

# The Minervan

THE OWL NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2024-2025

Chris Gookin '99, BOG Chairman

## Message from Board President

The 188th annual meeting, held on the weekend of September 27, 2024, was a landmark gathering, attended by members of both Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi. The event brought together alumni, current members, and leadership, to discuss vital initiatives for the organization's future. The central topics addressed were the rebuilding of the Board of Governors advisers, new annual meeting initiatives, and broad alumni engagement efforts.

The need to revamp the slate of Board of Governors advisers was a key point of discussion. Attendees emphasized the importance of recruiting advisers who bring diverse experience and insights to support the organizations' missions. This restructuring aims to provide both fraternities with a stronger foundation for mentorship, strategic planning, and member support.

In addition, the meeting introduced several new annual meeting initiatives aimed at fostering a more cohesive, goal-oriented community. These initiatives are set to enhance programming, enrich the event experience, and strengthen the long-term impact of the annual meeting on the fraternity's future.

Finally, a sizable portion of the weekend was dedicated to discussing strategies for reconnecting with a broader base of alumni. Acknowledging the value of a wide network, the participants focused on approaches to cast the widest net possible, using social media, technology to facilitate meetings, projects and associated work, regional gatherings, and personal outreach, to bring alumni back into the fold.

Overall, the 188th annual meeting underscored a shared commitment to progress, collaboration, and revitalization of both Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi. I look forward to seeing you at the next annual meeting and as always,

"Call back your courage, put aside unhappy fear, perhaps someday it will please you to remember these things."

Be well!

I Remain Owlishly,  
**Chris Gookin '99**

## Words, Wisely Defined

**Owls n. pl.** – A group of brothers, bound by a common cause, who respect, embrace, and contribute to the idiosyncrasies of each other's nature.



Lambda Iota, where you can always come home!.



Brothers (fraternal and biological) enjoying some Montucky Cold Snacks, September 28, 2024  
(L-R): Steven Kimball '88, Walker Kimball '85.



# 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!



A post-coop picture, September 28, 2024.



A premeeting toast, September 28, 2024 (L-R): Joel Sodano '01, Carl Siebecker '06, Phil Herman '03, Ray Pancha '02.



Lovely evening for a porch beer, September 27, 2024 (L-R): John Wager '85, Matt Murray '00.





A wise counsel, September 28, 2024.



Pre-coop porchin', September 28, 2024 (L-R): George Simone '90 (back), Greg Buehner (PKP), Tom Ratsep '90, Kevin Rooney '91, Dave Gilkes '94, Spencer Baker '64.



Catching up on the porch, annual meeting FADC, September 27, 2024 (L-R): Richie Coviello '23, Evan Healy '27.



Pre-game provisions, September 27, 2024.



# Impressions on Annual Meeting 2024

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It's with great pleasure and heartfelt appreciation that I address the Lambda Iota brothers. It was great to be back in Burlington to attend the annual meeting and participate with Lambda Iota's brothers. The last time I was able to attend was in the year B.C. (before COVID), 2019. This year, it was my pleasure to be initiated into the Lambda Iota Society and join the Chapter Room.

For the last six years, it's been my pleasure to have been involved with Lambda Iota Society and our unique partnership with the Lambda Iota chapter of Pi Kappa Phi. As I think of Pi Kappa Phi at UVM, I can't help but think about the humble beginnings of Nu Phi at the College of Charleston, out of which Pi Kappa Phi was born. So too are the men of Pi Kappa Phi (Lambda Iota) able to carry forward the legacy of the Owls at 440 Pearl Street.

Pi Kappa Phi remains proud to work with Lambda Iota Society as the Pi Kaps and Owls have a shared legacy. As I joined Lambda Iota, I would encourage any alumnus to join Pi Kappa Phi (Lambda Iota chapter) as many have already done, such as Spencer Baker '64, Chris Gookin '99, John Wager '85 and Chris Swartzbaugh '02.

In my role with Pi Kappa Phi Properties, Pi Kappa Phi's national housing corporation, I look forward to assisting where the Society deems appropriate to preserve the history at 440 Pearl Street for generations to come. For those of us who had a residential fraternity experience, we know there's always something going on, and it's a home that makes the campus environment much more welcoming. Around the country, fraternity housing remains a challenge in navigating the various university policies and unfunded mandates. It's my hope that in some way, I may contribute to Lambda Iota in a meaningful way.

Please feel free to find out more about Pi Kappa Phi Properties at [www.pkpproperties.org](http://www.pkpproperties.org). Thank you for the welcome and the opportunity to join your ranks.

In Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi,

Greg Buehner  
President  
Pi Kappa Phi Properties, Inc.



FADC porchin', September 27, 2024 (L-R): Rik Gray '89, Frank DeVita '85, Spencer Baker '66.

## Perspective Upon Attending Annual Meeting for the First Time as an Alumnus

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Returning to the annual meeting for the first time as an alumnus, just months after graduation, felt like coming back to the Nest after years away. Walking into the familiar setting, I was filled with nostalgia and pride to see the house thriving and well-maintained. It was heartening to witness how the traditions and values we hold dear are not only being upheld, but also flourishing in the hands of the current members.

Meeting fellow alumni for the first time was an incredible experience. Whether I was reconnecting with old friends or forging new bonds with those whose paths hadn't crossed mine before, the camaraderie in the room was palpable. The annual meeting this year was impressively well-organized, seamlessly blending moments of reflection and

celebration. From the warm welcome to the engaging updates, it was clear that a lot of thought and care went into making everyone feel connected and valued.

The energy and spirit of the meeting left such a positive impression that I am already looking forward to attending again in the spring. It's events like these that remind me of the lifelong community we're part of and inspire me to remain an active and engaged alumnus.

Thank you to all who organized it!  
Tony Mazzola '24

# Walker Kimball '85 Receives Special Edition of The Songs of Lambda Iota

In 2001, when **Woody Widlund '64** commissioned a new edition of The Songs of ΛI (the Society's third, preceded by print runs in 1909 and 1955), our song book was updated to include both the songs (lyrics and sheet music), as well as historical context for the ceremonial tunes. Woody, in his infinite wisdom, also commissioned four different versions of the book: a spiral bound edition for Chapter Room use and three presentation editions awarded to Owls, as merited by their level of financial contribution. A hard-bound copy is on offer in exchange for a \$130 donation, a leather-bound edition at \$1,300, and a finely tooled, leather-bound edition in wooden presentation case that is reserved for donors of \$13,000 or more.

At this year's meeting, **Spencer Baker '64** presented **Walker S. Kimball III '85** with our most ornately adorned song book for his incredibly wise contribution to society in the amount of \$13,013.13. The Board of Governors thanks Walker for his longstanding commitment to our efforts, and his most recent contributions of time in an advisory capacity to the BoG.

## Our Annual Meeting is Moving! Next Event to be held April 12, 2025

Based on feedback garnered from alumni and active members of our Society, it has come to the attention of the Board of Governors that the Society's current arrangement of hosting our annual meeting in conjunction with "UVM Weekend" has become untenable. Not only is it cost prohibitive for many of our alumni, but it is also difficult to predict, because the UVM alumni association is inconsistent from year to year in announcing the dates for UVM Weekend

To make our meetings as hospitable to attendance as possible, **Joel Sodano '01** presented the following proposal to the brotherhood at the annual meeting: Effective January 1, 2025, our meetings be held each year on the Saturday closest to April 21, the anniversary date of our Society's founding. On occasions where the Saturday closest to April 21 coincides with Easter weekend, the meeting shall be held one week earlier.

The proposal passed with unanimous support, and 2025 annual meeting will be held on April 12, to avoid conflict with Easter.



Recent alumni catch up on the Porch, September 27, 2024 (L-R): Henry Clapp '23, Frank Cody '22, Ollie Roberts '24, David Stoffel '24.



A wise gift to the feathered faithful from Chris Swartzbaugh '01.

## ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE THE DATE

April 12, 2025





# Condition of the Society

**Since suspension from Greek Life at UVM in 2007** (Spencer Baker)

**Occupancy** - ranged from zero in 2007, slowly increasing over the years to full occupancy of 24 for the current school year, plus fees from non-resident brothers

**Membership** - from 2007 until February 2023, we had no undergraduate members. Since February 2023, we have initiated more than 70 new brothers and are adding at least 25 per year through our partnership with Pi Kappa Phi. The history and traditions of our Society are included in the pledge education program that Pi Kappa Phi conducts.

**DEBT** - existing and accumulated from complete building renovation, chimney rebuilding, settlement with the U S Attorney and legal costs:

**Total:** \$2,331,000

**Debt retired:** -\$710,000

**Current balance of first & second mortgages:** \$1,621,000

**Resolution to be Debt Free by 2036** (Spencer Baker)

At our 188th annual meeting September 28, 2024, our members approved the following Resolution:

## WHEREAS:

The saga of The Lambda Iota Society of the University of Vermont (hereinafter the Society) commenced on April 21, 1836, and; A grand home, now known as the Nest, was constructed at 440 Pearl Street, Burlington, Vermont, through the efforts of alumni and presented to the Society on June 25, 1913.

## BE RESOLVED:

That we consider it the right, duty, and privilege of all living alumni, undergraduate, and future members of the Society to continue to improve and solidify the financial foundation of the Society; maintain the archives and traditions of the Society; continue to maintain and beautify our home as an asset for the Society and community; continue to add to the active and alumni membership of the Society and pass on its traditions through partnership with Pi Kappa Phi

## TO THAT END:

With the approval of our membership attending our 188th annual meeting on September 28, 2024, or otherwise expressing their opinions, we are establishing a Financial Committee that will conduct a campaign to raise significant funds by our 190th anniversary on April 21, 2026, that will enable us to be debt free by our Bicentennial on April 21, 2036.

Lambda Iota Board of Governors September 28, 2024

## Owlish News

**Jack Holly '51** laments that he is unable to flock to the nest for the annual meeting, but he encourages Owls to reach him by e-mail at oholly@optonline.net. To the feathered faithful he relays, "Give a hoot. The world needs wise Owls, and for a healthy future, never stop flying!"

**Dennis DeMontigny '58:** I am still enjoying being back in St. Albans, after many years away. The more time I spend, the more old memories come back! People and places I know in the old days.

**Louis Kiefer '58:** I am a survivor of the class of 1958, about to turn 88, and surprised that I'm still alive. Living with my wife Sheryl at 250 Bloomfield Ave., West Hartford, Connecticut. One of my sons lives close by as does my granddaughter, and great grandson. My activities involve catching up on "deferred" maintenance of about 40 years. I recently published a book under the name of JD Mortmain entitled "Fuzzy Pink Bathrobe" available via Amazon. It is a collection of short stories harvested from my many years in the Army and in private practice as a lawyer. If is funny, amusing, and informative.

**Dan Bean '60:** Just back (May 1) from a pilgrimage to Italy which included much

hill walking. Now resting up for my 90th birthday next month. Year has been busy: Three week driving trip last September to visit family in Illinois, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Minnesota. An annual event. Between Jeanette and I we have seven children, 15 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren. Something in that midwestern air! Spent part of the year working to keep the local Marine Corps Detachment (I'm Commandant at the moment) together and plan for the future. We had a great Toys for Kids, Vermont, drive last December, thanks to support from local NBC outlet and more than 100 volunteers. Met recently with Chris and board of Pi Kappa Phi to discuss how they might become involved this year. Hope to be in town this year for the annual meeting. I just realized that of the four of us from my HS class attending UVM and becoming Owls, I'm the sole survivor (others were Class of '56: Dave Depatie, Bob Brown, Bob Benoit).

**Dewey Caron '64** reports he was part of a team that just got a approximately \$5 million USDA grant to study bee colony health prevalence of California, Oregon and Washington honeybee colonies pollinating almond and NW fruit and vegetables. He

# SEND US YOUR NEWS!

LET OTHER OWLS  
KNOW WHAT  
YOU'VE GOT  
GOING ON IN  
YOUR LIFE.

News can be sent to  
**lambda.iota.society**  
**@gmail.com**

continues as content/communications specialist of Oregon Master Beekeeper program, when not keeping Africanized bee colonies in Bolivia, during Portland, Oregon wet season (November–February).

**David Rosenbaum '71** shares: “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 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 I ota 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, New York...). I’ll be 75 next year and hope to make it to next year’s annual meeting.”

**Douglas Foster Reed '78:** Doug is largely retired from his position as CEO of Meridian Associates, a civil engineering and survey firm. He continues as chairman of the board and in his business consulting practice. Doug just finished his second winter snowbirding in Florida at Lakewood National Golf Club. He still comes north in the winter for a few ski weeks. He is a father of three with three grandchildren. Doug has published a book *Lead a Movement: The Insider’s Guide to Powerful Strategy Execution*. He enjoyed his 2022 visit to the annual meeting.

**Paul Friedman '85:** After leaving UVM, I embarked on a six year flat-broke student journey that was both humbling and rewarding. Pushing myself deeper into debt, I pursued my goal of becoming a dentist and then went into my career as a periodontist.

I was lucky enough to marry my wife,

Rosanne. Together, we raised two remarkable children, Jacob and Max, who followed in their mother’s footsteps to graduate from the University of Maryland. Jake is in his second year of medical school while Max is working as an intern at two international relations think-tanks in Washington, DC. We have taken several ski trips up to Vermont over the years and spent some summer vacations in Stowe and Londonderry. It is always great to visit Burlington. I pointed out to my boys the last time we were there that I was forced to count the bricks on the newly paved Church Street Marketplace during hell week (I think I counted approx. 5,000 bricks. You bastards; you know who you are LOL.)

Travels this year include bucket list locations: Italy in June and St. Anton, Austria in February.

If anyone finds themselves in the Maryland area (Damn Flatlanders), look me up.

**William Tappan '85:** Three more years ‘til FAA mandatory retirement at age 65. Owls interested in a career in aviation should give me a call at 603-344-1484.

**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.

**Joel Sodano '01:** I recently started a new job with the New York State Office of Mental Health. As a managed care billing specialist, I help to support providers and educate insurance companies on New York State rules and regulations (translation: I help to ensure that insurance companies don’t steal more than they are allowed to steal). Meg and I are doing well, tackling projects in our historic home in Schenectady, New York.

**Ray Pancha '02** who has been hiding under the cover of owlsh 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 14, 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 Owlsh traditions alive.”

**Jordan Schiller '20** is going into his fourth year of teaching in Connecticut and starting a Master in Literacy Instruction.

**Colin Gregonis '21** reports: After moving to Charlotte, North Carolina in 2023, I have foregone city life for a more tranquil place that reminds me of my time in Vermont. I am now located in Asheville, North Carolina.

**Matt Aeschleman '23** reports: “I have established postgrad in Somerville, Massachusetts. I just recently passed my one-year work anniversary as a civil engineer for Green International Affiliates. I get up to the White Mountains on my weekends and have been knocking off some big hikes like the presidential traverse and Pemi Loop.”

**Henry Clapp '23** just began work at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as an engineer.

**Riley Pengue '23** hopes the boys are enjoying the haul of home improvement goodies he brought to the Nest at the annual meeting. Grinding for a power tool company has its perks.



Cornhole on the front lawn for annual meeting FADC, September 27, 2024.

# In Memoriam

**Norman Blair '66** is memorialized in a lovely tribute published in the Burlington Free Press on August 9, 2024. From that piece: "Norm grew up working on his grandfather's dairy farm in Jericho, Vermont, and was first in his family to attend college at the University of Vermont. During his time at UVM, Norm was a proud brother in the Lambda Iota "Owls" fraternity. UVM was also where he met Linda, a nurse-in-training. Norm and his frat brother **Robert Colagiovanni '68** cut a 45-rpm record titled 'Be Nice' and 'Don't Cry'."

The wife of **Paul G. Stevens '51** e-mailed the society to report that he passed away on January 10, 2024.



## IN MEMORIAM:

**Paul Giles Stevens '51**  
January 10, 2024

**Charles M. Goodwin IV '68**  
January 24, 2024

**Lloyd Judson Porter '57**  
February 6, 2024

**Robert Bradley Stewart '68**  
June 16, 2021

**Charles Willard Russum '73**  
July 5, 2020

**Raymond P. Gendron '61**  
May 30, 2021

**James S Robinson '72**  
July 17, 2022

**Ian W. DeGroot**  
February 27, 2019

**Norman A. Blair '66**  
August 9, 2024

**Dana Alan Rouisse '73**  
December 14, 2023