

THE CROSSED SWORDS

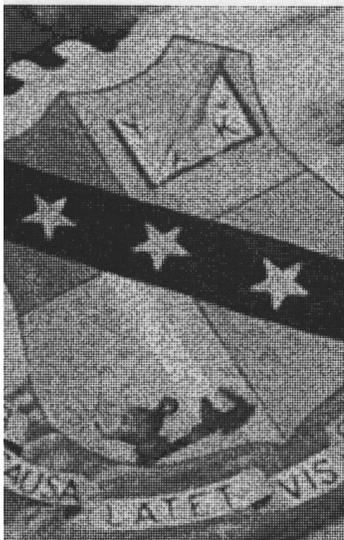
Fall Semester 2005

Alpha Tau Chapter

The 2005 Fall Rush

Matthew Keyser, 2009

Being a first-year brother brings its own unique blend of joys and trials, not the least of which is holding a position in the house for the first time. As an incoming brother, I was not too familiar with the details of running a house, so I opted to run for Rush chair simply because I was most



familiar with it; after all, hadn't I been to tons of Rush barbecues and movie nights? Didn't I show up for the Rush trip to New York City for Lazer Tag and hot dogs at Gray's Papaya with the brothers? I figured I could hold my own. How much work could

it be?

Those of you who have ever been Rush chairman for a semester already know where this is leading. I learned quickly that a Rush chairman has to become a sort of human Swiss Army knife: versatile and effective in all scenarios. A Swiss army knife, though, only has to perform one function (like cutting a rope or opening a wine bottle) at a time. Between managing lists of potential pledges, organizing trips to BJ's and Shop-Rite to purchase bulk food for barbecues, and micro-managing events like our Kung Fu Smoker, I was constantly multitasking. I felt swamped, and worse yet, I was running dry on original ideas; all I was doing was ordinary barbecues. It was time to do something I had never expected I'd have to do, something that was against my very nature to do: I had to ask for help.

Help, as it turned out, was not as far away as I had expected. Several brothers, most notably Andrew Numa, came to my aid with advice and physical aid.

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The Old Gal

Lawrence Lapitan, 2008

Most collegiate today, find themselves lost, and asking themselves questions like "Who am I?", "What am I doing here?", "What am I doing with my life?", "What do I want to do with my life?" ... and so on. They go out on a quest to find themselves in relation to what coordinate plane, only the psychology majors know. But what I have learned in my semesters in the house so far is

that, especially in my youth, life is not about finding yourself or your place in the world; nope, life is about defining yourself and creating your place in the world.

I know I've changed since I've joined the house. For better or worse, I'll leave that for my future self to judge after all, hindsight is 20/20 and right now I'm probably blind. The house has

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A Pledge's View of Alpha Sig

Manuel Garmendez, 2008

Receiving the bid to pledge Alpha Sigma Phi was a welcome surprise that broke the hectic routine of the fall semester. The Friday of pledge night followed suit as more than we expected as an introduction into the fraternity life. The pledges discussed what kind of ideals were sought in joining a fraternity, and despite the uncertainty of what would occur, the circumstances were found to be in accordance with the established mindset. Overall, the pledge night was a beacon of light shed into the lives of the brothers, what they expected of the pledges, and celebration of keeping the house growing. Though the pledges have been acquainted with the brothers prior to pledging, the existing bonds continue to grow as new ones are formed. Rush barbecues, social functions and athletic events offer opportunities to meet new people and possibly future potential pledges as well as play a role in house responsibilities as would be expected after initiation. Already, the pledges have proven invaluable in participating in the recently concluded Interfraternity Council (IFC) football season. The pledge education process has already begun and is making strong headway in preparing the Zeta Xi class to become a part of the Alpha Sigma

Phi brotherhood. Though the pledges maintain the busy schedule typical of students at Stevens Institute of Technology, time has been allotted to come together and accomplish the necessary goals set by the pledge education brothers. Instruction in the background, the values, and the functions of the fraternity is made possible during weekly meetings and through the distribution of "To Better the Man: Values for a Lifetime", the textbook given to each new pledge. At times, the primary obligations of scholastic excellence offer little leeway in which to focus on the fraternity, but the brothers have proven to be most understanding and supportive in every possible way. In the upcoming weeks of the pledge process, the class will continue to be instructed on Alpha Sigma Phi, quizzed on their retention of instructed and read materials, working together on group activities, and will ultimately choose big brothers to eventually find their place in the family tree of the fraternity. Positions in the pledge class also need to be fulfilled in the development of social, philanthropic, and house projects. During this time, the class will grow closer than they already have, not only to themselves, but also with the brotherhood of which they soon will be a part.

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Nine Lobsters, One Viking

Thomas Ritter, 2007

Ma^Maine. Lobsters, cold water, and brotherhood bonding. The purpose of the trip was twofold – one of our esteemed alumni, Eric “Viking” Greene (brother name: Super Doo), attends University of New Hampshire and we wanted to visit him – and we wanted lobster. So Lawrence “VPS” Lapitan, Mike “VPP” Yassa, Phil “Ticker” Jou, Tom “Modchip” Ritter, and Lawrence’s girlfriend Jen Stoiberg decided to take the 5 hour drive. (I mean 7 hour drive.)

Once we arrived at UNH, we stayed up till 3 in the morning talking about the brotherhood and old memories. It turns out Phil and Law’s pledge project (retiling the foyer) was also one of Viking’s semester projects – when a sewer pipe burst in the foyer and no one could enter in and out our front door. We collected a goodly sized package of photos Viking had from his time as an undergraduate, and swapped our own photos and videos – including last

year’s Castle Point King video of a dozen brothers and pledges reenacting the scene from Risky Business on stage for the campus.

After monopolizing his floor’s lounge for the night, we woke up and went for the meal of the day – Lobster! We drove 20 minutes to the edge of Maine where Tom had lived years ago with the intent to visit one particular lobster house – The Quarterdeck. 15 minutes later, it turns out it had been torn down! We got a new recommendation, and headed down to the edge of the water to eat at Warren’s Lobster House. 5 Tail & Claws, 1 Lobster Sauté, and approximately a dozen lobster bibs later, the verdict was in with a bill of about \$270. Tom Ritter’s traditional dive into the ocean when visiting Maine in the winter was postponed due to sickness.

The only question we have left is what’s next: Maine again to fix the discretion or Cincinnati for chili?

Life of an Alpha Sig

William Merunka, 2006

Go^Ging away to college can be a scary experience for some people, especially for those who have never been away from home before. For some, the decision of which college to attend is well planned and lots of thinking is involved. For others it is more of an ‘ok time to go to college, let’s fill out some applications’. For me, it was the later of the two scenarios. I never really thought about college much before my senior year of high school. I have taken SAT’s before but not much other preparation was given. Going to a high school that is 95% African American and being Caucasian, is not the easiest place to adapt too. Somehow, I managed to survive in one piece and made it into Stevens for the next chapter of my life.

My Stevens career started as I attended the Stevens Technical Enrichment Program (STEP). I started the program 3 days later then the rest of the incoming freshmen due to graduation not occurring until that Tuesday night. It was a strange feeling coming here and not knowing anybody and going to classes and feeling lost when I know I should not have been lost. One of the first people that I met was Hieu Trinh at my first experience with Pierce dining Hall. Little did I know that I would pledge a fraternity with him, and still be good friends with him three years down the road. During my first year, I would go home some weekends, and those when I did not, included some fun times with friends I met through STEP and through second floor Davis, even though I myself lived on the fourth floor.

At the start of my second semester, I went with Hieu and a few other friends to the Alpha Sig house for a trip into New

York City to play some laser tag. It proved to be a fun night, even though I did not know many of the people on the trip. A few days later, when I was getting ready to go to sleep there was a knock on my door. It was the Alpha Sig brothers extending a bid for me to join this thing they called a brotherhood. It was a pleasant while at the same time nervous feeling in me. I attended several Alpha Sig events my first semester, and I knew they were not the typical frat guys, but the whole fraternity thing still felt weird to me. I never expected to see myself in a fraternity, it never even crossed my mind. Upon talking to friends and people who planned on pledging Alpha Sig for Spring 2003, I decided to go through with it. I was not sure how my parents would react, so when I went home to get my suit, I just told them that I had a dinner to attend. I knew it was not right to lie to them, but at the same time, I was scared of how they would react.

The pledge process came and went and it seemed as if time was just flying by. On April 13, 2003, I became a brother of Alpha Sigma Phi, along with Hieu Trinh, Dev Ramudit, Devin Watkins, Dan Grinkevich, Aaron Halbert, and Marshall Powers. It was an awesome feeling knowing that I was a part of something here at Stevens and that I would be able to enjoy my college years, and not just be another Stevens’s student who does not leave his room. Sophomore year I decided that I would take my experience a step farther and move into the Alpha Sig chapter house. Between my sophomore year and my current senior year, there have been many changes to the fraternity.

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Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity Alpha Tau Chapter

HSP
HJP
HE
HS
HCS
HM
HC
HR
HP
HA
Manager of the House
Parliamentarian
Brotherhood Development
Service Chair
Historian
Rush Chair
Social Chair
Athletic Chair
Networking Chairs

Lawrence Laptian
Heiu Trinh
Michael Lutkenhouse
Jason Travis
Dennis Donnatelli
John Hite
Bruce Jordan
Andrew Scagnelli
William Merunka
Bruce Jordan
Spencer Burke
Philip Jou
Brian Compter
Michael Lutkenhouse
Brian Compter
Matthew Keyser
Michael Yassa
Frank Magnotti
Jason Travis, Michael Lutkenhouse

President's Notes

Lawrence Lapitan, 2008

When you pledge a fraternity or sorority, you are said to be "going greek". The following is what I believe is the significance of **Being Greek.**

The Ancients

The original Greeks lived millennia ago in, well, Greece. They did not live in a fraternity house, and I don't think they had colleges in the same sense we do. But I know for a fact that they cared much about thought and education, the original Greeks asked questions, a lot of questions: "Where did we come from?," "What are we made of?," "Why are we here?," et cetera. They wrote books, plays, dramas, songs. They practiced politics, art, sports, religion, and rituals. They didn't "rock letters" on their hoodies, but they did rule the land. And I'm sure some smelled funny. They came up with philosophies, theorems, and theories for life and mathematics. The ancients also said profound things: "pleasure is the highest good," "Envy is the ulcer of the soul," "I am not Athenian or Greek, but a citizen of the world," and so on.

Now, I do not know if it's true or not but I once heard that the ancient Greeks did not write obituaries, and that they only asked one question when one of their own died: "Did he have passion?" How profound and deep is that? These guys clearly understood what it meant to be alive. These were people who understood that life was not about the "what" but the "how." And that the "what" was really just a consequence of the "how."

Of course the world is a trendy place and all the Greeks died or got conquered, which gave way to the Romans, who are a slightly different story (or at least another paragraph that I will not write).

Also, before I forget, I'm quite certain that ancient Greeks threw toga parties and drank, A LOT in their quest of perfection and beauty.

Modern Greeks

Modern Greeks are not typically from Greece (at least in this article's context). They hold many things in common with the ancients whom I wrote about a minute ago. These modern collegiate Greeks also practice politics, art, sports, religion, and rituals. They go on to write books, plays, and songs. They too scream out profound things, "I drink therefore I am." The Greeks of today, like the Greeks before them, ask about passion. But instead of asking at the end, they ask during. Because what every "Old Gal" needs and has are just a couple of guys who have passion. And believe me weather it was an argument in the chapter room, a fraternity rivalry, an IFC game, kissing a girl on the roof, screaming "For he's an Alpha Sig," the anticipation you might have had on initiation night, the goat, or celebrating and of those moments with the men you call brothers around you; if you can remember the smile on your face or on the faces of the brothers around you, that is the look of passion.

So, when I die, and someone asks if I had passion, I hope some brother from the back of the room hears the question and yells with a smile, "He was an Alpha Sig!"

*For the brothers of the Omega Chapter,
I hope the food is good and the smiles true,
... And the ratio is better.*

Lawrence Joseph "VPS" Lapitan, HSP of Alpha Tau

A semester of Rush

Continued from page 1

The first (and most important) tip Numa gave me was this: ALWAYS delegate. As reluctant as you may be to rely on brothers for what you consider the core work of Rush, remember that it's impossible to micromanage a diverse and important job like Rush. Trying to run everything, he said, would burn me out.

I was already feeling the truth of his words. Because I worked a co-op job in New York City, weekdays from 6 AM until 5 PM were taken (9:00 to 5:00 plus time to get ready in the morning and for public transit), coming home and dealing with Rush planning, shopping, heavy promotion, and events meant I had little time for homework or leisure. At the next Rush meeting I decided to open the floor to any and all suggestions provided by brothers. It turned out they had some excellent ideas, like serving Fat Cats and shish kebab rather than burgers at our

The Old Gal

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pointed out my faults and short comings and made them more apparent to me. She has shown me my strengths and new ways to look at old questions. It has given me a chance to lead and represent something bigger than myself. And this is just the tip of how Alpha Sig, with its cracks in the walls, weathered brick, leaky roof, and the 21 other people sharing the toilettes, has helped me define myself. And for that I thank it.



Thursday night barbecues. Ideas are great, but unless they eventually get implemented, they're just nice ideas. Whenever a brother brought up a good idea, I asked them if they personally would be willing to help out in making it reality. This way, I could delegate organization and planning to them. When Fat cats and shish kebab were brought up, I learned that the brothers already knew how to make them, so there already was a cooking crew for my events. They helped me plan ingredients and set aside cooking time before the first midnight barbecue. When the event night rolled around, it was a little hectic, but a lot of fun. "Fat Cats" were such a hit that we brought them back for the next week's Thursday barbecue. Shish kebab was also popular the first night we tried making it, but unfortunately the next week both barbecues were rained out.

In the meantime, though, the brotherhood had gained four new pledges. Brian, Lou, Imran, and Manny were pledged on September 30th and have been very helpful at the Rush events since. Having current pledges helps attract new ones; people can ask them about the things they're worried about, like hazing (there is none) and time commitments (not so bad). It feels good to be a Rush chairman and have pledges, because it makes you feel like you've done something right. Of course, with a brotherhood like Alpha Sig we have to beat potentials away with a stick, but it's still a nice feeling.



Life of an Alpha Sig

Continued from page 2

I have seen many new brothers come into the fraternity as well as see many brothers leave, some because of graduation and others due to personal reasons such as loss of interest in the fraternity. Coming in as a new member, the upperclassmen were valuable resources of information. Now, almost three years later, I am that upperclassmen. One of the people to whom the new brothers go to ask questions about the way things worked in the past. Although my senior year is almost halfway over, senior status still has not kicked in. It is hard to acknowledge that in less than 200 days, my whole life will change and I will be out in the "Real World". When that time does come, I will think back and know that Alpha Sig has prepared me for that day. Through national conferences, and the Ralph Burns Leadership Institute I have learned a lot of important information. However, the valuable lessons came just from being a brother of Alpha Sig. I have been challenged various times with positions in the house. These include Treasurer, Editor, Service chair, and Alumni Relations. Each one of these positions has taught me quite a few lessons that I will never forget.

One of the most important lessons that I have learned is that not everybody is who they appear to be, and not everybody will be around forever. As editor, I was frustrated with not receiving articles to put together a newsletter. However, in order to not let my brothers down I sucked it up and wrote several articles so that a newsletter would be possible. Treasurer also had a great influence on me. It proved to be a lot of work at times, which will prepare me for

the hard work that is associated with getting projects out on time. It also taught me that friends are not always meant to be in your life forever, it is very easy for a friendship to go down the toilet in a split second. No matter how many friends I have in my lifetime, the one that I will never lose is Alpha Sig. I pledged to be a brother for life and I plan to keep that promise. As I advance in life and feel tied down, I will look back and think of the wonderful memories that Alpha Sig has brought me. From the pledge nights, to workdays, to the spontaneous blackout barbecues, to even the quarrels of brothers, there will always be good memories of Alpha Sig.

When talking to new members over the years, I was often asked what legacy I want to leave and what do I want people to remember me for. When these questions come up it is often hard to answer. I don't want people to remember me because of physical labor, nor do I want people to remember me because of my actions at a social gatherings. I want to be known as the brother who never gave up. The brother who was there through the good and bad times with personal and house issues, and at the end of the day never quit. Throughout life, we are never going to have everything our way, there are always going to be things we do not like and that pisses us off. There are always going to be those late night meetings that piss us off as they occur, but in the end pull us closer together. There are also going to be the actions we take that we regret and that make us feel bad when looking back on them. In the end, we need to learn from our experiences good and bad and just improve on future decisions.

Alumni News

William Merunka, 2006

I would like to start by congratulating Craig Polk on his engagement, and Nirav Patel on the conception of his soon to be first child. Each semester, there are several events run by the Undergraduate brothers to bring alumni back to the house and reminisce the good old days of Alpha Sig. So far, we had a very successful Undergrad vs. Alumni football game, in which we had about 15 alumni show up and show their support for the house. Other events for the semester include annual Thanksgiving dinner on November 22nd, and annual Christmas party on December 10th. We are also updating our alumni contact list as well as have a family tree project being run by Brother Tom Ritter. As of long-term goals, planning of 80th anniversary as Alpha Sigma Phi has begun.

Just Brotherhood and Fun

Michael Yassa, 2009

Brotherhood, a word that signifies a tight bond and amount of trust, is exemplified when a brother turns to another when he is in desperate need of seeing his girlfriend. And without a second thought, "When do you want to leave?" is uttered. It has then become a mission to drive a couple of hours away. So starts the story; a story of brotherhood, bonding, and carefree fun. After a few hours of singing along with the radio and random conversations being sparked by the smallest things we were proud to deliver him into the arms of his girlfriend. With one brother taken care of, it was then necessary to find our own fun. It now being about seven o'clock at night, and with nothing to do in the area of Hackettstown, we decided to take the two hour drive into Philadelphia.

Finding your way around a random part of New Jersey is difficult to do; finding your way out of a random part of New Jersey and into Philadelphia; slightly more difficult. So we did what any reasonable group of people would do, call a friend and have him look directions up online. After writing down a mockery copy of these directions, we were once again on our way. This time around we expanded our music repertoire and had even more singing, some of which being our most beloved "Loyalty Song" and "For He's and Alpha Sig." Upon arriving in Philadelphia, we walked around, soaked in the local South Street culture, and indulged in what else; some Philadelphia Cheese-Steaks. We then grabbed some extra steaks for everyone back at the house and were then back on our way again.

Now it was necessary to, yet again, kill some time. Upon placing a phone call we were on our way out of Philadelphia and on our way to Rowan. With our hunger satiated it was a very lax conversation. We met up with a few of my friends from Rowan and I introduced my brothers to them. Our only job here was to have a good time, kill some time, and make this phrase rhyme. After a few hours of conversation, we were off to once again drive for hours. We hoped to go through the night, but we had to take a break around four o'clock because our driver was starting to fall asleep. After a couple of hours of driving, picking up our missing brother, and a couple more hours of driving, we were heading back to Hoboken. Our brotherhood development was over and we had to head back to a work day and began even more bonding between brothers.