

# The Minervan

THE OWL NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2024

Chris Gookin '99, BOG Chairman

## Annual Meeting Notes & News: The 2023 Annual Meeting

The 187th annual meeting was well attended with a strong showing from the 1980s; I cannot thank them enough for their dedication to the society and each other. This wise group of Owls shared many stories and lessons with younger members of both Societies.

The board of governors was able to actively engage before, during, and after our annual business meeting, ensuring all participants were provided an opportunity to hear and be heard. In my opinion, this was one of the most refreshing and important business meetings hosted in the last thirteen years.

Alumni and undergraduates worked together like a "pit crew" to change out the Founders Room from the business to the chapter room, and I am happy to report that attendance was standing room only and those memories and decorum were strongly represented.

The board of governors continues to meet monthly in coordination with Pi Kappa Phi undergraduate leadership. On a larger scale, Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi alumni have been elected to the Greek alumni advisory council at the University of Vermont, working together for accountability, communication, responsibility and best interests of Greek life. Additionally, the BOG and its officers and advisors have opened up new initiatives to increase participation. We need your input to ensure we are providing answers to questions and as we are all increasingly busy a better level of access to Society business.

The Lambda Iota Chapter of Pi Kappa Phi continues to represent itself well on campus from leadership to philanthropy and other undergraduate and community activities. 187th annual attendees spent time with these new Owls witnessing their ardor, dedication and emerging owlsh wisdom.

The 188th annual meeting is in its initial planning stages, and I look forward to seeing you all! Just as 2023 was...let's make sure in 2024 we make time for Owls!

I Remain Owlshly Yours,  
**Chris Gookin '99**

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Left to Right: Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Joel Sodano '01, Nathan Fritz '24, and Nico Hirschman '25.



Left to right: Frank DeVita '85, Ed Nunez '85, Marty Daignault '86, Ky Koitzsch '86, Ray Nunez '87.



Golf outing from the annual meeting at the West Bolton Golf Club, Jericho, Vermont (left to right): Ed Nunez '85, Alex Brownstein '90, Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Adam Wisnia '86, Ky Koitzsch '86, Joel Sodano '01, Ed Peterson '04, Jim Goldsbury '72, Ray Nunez '87.

# MAKING TIME FOR OWLS

Send us your photos of your owlish gatherings! Be sure to include a caption of who is in the pic and where it was taken. Check out all the Owls who have made time to keep in touch!



Michael Zobrowski '94 , Alex Brownstein '90 and Joel Sodano '01 in Schenectady, New York, at the inaugural "Capital Region Owls Meetup."



Joel Sodano '01 & Michael Zobrowski '94 at "da club," Electric Grinch, in Schenectady, New York.



Scott O'Connell '94 and Tim Davis '97 skiing in Colorado.



Chris Gookin '99 and Jason Murphy '93.



Chris Swartzbaugh '01 & Dylan Boyd '06 at a Phish concert in Riviera Maya, Mexico.



Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Ed Peterson '06, & Joel Sodano '01 met up a few times to play golf this summer: Ticonderoga, NY; Lake St. Catherine, VT; Essex, VT. Yes, we got our money's worth!



Joel Sodano '01 and Jared Lombardi '04 at the Orchard Creek Golf Course in Altamont, New York.



Kris Dulmer '71 and Matt Burani '97.



Jeff Toussaint '89 and Brian Mack '91 met up regularly this winter to snowmobile through Vermont.

# 2023 Annual Meeting

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**Friday:** Despite a misty start to the golf outing on Friday, the weather was crisp but comfortable. With the addition of our Pi Kappa Phi brothers, we had a fantastic turnout of 30 golfers.

13th-tee Crambambuli offered solace to the duffers and encouragement to the crushers. The party then migrated to 440 Pearl for FADC and some porch-time bonding over a few MonTucky Cold Snacks, generously supplied by Walker Kimball '85.

**Saturday:** The annual business meeting was an excellent opportunity for alumni Owls to get updates on the goings on at the house. The meeting also featured participation from the CEO of the Pi Kappa Phi National Fraternity, Jake Henderson (pictured below). The Owls in attendance posed thoughtful and pointed questions to Mr. Henderson, which he answered generally to the group's satisfaction. We are all hopeful for a strong and mutually beneficial partnership.

The ensuing Chapter Room meeting was a splendid event and a full display of the energy and vitality that has been restored to our house and our hallowed association. Spencer Hallman '88 (below far left) presided as dean of the Owls, and the furthest-traveled member in attendance was Frank DeVita '85. The evening festivities were spirited and convivial, highlighted by the amazing job that the undergrad brotherhood did to cater the event in-house. Simon Flaherty, current



Achon, spearheaded the effort and led a dedicated crew through days of preparation and flawless execution.

As I wrote in a previous Minervan, everything happening at the house these days truly captures the spirit of the Lambda Iota Society. Our current undergrads have embraced the obligation of annual meeting as well as anyone could ask them to, and I encourage you all to come witness just how special this new-old thing really is.

## It's all happening at 440 Pearl

The undergrad leadership (exec board, they call it) is diligently working to keep the house full. They have already made it mandatory for every brother to live in the house for at least one year and recently passed a by-law stating that if a member hasn't moved in by second semester of their sophomore year, they will live in the house for their junior year.

Active recruiting continues to be strong—they consistently initiate pledge classes of 10 or more. Spring 2024 rush was very successful, with 13+1 pledges currently in the process.

It turns out that having the most beautiful

chapter house at UVM, a diverse group of committed members, and a positive reputation on campus are the keys to strong recruitment and maintaining a vibrant undergrad membership...who knew?



# ANNUAL MEETING

## SAVE THE DATE

September 27–29, 2024

Annual meeting coincides with "UVM Weekend," which will be September 27–29 this year.

**Hotel space in Burlington is limited, so make your plans now!**

Keep an eye on [www.alumni.uvm.edu/events](http://www.alumni.uvm.edu/events) and you can always find out when the annual meeting will be held.

# Platforms for Keeping us Connected

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• **Facebook:** Our private Facebook group “Lambda Iota Fraternity at the University of Vermont” has seen a resurgence recently. If you are not on Facebook but would like to take part in more regular communications with members, please consider making an account and requesting to join. If you are on Facebook but not a member of the group, send a request—we will ask a few questions to verify society membership, so brush up on your Lambda trivia!

• **LinkedIn:** New for 2024, we have created a private Lambda Iota Networking Community to be a resource for our newest alumni (and current upperclassmen) to make professional connections with those of us who are more established in the professional world. If you would like to join, click the link above and request to join... we'll hook you up! If you're already a member of the community, make a post and introduce yourself.

• **WhatsApp:** Currently in the development and testing phase, the BOG is looking into using the mobile messaging platform WhatsApp to create a series of chat groups (organized by geography, pledge class, eras, etc.) all housed under a common, general communication hub. More soon...



## How you can help the owlsh cause

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Opportunities to make a positive impact on the society's future are many and varied, but here let's stick to the **3 Ps**:

• **Pay yearly dues:** one of the most important things you can do is make regular financial contributions. At minimum, we ask for yearly membership dues of \$65, but we are supremely grateful for those who can do more.

• **Pay attention:** There are so many great things happening at 440 Pearl these days. We are committed to sharing the good news. Please be a receptive and responsive audience.

• **Participate and keep in touch:** Secret rites and rituals aside, brotherly society is the lifeblood of Lambda Iota. If you can come to the annual meeting, that's amazing, but there are plenty of other opportunities to connect with your brothers. Social media has made distance a surmountable barrier, see above. Take the analog approach and make a phone call or send an e-mail to some of your closest friends from the active days, or make plans to meet up at the Nest.

Need contact info for your brothers? Visit [www.lambdaiota.org](http://www.lambdaiota.org). There's a “find other members” feature for registered users.

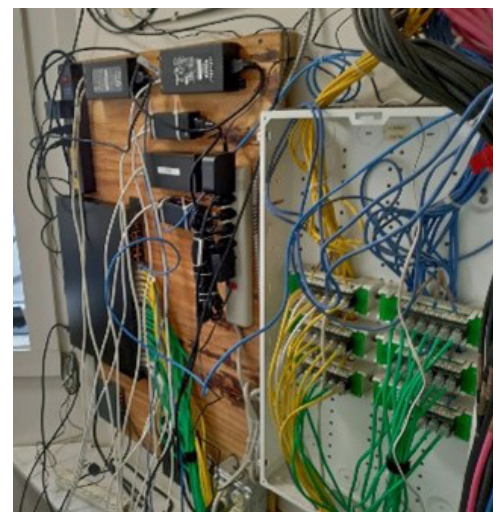
## Upgrades for the 21st Century

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Windows 11 security protocols, apparently, have made it necessary for us to upgrade the house's networking infrastructure. John Wager '85 and Mike Voity '99 collaborated to install five new wireless access points (upgraded from three), a 48-port switch (upgraded from 16-port), and a new router which can now be managed from the cloud. Minerva thanks them for their hard work and expertise.

The City of Burlington, Code Enforcement has sent notice that the house must be repainted in order to comply with lead paint abatement requirements. Heritage Environmental Projects is doing the work, beginning with the shutters. The project will begin in earnest this summer.



**John Cardwell '57** is enjoying retirement here at his home as well as at his family beach home in Lewes, Delaware. "I have five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren," he writes.

**John Geisier '57** continues to enjoy Hilton Head, South Carolina for 25 years! "Beach, no snow, quality of life," he writes. "Active with church, committees, etc. Also, I just found the hardcover book *An Owl's View: History of Lambda Iota at UVM: 1836–1964*: 698 pages. If anyone wants it, please advise where to send it. I am downsizing. Thanks!"

**Dennis DeMontigny '58** says that he has moved back to Vermont permanently after his Air Force career and living in Massachusetts. "I 'grew up' in St. Albans and now live a few hundred feet from my last home here!" he reports.

After 47 years of homesteading in Pennsylvania, **Peter Snyder '60** writes, "We sold the homestead and moved to Maine to be close to our first grandchild."

"Retired after 30 years of operating an environmental consulting business in Northern New Hampshire," **Raymond Lobdell '71** reports. "Keeping busy operating my Christmas tree farm. Dessie and I raised two sons, one living near Boston and the other in Wyoming. Lots of great memories of my time at Lambda!"

**David Rosenbaum '71** remembers: "On beginning college at UVM in 1967, I noticed

the beautiful Owl House and its front lawn strewn with junk, including a car wreck, for its upcoming Garbage Collectors Cotillion, which was a huge drink-fest party that pretty much coincided with the start of school. Soon after, I noticed, at a seat in the old Williams Science Hall, someone had carved into the desktop: "Lambda Iota kill you." I've always wondered what prompted the author of the carving... One big downside of living in Seattle is that it is so far away from Vermont (and Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and New York," he added. "I'll be 75 next year and hoping to make it to next year's annual meeting."

**John Gratiot '72** retired in 2010 and is loving living in Charleston, South Carolina. "No shoveling snow, lots of golf, boating, wooden model boat building, and loving life with the rescue dogs and wife of 30 years," he writes.

**Antonio Guerrieri Jr. '72** reports that he officially retired in 2012 after 28 years at Cote Contractors, two years helping develop a former Air Force base, three years running a trucking company, and five years flipping houses with his wife of 44 years, Jo. We still live in the house we bought in Grand Isle before we were married but have expanded it and added a horse barn and a three-car garage. I spend as much time as possible outdoors taking care of our 18 acres of pasture, hayfield and woods with a pond. For the last 33 years, we've shared a house with my sister-in-law in Kennebunkport, Maine, where our extended

family gets together every summer. Our son and daughter-in-law recently moved to Boston from Baltimore, so we see them much more. I went to last year's annual meeting and met the young men who are the next generation of Owls and can only agree wholeheartedly with Joel. "

**Mark Manning '85** writes: "Sounds like things are getting better. I wish that I could help more."

**Adam Frischer '01** was recently named EVP head of sales and brand partnerships for Front Office Sports, the multi-platform media and news organization covering the sports industry.

**Ray Pancha '02**, who has been hiding under the cover of owlish darkness, is now currently living under the cover of winter darkness in Stockholm, Sweden, and recently took on a new role as systems/product owner in Ericsson, where he has been working for the last 13 years. Also, Ray has inadvertently volunteered to help manage the LinkedIn community, so be sure to check there for posts!

**Tim Dougherty '06** reports that he and his wife Liz "welcomed their second child, another son, on October 14th, 2023. If all goes correctly, at least one of these little bastards will follow in the footsteps of their degenerate father, attend UVM, join the society, and keep our owlish traditions alive."

*Send us your news and we'll share it!  
E-mail [lambda.iota.society@gmail.com](mailto:lambda.iota.society@gmail.com).*

## IN MEMORIAM:

Wendell J. Ryan '47  
March 25, 2009

Robert Bradley Stewart '68  
June 16, 2021

Dana Alan Rouisse '73  
December 14, 2023

Paul Giles Stevens '51  
January 10, 2024

Gerald G. Benson '70  
November 7, 2010

Chad Corpieri '99  
May 28, 2020

Wallace C. Dunham '52  
August 8, 2021

James S Robinson '72  
July 17, 2022

John Thomas Batha '00  
March 6, 2022