

The Minervan

THE OWL NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2025

Annual Meeting Recap

Greetings My Fellow Owls!

The 189th annual meeting drew to a close well into the early morning hours of Sunday, April 13; it had more energy and spirit than we could have hoped for!

FADC saw a crowd of Owls, both active and alumni, gather on the front lawn and porch. Many older Owls who hadn't been back in decades took the 13-cent tour of their old rooms and a few other "wise" spaces, some of which are not for the faint of heart. Owlsh antics were shared across the generations over cold brews donated anonymously by an Owl from the class of '95. Later, with precision timing, the Owls departed for Sneakers Bistro, where we were generously hosted by **Marc Dysinger '94**. There, many unexpected yet happy reunions of old classmates continued to take place. Some told tall tales and stories that had gotten even better with age, like a fine crambambuli dram. The best part of the evening was Owls, young and old, getting to know one another. The after FADC meeting wrapped around 10:00 pm, and the Owls headed to Church, as was only appropriate.

Saturday morning saw the Owl house standing tall and ready for the day's schedule of events. From the business meeting in the morning, to the awards and speeches after dinner, the 189th annual meeting of our society was both well-timed and timely in its outpouring of support and mirth among the brothers, young and old. The Chapter Room meeting (in a wisely converted Founder's Room) was filled to capacity just after 3:30 pm. Despite the room's great size, it could barely contain the ensuing hilarity. **Walker Kimball '85** presided as dean of the Owls, and many wonderfully ribald traditions from that era were revived amid the ornately carved fixtures of our hallowed halls. We had a "balls out" great time!

In total, over 90 Owls attended the weekend's event, many hailing from the '80s, and they kept all the brave birds on their talons for the weekend! We hope you enjoy the photo spread in the pages to come and that you will save the date for our 190th celebration: April 18, 2026.

With You in the Owl,
Gook '99



A wise gathering for a wise occasion.



David Smith '87, Keith Friend '91, Walker Kimball '85, Bill Tappan '85.

MAKING TIME FOR OWLS

Send us your photos of your owlsh 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!



Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Carl Siebecker '06, Cam Zagursky '20, Franklin Cody '22, Jack Sobran '20.



Franklin Cody '22, Aidan Deluke '20.



Keith Friend '91, Kevin Rooney '90, Jared Lombardi '03, Chris Swartzbaugh '01.



Spencer Baker '64, Will Burks '28.



Spencer Baker '64, Joel Sodano '01, Carl Siebecker '06, Ed Peterson '06.



Charlie Morris '24, Julian '27.



Bill Tappan '86.



Waiting for the grub: Cam Zagursky '20 , Jack Zagursky '23 , Ed Peterson '06 , Alex Smith '24, Sean Dye '86.



Thomas Ratsep '90, George Simone '91.



Neil "Elmo" Kenslea '83.



Spencer Baker '64, Carl Siebecker '06.



Keith Kennett '17, Jack Zagursky '23.

Progress on Debt Free by 2036 Resolution

In the last newsletter, we relayed the board of governors' resolution to become debt-free by 2036. To that end, we assembled a wise parliament to convene the Financial Freedom Committee (FFC). Serving on that committee are **Spencer Baker '64**, **Walker Kimball '85**, **Tom Ratsep '90**, **Kevin Rooney '91**, **Joel Sodano '01**, **John Wager '85**, and **Adam Wisnia '86**.

The FFC began our work with an assessment of the society's finances. In March, we held a virtual presentation of our vision for 2036. In that presentation, our recent history was recounted, as well as a visual timeline of the house restorations that brought about both our current prosperity and our sizeable debt of roughly \$1.6M, all either indirectly (through the guarantee of our first mortgage) or directly (through a second position behind Northfield Savings Bank) dependent upon the financial backing of **Spencer Baker '64**.

The vision for 2036 concluded the following:

- Current debt to income ratio is strong, but not adequate to meet our 2036 goal and leaves us vulnerable to unexpected capital expenditures.
- Status quo operations rely far too much upon Spencer assuming our financial risk.

Therefore, the FFC proposes a trifold approach to achieving our resolution:

1. Creation of a "lending company" made up of Owls to raise a substantial amount of friendly debt, secured by a second mortgage, due to be repaid by 2036.
2. Enhanced alumni contributions through a more defined dues structure and regular solicitation of those who do not contribute.
3. A fundraising campaign to demonstrate our gratitude to Spencer Baker for the hard work and financial burden he has shouldered to ensure that the Owl house will flourish and Minerva's light will shine for many generations to come. Without Spencer, we would not have 440 Pearl St. to call our home. It is time to pick up the mantle and charge forward.

If you want to hear more about the FFC's findings, proposals, or operations, e-mail lambda.iota.society@gmail.com, subject: FFC Details.



Marc Dysinger '94, in conversation with Walker Kimball '85.

Simon Flaherty Receives the 2025 "Woody Widlund Undergraduate of the Year Award"

The board of governors has revived a tradition of recognizing one active brother for his distinguished service to the society. The award is named for one of our most distinguished alumni, **Woody Widlund '64**, whose tireless efforts and financial support brought us *An Owl's View: A History of the Lambda Iota Society*, by **John Thomas '98**.

The 2025 Widlund Award was given to Simon Flaherty at the annual meeting. Simon served as archon (chapter president)

during which time he was dedicated to solidifying the union of Pi Kappa Phi and Lambda Iota. His implementation of the ΠΚΦ bylaw requirement for all actives to live in the house prior to their junior year was instrumental in filling all 24 beds in the Nest. Among other impressive achievements was Simon's orchestration (and execution) of the catering for our 2023 annual meeting. Simon will graduate in May with a major in Business Analytics and a minor in Chinese.

Thank you and congrats, **Simon Robert Flaherty '25!**

Cody Surprise Fund

Fellow Owls,

It was great to see many of you at the 189th annual meeting. I enjoyed connecting with brothers old and new, who came from near and far in the spirit of brotherhood. I was impressed by the turnout and spirit of all who attended the activities over the weekend. One of the many successes was announcing the inaugural recipient of the Cody Surprise Memorial Scholarship.

Sergeant Cody Surprise was a member of the Pi Kappa Phi – Lambda Iota Chapter. He unexpectedly passed away at the Bolton Potholes on May 21, 2022, at the age of 21. Cody was a graduate of the Lyndon Institute in Lyndon, Vermont, and was studying exercise science at the University of Vermont. Cody was enlisted as an infantryman in the Vermont Army National Guard and honorably served our country with pride.

Cody was a very active member of the Pi Kappa Phi – Lambda Iota Chapter and served as the philanthropy chair in 2020. When talking about his fraternity, he would often remark, “Don’t you want this to be a place to come back to?”

Cody was one of a kind in so many ways. He was always there to brighten up the room, share a laugh with a stranger, or cheer up a fellow brother. He was incredibly loyal to his friends, and he wasn’t afraid to stand his ground when defending his passionate opinions and beliefs. Cody was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hiking, climbing, skiing, caving, and many other activities.

Over the past three years, active brothers and alumni have been raising money to build a sustainable scholarship to remember and honor Cody’s contributions to his chapter, community, and country. The Cody Surprise Memorial Scholarship is awarded to undergraduate actives who most embody Cody’s signature characteristics: brotherhood, perseverance, and his spirit of adventure.

At this annual meeting, the Cody Surprise Memorial Fund was able to issue its first \$100 scholarship to current member **Riley Gagnon ’28**.

The board of governors is proud to announce that the Cody Surprise Memorial Fund will be able to sustainably award a scholarship every year. This would not have been possible without the generous support of many of our newest alumni and fundraising efforts by the current active Owls.

If you are interested in supporting the Cody Surprise Memorial Fund, please e-mail lambda.iota.society@gmail.com with the subject: Cody Surprise Memorial Fund. The Cody Surprise Memorial Fund is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and contributions are tax-deductible.

Owlishly,
Franklin Cody ’22

Planning for the Fall

With moving our annual meeting back to its rightful place as an event for the springtime in commemoration of our society’s founding on April 21, 1836, the calendar may now accommodate two Owlsh gatherings per year. Once upon a time, we hosted “Homecoming” celebrations in step with UVM. Elsewise, they were known as “Fly Ins.” For a new era, the BoG is looking to add a new ritual to our repertoire, likely in October... perhaps to include a batch of crambambuli? Stay tuned to find out.

SAVE THE DATE

**MAKE YOUR PLANS
TO JOIN US FOR THE
190TH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE LAMBDA IOTA
SOCIETY**

April 17–18, 2026



Actives and young alumni enjoying the food from Poorhouse Pies - Underhill, VT.

Introducing: The Minerva Club

To recognize those Owls who have been exceptionally generous with their annual contributions, the board of governors has instituted a new tradition: Minerva Club. Each year at the annual meeting, we will announce the names of the donors who have contributed at least \$513 over the course of the previous giving year (April 30 to May 1). See the column on the right for a list of this year's honorees. Along with the recognition, the members of the club will receive a special commemorative item to signify their stalwart support of Minerva's good cause.



At Sneakers Bistro, with special thanks to Marc Dysinger '94, Dennis Hallahan '88, Spencer Hallman '88, Paul Sekerik '88, John Gamberoni '88, Pete McGinn '85.



At Sneakers Bistro, with special thanks to Marc Dysinger '94, Mark Manning '85, Adam Wisnia '86, John Wager '85, Neal "Elmo" Kenslea '83, David Smith '87.

2025 MINERVA CLUB MEMBERS

Jamie Jacobs '61

Woody Widlund '64

Ray Benedict '67

Roger Thompson '70

Ken Delaney '71

David Handy '78

Matt Gray '83

Walker Kimball '85

John Wager '85

Erik Gray '89

Matt Clark '91

Ed Peterson '06

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

News from the Feathered Faithful

John Cardwell '57 reports that he is fully retired and turned 90 on January 3. John has been widowed since May 28, 2021.

Jim Covey '66 met up with fellow Schenectady, New York, resident **Joel Sodano '01** to sip some crambambuli and reminisce about the Owl house. Jim recalled the time when Hustler magazine voted UVM one of the "Wettest Dry Campuses" in the US, citing FADC.

Don Devries '67 declares: "Life is good. Over the last year, after skiing in Colorado and in Val Gardena in Italy, they discovered my blood cancer was migrating to leukemia. As a result, they prepared me for a bone marrow transplant on November 20 at Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York. It was very successful, and I am now back home on Shelter Island, New York, waiting to begin my vaccination program so I can travel and not wear a mask. I'm feeling good, taking personal training to build up strength so my golf game can return."

Ken Delaney '71 sends his well wishes to the Owls for a great annual meeting. "I am still in Naples, Florida. As a former FADC bartender, I was once arrested for borrowing ice cubes from a local motel. I hope you all have a drink on me."

Charlie Barnes '83 reports: "Still trying to figure out what I want to do in life! In the meantime, I'm a photographer and a model agent."

Mike Fontaine '83 is now retired after over 35 years in banking and finance. He's looking forward to spending time in Massachusetts, Arizona, and Vermont, and having more quality time with family and friends.

John Gamberoni '85 has just retired after 32 years (!) at Accenture and plans to add more "recreational" activities to his lifestyle.

Sean Dye '86 is a practicing Vermont real estate agent and was remarried in 2022.

From **Guy Babbitt '86**: I am sorry to say that I cannot make it to the annual meeting this year. I hope to get back there one of these times. A huge thanks to those who kept things going through all the crazy years, and all the organizers for putting this event on and bringing the brothers together. It's great to see all the names of those I have fond memories of and have not seen in a long time. I hope to catch up in person someday. Have fun and take care. I live in Fort Collins, Colorado, so please give a yell if you are ever out here.

Since 2018, **David Ridley '90** and his wife Melissa have been living out their dream of selling their house and traveling to at least 85 countries across all seven continents. They share their experiences, travel tips, and observations on www.thetravelingridleys.com, where you can learn about the places they have traveled and send them well wishes.

From **Matt Reider '92**: I moved to Austria in 2019 and have lived here with my wife and kids ever since.

Tom Decotis '95 sent a remote "Beers Up, Beers Down!" and his regrets at being unable to attend the annual meeting. This year, Decotis Specialty Insurance (decotis.com) is celebrating 18 years in its Greater Boston location.

Tucker Paradee '20 got married on June 15, 2024, and honeymooned in Saint Lucia. He recently finished off another successful season reffing high-school basketball in Greater Boston, including his first playoff game.

From **Matt Aeschleman '23**: I'm moving from Boston to Denver this summer! Very excited to explore a new area of the country though sad to be away from the northeast. I'll be continuing my work as a civil engineer. I'm moving with my girlfriend, Brigid, and we are going strong. I enjoyed a great ski season in New Hampshire and Vermont, but I am looking forward to warm-weather activities.

From **Matthew Richardson '23** (Brother CM) "I recently followed the flow from the East Coast to Salt Lake City for some Utah skiing. Settling down here indefinitely. Best of luck at the nest!"

IN MEMORIAM

Richard "Dick" Bohlen '50
June 20, 2020

Elbert "Ike" Isham '50
December 5, 2018

Wallace Dunham '52
August 24, 2021

James Edgerton '52
June 9, 2022

Clement "Clem" Nadeau '54
January 17, 2021

Robert Brown '56
January 9, 2019

Edward Crane '56
May 15, 2020

Edward Nugent '57
September 11, 2016

Alan Dow Knickerbocker '61
January 29, 2025

Frederick Smith '61
July 14, 2016

Scott Hallock '62
June 1, 2016

Morris Leno '62
December 24, 2019

Laurence "Larry" Cashion '63
January 12, 2018

Daniel Boone '64
April 2, 2018

Thomas Keppel '65
July 16, 2019

Norman Blair '66
August 8, 2024

Robert Stewart '68
June 16, 2021

Richard "Dick" Trudell '68
January 22, 2025

Greg Barlage '90
November 21, 2022

Vannarin "Vann" Ly '01
June 1, 2016

Cody Surprise '24
May 21, 2022