



# NEWS FROM THE KNOLL



## LETTER FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Hello alumni, family, and friends of Phi Kappa Tau. The chapter is alive and well this semester, and I am quite proud of the efforts and strides made by the officers on the executive board.

One of the main challenges we encountered this semester was how to improve attendance at our many events. Instead of resorting to disciplinary methods, I decided to revamp what was previously called the President's Challenge. Under a new initiative—the President's Cup—brothers compete as part of a team-based incentive system, with greater prizes corresponding to each finishing place.

Every brother in the house was randomly placed on a team evenly composed of executive board members as captains, along with the remaining brothers of each associate class. This new system allots points for meeting/event attendance (e.g. chapter, social, brotherhood, philanthropy), community service hours, and ritual attendance. The President's Cup has fostered more interaction and teamwork between the younger and older brothers in the house. I hope this practice will continue and grow in the future as a way for the executive board and other active members of the fraternity to challenge other brothers to attend and participate in the range of events the house offers.

As for our standing at Cornell University, Phi Kappa Tau continues to be at the frontier of the 21st-century fraternity experience.

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*Top photo: Members who went on the fall brotherhood trip to Montreal in October gather as a group.*

## VP ROUND-UP: AN ISSUE PACKED WITH CHAPTER NEWS

Dear Alumni,

Thank you for reading the newest edition of *News From The Knoll*. Our chapter has been very busy this semester and we are very excited to update you on the current state of the house. Most recently, the Alpha Tau Chapter hosted its annual Homecoming event. We were very pleased to welcome back alumni from different generations to join us for a day of tailgating and other festivities. The undergraduates love see-

Montreal, and **Graham Sabo '15** speaks on the current state of The Knoll.

This issue of *News From The Knoll* is my last as vice president of alumni relations. However, I will be actively involved in transitioning my successor into this position and am confident he will be able to effectively continue our alumni outreach and foster strong ties to our chapter.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions



*Paul Orshansky '14, Akshay Jain '15, Eric Oberman '14, Alex Gomez '14.*

ing alumni back on campus and we are more than willing to host anyone who decides to come back!

In this edition, our president, **Brian McGovern '13**, discusses the current state of our chapter. **Akshay Jain '15** describes the chapter's continued philanthropy efforts and our new event, Spike Tau, while we look back at Phi Tug. **Paul Orshansky '14** discusses the chapter's recruitment efforts, and **Sam McDermott '12** introduces our newly initiated brothers. **Jack Schnog '14** shares some stories from our chapter's annual Brotherhood Trip to

or concerns via email at [vpar@cornellpkt.com](mailto:vpar@cornellpkt.com). If you are not receiving updates from the chapter, please let me know and I will update our chapter alumni database. Additionally, if you have any comments or suggestions about past or future events, please take a moment to let us know how we are doing by filling out this survey: <http://www.cornellpkt.com/survey>.

In Phi,

Alexander Gomez '14  
Vice President of Alumni Relations



# CHAPTER'S FALL CLASS LARGEST SINCE RE-FOUNDING



*The fall associate class hard at work in the library.*

I am proud to announce that nine outstanding gentlemen have been initiated into the Alpha Tau Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau. This is very exciting, as it is the largest fall class since the refounding era. We are very happy with the direction we are headed in as a chapter and look forward to having as cohesive a brotherhood as ever. We feel the shortened four-week association process has not limited how much these men can learn and grow before becoming brothers of Phi Kappa Tau. The Pi class is currently working on installing a new serving station for dinners as its house improvement project.

Though fall rush at Cornell is a very relaxed

procedure, the number of rushees this semester was as large as ever, with the limited time not affecting the number of people interested in learning more about Phi Kappa Tau. Given its informal nature, fall rush normally does not bring many potential recruits to each house, but we were astounded when more than 30 men showed interest in our fraternity. Ultimately, 11 bids were given out this semester, and two associates accepted bids given to them in previous semesters, resulting in the nine associates. The brothers remained enthusiastic throughout the period, growing more acclimated to the strict restrictions that have now been imposed 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 the university.

As this fall semester goes on, recruitment will continue to be a central focus for our chapter. It is always essential to recruit extraordinary gentlemen and scholars so as to preserve our ideals and endeavors as a house internally as well as at Cornell as a whole. Phi Kappa Tau will continue its history of recruiting outstanding men through the brothers' numerous on-

campus activities and continue its emphasis on meeting new recruits. The energy and personality of our brotherhood will help us through any new restrictions placed on recruitment of new members, and each of us looks forward to many more successful years and memories here at 106 The Knoll.

Paul Orshansky '14  
Recruitment Chair



*Paul Orshansky '14, second from left.*

## NEW-MEMBER PROGRAM SHORT BUT SOLID



developed in their time at Cornell. These included introduction to acting, networking and professionalism, the basics of golf, a crash course in longboarding, and social responsibility. The lessons gave the associates a glimpse into the breadth of our brotherhood's interests and talents.

Together, they raised \$602 for our national philanthropic partner, SeriousFun Children's Network, by setting up a variety of events to raise both awareness and funds.

In mid-October, brothers voted the associates into the chapter to gain full membership through the initiation ceremony. It is with great honor that we welcome **Benedict Harvey, Alec Dean, Adrian Alepuz, Connor Duncan, Marvin Rodriguez, Max Senkovsky, Cam Curtin, Cameron Boroumand,** and **Jack Press** into the brotherhood of Phi Kappa Tau.

Sam McDermott '13  
Membership Orientation Officer

This fall, after an outstanding fall recruiting effort by chapter Recruitment Chair **Paul Orshansky '14**, Phi Tau associated and initiated nine men into the Alpha Tau Chapter. Historically, fall class sizes have been anywhere from two to five men, but due to interest from both brothers and rushees alike, a larger class was chosen. With open minds and an urge to learn, the eight sophomores and one junior embarked on the four-week process toward full membership.

Associates attended lessons, including national Phi Tau history, fraternity organization and leadership, and local Alpha Tau history, taught very courteously by domain director **Scott Conroe '01**. To ensure that the process was as enjoyable as it was informative, many brothers stepped up to give lessons that would either develop them professionally or teach them a skill they may not yet have



*Tyler Neace '13, center, with the associates*



# SPIKE TAU BECOMES NEW CHAPTER FUNDRAISER

Every semester, Phi Tau shows its overwhelming enthusiasm for both service and philanthropy. This semester, we found a new way to show our commitment to both.

We held an event we had never attempted before in the hope of reinvigorating our philanthropic spirits: Spike Tau, a 32-team spike ball tournament, was held on the Arts Quad to benefit SeriousFun Children's Network, Phi Tau's national philanthropic partner since 1995. The event far surpassed our initial monetary projections, raising \$710, and we happily plan to continue it in the future. Spike Tau replaced Phi Tug, the chapter event held since 2001.

We also partnered with the Cornell business fraternity Phi Gamma Nu to host an event at a restaurant, raising another \$405 for

SeriousFun. Our fall pledge class will also be hosting its own philanthropic event this semester, which I will help guide them through.

As a chapter, we have placed great emphasis on serving the community this semester. We attend the Ithaca branch of Loaves and Fishes every Thursday to prepare and serve meals to local underprivileged families. We have also planned a service trip in November to Double H Ranch in the Adirondacks, the SeriousFun camp closest to Cornell. The interest in attending the event has been remarkable. We hope to further expand our philanthropic and service related efforts in the coming semester.

Akshay Jain '15  
Philanthropy Chair



Javi Ortiz '12 at Loaves and Fishes.



Spike Tau gets a promo from (left to right) Jeff Witz '14, James Cheung '14, Jack Schnog '14, and Akshay Jain '15.



Dan Masetti '14, left, competes in the final match of Spike Tau. Dan and his partner finished second to a team of two freshmen.

## PHI TUG SAYS FAREWELL

Phi Tug, the tug of war tournament that served as the chapter's major annual fundraiser since 2001, was replaced this fall by a spike ball tournament. But it had a great run. It will be remembered by many alumni and raised thousands of dollars during its time.

In the spring of 2001, the colony of Alpha Tau was trying to regain its charter, increase visibility on campus, and hone its service mission. The men created a tug of war event with divisions for men's, women's, and co-ed teams. Every chapter tried to raise money for the national philanthropy, the Hole in the

Wall Gang Camp, which later evolved into the SeriousFun Children's Network.

The event took place on the Arts Quad and involved teams from sororities, fraternities, lightweight crew, and clubs. Cornell University's concern about damage to the quad caused the chapter to move Phi Tug to North Campus, where the spacious lawns could host multiple tug battles at a time and freshmen could see a fraternity in action. Some years the event had open and Greek divisions, and sometimes sororities sent two or three teams. The Big Red wrestling team dominated, winning 10 times

even when challenged occasionally by Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and the rugby club.

A deejay provided music, people could donate, and businesses provided food and prizes. Every year, hundreds of dollars were raised for SeriousFun.

But recruiting teams became more difficult, there were more conflicts with other service events, and the chapter decided to try something different. Of course we hope Spike Tau will keep the money flowing.

Scott Conroe '01  
Alumni Communications

## NEWS FROM THE KNOLL

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# ΦΚΤ ALUMNI NEWS



*Brian McGovern '13 competes in Spike Tau.*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

We received awards this past semester for Most Outstanding Chapter and Outstanding Social Responsibility and are continually highlighted by the university as a model organization.

In addition, individual awards were given to **Javier Ortiz '12** for Outstanding Chapter Officer and **Chris Cox** for Outstanding New Member.

In spite of these accolades, our chapter consistently works to improve its educational programming and increase its commitment to the Ithaca community and SeriousFun Children's Network. Whether it's having multiple representatives from organizations come in to talk about issues related to sexual assault and bystander intervention or setting up partnerships with Loaves and Fishes and the Double H Ranch, Phi Kappa Tau always aims to improve.

The end of this semester brings the end of my time serving as chapter president. It has been a privilege to hold this position for an organization that has truly shaped my college career and helped me develop as a leader. With many younger brothers stepping into significant positions of leadership in the past year, I am confident that the 2016 executive board will be just as successful. I wish the chapter the best of luck in the coming year.

In Phi,  
Brian McGovern '13  
Chapter President



*Graham Sabo '15 addresses a house gathering.*

100 years old and has housed professors and multiple student organizations is incredible. Each day when I wake up, I am amazed by the view out of my third-floor window, which overlooks Ithaca in the valley below. It inspires a real appreciation for how incredible this house must have been when Professor Tanner built it in 1902.

But living in such an old house lends itself to some issues. This semester there have been a few problems but also a lot of fixes and improvements. To start off, issues with the new hot water system caused radiators to come on early in August when outside temperatures were in the 80s. This problem was fixed promptly, and the house was no longer a sauna.

This semester, the large associate class has been tasked with creating a new food serving station in the annex to replace the station that

## HOUSE MANAGER RISES TO THE TASKS OF UPKEEP, REPAIR

Living on The Knoll has been a great experience. The history in a facility that is more than

has greatly deteriorated in the past couple of years. Last spring's associate class added a new enclosure for the trash bin and tore down and discarded the dilapidated shed that was behind it. This project has greatly improved the look of the back yard and created a better space for parties.

We are looking into purchasing more chairs for the dining room and renovating the serving station.

This fall there were a few cleaning projects in problem areas of the house. The storage room was thoroughly cleaned to make room for the extra bedframes from a relatively small number of brothers living in the house. Also, the laundry room and alumni archive room were given a much needed tidying.

All in all, the house continues to serve as a wonderful meeting space for the brotherhood and friends. If we keep improving it each semester and taking care of what we have, 106 The Knoll should remain a sound home for many future classes.

Graham Sabo '15  
House Manager

## MONTREAL: THE TRADITION CONTINUES

I joined Phi Kappa Tau for the brotherhood and the friendships I knew it would offer. Now, my role as brotherhood chair is to provide brothers with chances to build the everlasting friendships that this fraternity fosters. It is part of my responsibility to plan events that allow the brothers to remember their college experience and the friendships they made. People should be able to tell stories of the events the brotherhood chair planned.

This semester I have organized a range of gatherings—from supporting a brother's small on-campus event to larger get-togethers. This semester's annual trip to Montreal, a tradition that started in 2001, went off without a hitch. Forty brothers went on the trip, 17 more than last year. It was a weekend full of adventure and bonding. Brothers spent the weekend exploring old Montreal, seeing the sights, and enjoying the

people and energy of the city.

With the addition of nine new fall Pi class associates the brotherhood is quickly growing. The addition of new brothers has everyone excited to get involved and continue to forge bonds with one another.

Jack Schnog '14  
Brotherhood Chair

**CHAPTER ETERNAL**

We regret to announce the death  
of the following alumnus:

**John E. Owens '48**  
June 27, 2015