

OMICRONICLE—SPRING 2010

OMICRON CHAPTER OF Φ KT

Greetings Fellow Phi Tau Brothers!

It has been almost a year since the last Omicronicle and many things have happened with our undergraduate chapter and our fellow alumni members.

Those of us serving on the Board of Directors and Board of Governors hope that everyone is doing well.

ALUMNI REPORT

On the weekend of June 5 2009, the Brothers of Omicron that graduated in the 1950s gathered in State College for their second reunion. After a successful similar event in 2004, 36 so-called “Old Phi Taus” reunited again to remember their experiences as a Phi Tau brother and a Penn Stater. The event was sponsored by Walt Scott ('57) and supported by Board member Dave Lapinski. Everyone had a great time and voted to meet again in 2012.

Contact Walt Scott at walterpscott@aol.com if you want to get involved.

If you regularly spend time with other Omicron Phi Tau brothers then please let us know about it. Please send in any pictures or stories of gatherings to Chris Nesselrode at chrisnesselrode@yahoo.com and they will be included in the next Omicronicle. Also you can post your pictures to our dedicated website at www.pktomicron.com.



WWW.PKTOMICRON.COM

UNDERGRADUATE REPORT

Over the last few years, fraternity life at Penn State has gone through an period of historic change. The Borough of State College and the University have both instituted new laws and rules governing Greek life at Penn State. The changes include more stringent property maintenance laws and more university oversight and reporting requirements. The University has also issued new rules surrounding new member recruitment including alcohol free dry rush and rush registration requirements.

The penalties for non-compliance are strict. In fact, several on-campus and off-campus fraternity chapters were forced to close under the weight of these new rules. Many other chapters are still open but struggling to maintain their memberships at Penn State.

We are happy to report the undergraduate members of the Omicron Chapter of Phi Kappa Tau are not just surviving in this environment...they are thriving.

- The chapter recently initiated 22 new members from the Fall 2009 associate member class. Historically, a 22 man class is large for our chapter and an indicator of the strength of our undergraduate chapter leadership.
- The chapter has recently recruited 5 associate members for the Spring 2010 class. If you recall, recruiting is lop-sided with a heavy influx arriving in the fall semester and small classes in the spring. So it is not unusual to have a smaller spring class and, in fact, a five man class is quite strong.
- Over 20 brothers are living in the Chapter House this spring. While this does not represent full occupancy, it is a strong foundation. This fall the BoD is anticipating that both the Chapter House and the Annex (Cutler House) will be at full capacity. As most of us remember, fraternity life is a much richer experience when the house is full.
- Brother Tom Piarulli is currently serving as a member of the Inter Fraternity Council (IFC) which governs fraternity life at Penn State. By working within the system, Tom can ensure that Phi Tau's interests and culture are in sync with University policy. Likewise, Tom is working to ensure that our traditions and culture are taken into account by the IFC. Before this assignment, Tom served as chapter president.
- The chapter raised over \$53,000 for Dance Marathon (THON) with their partners the Student Nurse Association of Pennsylvania (SNAP). This is the second year in a row that the team of Phi Tau and SNAP have raised over \$50,000 for THON. As early as 5 years ago, Phi Tau was only raising a small fraction of this total. In total, THON raised \$7,838,054 which allows THON to continue to be the largest student run philanthropy in the world.
- Besides dancing in THON, Ryan Sheffield serves as an executive member of Greeks of Kids whose purpose is to build Greek pride for THON.
- Dan Heinitsch, Omeed Nabavian, Dave Wolff, Pat Shore, Will Wisk, Sean Cochran, Rani Arsanios, Alan Rider, and Don Bondschuh recently graduated from Penn State. Please welcome them into our Alumni Brotherhood as they learn the joys of new job orientations, waking up a 6:00am instead of going to sleep at 6:00am, and the realization that they should have stayed at Penn State for a 6th year. Good luck guys.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: JOHN FELMY (“SMOKEY”)

In an effort to (re) introduce our alumni members to each other, the Omicronicle will occasionally include a brief article about one of our alumni members. This time John Felmy (‘75) is in the Alumni Spotlight.

Like many of us, John (“Smokey”) traveled a winding path to Phi Tau. John decided to try Greek life at the end of his first year at Penn State because he had a very eccentric roommate and he simply had to move out. Several of the other fraternities he rushed he found either boring or not memorable...or both. Eventually, like most of us, John found his way to Phi Tau, liked the people he found there, and decided to stay.

Besides taking a 150% credit load and holding as many as three jobs, John also assumed the responsibility of House Manager because he was “dirt poor and needed the money”. This decision to take a leadership role in the Chapter House would create a lasting memory. On his first night as House Manager, “Mother” blew up which made for an ill-fated introduction to his new job.

Living in the Chapter House was a valuable experience as he relayed in his own words: “Living at Phi Tau was an interesting experience. One has to associate and understand all different types of people with varying backgrounds and experiences. As a house manager, you have to keep the infrastructure from collapsing without creating total rebellion. I think I failed in the latter but it was worth it for the experience of learning to plaster and other skills”.

Today, John lives in Olney, MD and serves as the Chief Economist for the American Petroleum Institute and is one of the lead spokesman for the oil industry.

Because of his status within his profession and industry, John is often asked to brief members of Congress and their staffs on energy issues. He was even able to exchange greetings with fellow Phi Tau alumnus Senator George Voinovich (R-OH). As John said, his professional life is a “big change for an old country boy who arrived at PSU with only \$20 in his pocket”.

His profession also allows him to express his opinions on the airwaves and in print media. In a given year, John may do between 500 to 1,000 interviews about the inner working of the oil industry. John regularly appears on CNBC to provide industry insight and was even a guest host of Squawk Box in 2008.

So, the next time the oil and gas industry is making headline news, take a spin around the various cable news programs and perhaps you will see John providing his critique and analysis.

Fellow Phi Tau alumni can reach John via email at felmyj@aol.com.

BROTHER TIHANSKY ENTERS CHAPTER ETERNAL



Alumni Brother John “Tag” Tihansky (‘55) recently passed away. The news of his passing was relayed to his closest Phi Tau brothers by his wife, Emilie.

Fellow alumni brother Bill Westley (‘54) remembers this Phi Tau story about Tag:

In the Spring of 1953, the brothers threw a “Whiskey Sour Party”. Tag put on a waiters jacket and assumed the role of bartender / server. Tag made a gallon of whiskey sours in a large glass jug and raised it over his head to give it a fancy shake. However, Tag was a bit too enthusiastic as he lost his grip on the jug which tumbled through the air and smashed into pieces on the floor. The party was over before it started but a legend was born. Goodbye Tag.

GIVING YOUR TIME AND TALENT

Supporting the chapter doesn't just mean donating your money. There are many ways to help which are fun and rewarding. Here are some ways you can give:

—**JOINING A BOARD.** The Omicron Association has two Boards that support the chapter; The Board of Directors (BoD) and Board of Governors (BoG). Both Boards are critical to our success.

The BoG is a group of usually local alumni who help the chapter with day to day activities. The BoD is a larger organization of at least 9 alumni that take a more global approach to the financial and other obligations of the Omicron Association on behalf of all alumni. If you want to help then please contact Chris Nesselrode at chrisnesselrode@yahoo.com.

—**ALUMNI WORK WEEKENDS.** Each summer the BoD hosts atleast one alumni work weekend to make repairs to the chapter house before the fall semester begins. The date for this year's work weekend has not been set yet. But check our website at www.pktomicron.com later this spring for details.

—**VOLUNTEER FOR A SPECIAL PROJECT.** The BoD is always looking for support from those with special skills that can help repair and refurbish the chapter house. Specifically we are looking for alumni brothers who are skilled in heating and cooling systems, mechanical engineering, and architecture. Contact Alumni Brother and BoD member Eric Tarquinio at erictarquinio@gmail.com for details on how you can get more involved.