

Phi Tau seniors, all 2012 initiates (l to r): Marcus Wetlaufer, Matt Coster, Ankith Harathi, Javi Ortiz, Nitin Rajinikanth, LT Nault, Lex Shivakumar.



NEWS FROM THE KNOLL



ALPHA TAU CHAPTER, IN REVIEW

Hello, Alumni!

First and foremost, thank you for reading this new edition of *News from The Knoll*. We are very excited to share our experiences from this past semester with you and have included a host of articles written by both undergraduates and alumni for your reading pleasure.

My name is Alexander Gomez, and I am the Alpha Tau Chapter's new vice president of alumni relations. I am a current sophomore from Teaneck, New Jersey, and am studying policy analysis and management in the College of Human Ecology. I am very excited to get to know you all and to help you keep in touch with the chapter and its activities.

This edition features messages from our chapter president, Brian McGovern '13, and from Timon Amirani '14 about the chapter's continued philanthropy efforts, Daniel Masetti

'14 about house improvement, Jack Schog '14 on our brotherhood activities, and Paul Orshansky '14 on the chapter's January rush week. Our membership orientation officers, Tom Flagiellp '12 and Javi Ortiz '12, will also introduce our new class of brothers. Finally, we have an alumni spotlight on Dr. Barry Diener '01.

In terms of events, we held our annual New York City networking and social dinner at Schapiro's NYC on the Lower East Side on March 14. There was a great turnout, with 45 alumni gathering for a delicious meal with the current undergraduates and a night out in the big city. It was a great time, filled with reminiscing and reunions between brothers. If you were unable to make it, I highly recommend that you try to next year, because it is a lot of fun, and I know the undergraduates love meeting alumni and hearing about their escapades while at Cornell.

We are now in the process of planning a summer reunion. More details on that to come, but it will take place on Saturday, June 6, so save the date! We are very excited to host you all at the house and look forward to seeing you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me by phone at 201-560-7555 or by email at vpar@cornellpkt.com. If you are not receiving updates from the chapter, please let me know so that I can update your information accordingly. Additionally, if you have any comments or suggestions about past or future events, please let me know! We are in the process of exploring new events and initiatives and would love any input that you may have.

In Phi,
Alexander Gomez '14
Vice President of Alumni Relations

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Hello, alumni, family, and friends of Phi Kappa Tau. My name is Brian McGovern, and I am the chapter president for 2015. I am a junior from Eastchester, New York, majoring in policy analysis and management.

Having spent the past year as philanthropy chair for the house, I sought to immerse myself in a role where I could spread the principles a brother embodies while serving the community to all other areas of the house. As president, I will strive to ensure that the brothers of Phi Kappa Tau continue to act as leaders in the Cornell community and to shine positive light on the Greek system in a time when many popular news stories focus on fraternity problems.

Interfraternity Council is continuing many initiatives this semester, both to boost public perception of the Greek system and to work with Cornell to extend the new-member education period from its current length of four weeks. These committees are the Public Relations Committee,

Greek Week Committee, and the New Member Education Committee. Greek Week is largely a recruitment event that celebrates Greek life while concurrently exposing freshmen to Greek members in "dry" settings. The week aims to increase the knowledge freshmen have of the Greek system in the fall semester, before the single, formalized rush week in January. With many younger men applying to these committees, we hope to see a return in IFC involvement for Phi Kappa Tau.

As for the Alpha Tau Chapter's relations with National, I have attended two national programs: Presidents' Academy in Houston in January, and the New England Regional Conference in Troy, New York, in February.

We continue to value a strong relationship with National and to remain a top-level chapter in their eyes.

In terms of more local logistical news, we have a new chapter advisor on board: Benjamin Tudor, a Phi Kappa Tau alumnus from Centre College (Delta Chapter). Ben is a graduate student in the College of Human Ecology's Sloan Program in
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New England Regional Conference in Troy, New York, on February 7.



From left: President Brian McGovern '13, Risk Manager Alex Pomerenk '14, VPAR Alex Gomez '14.

From left: Treasurer Binian Jared '13, Recruitment Chair Paul Orshansky '14, Philanthropy Chair Timon Amirani '14.

From left: Eric Bellin '11, Sam Nelson '12, Charlie Schwartz '11, Alex Pomerenk '14, Mike Truhlar '14.



NYC TRIP & BROOMBALL HIGHLIGHT BROTHER EVENTS

I joined the Alpha Tau Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau because I meshed so well with all brothers of the fraternity. As soon as I stepped foot in our house, I felt that Phi Kappa Tau would give me a place where I could feel at home in this large university setting. Now, as brotherhood chair, it is my duty to instill a sense of brotherhood by creating opportunities for brothers to grow even stronger bonds and lifetime friendships.

The spring semester started off with a fun-filled night before rush week, where the brotherhood went to an ice hockey rink in downtown Ithaca to play an annual game of broomball. With only minor bumps and bruises, this event will be something everyone looks forward to next year.

Shortly after that, Phi Kappa Tau welcomed the addition of 15 new brothers of the Omicron Class, eager to partake in any opportunity to form strong ties to the older members. The as-

sociate class brotherhood chair, Logan Allen '15, brought the brotherhood together for an afternoon full of pizza and all sorts of outdoor snow activities, including snow football and a massive snowball fight. Our chapter has been looking forward to meeting alumni on our annual New York City trip and to many outdoor activities once the harsh Ithaca winter starts to disappear.

This position has given me the opportunity to help facilitate bonds, forming a stronger brotherhood, and has taught me the importance of brotherhood within the chapter. I am looking forward to planning events for brothers to enjoy in their three and a half short years as active brothers of the Alpha Tau Chapter, even after my term as brotherhood chair comes to a close.

Jack Schnog '14
Brotherhood Chair

FALL RUSH BRINGS TWO NEW MEN

Last October, the Alpha Tau Chapter initiated two new brothers as members of the Omicron Class: Michael Merrill and Michael Truhlar.

Merrill, a sophomore from Buffalo, New York, is studying information science and currently plans to attend medical school after graduating. Aside from serving as Phi Tau's steward, he works in a computational population genetics lab and writes for the *Cornell Daily Sun's* science section. As he watched his fellow Omicron Class from this spring discover the house, he further appreciated the brotherhood he has built here. His proudest accomplishment is winning a trip to Las Vegas to compete in an entrepreneurship competition with brother Dan Masetti.

Truhlar is a sophomore from Stony Brook, New York, studying operations research and information engineering with an interest in industrial data analysis. As an associate, he held four leadership positions in his class and built a new table for the house. Besides his contributions to Phi Tau, Truhlar works with Cornell Information Technologies as a service-desk consultant. Since joining Phi Tau, he has been present at our weekly Tau Tuesday events, claiming that our strong sense of brotherhood is what makes him most "proud to be." One of his proudest accomplishments is running a mile in 4:47 during his senior year of high school.

Tom Flagiello '12
Fall Membership Orientation Officer

DINNER & BROTHERHOOD EXPERIENCE

The spring of 2015 has proved to be a challenging season for The Knoll. But despite the dense snowfall, intermittently functional boilers, and subzero temperatures, our brotherhood remain as close-knit and warm as ever. On any given night, one will find a cluster of Phi Taus huddled around the dinner table, enjoying the latest culinary exploit of our chef, Matt Lea, and sharing stories of whimsy and revelry. The marks and divots in the tables speak of a home well-worn with the friction of all-too irresponsible Tuesday nights, while ancient yearbooks, charters from our fraternity's birth, and last decade's scrapbooks share the same stories of years past.

Our cozy home on The Knoll has experienced its fair share of fraternal escapades over the years, the results of which mean some of our chairs, mirrors, remote controls, chandeliers, and tables have ended up the worse for wear. Thankfully, the board of directors has purchased four new tables for the home, and a few handy members have contributed to repairing the fre-

quent minor breakages.

In addition, some real improvements have been made. The fledgling Omicron Class, for example, is leaving its mark by removing the decaying storage shed out back and constructing a new enclosure for the trash dumpster. Ladders have been created for custom bed lofts, and a few of our precious charters have been waterproofed and reframed.

Now The Knoll continues, with new and repaired armor, to weather the storms of both Ithaca and rambunctious young adults, its scraped walls a documentary and its fresh new tables a canvas: a canvas on which we eat hot meals in subzero weather, a canvas around which we tell absurd stories against the backdrop of a reasonable world, and a canvas in which we leave the memory-infused markings of a fraternal life, a life in which we take just pride.

Daniel Masetti '14
House Manager

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

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Health Administration. Having served as treasurer of his chapter for two years as an undergraduate, Ben has faced a multitude of challenging circumstances. Ben, a native Kentuckian, born and raised about an hour away from his *alma mater*, will be able to provide fresh insights on how to approach difficult chapter tasks and problems. Over the course of the semester, I hope to meet with Ben frequently and to make sure that his transition from involvement in Delta Chapter to our beloved Alpha Tau Chapter is seamless.

Ben replaces B.J. Siasoco '03, who has advised us over the years and is a valuable alumnus.

Lastly, I am very thrilled with the current state of our executive board. With motivated brothers in positions that they enjoy and thrive in, I am certain that 2015 will have good things in store for the Alpha Tau Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau.

In phi, Brian McGovern '13
President

SPRING CLASS SHOWS ITS STRENGTH

For the four weeks of February, I had the pleasure of guiding 15 fine men through their associate membership process. Even with the process only lasting four weeks, the Omicron Class proved its drive and character. Led by their class president and vice president, Joe Antonakakis '15 and Brendan Coyle '15, the new members completed the association process through hard work. In keeping with the duties of associates of Phi Kappa Tau they made sure none of them fell behind in the process. I can proudly say that each and every one of them has earned his place in this brotherhood.

As always, each associate class must complete a house improvement and philanthropy project.

Given the brevity of the process and the importance we place on academics, they are still working on both of them as I write this. They have raised about half their philanthropy goal solely by selling hot cider in Collegetown. This year's house-improvement project is the construction of a wood enclosure for our trash dumpster, as well as tearing down the deteriorating shed in the backyard. The project will reach completion once the ground thaws out and they can sink the posts of the enclosure.

Perhaps the best thing about this new class is its variety. Each member brings a completely different and great perspective. Some are engineers on project teams, one makes his own music, one

is involved in an improv comedy group, another is treasurer for one of the larger organizations on our campus that supports the LGBT community. No matter what they do as individuals, what resonates among everyone is that they are passionate about what they do. That passion is what brings them together. A group that might not seem to mesh together is actually a perfect fit for each of them. They all bring something unique to the table, and they've formed strong brotherhood bonds.

In Phi, Javier Ortiz '12
Spring Member Orientation Officer

RECRUITMENT REMAINS STRONG

I'm proud to announce that 15 new and outstanding gentlemen have been initiated into our Alpha Tau Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau. Following another successful rush week, our new Omicron Class has completed the association process diligently, and each man looks forward to assuming his role as an active member of our brotherhood. With the second year of the shortened four-week process in the books, I can confidently say that Alpha Tau has skillfully adapted to Cornell's new regulations governing Greeks during the rush process while also providing a fulfilling new-member process for our newly initiated members.

Phi Kappa Tau's rush week traditions remained intact under the leadership of Alex Crooker, as the brotherhood still participated in events such as broomball, paintball, hibachi night, and the bid dinner. We've also made new traditions under the university's new rush policies, like a day of winter sports prior to night smokers.

The pool of recruits this semester was as strong as ever, with the limited time not affecting the amount of people interested in learning more about Phi Kappa Tau. A staggering number of potential recruits walked through our doors

this rush week; just over 200 candidates had the opportunity to speak to some of our brothers. We gave out 23 bids, and the brothers remained enthusiastic throughout the period, growing more acclimated to the new regulation, which have now been in place for several semesters. Risk has been reduced significantly, and our chapter continues to infuse a lot of fun activities into the short amount of time given to us by Cornell.

This spring semester, recruitment barbecues will again soon become a regular activity as the weather gets warmer and our newly initiated members begin to assist with the beginning of next semester's fall recruitment.

Phi Kappa Tau will continue its history of recruiting outstanding men through the brothers' numerous on-campus activities and continued emphasis on meeting new recruits. The energy and personality of our brotherhood will help us through any new restrictions placed on our recruitment of new members, and each of us looks forward to many more successful years and memories here at 106 The Knoll.

Alex Crooker '13
Recruitment Chair

SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

Tom Flagiello majors in human biology, health, and society, with a minor in health policy. He studied abroad in Florence, Italy, for a semester and is very involved in Phi Tau (MOO, risk manager, secretary). Tom is a biochemistry teaching assistant, has been an employee of Fine Arts Library for three years, and is involved with Cornell Catholic Community and Cornell Italian Society. His post-grad plans: working as a research technician at Weill Cornell Medical College in NYC before continuing to medical school. He will be with a subset of the Department of Genetic Medicine that conducts research utilizing gene-transfer techniques for disease treatment.

Ankith Harathi graduated from Cornell *summa cum laude* in December, majoring in mechanical engineering with a minor in applied economics and management. He held the roles of the cooling-team leader and flow-team engineer on the Formula Racing (FSAE) Project Team, participated in Cornell Running Club and Model United Nations, and served as scholarship chair in Phi Kappa Tau. Post-grad plans: he will be working at Stroud International Consulting, a firm specializing in engineering operations and capital projects management.

SERVICE REMAINS CRUCIAL TO PHI TAU

Philanthropy and service are a key part of being a Phi Tau, especially here at Cornell. This past year, brothers spent countless hours both on and off Cornell's campus to improve the local community.

During the fall semester, we held our annual tug-of-war competition, Phi Tug, raising funds and awareness for SeriousFun Network, Phi Tau's national philanthropy, founded by the late Paul Newman. This semester, we are partnering with other organizations on campus to do joint

philanthropy events to help SeriousFun. We have an event scheduled with the Phi Sigma Sigma sorority, with the help of Loco Cantina and Connections Pizza, as well as our annual seesaw marathon with Kappa Delta.

In addition, our newest brothers participated in fundraising efforts to aid SeriousFun by selling baked goods and cider in Collegetown.

During the first weekend of our spring break (March 27-29), more than ten brothers planned

to go to Camp Boggy Creek, a SeriousFun camp in Eustis, Florida. We are also planning trips to local charitable organizations, such as the nearby Loaves & Fishes, to support its efforts in feeding the community.

We hope to be even more involved in the local community in future semesters.

Timon Amirani '14
Philanthropy Chair

ΦΚΤ ALUMNI NEWS

“Retired and enjoying life,” exclaims **John Babbitt ’66!** Get in touch with him to find out what he’s up to: johnbabbitt_2000@yahoo.com; 908 Collier Ct., #501, Marco Island, FL 34145.

“Thanks for all the great alumni communications,” says **Joel Zackin ’80.** “It is really great how you all seem to have your act together! Keep the newsletters rolling. Good luck with school, and have fun with the house.” Joel signs his note, giving himself the title “House a--hole numerous times in the early ’80s.” He then goes on to explain: “Not sure if you have continued this house leadership position. In the ’80s, elections for this post of honor would be held at dinner whenever a nomination was brought up and seconded. Of course, bringing a nomination to the membership could cause the nominator to be immediately nominated. The merits of the candidates were discussed, and an election was held. The new officer was presented with a tube of Preparation H by the previous a--hole. Sometimes, words or actions called for multiple elec-


tions in a single night, although many folks held the office for months. It required special skills to hold the office for months.” Get back in touch with Joel at joel_zackin@cyclone.com or at 103 Everit St., New Haven, CT 06511.

“Not much new here,” writes **Christopher Mager ’84.** “Still working at BNY Mellon, where I currently serve as managing director, head of market segments for the treasury services business. Most of my non-working hours are spent at soccer, basketball, cross-country, and now track events for my sons (14 and 11), some of which I coach. I run when I can, but nothing like **Phil Scinto ’84** and Brenda Scinto (Phi Tau little sister)! I see them a few times a year; they sometimes come to see my boys run or play, or we visit them in Cleveland. My wife, Jennifer, is doing fine too. We just had a great ski/board trip to Gore Mountain in the Adirondacks a few weeks ago.” Reconnect with Chris at magercj@gmail.com or at 214 Lakevue Dr., Cranberry Township, PA 16066.


Derek Paxton ’11 is in Boston, working on his master’s degree in aerospace engineering at MIT. Write him a note to find out how he’s doing: 50 Plymouth St., #2, Cambridge, MA 02141.

CHAPTER ETERNAL


We regret to announce the deaths
of the following alumni:




John Everett Dodge ’48
January 31, 2015



John C. Britting ’48
September 8, 2014



John H. Schuenger Jr. ’54
February 17, 2015



Gilbert I. Smith ’41
November 5, 2014

DIENER ’01 HAPPY WITH MEDICAL CAREER

Barry Diener ’01 stood before the chapter one day in the spring of 2002, giving an election speech, and said he planned to become a pediatrician. The brothers might not realize it, he said, but during the summer, he handled medical aid for a town camp on Long Island.

All these years later, Barry is, in fact, a pediatrician, along with having served on the chapter’s board of governors since he graduated from Cornell in 2004. Now, he is a family man as well.

Barry has a practice in pediatric pulmonology at Stony Brook Children’s Hospital, focusing on children with acute and chronic respiratory illnesses. He also is an assistant clinical professor at Stony Brook University, where he teaches medical students who are on their pediatrics rotation, as well as residents and fellows.



Barry with his wife, Ilana, and daughter Addison Grace.

“I’m happy with my decision in my career and the effect I have on the people I work with,” he said. Pediatric pulmonology is based on building relationships, he said, because he works with children with complex medical problems and chronic care. Lately, he has branched out into studying how health care is managed in a changing society through quality improvement, looking for more efficiency and the need to re-interpret how things are done in our changing landscape of medicine.

That follows a theme from his days in Phi Tau as the chapter re-founded and set about establishing its recruitment, new member, alumni, and social programs. He served as alumni relations chair (VPAR) and membership orientation officer (MOO).

“It was a community, a place you could go, but a place where we were really pushing each other to see what this thing was and if it would last,” Barry said. “We didn’t think it would last.”

Barry graduated from Cornell with a bachelor’s in biology, with a molecular and cellular concentration. He studied medicine at New York Medical College in Westchester County and did his residency there. He next worked through a fellowship at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

“I wanted a very hands-on education and was lucky enough to have a small hospital in a metro area,” Barry said. “I got a really good picture of what I could do in my practice.” This experience allowed Barry to obtain a fellowship to study pediatric pulmonology at one of the top children’s hospitals in the world.

He married Ilana Sarfati, who was from his hometown of Plainview, New York, in 2011. In January, they welcomed Addison Grace. They live in Commack, New York, near Stony Brook.

Barry likes being on the board of governors because it brings his fraternity experience full circle.

“It’s a way to reflect on what we did and to see how this thing has grown, how the chapter has taken off,” he said.

Scott Conroe ’01

NEWS FROM THE KNOLL is published by the Alpha Tau Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity at Cornell for its members & friends. News should be sent to Alumni Records Office, Alpha Tau of Phi Kappa Tau, P.O. Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851-0876.