

# The Minervan

THE OWL NEWSLETTER | FALL 2025

## Pi Kappa Phi / Lambda Iota Organizes a Very Successful “War of the Roses”

Hello, fellow Owls!

I wanted to share some success that the actives and I had with our recent weeklong fundraising event, War of the Roses.

Together, with all six sororities, as well as three local Vermont nonprofits and businesses, we raised \$40,000 in a single week for more than seven charitable organizations. The actives alone raised \$20,000 for our national philanthropy, The Ability Experience.

This marks the most successful philanthropic initiative in recent Greek life history, surpassing the all-time fundraising record for a Greek event by \$10,000. We're committed to making this event a lasting tradition on the UVM campus and continuing our mission to make Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi an overwhelming force for social good. We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the alumni who donated and supported our efforts! Your generosity helped make this incredible achievement possible.

If you would like to be involved with the event next fall, please reach out.  
Phone Number: 703-254-6503 E-mail: [eward8@uvm.edu](mailto:eward8@uvm.edu)

Hoots!

**Evan James Ward**

Philanthropy Chair, Pi Kappa Phi AI  
University of Vermont



Owl House Adorned with War of the Roses Banners.



War of the Roses Banners.



# 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!



Front: Spencer Baker '64, Riley Pengue '24, John Wager '85, Chris Gookin '00, Richie Coviello '24, Charlie Morris '24, Erik Gray '89, Adam Wisnia '85.  
Back: Carl Siebecker '06, Ed Peterson '06, Alex Smith '23, Charlie Kimmich (chapter archon/pres.), Raph Santaella '97, Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Kris Dulmer.



Tom Collins '24, Cam Zagursky '20 and others porchin'.



Those are some funny looking coats.





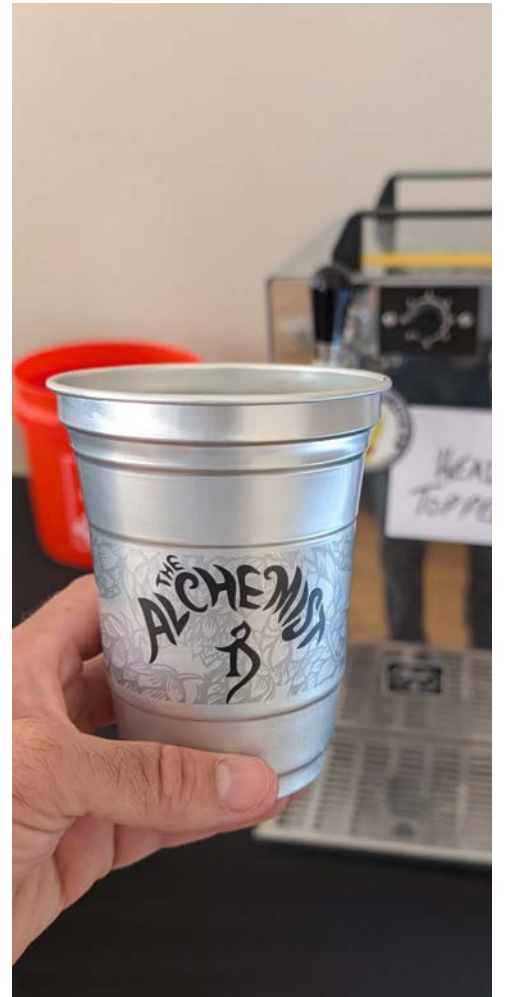
Joel Sodano '01, Charlie Morris '24, Charlie Kimmich, Carl Siebecker '06, John Wager '85, Adam Wisnia '85, Richie Coviello '24.



These Pi Kapp guys sure are into owls.



Matt Clark '91 and son Luke on a UVM visit; John Wager '85, Evan Ward, Spencer Baker '64.



Heady Topper on Tap!





Sweet Alchemy.



A packed house at the charity hockey game!



Dads chilling on a frat lawn couch.



Evan Ward managed to find time to go out for his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday amid a weekend packed with responsibilities.



Chris Swartzbaugh '01, Jared Lombardi '03, Ed Peterson '06, Charlie Kimmich (archon), Carl Siebecker '06.



Definetly an active group!



# A Message from the Chairman of the Board

**“Autumn came, and with it came the promised party...” Lord Byron, *Don Juan***

Our recent Homecoming and Alumni Fly-In Weekend was a resounding success, a testament to the strength and endurance of our bond across generations. The gathering provided a meaningful opportunity to renew friendships, celebrate our shared history, and welcome new members into the continuing story of our brotherhood. These events remain vital in maintaining the living connection between our active chapter and our alumni, ensuring that the spirit of our society endures. Plans are already underway to establish alternate dates for future gatherings, allowing all who are faithful to find their way home to Burlington and to the Trysting Tree once more.

A special note of gratitude goes to all the alumni who made the trek back to the house, particularly those who have been away for a long time. Your return brought renewed warmth and perspective to our shared traditions, reminding all present that the brotherhood of Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi is not bound by time or distance. Your stories, laughter, and counsel reconnected the past with the present, strengthening the chain of friendship that links every generation of our society. I would be remiss if I didn't also express my appreciation to the parents and families who attended, allowing your sons to showcase our house but also our relationship. Special thanks to John and Jen Kimmich, parents of house Archon Charlie, who supplied a variety of Alchemist creations for our Owlsh gathering, including a Heady Topper on tap!

The business meeting was equally well attended and productive, offering time for thoughtful discussion on the current state of the society and the shared vision for the coming decade. The Brothers voiced a strong desire to advance both fraternal and fiscal initiatives, emphasizing stewardship, preservation of our archives, continued alumni engagement, and renewed commitment to leadership and service consistent with the ideals of Minerva and our founders.

Other key topics included positive updates to the Cody Surprise Memorial Fund, which continues to honor Brother Cody's enduring spirit of generosity, service, and leadership. The program stands as a lasting tribute that inspires both actives and alumni to embody the finest values of our brotherhood. The meeting also highlighted ongoing collaboration between Lambda Iota and Pi Kappa Phi in maintaining a unified legacy rooted in friendship, scholarship, and service.

To all who traveled, contributed, and gave of their time and counsel, thank you. Your presence and participation ensure that the Society remains not merely an institution, but a living tradition of brotherhood.

In the Bond,  
**Chris “Gook” Gookin '99**  
Chairman, Board of Governors



Adam Wisnia '85, Walker Kimball '85, Spencer Baker '64.



Actives, parents, and actives hanging out.

# Cody Surprise Memorial Fund Update

Fellow Owls,

While I was unable to attend the Fall Fly-In, it seemed to be quite a great time by all!

Since this spring's annual meeting, we have some important updates to share about the Cody Surprise Memorial Scholarship.

We have officially reopened the Cody Surprise Memorial Scholarship for the 2025–26 academic year. This scholarship helps support our active members in continuing their education at UVM by defraying the cost of necessary educational expenses, such as books. For this year, the scholarship amount has increased to \$175 from \$100.

Additionally, it's now easier than ever to contribute to our scholarship through our new Venmo and PayPal accounts. To donate, search in Venmo for our handle: @Surprise-Memorial-Fund. You can also contribute to us through PayPal, which allows you to set up one-time, monthly, or yearly donations. The QR code for our PayPal donation portal is to the right.

If you would like your donation to go directly towards the 2025–26 scholarship award, please let us know in the comments of your donation, and we would be happy to arrange that! All other donations support the long-term sustainability of the scholarship.

The Cody Surprise Memorial Fund is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and contributions are tax-deductible. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to [lambda.iota.society@gmail.com](mailto:lambda.iota.society@gmail.com).

Owlishly,

**Franklin Cody '22**

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?"



PayPal

## Q&A: Tax-Advantaged Giving & Estate Planning

### **Q: Can I make a tax-deductible donation to support the Owl House?**

A: While general contributions to the society and regular dues are not tax-deductible, Lambda Iota does have an option for tax-advantaged giving through our membership in the Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing (SPGH) [www.spgh-foundation.org](http://www.spgh-foundation.org). The SPGH provides a non-profit vehicle for Owls to donate funds that are earmarked explicitly for distribution to Lambda Iota and can be used for "interior rehabilitation or restoration" of 440 Pearl St, this includes renovations that have already been done.

### **Q: If I have an IRA that requires me to take a minimum yearly distribution (RMD), can I donate a portion of that distribution to the Owl House without having to pay federal income tax on the distributions?**

A: Yes! Through our SPGH membership, it is possible to apply this philanthropic strategy to make a federal tax-free charitable distribution from your traditional IRA, rollover IRA (IRRA®), SEP or SIMPLE IRA that will benefit the Society and reduce your tax liability.

### **Q: Should I consider including Lambda Iota Society in my Estate Planning?**

A: The Board of Governors, and future generations of Owls would be honored to be remembered in such a generous way.

If you are interested in the above, or related topics, please contact the BoG at [lambda.iota.society@gmail.com](mailto:lambda.iota.society@gmail.com). We can provide informational resources and technical assistance, including helping you with questions for your financial advisor or tax professional.



Erik Gray '89, Mark Manning '85, Matt Gray '83.



# Alumni Spotlight: Dispatches from the 1950s

Brothers,

One of the most fulfilling aspects of being BoG alumni communications chair is the opportunity to connect with so many of the brothers that make up our unique and motley Parliament of Owls. In recent years, the increase of our alumni ranks for the first time in roughly 13 years has been cause for much excitement. In fact, our membership is on pace to double by 2026!

Very recently, however, artifacts from our storied history and the stories of their owners have been grabbing my attention. **Jack Holly '51** sent along a couple of items from our past, including something I had never seen before, a Kakewalk program from February 22–24, 1951, in excellent condition (cover price, 25 cents!). While Jack and I both believe that Kakewalk's openly racist theme is nothing to be celebrated, we also agree that we gain very little by forgetting the event altogether; it deserves a page in history. I, for one, hope that we can learn how to balance the significance that Kakewalk had for those who lived it against our desire not to relive its spirit in the present day. And that brings me to the second time capsule from the 1950s, which included some snapshots of snow sculptures from the 1949 festivities taken by **Ken Peirce '52**.

Ken's son, Hank, reached out not too long ago to say that he and his dad were going through old photos, among which was a treasure trove of memories from Ken's days at Lambda Iota. See below for a sampling of the items they sent to be kept safe in our society's archives (the entire collection will be posted to our website soon). From Hank's email, "My father, Ken Peirce Junior, was an Owl in the late '40s and early '50s as I believe his father was before him. He so values his days as an Owl and was just talking about some of the guys yesterday." Thank you, Ken and Hank! We will display these items at our upcoming annual meeting.

Owlishly,

**Joel Sodano '01**

Alumni Communications Chair



Items from Jack Holly '51.



Items from Ken Peirce '52.

## DIGITAL UPDATES, COMING SOON

We are thrilled to announce that we are in the process of revamping our website ([www.lambdaiota.org](http://www.lambdaiota.org)) and implementing the migration of our database to a new platform! When completed, Owls will have a shiny new platform for sharing news and keeping their contact info up to date. Stay tuned for more news on this front in the coming months.

## SAVE THE DATE

### MAKE YOUR PLANS

22 New Brothers were welcomed into the fold this Fall, come meet them and join us for the  
**190<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Lambda Iota Society**

April 17–18, 2026



# News from the Feathered Faithful

**Kenneth S. Peirce Jr. '52:** Ken Peirce is doing well for 95, though this year has been a difficult one. He moved into a nursing facility in May and lost his wife Maggi in December after 60 years of marriage. He is still mentally sharp and able to regale his visitors of the stories of Owls long gone. When we moved him two of the books that he wanted in his room was his UVM year book and the Lambda Iota song book. He wishes all the Owls the best of luck in the coming years. (written by his son Hank Peirce).

**Daniel Joseph Bean '60:** I went to Italy last April, and I came home with a compressed spinal nerve. I had an operation in July to decompress nerve and up until now I've been rebuilding my leg (left) and nerve. Finally walking (more like a waddle) without aids, still a way to go. Looks (2024 newsletter) like meeting was great. Great to see the house doing so well, Hoots to all those responsible. Hope to see you next year.

**William E. Rowe '63:** Still above ground! Keep in touch with George Cronk '63, Laurie Cone '64, as well as Spencer Baker '64.

**Woody Widlund '64:** My wife, Elise, and I continue to enjoy life at Wake Robin Lifecare Community in Shelburne, Vermont. Our granddaughter Aida, now 13 and a wonderful young lady, lives nearby with her father, Eben (UVM '94), and her mother, Chris. We're taking things at a slower pace these days but have discovered Pearl Seas Cruises, small ships with about 180 passengers, which are just our speed. We recently returned from a 12-day Great Lakes cruise from Milwaukee to Toronto, and last year we sailed from Portland, Maine, to Quebec City.

**Donald Charles DeVries '67:** "Retired" this past year from my voluntary position as leader of Loosey Goosey Apres Ski Group in Summit County, Colorado. I lead the organization for the last 12 years after retiring from the Department of Defense. The Loosey Goosey Ski Group has been running over 35 years. It hosts a potluck Apres Ski party every Thursday in the Summit County Community Center. With over 200 members who winter in Summit County, our Thursday gathering has over 40-75 people meet during the ski season. I still look forward to skiing in Colorado and Italy, but also look forward to sailing and fishing on Shelter Island. Just have some aging medical issues to work on, so I can play golf at next annual meeting. I went through a bone marrow transplant on November 20, 2024. It was very successful so far. Home on Shelter Island. I cannot travel until later in the year, when my vaccinations are done and I am over several months from transplant. I look forward to visiting Burlington! I last skied in Colorado January to March of 2024, and in Italy in December 2023. With hope this coming January 2026!

**Raymond Davi Lobdell '71:** Hope to make the 2026 meeting. I am still retired but continue to grow Christmas trees for choose-cut and wholesale. I recently went back to Bethel, New York, with Dennis Edson, former Owl and relived our journey in 1969 to Woodstock, "3 days of Peace, Love, & Music." We had no idea what we were in for back in '69!

**Mark Aubrey Dayman '73:** Nothing really new, but starting January 2025, I'm on a retirement path. Fourteen cases left to

complete in 2025, and I'm out of here! Ruth and I went skiing in the French Alps in January. I had to get that one off my list!

**Mark Stephen Manning '85:** I just finished my 10th year on the UVM CEMS board, sold my company, and am an elected official in Alton Bay. Who would have guessed?

**Matthew V. Clark '91:** All is well here in the mid-Atlantic (NOVA specifically). I managed to get up to Burlington this past summer, joined a student tour with my two boys. They are lightly considering UVM, but we shall see how that plays out. We broke or rather walked into Lambda... couldn't find anything worth appropriating and moved on to other activities. Met up with Brian Mack for a few pints... that guy just does not age? Guess that's it over and out!

**Carl Turner Siebecker III '06:** "I'm a man. I'm 40!" So proclaims Carl Siebecker '06 as he celebrated two score revolutions around the sun with fellow Owls Joel Sodano, Chris Swartzbaugh, Ed Peterson, Teddy Moy at his farm in Shoreham, Vermont. An epic Nerf gun battle showed that Minerva has blessed their daughters with extreme battle prowess; male heirs and assigns have much training to do before they fly the coop for UVM.

**Greg Buehner, PKP Properties:** On a professional note, I was elected as a board member for the Catholic Order of Foresters, a fraternal benefit life insurance organization, in 2024. I also was re-elected in September to the Fraternal Housing Association board, which serves all fraternity and sorority housing efforts nationwide.

## SEND US YOUR NEWS! WE LOVE HEARING FROM YOU!

In recent years we have enjoyed an influx of communications through our Facebook group page ([www.facebook.com/groups/Lambda.Iota](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Lambda.Iota), join by request) and by e-mail ([lambda.iota.society@gmail.com](mailto:lambda.iota.society@gmail.com)).

We're committed to maintaining our Owlsh connections, with your help.

Send your news to share with the brotherhood and we will get the word out!