick together, support each other, and focus on what we can control while celebrating the positives.



Fraternally,
Patrick Fitzsimmons '19 (Γ1817)
Noble Ruler
patrickfitz26@gmail.com | (862) 268-0938

RECRUITMENT REPORT

As everyone is aware, COVID-19 has severely affected recruitment. It had to be done through Zoom like last semester, which was a great challenge. The difference this semester was having many more potential new members. With the help of all brothers—especially my recruitment committee, composed of **Ryan Ackerman '20**, **Nick Galulo '20**, **Nick Whitman '20**, and **Andrew DiSanto '20**—we successfully ran a recruitment process that allowed all the brothers to meet the potential new members (PNMs) in the best way possible.

On "Zone Day," about 260 people showed up to our Zoom. Thankfully, we had a plan to make it as smooth as possible. I created five different breakout rooms that had about three active brothers with the PNMs at all times. Nick Whitman, other brothers, and I were in the main Zoom room talking to the recruits as they filtered in, as well as getting their information through a Google doc. Once we talked to them in the main room, we sent them to breakout rooms to talk to different brothers.

Overall, Zone Day was the most hectic event out of all them. We managed to filter the recruits to about 150. We then held different activities through Zoom, such as trivia and other online games. As we reached the end of the recruitment process, we narrowed it down 34 PNMs and had 24 to accept their bids.



Fraternally,
Jack Fascowich (Γ1845)
VNR Recruitment

ATP

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REPORT

As the third semester of online school continues, I am so glad to say that Gamma Chapter is up for the task. Meeting students online is difficult, but as a brotherhood we were thrilled with our recruitment results and proud to welcome our 24 new members. Together, we

have learned and practiced the house information and history. The new members are doing very well, and I am pleased to introduce you to them below. I can't wait to keep working with them and see what the future holds for Alpha Gamma Rho!



Fraternally,
Jeffrey Fichter (Γ1847)
VNR Membership Development



Aidan Bastarrika '21 is a civil engineering major from Flanders, N.J., who likes surfing and playing the guitar.



Jacob Berry '21 is a biomedical engineering major from Auburn, Mich., who loves skiing in his free time.



Robert Zelley '21 is from Milford, N.J., and loves watching and playing basketball.



Aidan O'Leary '21 is a marketing major from Southborough, Mass., who enjoys fishing.



Josh Meyers '21 is from Wernersville, Pa., and loves golf.



Ryan Macosko '21 is majoring in supply chain management. He is from Lansdale, Pa., and enjoys lifting weights and exercising in his free time.



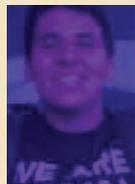
Chris Deitirch '21 is a finance major from Allentown, Pa., who loves watching and analyzing sports.



Kevin Dyke '21 is a chemical engineering major from Bel Air, Md. He is on the club lacrosse team at Penn State.



Ryan Yang '21 is a mechanical engineering major from Royersford, Pa., who enjoys watching football and playing guitar.



Chuck Carter '21 is a business major from Warrington, Pa., who enjoys golf in his free time.



Lucas Arabo '21 is a pre-med student from Franklin, Mich., who enjoys stock market research.



Sam Pedone '21 is from Holden, Mass., and enjoys following sports, especially football and the NFL draft.



Colin Becker '21 is a communications major from Havertown, Pa., who loves Philadelphia sports.



Matt Berkenstock '21 is a biorenewable systems major from Lancaster, Pa., who loves watching and playing basketball.



Sean Clark '21 is from Havertown, Pa., and enjoys playing golf and poker.



David Lukac '21 is from Pittsburg, Pa., and enjoys sports and video games.



Mitchell Kessler '21 is from Brookfield, Conn., and enjoys making music, playing ping pong, and writing food reviews. His brother is a Gamma Chapter alumnus.



Shane Pallante '21 is a business major from Phoenixville, Pa., who enjoys working out and playing baseball.



Dylan Chilowitz '21 is from Yorktown Heights, N.Y., and enjoys beach volleyball and spikeball.



Josh Wefers '21 is majoring in recreation and park and tourism management. He is from Richmond, Va., and enjoys tennis, skiing, and hiking. Josh's cousin, uncle, and great-uncle are ATP alumni from the University of Vermont.



Steven Bontempo '21 is from Morrisville, Pa., and likes playing basketball in his downtime.



Jack McLoughlin '21 is from Katonah, N.Y., and loves skiing, basketball, and video games.



Tyler Giese '21 is a mechanical engineering major from Thousand Oaks, Calif., who likes writing music, skateboarding, and working as a DJ.

ALUMNI RELATIONS REPORT

Given the past year's safety requirements, the events that we have had in previous years to engage with alumni, such as the Gamma Chapter Homecoming and tailgates, were not feasible. To adapt to this new virtual environment, we held many Zoom calls to connect and learn from alumni about job opportunities within agriculture across many majors. This is something I hope to continue this semester and in the fall, whether in person or virtual.

In addition, I have been working to fully digitize chapter photos from years past. This would allow everyone to access these photos and reminisce about the memories they have, which is something that has not been able to happen in over a year due to COVID-19. However, Penn

State plans to reopen the campus this fall, and as such the restrictions over tailgates and other large gatherings should be gradually lifted.

Although I have only experienced my position in this virtual world, I look forward to figuring out and planning safe in-person events similar to years past. I want to help Gamma Chapter connect with alumni and experience events that I and the younger brothers have only heard about. Stay tuned as we learn more about the fall semester!



Fraternally,
Kyle Ferguson
VNR Alumni Relations

Finance Report

Finances for this semester have not been as good due to the pandemic. Thankfully, we managed to pick up 24 good guys for next semester to replace most of the seniors we are losing this year, which will help keep us stay afloat next year. While we are losing more than we are keeping this year, out-of-house dues will be higher next year to make up for it.

Also, we are projected to have at least 28 members in the house next semester, and we are trying to increase that number. The new class has

multiple members who want to live in the house but are locked into leases. I am working with them to break their leases so they can live in the house next year. Since it will cost extra to break leases, I am also planning to raise in-house dues to account for it.



Fraternally,
Jacob Schindler
VNR Finance

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Twenty-three brothers are living in house this spring, and we are still working out how many will live here in the fall. The house is in good condition with a couple of small projects planned.

We have had a couple of issues with our heating in the house, but our boilers are now serviced and new thermostats are installed. On the third floor, we cleaned up our study room and turned it into a usable room again; many brothers are now getting good use out of it.

The brotherhood has plans for projects around the house. First, we intend to put a fence up around the yard outside of Blue Tower. We will also be working on treating the floors in Great Hall to make them less slippery when wet. Finally, we will be putting turf on the deck to make it nicer on the weekends.



Fraternally,
Jim Twomey (Γ1856)
VNR Maintenance and Operations

ACTIVITIES REPORT

As you've read so far, we've had to get creative in terms of social interactions. None of this is ideal, but it's the current world we live in and we have to adapt appropriately. This spring, we have organized many small and interesting ways for us to connect as a brotherhood. As some of you may have seen, **A.J. Mastrangelo '19 (Γ1839)** set up a snowboard/ski ramp going down the front steps of the house during the massive snow storm we experienced earlier this year. In the warmer weather brothers started playing pickup basketball games and going to the White and Blue courses to safely play golf.

Despite the lack of in-person events, we were all thrilled to participate in THON this year. With the help of everyone's donations and hard work throughout the year, we placed ninth among Greek pairs with our partners at Phi Sigma Sigma and raised over \$108,000! This is the highest amount of money we have ever raised—an absolutely insane number, especially with the challenges COVID-19 put on our donation efforts.



Fraternally,
Dylan Patrick '20 (Γ1850)
VNR Activities



Huge shoutout to our dancers this year! They stood the entire 46 hours despite the school's recommendation for them to take a break in the middle of THON.

They truly exemplified aggressive effort and became better men with each other's help. From left: Mike Donohue '18 (Γ1806), Adham Al-Bataineh '18 (Γ1794), and David Uribe '18 (Γ1778).



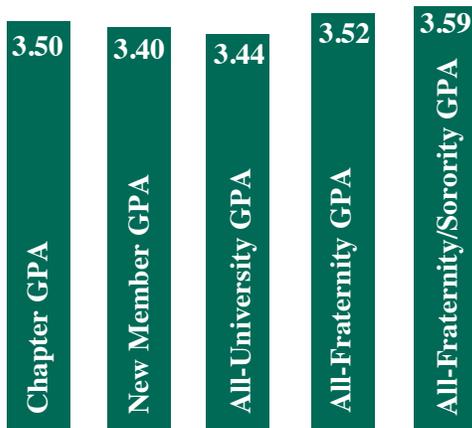
Zack Shaffer '18 (Γ1802) attempts to land a backflip off of the ramp that A.J. Mastrangelo '19 (Γ1839) constructed earlier this semester.

SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

As challenging as it was to adapt to virtual classes, the brothers have maintained excellent academic performance this school year. Through the help of alumnus **Jesse Hollowell '97 (Γ1392)**, who coordinates the freshman agriculture scholarship, VNR Maintenance and Operations **Jim Twomey (Γ1856)** and I have selected two of the nine applicants to receive the \$1,000 scholarship. Going forward, I plan on organizing the filing cabinets in the red lounge into a helpful, organized library collection.

We are also proud of the 53 brothers who made the fall 2020 Dean's List by achieving a GPA of 3.5 or above! That includes 32 seniors, 13 juniors, and eight sophomores.

As you can see below, fall 2020 was a particularly strong semester for the chapter.



Fraternally,
Bronson Kilroy
VNR Scholarship



Alumni Update

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Harold R. Wakefield '46 (Γ532) entered Chapter Eternal on September 14, 2020, at age 97. Harold was a 1941 graduate of Armagh High School in Pennsylvania and a 1948 graduate of Penn State with a master's degree in 1951. He served in the Army Air Corps from 1942 to 1945 as a navigator and flew in 35 combat missions. Harold was an engineer and worked for Pennsylvania Power & Lights in Lancaster. He taught at Penn State for three years and worked at Universal Cooperative for 36 years. He was a member of the Lions Club and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. Harold was an active Boy Scout leader in Columbiana County, Ohio, and Elkhart County, Indiana. He was a member of St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Goshen, and was an excellent gardener.

Maj. John C. Houck '48 (Γ570), 90, entered Chapter Eternal and was reunited with his wife of 67 years, Norma Jean, on April 18, 2017. He served in the Marine Corps, followed by a career in the Air Force. After retiring, he was a science teacher and youth counselor in central Florida. He was deeply loved and will be dearly missed by his six children, 12 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and his extended International family of students. His many talents included storytelling, making friends wherever he went, and his infinite sense of humor. His outgoing personality, smile, and laughter brought joy to all those around him.

Irving "Irv" Lowell Buck '54 (Γ683), retired colonel USAF, entered Chapter Eternal on August 17, 2020. Born on the beautiful Buck family Star Spring dairy farm in the rolling hills of Starrucca, Pa., on August 8, 1934, to Florence and Lowell Buck, he endured the untimely death of his father as a young boy. Supported by his quietly strong mother and loving extended family, Irv went on to graduate from Penn State University where he studied agricultural science. Foregoing childhood visions of becoming a cowboy or baseball star, Irv's ultimate dream of flying took him in an unexpected direction, trading in tractors for turbopans, and eventually traveling all around the world during back-to-back careers as a fighter pilot and commercial airline pilot/executive. After many years of flying as well as community and international service, Irv and his wife, Kathy, traveled the globe with dizzying frequency, reflecting their shared passion for culture, history, food, and interacting with people from all walks of life.

Kenneth L. Dietz '77 (Γ1103), 63, entered Chapter Eternal on February 2, 2021. Ken was the loving husband of Kim Johnson Dietz and they observed their 40th wedding anniversary in October of last year. In 1979, Ken graduated from Penn State University with a bachelor's degree in ag-mechanization. During his career, Ken worked 15 years for Ford New Holland, then five years for Deere and Company Incorporated. In 1999, Ken purchased the former Landis Bros. Inc. He was president and owner of what is now Deer Country Farm & Lawn Inc. Ken attended LCBC, Manheim Campus, and volunteered with Meals on Wheels in the Lancaster area. He was a passionate fan of Penn State Football. He held season tickets and never missed a tailgate. Ken was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, and cherished time spent with family. He was known for his leadership, kind and genuine spirit, smiling face, and helping hand.

ALUMNI NEWS

R. Bruce Hopkins '39 (Γ428) turned 101. Bruce studied agricultural engineering at Penn State and started his engineering career in tractor engineering at Allis-Chalmers Manufacturing Co. Later, Bruce and his wife, Betty, lived in Iowa for 55 years, where he worked in product engineering at the John Deere Waterloo Tractor Works. After that, Bruce started a consulting practice and also taught machine design in the mechanical engineering department at Iowa State University for 10 years. Bruce retired in 2011 and lives in Wyomissing, Pa. Email: rbhopkins@verizon.net

GAMMA CRESCENT



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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.

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