

# THE OMICRON

CHAPTER OF PHI GAMMA DELTA - UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

WWW.UVAFIJI.ORG

## GREETINGS FROM THE TEMPLE

Nate Silvestri | Chapter President



Brothers,

We undergrads at 128 had another successful spring semester. With the end of finals and the coming of summer we are pleased to celebrate the graduation of our outgoing fourth year brothers, as they leave the Temple and head out into the “real world”. While we are all going to miss them, each of our graduates has brought something special into this brotherhood and has left behind a legacy that we are all proud of.

Our graduating class includes:

- Troy Kirwin and his dedication to the house as winner of the Omicron Award
- Pat Callaghan and his role as the “Sweetest Influence”
- Brian O’Rourke and his endless dedication to the community as the Darden Award recipient
- Tom Jones for the endless softball home runs and IM wins
- Eric Bauer and his love for his lineage
- Trip Burke, who gave us a reason to go to every UVa hockey game
- Michael Ellis and his tireless effort to make sure everybody says yes
- Alex Crocker and his help as the resident DJ
- Stephen Long and his uncanny ability to allow for a case study of zombies, and for Theta
- Chris Vignali, our resident Yogi, and spiritual mentor
- Austin “the Entertainer” Diduch and the endless



laughs he brought to us

- Branson Berger and his service to this country in our armed services
- John Moore and his tireless effort as Scholarship Chair
- Reade Paterno and his “elderly” experience and advice
- Jake Ellis and his excitement shown every chapter (illustrated by standing in what will now be referred to as the “Ellis Doorway”).

We thank them all for the time they have spent with us as undergrads and look forward for everything they have to offer in the future. Though the class of 2016 is heading out of Charlottesville, we remember the motto “not for college days alone”, and can expect them all to return soon. Our beloved motto was further exemplified by Steve Surprenant (Class of ‘74) and his tireless efforts to address the malfunctioning pipe system at the 128 residence. Without his hard work, the House would not be in the great state that it finds itself in today.

Another strong point of this semester has been the success of our newest pledge class. We have fully initiated the Spring Pledge Class of 2016 and look forward to having them as brothers. This new class of initiates brings exceptional academics, a wide breadth of extracurricular involvements, and unique personalities. Transitioning away from our newest members, however, we would like to thank the

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class of 1991 for their fantastic contribution of a Foosball Table in foyer. It has become a mainstay of activity in the House and we look forward to using it for the semesters to come. The Class of '91 spent reunions weekend in the Temple and it sounds like they had absolutely fantastic time.

Our brothers both old and young have grown, laughed, and prospered together this year. The great times experienced by all have also been met with great sadness, however. Lisa, Chef Assistant for our incredibly successful Kitchen Project, has passed away after suffering health complications from a stroke. Lisa was cherished by all brothers; a shining light and positive spirit for all who crossed paths with her. Our deepest condolences are with her family and loved ones. The Omicron Chapter has taken steps to contribute financially to her family in this time of sadness.

I wish everybody a happy and relaxing summer, whether spent on the beach or behind a desk, take some time to reach out to one another for a chat, a meal or a cold drink. Happy summer brothers, and I thank everybody for another great year at Omicron.

Faternally,

Nate Silvestri, President



## HEALTH AND LONG LIFE TO YOU, LAND WITHOUT RENT TO YOU...



*Los Angeles for Andy Cooper's Wedding*

Sitting just 650 miles off the coast of North Carolina lies the gorgeous, Gosling rum-filled, turquoise water-laden, subtropical island of Bermuda. On June 6th, 2011 an errant online search showed me that JetBlue had reduced the cost of a flight to just \$69 each way from Baltimore. What? Yes. After pulling Mike Headley ('08) into the mix, we flew to Bermuda a few days later, for the weekend - just like that - and finally got to see the island's legendary pink sand. Thus began a multi-year quest to find the cheapest flights

possible. Until that point in my life, I had spent months planning trips never knowing that spontaneity could be so cost efficient.

Then there was the time Tommy Hayne ('09) and I did the same thing to Puerto Rico - less than \$100 each way for a weekend flight booked just 10 days prior. For about the cost of a traffic citation in DC, we were able to kayak through a bay full of bioluminescent plankton, and see the radio telescope from the movie Goldeneye.

After a countless number of these flights, and keening my skills over the past few years to keep finding these exceedingly inexpensive trips, I began to realize that spontaneity truly was the key - that and really short trips. I later hopped over to Paris for the weekend for about \$150 and tax, Cabo for a couple of days at \$28 (snaps), and I'm even heading to Taipei, Tokyo, and Hong Kong this October on Japan Airlines for \$75 each way. A few months ago I flew to Hong Kong from Dallas just for the night. Thirty hours flying on American Airline's longest direct route all for 17 hours in South East Asia and a pretty cool story.

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No, most of these flights aren't in steerage either. This fall, I've booked an entire room (bed and leather recliner), shower (yes, a shower), and a lounge (yes, a lounge) on an Etihad Airways A380 from Mumbai to London, all for less than what it would cost to take your wife to Valentine's Day dinner. Though I do still believe my best find was \$4 from Dubai to Manila. Yes, that's a 4000 mile flight for the cost of a large coffee at Starbucks.

Keep in mind - every single one of these fares exist and are out there, publicly priced by the airlines, it is just a matter of finding them.

Even the Deck Creed wishes for us to travel – **Health and long life to you, Land without rent to you, A child every year to you, And may you die in Ireland... (or) the Deck. (Cron 1:28)**. And after a \$250 round trip to Dublin and some delicious Guinness, I'm officially on the Ireland boat.

It turns out that airlines may be really great at getting people from point A to point B, but might not always be the most efficient at pricing that movement of people. That's where I found my niche. I travel and search for these fares. A lot. As of July 2016, the US Department of Transportation mandates that you have 24 hours to cancel an airline ticket for a full refund after you have purchased it. So when you see that \$28 fare to Mexico, book quickly and figure it all out later. You have a day to determine if you can make it work. These cheap prices don't last long. Book first. Ask questions later.

And while I've been very lucky to travel a bit, all that adventuring is not without a downside. In a letter written to his nephew in 1787, Thomas Jefferson warned that "travel makes men wiser, but less happy." The more you see and experience, the more people you meet, food you consume, flights you miss, trains you pile into, the faster and more thinly spread your affections can become. TJ opined that travelers tend to remain focused on the past, and their past travels, and can never be satisfied with staying in one spot. Today, this simple concept is so eloquently referred to as the Traveler's Curse.

While Mr. Jefferson couldn't have been more right, I'd say it's a risk everyone should be willing to take. There's a lot of world out there to see.



LAN Airlines business class to Chile for \$120

Since graduating six years ago, I've done my best to get out of the country as often as possible. I cherish freedom as much as the next American does, but there's just something about leaving the country – finding that deserted island, ancient archaeological site, scenic mountaintop, and discovering new cultures - that sheds just enough perspective to make each and every trip worth every second spent on it.

I said second, not penny. When it comes to traveling, time is our most important limiting factor. If you're holding a full time job, how many weeks do you get to take off every year? Two? Maybe three, if you're lucky? I've managed to get to 32 countries all while working full time, with some great fellow Fijis mind you, and yet, the biggest excuse I hear from my friends when traveling is, "I have no time." You'll only be able to see the world if you make the time to do so. So make the time.

We're only here for a little while. Let's make the best of it.

See you in Ireland.

Perge!

Jay Farris '09

## PHI GAMMA DELTA IS NOT FOR COLLEGE DAYS ALONE!

Over the past year, there has been a real resurgence in local graduate chapters. These chapters are open to any Brother living in the area. Both the Richmond, VA and National Capital Fijis (VA/DC area) have facebook pages for those interested in joining or just learning about upcoming events. Brothers Baker and Nank are excited to add some more 'Crons.

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NATIONAL CAPITAL FIJIS  
(Washington, DC area)  
Timothy D. Nank (Columbia '93)  
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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2016

John Moore - M.S. in Commerce program at McIntire

Austin Diduch - Insight Global in Richmond, VA

Chris Vignali - VCU Department of Physical Therapy Program

Tom Jones - VCU Department of Physical Therapy Program

Reade Paterno - Masters in Public Policy at Batten

Stephen Long - Navigant Consulting in Washington, DC

Brian O'Rourke - Oracle in Boston, MA

Trip Burke - Rothschild in New York City, NY

Pat Callaghan - Undecided at time of publishing

Jake Ellis - Jefferies in New York City, NY

Troy Kirwin - Jefferies in New York City, NY

Michael Ellis - GLG in Austin, TX

Ford Whitticar - Jefferies in New York City, NY

Eric Bauer - Accenture Consulting in Washington, DC

# GRADUATE UPDATES



Kyle Fuschetti '06 married the beautiful Jean Schwaroch on May 29th in Richmond, VA while Brothers Ryan Hickox, Chris Walters, Michael Chester, Sean Arietta, Brent Bullock, and Adam Mikesell ensured the tradition of pieing the groom continued!



The first annual Omicron Midsummers-DC BBQ was a success, bringing together beans and their families from all over the DC-area and beyond. Look out for next year's detes as we get closer.

# GRADUATE ANNUAL GIVING

Brothers,

It has been a fantastic year, full of both great challenges and even greater achievements.

We ended last year with a catastrophic failure of our sewer system, just when we were starting our kitchen renovations. This unexpected challenge turned into a model of cooperation and volunteerism as we saw graduates from across the years step up and provide their services – everything from real estate law to construction expertise. The fact that the sewer runs underneath the church next door turned out to be a good thing, as the brothers have maintained a positive relationship with our neighbors and they were a big help in resolving the matter.

This spring was our second semester with CampusCooks providing chapter meals out of our renovated kitchen. It has been a great success and absolutely fantastic to see so many brothers in the house every lunch and dinner. A chapter meal plan is something few other houses can offer, and just another example of how Omicron is leading in the Greek system.

Graduate support is what makes critical repairs like the sewer and strategic renovations like the kitchen possible. Our House Corporation recently completed an in depth inspection of the house as part of our ongoing efforts to maintain, repair, and renovate 128 Madison Lane. The list is long, covering everything from yard work to be done by the brothers, to more difficult brick and electrical repairs to be done by professionals.

The goal, of course, being to provide a house that generations to come will enjoy and you as graduates are proud to come back to. It is a never ending effort, there is always more to do, especially with 28 brothers living in the house at any given time.

I hope you will join me and the other graduates listed below in supporting the chapter this year as we continue our work. Many thanks to the graduates who continue to give year after year – a true testament to our mantra that Phi Gamma Delta is not for College Days Alone.

PERGE

Nick Feakins '05

President | *Omicron Chapter House Society*

## GRADUATE DONORS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016

### 1000 +

Jack William Burkart '68

John A. Poulson, Jr. '78

Harrison R. Murphy '86

### 500 +

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Matthew K. Swingle '79

Justin J. Bonner '04

Michael C. Outten '05

Terry E. Schnuck, Jr. '07

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Robert M. Morelli '18

### 128 +

Thomas B. Slade III '53

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James M. McDiarmid, Ph.D. '66

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James M. McGee '91

James Y. Cho '96

Taylor Meredith Grout '98

Jared P. Cooper '03

Nicholas P. Feakins '05

Steven A. Driskill '06

Kyle S. Fuschetti '06

Jonathan R. Hilliard '07

David C. Backer '10

Kevin Simmons Dowlen '10

Joseph T. Vergara '10

Richard P. Gean '15

### 28 +

Kenneth B. Gore '53

Capt. James H. Levasseur '62

Nicholas M. Kristoff '06

Stuart C. Keech '11

Gregory C. MacDonald '13

Ms. Elyse N. Eilerman '16

Ms. Caroline C. Woods '16

Tate C. DeVito '19

*If we have mistakenly forgotten your name, please contact us at [giving@uwafiji.org](mailto:giving@uwafiji.org).*

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!