

# THE THETA RECORD

Official Newsletter of the Theta Chapter of Chi Phi Fraternity

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# STATE OF THE CHI

Br. Kevin Porrecca '21, Alpha

I am proud to see what we've accomplished in the time that we had with our new Executive Board. Despite the semester being cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to achieve many of the goals we set for ourselves. We have maintained a strong presence on campus with Br. Danny Klee as IFC Secretary and Br. Noah Prisament as Greek Senator. We are continuing to work with the administration, as they are involving the Greek Chapters in more decisions. Br. John Owens began a committee to help revise 5 Star, and we have been included in the hiring process for a new Greek Dean. The Chapter has continued to revise our by-laws to accommodate the Arch, had an excellent recruitment period with 11 signees, received the best score in recent memory on inspection, and was accredited with distinction from Chi Phi National. We also congratulate our newly elected Theta Alumni Association Treasurer, Br. Sam Atkinson, and thank Br. Aaron Ide for his time holding the position.

The biggest obstacle the Chapter faced this semester is the same obstacle that the entire world struggles with at this moment, COVID-19. Chapter operations have continued remotely for the remainder of the semester, as RPI has closed campus and moved to online instruction. We are suspending the new member process until the Fall semester. All events hosted by the Chapter have been canceled including our St. Baldrick's Event, and we are now preparing our Brothers for an online Summer Arch as well. We will be looking to make up for the loss of our largest philanthropy event this Fall, and will be using every opportunity to begin helping our community again.

With all of the changes that come with this, we have refocused our efforts onto what we can still change and improve. Br. Justin Underwood and our Judicial Board have used this time to reevaluate our by-laws and make more changes that streamline house operations and more accurately outline Summer Arch. Other officers are using this time to focus on planning and setting goals for the Fall semester.

Despite the difficulties we've experienced, we are all making a concerted effort to stay in touch and preserve our Brotherhood. I am looking forward to a promising Fall semester and seeing all of my Brothers again.



Br. Porrecca

## AND MY AXE!

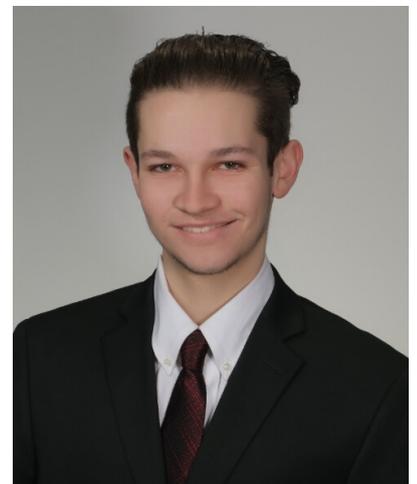
Br. Justin Underwood '20, Beta

With my first semester as Beta coming to an abrupt end, I have been able to look back and reflect on a semester of growth. I have worked closely with the officers to come to a better understanding of what each position entails. I will use this experience to work closely with both the current and newly elected officers in the upcoming weeks to make online transitions as smooth as possible. During this process I will be looking for ways to improve the overall officer transition process. With the implementation of the Summer Arch and deferred recruitment it has become increasingly difficult for younger brothers to hold positions for longer than a semester. By ensuring that knowledge is passed down successfully, we will be able to build upon past achievements in order to continually better the house's operations.

Another difficulty we have faced with the implementation of deferred recruitment is a smaller pool of potential rushees in the Fall. To ensure that we were able to capitalize on Spring rush and maintain the overall size of our Brotherhood, I allowed the Iota to handpick their committee. This change provided much needed support to one of the most critical parts of house operations and allowed us to almost make up for the loss of the graduating class. By continuing this method in future semesters, we will be able to grow the size of our house while also maintaining the quality of our Brotherhood.

With the completion of the first semester of Summer Arch we are now able to review the changes we made to our bylaws with an informed perspective. The previous Judicial Board did an admirable job foreseeing the complications associated with this program, but there is always room for improvement. By working with the rest of the Brotherhood, this semester's Judicial Board was able to draft changes that would improve the housing situation for Brothers returning from their Arch semester. We have also come up with improvements that will allow us to operate more successfully and have created incentives that will allow local away Brothers to actively participate in the Brotherhood.

With the early ending of in-person classes, we were fortunate enough to have already hosted this semester's Faculty dinner. In his second semester as Beta, Br. John Owens had begun transitioning the dinner to more of a community dinner by inviting the bosses of Brothers with local internships. I continued to build on this change by inviting Tim Stockwell, the head of a soup kitchen where we regularly volunteer, as well as once again inviting Brother's bosses. In doing so I believe we are able to better demonstrate the benefits of our Brotherhood to the faculty and the community as a whole. Continuing to grow these relationships will serve us well as we continue adapting to unforeseen challenges. I am excited at the prospect of seeing what our Executive Board as a whole can accomplish as we apply the lessons from this semester and am certain that we will continue to improve throughout the remainder of our term.



Br. Underwood

## FOOTNOTES FROM THE GAMMA

**Br. Eddie Swan '22, Gamma**

During my semester as Gamma, I have been putting in hours of work in order to better the house as much as I can. By utilizing the resources of the past Gammas, Br. Klee and Br. Sheldon, I have been able to maintain the Chi Phi Wiki and improve both our in and out of house relationships. This semester we have been bettering out-of-house relationships by making and giving out creative gifts to all the sororities on campus. The gifts have been a hit and I truly believe that our relationships with the sororities are improving.

The house is still using Slack as our main contact and we welcome any alumni that are interested to join, to do so contact me or Br. Porrecca. I look forward to continuing to better the house as Gamma for the rest of my term. Br. Fluker has been elected to serve as the next Gamma and I plan on teaching him all the traditions required for him to become the best Gamma yet. Having a strong Gamma is essential for this house, and I believe that we are in good hands and will continue thriving with Br. Fluker on our Executive Board.



**Br. Swan**

## SMOOTH SAILING

**Br. Connor Hanggi '22, Eta**

My smooth transition into Eta is attributed to the preparedness and organization of every brother who held the position before me. The great documentation on inspection do's and don'ts as well as access to previous inspection scores and mitigation reports allowed for a very successful Fire and Life Safety Inspection. Thanks to the cooperation of the brothers and the help of my committee and previous risk manager Br. Anton Kapitman, we were able to impress the inspectors for yet another semester. This spring, the Main house earned a 96.31% and the Annex a 95.07%, which are about 5% higher than our impressive fall semester scores. Most of the few situations the inspectors pointed out have already been mitigated, and I will be working with our Epsilon to fix the longer term projects, such as finishing trim and molding in brothers' rooms in the Annex and installing a railing by the back stairwell of Main. Along with inspection, I looked into safety training courses for brothers, including: Bystander Intervention, TIPS, and CPR training.

Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 outbreak, all trainings have been cancelled. I am planning to get them rescheduled for the fall semester. Even without the safety trainings this semester, it is comforting knowing the majority of the house is Bystander Intervention trained, meaning they are aware of when and how to intervene in a risky situation. TIPS is a slightly more in-depth course on similar topics and those who pass earn a certification. About half of the current executive board is TIPS trained and most previous executive board officers were TIPS trained in prior years. CPR training teaches you how to recognize and act when someone goes into cardiac arrest; around half of the brotherhood is CPR trained and I am looking to increase that ratio in the fall. Not only may these trainings prove useful in the fraternity house, but you may find yourself applying these skills later on in life. Finally, with the current COVID-19 pandemic, I urge both active brothers and alumni to stay at home whenever possible, wash your hands, wear gloves and masks, and play it safe. This is not only for yourselves, but for your friends, your families, and everyone else around you. If you stay at home and just observe, you'll be helping to flatten the curve.



**Br. Hanggi**

# FRATERNAL FINANCES

Br. Noah Prisament '22, Delta

This semester has, and will continue to be, financially difficult for the chapter. The full implementation of the Arch, instantiation of deferred recruitment, and Coronavirus have all simultaneously strained our budgeting. With the vast majority of Brothers heading back to their hometowns for self quarantining, I have prorated Brothers that were living in house or on our meal plan (note that the attached budget was from before any prorations). Unfortunately, in large part due to said refunds, the Chapter will end up in the red for this semester. Likewise, the Chapter's savings will also be taking a hit this semester as we pay any late fees and back taxes we owe to the IRS as we fix our tax-exempt status.

This coming Fall, on the other hand, is looking to be much brighter financially. With a relatively large pledge class and our prospective exemption from property taxes, we will be able to deposit funds back into our savings. To help alleviate the strain of Summer Arch we have implemented Summer dues for Arch brothers and Summer rent for non-Arch brothers which are rolled into the Fall budget. I will continue to work on longer term initiatives such as higher yield savings like my predecessors once there is more of a return to normalcy and our tax statuses are properly handled.

One of my top priorities as Delta has been to re-examine each of the budgets and make sure that we did not over or under budget anything that could be accurately estimated. Because of this, we were able to reduce our Spectrum bill considerably and we are looking at upgrading the house's fire alarm system from using expensive landlines to more affordable cellular connections. Additionally, I am currently in the process of getting the houses exempt from Troy property taxes which will save nearly fourteen thousand dollars from each semester's budget and regaining the Chapter's 501(c)7 federal tax-exempt status; both of which I plan on completing by the end of this semester.

This semester I took a new approach to budgeting than what had been used previously. As opposed to simply allocating officers a budget, a top-down approach, I used a bottom-up approach in which officers would write out budget lines for what they wanted to spend on and I would designate them a budget that could best accommodate their needs in conjunction with every other budget. With detailed budget lines that I keep track of, the internal budget is recorded more accurately and semantically. I plan on continuing to use this strategy for the Fall budget next semester.

I have a philosophy that finance should not be an inhibitor of spending but instead an enabler for an organization to spend on what it wishes to. Therefore, I always strive to make sure that our fraternal functions are never hindered by our finances. I am confident that our Chapter's finances will only improve in the coming semesters and in years to come so we can continue providing valuable programming while building better men.

Budget	Expected
Alpha	\$ 250.00
Beta	\$ 550.00
Gamma	\$ 300.00
Delta	\$ 50.00
Epsilon	\$ 6,000.00
Zeta	\$ 1,250.00
Eta	\$ 300.00
Theta	\$ 700.00
Iota	\$ 6,500.00
Social	\$ 7,000.00
Public Relations	\$ 350.00
Philanthropy	\$ 600.00
Steward	\$ 20,450.00
Wiring	\$ 1,000.00
National	\$ 4,500.00
Insurance	\$ 12,050.00
Utilities	\$ 11,500.00
TV/Phone/Internet	\$ 2,000.00
Misc. Budgets	\$ 7,893.00
Housing Corp	\$ 10,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$93,243.00</b>

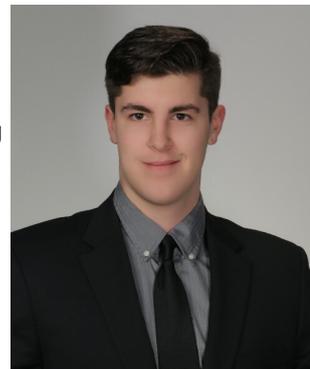


Br. Prisament

## A STATE OF PERPETUAL REPAIR

**Br. Ryan Fishbein '21, Epsilon**

We started this semester off well with a successful Spring work weekend with focus on continuing some long term projects and fixing up small problems to help increase our inspection scores. Some of the small projects included cleanup of the backyard area, repairing of the retaining wall in front of Stroud Hall, repainting the kitchen and the second floor of Stroud Hall, and full replacement of the curtain rods on the first floor of the Main house. In addition, some long term projects were continued and finished during this work weekend. These were the completion of the shower replacements in the 2nd and 3rd floor bathrooms of the Main house, and the continued renovation of M35. All of our efforts were rewarded with even higher inspection scores for the Main house and for Stroud Hall than last semester. Throughout the short time that we were on campus, we were able to replace the exit door in the attic of Stroud Hall and continue working on the renovation of M35. All of the demolition work necessary for the room was completed and insulation was put into the ceiling of the room. For this semester, it was agreed upon that each active brother would now be required to do a total of 4 hours of Epsilon work throughout the semester. This was put in place to help get more Brothers involved with the upkeep of the two houses and give them more experience with house repair and maintenance. This way I can continue with Br. McDonald's goal of getting the Brotherhood experience in these areas so that individuals can then take on projects on their own in the houses. With the semester being cut short, there is still a continued list of projects to be done. We still plan to finish the renovation of M35, build a fence around the back staircase for safety reasons, and eventually replace the windows on the first floor of the Main house. I look forward to working with Housing Corp and the Brotherhood to help accomplish these projects, and I would like to thank all of our Alumni for their continued contributions to the Fraternity over the years. Without their help, the house would not be in the state that it is today.



**Br. Fishbein**

## STAYING SOCIAL

**Br. John Farrell '20 and Br. Brian Sposato '20, Social Chairmen**

This semester has been full of fun despite the campus closing due to the coronavirus. While no registered parties were allowed, we had two great mixers this semester, and we had mixers planned with all three sororities. We started off the semester with an olympic theme mixer with Alpha Gamma Delta. Brothers and guests dressed up in theme, played olympic games, and danced the night away. Later in the semester we invited the Sisters of Pi Phi to the Chapter House for a Mardi Gras mixer. We split up into teams of four guys and girls and put our beignet making ability to the test. For this semester's Formal Dinner, Brothers and their dates took buses to Brunswick Greens. We enjoyed spectacular food and had a fun-filled night with our dates. We appointed Br. Danny Klee as our Sports Chair who has brought us many wins in all of our intramural sports. I also appointed Br. Dan Celic as our Brotherhood Chair who has held many amazing events for our Brothers to have fun and bond in. We are looking forward to working with our newly appointed Social Chair Br. Thomas Neuman for another great semester of safe, but fun social events that will improve our public image and relationships with other campus organizations. No matter what, we will maintain a focus on our Brotherhood and Alumni.



**Br. Farrell**



**Br. Sposato**

## GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Br. Christian Winicki '22, Philanthropy Chairman

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 virus it was necessary to cancel our annual St. Baldrick's event, as well as the tabling and volunteering that we had planned for the rest of the semester. This comes as a massive blow, because St. Baldrick's is usually the highlight of our spring semester for both philanthropy and community outreach. This year was shaping up to be our most successful yet, and I'd like to especially thank Br. Underwood for all of his time spent planning for St. Baldrick's, months organizing sponsors, coordinating with other groups, and booking live entertainment, even though it had to be cancelled in the end. While we were still on campus, we were still able to raise money for St. Baldrick's foundation by tabling, and to help the community by volunteering at Victorious Life Church's soup kitchen.

We look forward to the coming semesters to bounce back from this pandemic. While this has been an incredibly stressful and trying time for all of us, I feel it has fostered a heightened appreciation for the community we have at RPI & in Troy, and newfound this appreciation can be leveraged for unprecedented community engagement and philanthropic effort in the years to come.



Br. Winicki

## MEET THE ETA TRITONS

Br. Cameron Scott '20, Theta (New Member Educator)

In the semester of Fall 2019, the Zeta Triton Pledge Class was initiated to the Theta chapter. This class, consisting of a sole member, has already shown that he is driven and professional through his excellent school work and his dedication to the fraternity. He put forth his best effort in the Spring 2020 rush and aspires to hold leadership positions in the house. I am proud to have him join the Theta chapter, and I am excited to see the impact that he has on this fraternity. Congratulations to this newly initiated brother!

This Spring, we have 10 new members that have begun the new member process as part of the Eta Triton Pledge Class. These young men have performed exceptionally up to this point and are fully committed to their education, but the quarantine caused by COVID-19 has required us to postpone the remainder of the new member education process until the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. While this is unfortunate, I am adamant that they will continue to succeed.



Br. Scott

## INTERACTING WITH ALUMNI

Br. Peter Gramenides '20, Alumni Relations Chairman

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all alumni events are cancelled until further notice for the health and safety of all active brothers and alumni. No information is currently available regarding when we will be able to host future events or engage alumni, but we will be continually evaluating health and safety guidance from the Chi Phi national office, RPI, and New York State. The Brotherhood continues to work diligently with the Theta Alumni Association and Theta Housing Corporation to ensure continuity of operations and the health and safety of our community. Should any alumni need support or help during these times, please reach out to the Brotherhood and we will offer any help we can. Conversely, if any alumni would like to offer support for the active chapter or brothers that may be in need, please reach out to the Alpha, Kevin Porreca for future guidance and information. During this state of national emergency, we must bond together as Chi Phi gentlemen to help our families and communities recover from this terrible pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families as we hope for the resolution of this pandemic and the health of our community members.



Br.  
Gramenides

## PUBLICALLY RELATABLE

Br. John Owens '20, Br. Noah Prisament '22, Public Relations Chairman

This Spring we were accredited from national with distinction, citing Theta as one of the top 3 Chapters nationally. We are currently awaiting 5 star scoring for this semester, but we anticipate scoring very highly. This is also the last round of 5 Star with Rensselaer in its current format. I have been busy working with the Director of the Student Union and the interim Greek Dean, among others in the Greek student body, to create a 5-star replacement system that more fairly and honestly assesses Greek Chapter health and function. We look forward to piloting this semesterly program in the Fall, provided campus is re-opened. Theta has also expanded our involvement in the community beyond RPI this semester. We had plans to participate in a build with Habitat 4 Humanity this April, but we hope to reschedule this for the Fall or next Spring as we are able. We also began bi-weekly visits to the Victorious Life soup kitchen in Troy to offer our help. If awards are still opened with Chi Phi national this May, I look forward to applying for the Gehring Award once again on behalf of the Theta Chapter.



Br. Owens



Br. Prisament

## RUSH CHI PHI

Br. Matthew Fluker '21, Iota (Recruitment Chairman)

I am proud to say that our Brothers were able to recruit 11 signees this Spring. This was an extremely important Rush for us as it was the first semester the current freshman class was able to participate in. Additionally, it was paramount we recruit a large pledge class to offset the previous semester's small class size.

Rush was lengthened to four full weeks this semester, which gave us a lot more time to form bonds with potential new members. It was a pretty standard Rush in terms of events. We did all the classics; Lobsterfest, Wingstock, Brunch and Billiards, etc. We also introduced some new events this semester, including a Dodgeball tournament in the '87 Gym, and Kevin's Chili Night, where our Alpha, Br. Kevin Porrecca made some amazing Chili, followed by the McGregor Pay-Per-View Fight.

I would like to commend all my brothers for making this the best Rush we've had in a while. I want to specifically thank Br. Celic, Br. Javed, Br. Kapitman, Br. Porrecca, Br. Prisament, Br. Scott, Br. Sposato, and Br. Underwood for all their hard work. Everyone was more than willing to help with event shifts, and everyone was very social and outgoing at the events. This was a very successful Rush in terms of rushee participation at events; rarely would a rushee show up to an event and feel bored or uncomfortable. Brothers did an amazing job conversing with rushees and forming friendships with them.



Br. Fluker

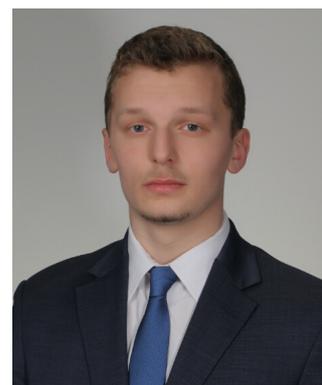
## FOCUSING ON ACADEMICS

Br. Peter Strbik '20, Br. Daniel Celic, '21, Scholarship Chairmen

The house GPA for the Fall of 2019 was 3.17, which is a great accomplishment due to the individual efforts of each Brother. This set us above the All-Fraternity average (3.10), the All-Greek average (3.13) and the All-Men's average (3.16). This semester, our primary focus was on assigning personalized academic plans for struggling Brothers and to incentivize Brothers to be high achievers academically. These plans required Brothers to attend study hours that were held mostly at on-campus classrooms in order to get away from any distractions and focus on succeeding in Brothers' academic endeavors. Some silent study hours were held along with baked goods and refreshments to optimize focus and study potential. Brothers were encouraged to aid one another through one-on-one tutoring, which awards them based on the point system. Struggling Brothers were strongly encouraged to attend ALAC Drop-In Tutoring and Success Labs for the first half of the semester which gives helpful advice regarding motivation, organization, and finals preparation. In addition to providing these academic resources, there was still an emphasis on rewarding academic improvement and excellence through the popular achievement chart along with awarding a deserving Brother each year with the Sparks Medal. All classes for the Spring 2020 term were optionally P/NC for each student due to the drop in on-campus resources but Brothers were encouraged nonetheless to try their best and ask for help in figuring out a working routine within the shift to online-learning.



Br. Strbik



Br. Celic

# BUILDING A HISTORICAL COMMONS

Br. Aidan Weathers '20, Zeta

As Zeta, I sought to continue to breathe new life into the position, continuing on from the hard work that Br. Gramenides put in last semester. I commend his efforts to organize our records so that future Zetas can easily find artifacts and documents. In the works are plans to expand storage of these in the attic of Stroud Hall as they will no longer face damage there. Long term, there are plans to convert part of the attic into a library for both scholarship and for historical records to better utilize the space.

As ritual is quintessential to our Fraternity, I have made a commitment to connecting ritual to our everyday lives. I had organized and led rituals effectively to make sure that the Brotherhood benefited from participating in them. Rushees, or New Members, and Brothers alike effectively performed required rituals and provided positive feedback from it. Due to the COVID-19 virus, I had to adjust to the conditions of both not seeing Brothers and trying to maintain my position. Projects I had intended on completing during the semester are now on hold until the Fall.

Maintaining relations with Active Brothers and Alumni is especially important during this time. There will be difficulty in installing the new Alumni from this semester due to social distancing protocols. However, I will overcome and organize an alternative, whether that be in the future in person or online. On the point of Alumni, the TAA meeting went off without a hitch, where Br. Sam Atkinson was elected as the new TAA Treasurer. It is also my pleasure to announce that Br. John Friendship and his spouse were wed last Fall in India.

It is in joyous moments like these that we can look back upon and have hope of returning to a semblance of normality. However, during this historic and frankly terrifying time we need to maintain social distancing protocols so that doctors can quickly find a cure. I hope this newsletter finds Brothers in good health and in good hopes.



Br. Weathers

## THETA EXCELLENCE FUND

With the Theta Excellence Fund active our first goal is to provide an annual scholarship in honor of Brother Andrew Colditz, who passed away in 2005. The scholarship is for a new member in each pledge class who was found to best represent the values of Chi Phi, and met a minimum GPA requirement. The scholarship fund has been so successful we have been able to establish a second scholarship for leadership in honor of Stephen “Rusty” Gordon. This scholarship is for any Brother showing leadership through his activities with the house. If you would like to help the chapter through donating directly to the Theta Excellence fund please follow the instructions below:

Your Return Address	Postage
Chi Phi Educational Trust 1300 Sixth Avenue Columbus, GA 31901 Fax: (404) 237-5090	

Pay To: <u>Chi Phi Educational Trust</u>	\$ Amount
<u>Amount in Dollars</u>	
_____ Theta Excellence Fund	
↑ Important	

## CHAPTER DONATIONS

Want to have a direct impact on the chapter? Please contact the Alpha, Kevin Porrecca, at [kporrecca@gmail.com](mailto:kporrecca@gmail.com) to discuss room dedications and contributing to housing renovations in the Chi or Stroud Hall. Recent contributions from Alumni include Br. Kent Worden '69 renovating the main house bathrooms and Br. Charlie Hammond '04 installing new lights in the dining room. All donations from Alumni towards housing renovations are honored with plaques and room dedications for contributions and generosity. Get involved and invest in the future of our chapter!

## ALUMNI UPDATES

John and Nikita were wed in the Fall.

Robert Rouhani and Ann were wed in November.

Matthew Vogus and Kimberly were wed in December.

Sam Atkinson was elected the new Treasurer on the Theta Alumni Association