

# THE THETA RECORD

Official Newsletter of the Theta Chapter of Chi Phi Fraternity

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## RPI RELATIONS

Thankfully, this semester RPI returned to mostly normal operations as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. After a two year interim, our Brothers are once again active, in-person, in other campus organizations. Most classes are back to being in-person, while some still offer a hybrid online/in-person format. Campus is a lively atmosphere once again, as festivities like the Winter Carnival and RPI hockey games return.

The Chapter has bolstered its presence on and around campus. Our philanthropic efforts, such as our St. Baldrick's and Casa de Quesadillas fundraisers, allow fellow members of the RPI community to get involved and share in our Chapter's core value of giving back to the community. Additionally, we tabled five times this semester in front of Russell Sage Dining Hall and at the Troy Farmers Market in order to build awareness around our fundraisers and make it known that we have a passion for community service.

From an Interfraternity Council perspective, we are proud to have two Brothers currently serving on the executive board - Br. Noah Prisament as Executive Vice President, and Br. Shankar Veludandi as Greek Senator. All Chapters have begun working with our new Greek Dean, Ethan Stubbs, as he is working to build up the Office of the Fraternity and Sorority Commons in order to help rejuvenate Greek life at RPI.

We are excited to welcome RPI's new President, Martin Schmidt, to campus when he begins his term on July 1st. Before coming to RPI, he was the Provost at MIT. We hope that he makes changes which help foster the Greek life community at RPI; it appears that he will have a friendlier stance towards Greek life than his predecessor. The Chapter will be sure to keep you updated as we enter this new era with Dr. Schmidt as our President.



Brothers at the Spring 2022 Meet the IFC event during Rush

The Chapter recommends that alumni stay aware of the controversies happening within the Rensselaer Alumni Association concerning bylaw changes. A good source for important updates is <https://renewrenselaer.org/>.



# UPDATES FROM THE BROTHERHOOD

## Academics and Member Education

The chapter invited two faculty guest speakers to the house this semester, Dr. Kristen Bennett and Dr. Holly Traver. Professor Bennett presented her research experiences and past projects at the Rensselaer Institute for Data Exploration and Applications (IDEA), as well as data science research opportunities at RPI. Brothers were genuinely impressed with the profound impact that data science and analytics are making across campus and in the world. Immediately after the seminar, multiple brothers reached out to her regarding opportunities for future projects.

Professor Traver came in towards the end of semester, a time when students tend to be overwhelmed with assignments, to discuss stress management. Many members raised questions about maintaining their well-being during demanding times. With her expertise in positive psychology, Professor Traver offered numerous pieces of advice related to mental health. Members were enlightened with practical stress management skills after attending the seminar.

## Staying Social

Given the restrictions facing us this semester we have had to hold limited social events to maintain a COVID-safe environment. However, we have still been able to hold several events through these last couple months. We had our formal and several large events at the beginning of the semester in conjunction with the Iota and Rush. We hosted a pizza making night with the Pi Beta Phi sorority wherein the brothers and sisters interacted and made themselves pizzas. With the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority we held a little inter house competition between our brotherhood and their sisterhood. We have also held several BBQs and campfires as smaller events for people to hang out. The brotherhood has had several fun competitions as classes have gone on, and went on a cabin trip after finals to celebrate and relax at the end of the semester. In somewhat of a partnership with the philanthropy chair we held Dog Days, which from a social sense was a decently large bbq and social gathering to mark the beginning of finals. Despite the continuing restrictions we have managed to keep working on improving relationships with other Greek houses and the RPI student base in the post Covid environment. Every week we've had some sort of events running; both internal brotherhood ones and more open ones to the student base.



The peak of the Lemon Squeeze brotherhood hike in the New York Mohonk Preserve



Pizza making mixer with Pi Beta Phi

## Philanthropy

At the founding of this great organization, men got together to build better men. Added to this was a notion to build a complete man, one who strives to not only excel in his academics and in his chapter but also in volunteering in the community. All new members going through the pledge process are taught this importance so it is ingrained in the house for generations to come. Even though COVID-19 changed the way the house operates internally as well as with the community, this semester had a more hopeful tone. This was the first semester back when we were able to organize philanthropic events to be as impactful as before the global pandemic hit. Many of our contributions to the community could not have been made possible without the support of our esteemed alumni.

KEVINDILLA	\$7
Sirloin Philly Cheesesteak, Provolone, Bell Peppers, Sauteed Onions	

THE GEORGIAN	\$7
BBQ Pulled Pork, Veggie Slaw, Sauteed Onions	

THREE CHEESE	\$5
Traditional Mixture of Cheddar, Pepper Jack, and Monterey Jack	

VEGGIEDILLA (V)	\$6
Bell Peppers, Onions, Black Beans, Corn, Vegan Jack Cheese, Lime Aoli	

QUESADILLA DE POLLO	\$7
Seared Chicken Breast, Peppers, Onions, Monterey Jack	

SIDES	
Tortilla Chips	\$1.00
Homemade Guacamole	\$2.00
Salsa	\$1.00
Sour Cream	\$1.00

**V = Vegan Option**

**RAINN**  
All profits go to RAINN  
TOD 4/17 weather@rpi.edu

This semester, the Brotherhood managed to log over 200 hours of volunteering for the community. This was spread out across numerous organizations, including Provisions Food Pantry, the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York, and the church-sponsored homeless food distribution organization His Table. In addition to all of the time the Brotherhood committed to the community, we had the best fundraising semester since the spring of 2019. Through generous donations from family, friends, alumni, and other chapters of the RPI Greek community, we raised nearly \$15,000 for St. Baldrick's Foundation and RAINN. We especially commend Br. Jared Zonitzer for personally raising more than \$5,000.

These past 5 months offered up many successes as well as many opportunities to grow. Our chapter hopes to capitalize on our successes and pick up the slack where it presents itself to continue to give back to the community. It is my hope by next spring that the Brotherhood expand its opportunities to collaborate with other organizations to grow our more popular fundraising events and better connect with the RPI community.



The Dog Days of Finals Event



Brothers that shaved their heads for St. Baldrick's

# SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS



**Br. Anton Kapitman**  
BS Mechanical Engineering,  
MEng Mechanical Engineering

Anton is set to work on upcoming weapons and defense technology at Lockheed Martin RMS based in NJ. As an active brother, Anton held the positions of Risk Manager, Philanthropy, and Alumni Relations chairman, what a guy. Good luck on all your future endeavors, Brother Kapitman!



**Br. Marcello Degani**  
BS Aerospace Engineering

Marcello will be working as a systems engineer at Electric Boat. He has held the positions of New Member Educator and Risk Manager, as well as Treasurer of Club Soccer. Good luck on all your future endeavors, Brother Degani!



**Br. Connor Hanggi**  
BS Mechanical Engineering

Connor will be pursuing an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Virginia, where he will be conducting research in the Center for Applied Biomechanics. Connor was a very active brother, holding the positions of Treasurer, Risk Manager, Historian, and Peer Live-In Advisor. We wish you the best, Brother Hanggi!



**Br. Daniel Klee**  
BS Biology

Danny plans on going back to California and exploring his options for research and work. As an active brother, Danny served as both Gamma and Theta for the chapter, as well as Secretary and Treasurer on IFC. Good luck on all your future endeavors, Brother Klee!



**Br. Alex Levy**  
BS Chemistry

Alex will be moving back to Chicago, Illinois and continuing his job search from there. We wish you luck, Brother Levy!



**Br. Aidan Weathers**  
BS Environmental Science

Aidan hopes to pursue a job in Natural Resources Management or Conservation in the near future and continue his academic career in Graduate school. He served as Zeta, Philanthropy, and Social Media Chairman. Good luck on all your future endeavors, Brother Weathers!



**Br. Christian Winicki**  
BS Chemical Engineering  
and Computer Science

Christian will be working in Lawrenceville, NJ as a Data Analyst at Bristol Myers Squibb. As a Brother, Christian served as Beta and Judicial Board Chairman. Good luck on all your future endeavors, Brother Winicki!



**Br. Zachary Burpee**  
BS Electrical Engineering

Zachary Burpee will continue onto graduate school at Columbia University to pursue a M.S. in Electrical Engineering. He is very thankful of all the support and memories his Brothers at Chi Phi have given him during his time at RPI! We wish you the best, Brother Burpee!

# CHAPTER OPERATIONS

## Finances

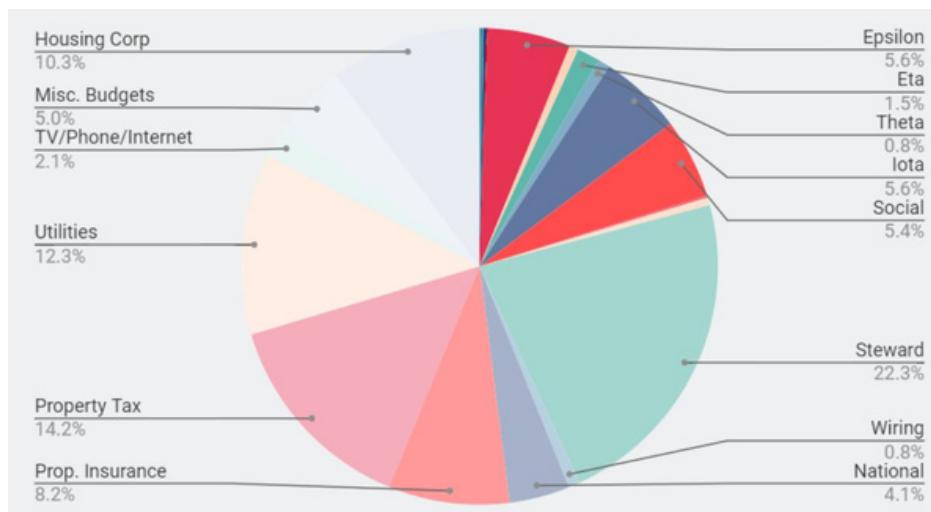
Most of the house's semesterly costs are fixed and are mainly independent of the membership rate, this means that although much of our spendings remain the same or increase, the house's revenue has gone down along with the membership rate. However, thanks to a small increase in dues, occasional donations from actives and alumni for events like Alumni weekend and Initiation weekend, multiple cost cutting measures, and frugal spending on the part of the whole brotherhood, we are glad to maintain that the house has remained in excellent financial shape and we are on track to collect 100% of brother's dues this semester. Initially we were looking into dipping into our savings account, however, we are currently on track to end the semester with a small budget surplus, allowing us to add it to our savings account.

We have opened a brother managed investment account, we will be keeping about 35% of our savings in cash, which can be used as an emergency fund, and the remaining 65% will be put into a diversified portfolio of bonds and safe stock investments. We are hoping that this can help preserve the house's purchasing power amid the ongoing inflation. The investment account does not put the house's tax exempt status at risk, unless we were to start getting triple digit returns on the account and it was all sold at once, which is obviously unlikely.

As another cost cutting technique we have been looking into is creating a house credit card, this would help us save a lot of money as a substantial amount of our spending could be conducted with credit cards, and so the cash back that credit cards offer could provide a valuable boost to our semesterly budget. Unfortunately, the house does not have any credit history, and so all of our credit card requests have been denied. As a consequence, we are working with SEFCU, our bank, to create a low cashback credit card which would allow us to start building credit and eventually be eligible for better credit cards.

The house has also opened a new chapter support fund through RPI, this allows anybody to make a tax-deductible donation to the house. Although RPI does take a 10% fee, this donation channel leverages RPI's non-profit 501(c)(3) status to allow for tax deductible donations, contrary to our 501(c)(7) status which does not permit that. If you would like to contribute to the chapter support fund, you can donate at <https://tinyurl.com/chiphicsfund> or using the QR code below.

Finally, after previous concerns that we might owe the IRS up to \$25K in late fees for tax fillings between 2014 and 2019, we were able to clear everything up with the IRS and are happy to now confirm that we are up to date with our IRS balance.



## Artifacts, Ritual, & History

This semester we obtained some new ritual equipment, which allowed us to conduct our rituals according to plan, without modifications due to COVID or lack of supplies. We also had the chance to reorganize the National Awards in our Chapter Room, including hanging up 8 new awards from our efforts in 2020 and 2021! Composite restoration is still in the works, but all necessary information was sent to Valentine for a quote. If you would like to donate to help restore your composites or any others, please feel free to reach out to our Zeta (zeta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com) or Delta (delta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com).

One new thing that was started this semester is the Alumni Spotlight. We would like to both honor and congratulate Theta Chapter Alumni, as well as share some great stories and updates. The periodic Alumni Spotlight is something we would like to continue and do more frequently in the future, so feel free to reach out with suggestions, stories, or Brothers you'd like to shout out!

Additionally, this past summer, when redoing the floors in the Annex attic, we found a box of old photos and letters from the early 1900s (earliest is dated 1907) under the floorboards. We are working on scanning these into the house file server and putting the physical copies into a photo album, so be on the lookout for these great pieces of Theta Chapter history very soon! If you have any old photos or artifacts you are willing to donate, please contact the Zeta.



## Brothers and Bylaws

This semester we have proposed and passed two amendments to the bylaws. The first allows Brothers doing an early arch internship to opt-in to being considered active. The Bylaws require that officers must be active but excluded non-enrolled Brothers because the past Bylaws did not allow said Brothers to have the ability to hold an active status. The change made our current Epsilon, Brother Alex Lui, eligible to run for and receive the position while he is currently working a full time internship but lives in house and participates as an active is expected to. We, as a brotherhood, did not see the utility of barring him and others in a similar situation from running for an officer position. The second change permits EBoard, with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote, to approve graduate alumni status to requesting graduate and PhD brothers. In addition to Bylaw changes, committees are more active this semester than the last. Officers are required to provide reports in their respective channels pertaining, but not limited to achievements, goals, considerations, related thoughts, and current projects. This provides committee members with an accurate idea of what it means to hold the officer position including its conduct and all its responsibilities. Committees do not exist solely for the purpose of assisting their officers but also serve to properly train prospective officers.

## Housing

This semester we upheld our usual maintenance and made some small improvements on both houses. At the beginning of the semester, we held our usual work weekend where we were able to install the new dishes sink and garbage disposal, install a sliding door for the A2 bathroom, and fix some holes and trim in the Annex. During this time, we were also able to figure out how to fix the stove tops and replace the grease filled pipes that prevented the pilot lights from staying on. Near the middle of the semester, we installed a new washing machine, thanks to all alumni who helped subsidize this, and met with Housing Corp. We will continue to fix any existing problems we had with Housing Corp and plan to increase our connections with them in the near future, starting with our newly setup Chapter Support Fund. Lastly, we will have had a work party by the time this was sent out where we focused on fixing the wires held by tape on the M21 ceiling, the M24 door, and other miscellaneous spring cleaning activities.



New stall door for the A2 Bathroom



New washing machine in the laundry room



Holes repaired in the Annex foyer floor

## Risk Management

With the continuation of the COVID pandemic and increased availability of vaccinations we were able to get every active brother living in the house fully vaccinated and boosted prior to the start of the spring semester. This proved to be extremely valuable as we had brothers test positive for COVID multiple times throughout the semester, but through vaccinations, rapid testing, and quarantines, the virus was managed to be contained and no brother to brother transmissions occurred.

We continued our good performance on inspection this semester as well, with a 94% on the annex and an 84% on the main house. Each of the required mitigations from inspection have been addressed by either the Chapter's 30 Day Mitigation Report or the Housing Corporation's Mitigation Report.

# CHAPTER GROWTH

## Rush

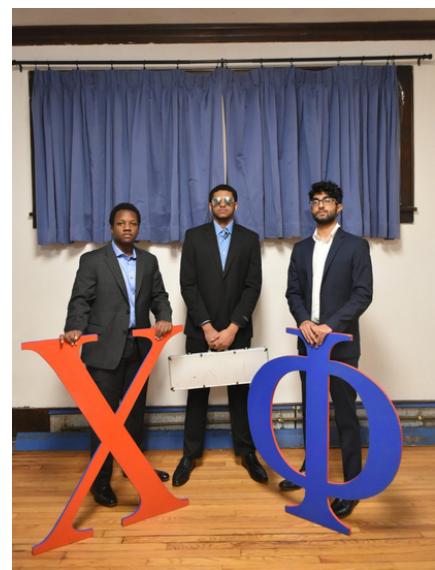
This semester we had well run Rush with lots of attendance and enthusiasm but a poor yield of bids to signees. Although it currently looks like the Chapter will only be initiating 2 new members this semester, I think I can confidently say that the Brotherhood agrees we all put forth our best efforts and tried our best with a smooth and well organized formal recruitment session. Our events all garnered very high attendance and we were able to make numerous connections across the campus community which will hopefully convert to strong future recruitments. The classics of Lobsterfest and Winter Wingstock continued to be incredibly popular and the new twist on an already beloved event of Sushi and Smash worked very well too. Moreover, the Chapter learned many valuable recruiting lessons that we can and will work to implement in the immediate future.

One challenge this semester was the number of new restrictions put in place on recruitment that were coordinated by IFC but pushed by the new Associate Dean of the Fraternity and Sorority Commons. Specifically these included a prohibition on Sunday events, the division of all Chapters into groups A and B where only certain groups could host events on certain days and a new mandatory registration system for potential new members to even be given bids. Another challenge is that there is a strong trend in the student body “post-COVID” of low commitment, especially to in-person programming. The new paradigm for recruitment necessitates an emphasis on outside connections as opposed to relying on people showing up at events and showing inherent interest.

There were a handful of changes that our Iota implemented including utilizing the ChapterBuilder system wholeheartedly to track and comment on our potential new members as well as a renewed emphasis on posterizing and online advertisement. Another change was allowing Alumni to order rush shirts to be delivered to them which we hope to continue doing in future semesters. These changes all seemed to make a positive impact and will be continued. Lastly, we have learned a number of lessons from this recruitment period. Specifically that the most important aspects of recruiting are what happens outside of the formal events and that we need to work on implementing a robust system of pre-closing with our rushees in order to ensure we are able to convert interest into signed bids. We are confident that the Chapter will work to heed this advice to continue to improve and rush 3-6-5.

## New Members

It is our great pleasure to introduce our newest pledge class, the Lambda Tritons. These two fine gentlemen, pictured below, performed excellently during their new member process and it is a great honor to be able to call them brothers. I believe that as brothers, Jay and Omri, will help the chapter make great strides forward. Jay is a freshman nuclear engineering student and Omri is a junior computer science major. During the process they helped to fix the Chi and improve its furnishings such as, fixing-up the bar area in the basement and replacing doors and lights. In the years to come they will continue to build a stronger brotherhood.



Brothers posing for a pre casino night advertisement picture



Our newest Sweethearts, Natalie (left) and Clara (right)!



Jay Gaiardelli (left) and Omri Maor (right)

## NATIONAL AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

### National Relations

The Actives continue to maintain a strong relationship with our National organization. Before the start of the Spring 2022 semester, Br. Jared Zornitzer and Br. Noah Prisament attended Alphas and Thetas Academy in Atlanta. Our Executive Board attended virtual Regional Leadership Alliances. We also participated in a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion webinar which taught us how to be more inclusive of members' backgrounds and experiences. Our Alpha and Beta, Br. Jared Zornitzer and Br. John Cohen, will be attending Congress in Philadelphia this Summer.

The Chapter continues to set a high standard with our school and National accreditations. We were accredited as a Two-Star Chapter under Chi Phi's Three Star accreditation program last semester. The National organization changed their requirements so that One-Star or higher Chapters only need to submit accreditation once per year, so we will submit next in the Fall semester. Furthermore, the Brotherhood is actively working to apply to National awards. Thank you to all of the alumni who were willing to help us apply by writing letters of recommendation. We will find out if we win any awards at Congress, the weekend of July 22nd, and will keep you all posted!



Br. Noah Prisament (left) and  
Br. Jared Zornitzer (right)  
pictured with Grand Alpha Br.  
Steven Hopkins (Nu '99) at  
Alphas and Thetas Academy.

### Alumni Updates

See the message from the TAA President for updates regarding this semester's alumni programming and Theta Alumni Association News. Additionally, we would like to update the Brotherhood on the elections of Br. Brian Sposato to the position of Theta Housing Corporation President and Br. Justin Underwood to the position of Theta Housing Corporation Secretary. Congratulations to both of them in their new positions and thank you to Br. Robert Spicer and Br. Brian Dunn for their service in those roles.

# THE CHAPTER ETERNAL

Honoring the Theta Chapter Brothers who have passed  
to the Chapter Eternal within this past year.

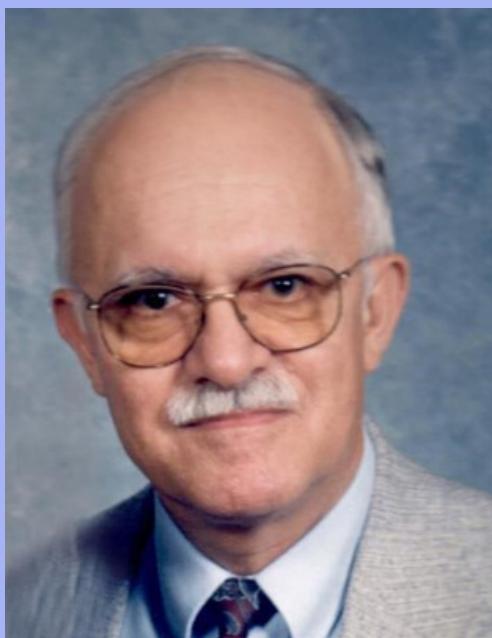
## Br. James Trent Ferguson '53



July 7, 1931 - June 7, 2021

"Jim" born in Cambridge, MA and raised in Troy, NY was an eagle scout and graduated from RPI in 1953 with a degree in biology where he was the class Vice President. He was commissioned in the US Army Chemical Corps in July '53. He served on active duty until 1955 and retired from the reserved in 1984 with the rank of Colonel. Jim continued by starting an independent consulting and technical marketing business in chemical and biological defense which he maintained for 32 years. He enjoyed skiing, tennis, hiking, camping and sailing. He was instrumental in the inception and design of his church's columbarium. Jim was a life member of the US Army Chemical Corps Regimental Association, the Military Officers Association of America and the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). He was the Chairman of the Chemical Operations Division of NDIA, a Past President of the Baltimore Chemical Association and a Past President of the Baltimore Chapter of the RAA.

## Br. George Speros Maniatty '59



August 5, 1937 - February 7, 2022

Born in VT, George graduated valedictorian of Spaulding High School and graduated top of his class in 1959 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from RPI where he met his wife. In 1969, George became the founding President of Precision Roll Grinders, Inc. Under his leadership, the company quickly grew a reputation for unparalleled technical expertise, capabilities, and service. Active in the life of his church, he chaired the building committee that oversaw the church's construction in 1977 and served in various other leadership roles over the years. George was known for his intelligence and generosity. He enjoyed playing tennis and spending time with family and friends. He ultimately live in Allentown, PA and died peacefully in his home.

# MESSAGE FROM THE TAA PRESIDENT

Hello Brothers,

The Theta Chapter hosted their annual Spring Alumni weekend in early April. During the weekend the actives hosted several events to increase Alumni/Active ties including a catered dinner and bowling. Throughout the weekend we had well over 30 Alumni in attendance. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again in the Fall.

On Saturday we held several votes and elections. Br. Kevin Porrecca was elected TAA Vice President, Br. Sam Atkinson was re-elected as TAA Treasurer, and Br. James Loveland was elected TAA Member at Large. Congratulations to everyone in their positions and thank you to Br. Greg Avsyuk for his time at TAA VP. During the meeting we also awarded three scholarships. Congratulations to Br. John Cohen for winning the Br. Andrew Colditz Memorial Scholarship, Br. Noah Prisament for winning the Stephen Rusty Gordon Memorial Leadership Scholarship, and to Br. Jared Zornitzer for winning the Br. Randall Clayton French Memorial Scholarship.

Looking forward, we have begun planning the Theta Chapter's celebration of the Chi Phi's 200th Anniversary in Fall 2024. We plan to host the celebration in/around Troy, however, this will not be held the same weekend as RPI's Homecoming/Alumni weekend since RPI will also be celebrating its 200th anniversary. If you would like to assist with planning, please reach out to me.

Fraternally,  
Br. Nathan Rosengrant  
TAA President  
570.702.4454



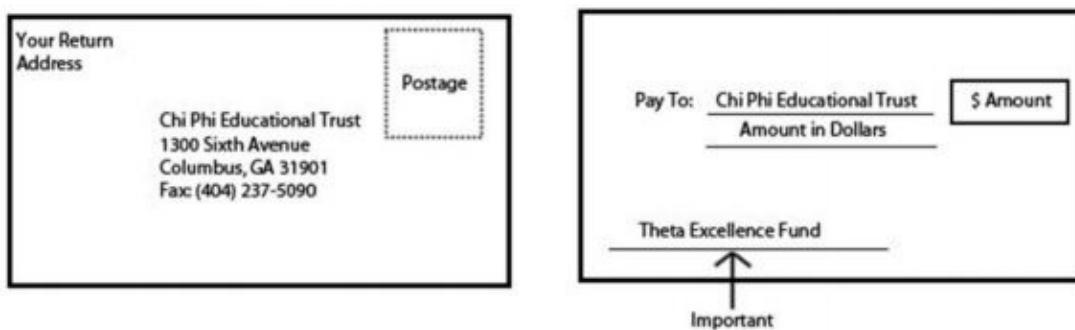
Brothers and Alumni bowling at Uncle Sam Lanes  
during Alumni Weekend

## Upcoming Events

There will be an Alumni Weekend planned for the Fall 2022 semester and we encourage everyone to attend! Details will be sent in the email chain once they are finalized. If you are not currently on the email chain, contact the current Gamma at [gamma.theta.chiphi@gmail.com](mailto:gamma.theta.chiphi@gmail.com) or via the discord server to be added. Unfortunately the campus remains closed to individuals not in the COVID testing pool, but we will let you know when that changes.

# THETA EXCELLENCE FUND

With the Theta Excellence Fund active, our first goal has been 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 represent the values of Chi Phi best and met a minimum GPA requirement. A second scholarship for leadership, in honor of Stephen “Rusty” Gordon, was established. This scholarship is for any Brother showing leadership through his activities with the house. Most recently a scholarship in memory of Brother Randall French was established for Brothers that show a commitment to service. If you would like to help the chapter by donating directly to the Theta Excellence fund, please follow the instructions below:



## CHAPTER DONATIONS

Want to have a direct impact on the chapter? Please contact the new 2022 Alpha (alpha.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Jared Zornitzer, or Delta (delta.theta.chiphi@gmail.com), Brother Noé Horowitz, to discuss room dedications and contributing to housing renovations in the Chi or Stroud Hall.

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!

## CHAPTER CONTACTS

### SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage you to follow the Theta Chapter on social media for more frequent updates on the chapter and events we are hosting.



@chi\_phi\_rpi



@chiphiaatrpi



@chiphiaatrpi

## CHAPTER WEBSITE AND DISCORD

<http://www.thetaofchiphi.org/>  
<https://discord.gg/Wepf99Q>