

ALPHA GAMMA RHO BETA GAMMA CRESCENT

December 2024

Alumni Spotlight - Mike and Lynn Martz

By David Ward #085

Brother Mike Martz #154 and his wife Lynn (a former Rho-Mate) have built a very successful grain and cattle business in Maple Park, Illinois (near DeKalb) in partnership with Lynn's family. Lynn is in charge of the cropping operation which is 6,500 acres. Mike runs the beef feedlot operation which finishes 7,000 head per year. Included in the custom feedlot operation are cattle that are feed out for other owners. A unique feature is their use of Ultra-Sound technology which enables them to send cattle to market at an ideal time. Because of this, buyers are willing to pay a premium for cattle from their feedlot. You can find out more about Mike and Lynn's farming operation at www.Larsonfarms.com.

Mike grew up on a 6,900-acre grain farm near Lanark, Illinois. After high school Mike enrolled at Highland Junior College in Freeport, Illinois. After graduating from Highland in 1976 Mike enrolled at Platteville and majored in Agricultural Education. Mike was a member of the Xi pledge class. Amongst Mike's memories in AGR include the "Skip Out" to Illinois State in Bloomington, Illinois. Another memory involved a horse at the college farm. Mike commented that he met many AGRs while showing cattle and he knew if he had the chance, he would become a member. Mike's fondest memory of AGR at UW-Platteville was meeting Lynn. Lynn grew up in Maple Park, Illinois and enrolled at UW-Platteville after graduating from Kaneland High School. At Platteville she majored in Agri-Business. Lynn recalls when she started at Platteville there were only five females in the College of Ag. When Mike started at UW-Platteville he shared an apartment with two other men that he knew from Highland Community College, Earl Heimerdinger #153 and John Meyers #152. All three that lived in that apartment pledged AGR and all three married Rho-Mates.

After Platteville Mike started teaching Vo-Ag at Pearl City, Illinois where had student taught. Mike recalls taking some of his students to tour UW-Platteville. One of those students was Brother Ken Gibson #231.

Mike and Lynn married in 1979 and went into partnership with Lynn's parents and Lynn's brother. Soon after joining the partnership, they managed a 1,200-acre beef operation near Rewey, Wisconsin. Nine years later they sold the Rewey location and moved to Maple Park, Illinois.

In addition to their busy farm life, they are active in their church. Lynn as the treasurer and Mike as Church Council Chair. Mike served as the President of Illinois Beef Association for 2 years and the Governor appointed him to the Illinois State Fair Board. They also are active in a Livestock Development group that helps producers navigate the permitting process.

Mike and Lynn's son Justin has also joined the operation. Justin and his wife, Jamie, have three children which are involved in FFA, 4-H and sports. Justin was the Noble Ruler of the Alpha Chapter at the University of Illinois. Tragedy struck Mike and Lynn on January 20, 2000 when they lost their son Doug to a heart condition. At that time, they were thankful for the support they got from several AGR brothers.

Mike and Lynn appreciate the relationships they have made through Alpha Gamma Rho. They attended the 50th Anniversary where they renewed many old friendships and were impressed by the size of the crowd. In closing the brothers of Beta Gamma

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Advisor Report

By Dr. Charles Steiner #653, Beta Gamma Advisor



As we approach the holiday season, we are grateful for the opportunities provided to engage and interact with you. Each year we are amazed by the number of Beta Gamma alumni we see at events on campus or across the state. We visited with several of you at our annual golf outing supporting BILSA scholarships, World Dairy Expo, Homecoming and several UW-Platteville athletics events this fall. Your dedication to our university and chapter does not go unnoticed. Thank you!

It is obvious to us that the bonds developed by our brothers during their time as undergraduates extends well beyond graduation. Whether it be the "Platteville Oldies Gatherings" at Paddy Mac's Pub and Grill in Verona, alumni attendance at Ag Fest and other campus activities or the newly developed alumni mentoring program to further connect and assist our undergraduate brothers as they prepare for life after graduation, we are establishing connections and networks that will last a lifetime.

We would like to thank the outgoing undergraduate executive team for their commitment to the fraternity over the past year. As the first officer team to participate in the newly formed AGR Top Leaders Institute (TLI) in early February 2024, this program provided a foundation for developing chapter-specific plans for long-term success. One of the goals the executive team set was to achieve "Gold Chapter Status" which they were successful in accomplishing and were recognized with at the 2024 AGR National Convention in Sacramento, California. We are excited to begin this process again with the newly elected executive team which is only returning two undergraduates from the past year. With so many new faces on the executive board, we are confident there will be both traditions maintained, and emerging new ideas.

In the SOA, Justin Daugherty, Animal Care Manager at Pioneer Farm, was recognized with the 2024 Academic Staff Award for Excellence recognizing his commitment and dedication to the university and Pioneer Farm. SOA faculty members Dr. Joe Sanford, Dr. Chris Baxter and Advisor David Heimerdinger were awarded a substantial grant from the CHS Foundation to advance the university's precision agriculture initiatives. The Dairy Innovation Hub continues to provide resources expanding our research and outreach capacity supporting the Wisconsin dairy industry. This fall, Advisor Dr. Ryan Pralle conducted several interviews and news stories highlighting the investment at Pioneer Farm in a GreenFeed machine that offers a unique opportunity to directly measure the microbial activity within the cow's digestive system. Reach out to Ryan if you want to learn more about the science behind measuring cow burps!

Our collegiate crops and soils teams continued the tradition of success with high placings at annual regional and national contests. Most recently, the crops team placed third overall in the 90th annual National American Royal Kansas City Collegiate Crops Contest and the 95th annual National Chicago Collegiate Crops Contest. Undergraduate

brother Jack Lichte was a member of both teams and placed individually in both contests. Undergraduate brother Brayden Peter was on the cover page of the November 2024 edition of "The Berkshire News" a publication of the American Berkshire Association. There was a great article highlighting the hands-on learning and Berkshire breed at UW Platteville's Pioneer Farm Swine Center.

A major project this year will be assisting the chapter with the transition from OmegaFi to ChapterSpot as our new member database platform for AGR. ChapterSpot is a product of the extremely successful business software, Salesforce, that provides integrated solutions which will help brothers become more efficient and connected. The fraternity has implemented an AGR ChapterSpot Transition Team to assist the local chapters through this process. This transition is underway and will be implemented throughout 2025. If you would like more information on this visit the AGR website.

SOA Fall 2024 enrollment figures totaled 449 majors up slightly from Fall 2023. The 449 SOA majors include 126 male students and 323 female students. The following table provides additional enrollment figures for the SOA and our majors.

School of Agriculture (SOA) Term	Fall 2024	Fall 2023	Fall 2022
SOA Total Enrollment	449	433	421
Ag Education	55	42	55
Agribusiness	124	132	126
Animal Science	183	167	158
Dairy Science	24	22	20
*Ecological Restoration and Resource Management	14	17	15
Environment Horticulture	23	17	21
Soil and Crop Science	47	50	49
*Previously Reclamation, Environment and Conservation			

As our chapter continues to grow and evolve with changes in higher education and Greek organizations, our commitment to academic achievement, professional development, and community service remains strong. The chapter plays an important role in shaping the future of agriculture, preparing our undergraduates for success in their careers and communities, while emphasizing the values of brotherhood and leadership.

We look forward to assisting the undergraduates with living the promise and values of Alpha Gamma Rho. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and prosperous new year!

Fraternally, Chuck Steiner, David Heimerdinger, and Ryan Pralle, Beta Gamma Advisors

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would like to thank the Martz's for their generous support of the AGR chapter at UW-Platteville. They say that they feel a sense of responsibility to help keep the chapter strong and also be a fraternity that their grandsons could potentially join.

If you know of an alumnus that you would like to see featured in the Crescent, please send their name and contact information to David Ward at palum76@yahoo.com or Chuck Miller at cmiller4424@gmail.com.

Correction - Credit should go to Ken Janes for the idea to spotlight Steve Mergen in the May 2024 issue of the Crescent.

Chapter House Update

By Kevin Klubertanz #304



The actives continue to work with Brother Frank Raupp #374 to keep on top of key improvements around the house. Before the fall semester started, we were able to get all the windows replaced to take care of a key maintenance project on the house. There were also a number of small improvements such as power washing the siding and staining the deck that helped to make the

house look its best for the successful Ag Fest.

Just like any house we continue with normal replacement items like

washer, dryers, sanitizer repairs, and likely hot water heater. It is great to see the active numbers in the house grow along with their commitment to improve what they can put their teamwork into.

We continue to plan and review options to update other areas of the house. Larger renovation projects to update other areas of the house continue to be investigated as the fund-raising options are also considered. Some of our alumni have already stepped up with donations directed toward these longer-term goals. Consider how you might help to improve our gathering space for all of us to be proud of our chapter house today and in the future.

Message From the President

By Michael Long #727, Alumni Board President



The fall of 2024 has been an exciting time for Beta Gamma with well attended events and plenty of comradery between old friends and new. Once again AGR was very well represented at the BILSA golf outing. The second year of the expanded Ag Fest was a giant success. A small group attended the Chicagoland AGR Golf Outing, winning a \$500 donation to the alumni chapter.

Homecoming events were well attended and new member recruitment was extremely strong despite continued smaller school of ag male enrollments. We have plenty to be proud of.

Looking forward, the Beta Gamma alumni annual meeting will be held on Saturday April 5th, 2025. Specific meeting times and locations

have not been set yet but it is safe to expect a mid-afternoon annual meeting and a social gathering in the evening at Steve's Pizza. Official times and location will be sent via email at a later date. This year we have three director terms up for election. Two of these three directors have expressed their desires to step off the board this year. If you are interested in running for the board this year, reach out to myself or any of the other board members for information.

Taking a larger look forward, Beta Gamma will be hosting a weekend of events including a banquet dinner in the spring of 2027 to celebrate the 55th Founders Day. We are in search of two or more brothers who are willing to co-chair the 55th celebrations as well as committee members to help make the entire weekend a success. If you are interested in helping to plan this weekend of activities, please reach out to any board member.

Scholarship Program Update

By Scott Laufenberg #224



We have made a few changes to our scholarship program in 2024. We are continuing to use the Beta Gamma "Making Better Men" scholarship to drive recruitment. We have partnered with UWP in that the AGR Scholarship is included in the scholarship package that is sent to all incoming freshmen. The undergrad chapter will review the applications and award the scholarship(s) to deserving students focusing on individuals that are likely to join. The announcement of the AGR Scholarship also gives us a platform to share our story outside of the College of Agriculture. Last semester we awarded two-\$250 scholarships. The winners were Ryan McCord and Braden Rogers. Both were initiated

We also added a \$200 scholarship to all new initiates to help offset the upfront cost to join Alpha Gamma Rho. We are very pleased that the chapter has initiated twelve new members this semester. This scholarship award has been a useful tool in helping push some prospects off the fence and bring them into our brotherhood. Applications for the Mike

Gulke and Dennis Valstad scholarships are due in early 2025 and will be awarded prior to spring break.

Our funds are performing well. The Beta Gamma Fund has a balance of \$106,249 and the Dennis Valstad Fund has a balance of \$43,572. The Beta Gamma and Dennis Valstad Scholarship funds and their growth are really making a difference for our chapter. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to all that made this happen! We are truly "Making Better Men". Please consider making a gift before the year end. If you wish to make a donation to a scholarship fund, make your check payable to the Educational Foundation of AGR and mail it to Collin Bays, Treasurer, 2106 W 10th Lane, Adams, WI 53910, In the memo section of your check please indicate which fund you wish to donate to. To give by credit card, go to <http://www.alphagammarho.org/donate>. On the Donation page scroll down and select Scholarship Funds, on the next page click "I Want to Support" and in the drop-down box choose either Beta Gamma or Dennis Valstad Memorial. These donations are tax deductible. Also, keep in mind that the Alpha Gamma Rho Foundation also has many ways to give other than cash. Please contact Carol Johnson for options on non-cash gifts at carol@alphagammarho.org or 816-891-9200 x121.

Beta Gamma Colony - Session II

By Don Von Rueden #58

This article is a follow up to the article that was in the December 2023 Crescent about the beginning of Beta Gamma AGR Colony in Platteville. The initial group of Founders were generous in sharing information that the editorial board thought it would be good to share more stories of our beginning.

Steve Mergen made a comment that I think speaks to the true grit and foundation of Beta Gamma, "Initially it seemed like only a pipe dream, but as we added more fellows with similar interests the momentum became unstoppable". Wegmueller's attitude of "what do we have to lose" was soon adopted by those attending the meetings in Ulrich Hall on September 26, 1968.

Don Von Rueden has a story to tell about 350 W. Pine Street before it was inhabited. In November of 1969 Don, Alumni Secretary at the time, was carrying the first edition of the Crescent down to the Post Office. As he walked past the house, he noticed that a large cement truck had pulled into driveway of 350 W. Pine Street. He knew that there was supposed to be a cement truck the next day for when a crew was planning to help cement the entire basement. Don apologizes if he gets a little of this wrong or if he left out a name, however, Mike Myers, Steve Windett, Mike Krutza and Mike Miller were rounded up along with tools to rush to the house to take care of the basement project a day early. Unfortunately, the cement company put an additive in the cement to make it cure quicker which presented another issue! The project got done and was not perfect.... just ask the guys that lived down there. Frank Friar recalls that we filled as many five-gallon buckets as needed to empty the cement truck and placed them strategically around the back yard. Rumor has it that John Wegmueller had an encounter with one of those hard objects late one evening. Don and others had to throw away such items as shoes, clothes, etc. that were victims of being pressed into service on that day.

Stan Smith shared a story about the first pledge class, Alpha. He recalls that there were meetings in Ullrich Hall one evening and there was a rumor that the Alpha pledge class was going to kidnap an active or two and haul them out to the country. Stan and another brother (whom he can't remember) parked outside of Ullrich Hall and followed Mike Krutza and other pledges as they went out of town. Stan followed them with his headlights off and said that they almost beat the pledges back to town with the kidnaped actives. Stan does admit, however, that it probably was not very smart to drive in the dark without lights!

Mike Sands remembers that AGR was initially viewed on campus with some disdain, maybe a lot of disdain. We were considered as interlopers in the Greek system, we did not "belong", had not paid our "dues", we weren't the "cool" kids on campus, engineers, etc. We were



AGR House, 350 W. Pine Street, Platteville.
Photos compliments of Mike Sands and Scott Weisinger

just a bunch of farm kids who wanted to organize as a fraternity. Mike says, "As we began our journey on campus, our activities began to garner respect". Jeff Key remembers "outmuscling" the LSPs (the jock fraternity) in an intramural basketball game. Coach Dale Schraeder, one of the UWP basketball coaches was a staff member at the game and was very complimentary of the AGR basketball team. At our first participation in the homecoming game, "Tug of War", the championship

came down to two teams, the LSPs and AGRs. The AGRs chanted "We drink Milk" and "We eat Beef" and defeated the LSPs in a very long, closely contested pull. Thus, we started to earn respect on campus but not necessarily with the LSPs!

Steve Mergen describes Beta Gamma finding the first House Mother for the new house. Steve was student teaching in Hillsboro and needed a place to stay. Helen Johnson had a room to rent that he gladly rented. One night, Helen and her daughter from Montana were discussing the possibility of Helen having to go to assisted living. She was getting on in years and had some health issues that required attention. Steve knew that Beta Gamma was looking for our first official housemother. He explained to her that she would never be alone as she would have college boys to watch over and conversely, they would watch over her. The next day, she made the trip to Platteville to meet with the leadership crew. Her return to Hillsboro was full of excitement, liking what she saw and would take the job if it was offered as it would give her another family to love and cherish. Steve said that Paul Onan and Francis Friar were very instrumental in welcoming Housemother Helen and insuring her acceptance by the brothers.

In conclusion, Don would like to share a couple of examples of being an AGR is forever. There are Alumni groups that gather, some monthly. One such group started by Brother Ron Goplin meets twice a month in Verona, Wisconsin, once for breakfast and another day each month for lunch and cards. This group has expanded to include some non-AGR alumni because they think it is cool. There has been as many as 20 and as few as 6 but the conversations and fun enjoyed are as if it were back in the house or on campus.

The second example involves Wayne Reiche, one of the Colony founders, and John Meyers. They were working on a project in 2015 involving a 345,000-volt transmission from Brookings, SD to New Ulm, MN. It was an 800-million-dollar project that took 3 years to complete. Wayne indicated that the two of them were a force to be reckoned with as they trouble shot the project. Along the way in discussions, they realized that they were not only AGRs but also Platteville Beta Gamma brothers.

Giving Tree Update

By Scott Laufenberg #224

We would like to recognize Brother **Duane Schaefer #370** who has reached the GOLD level (\$5,000 or more) and Brothers **Ken Von Ruden #57** and **Jordan Alf #685** who has reached the SILVER level (\$2,500-4,999) of giving. Engraved "Leaves" acknowledging these gifts to Beta Gamma will be placed on the Giving Tree in the Chapter House. We wish to sincerely thank all donors, large and small, helping AGR 'Make Better Men'.

Alumni Spotlight Stan Smith #59

By Jerry Davis, Our Wisconsin Magazine Field Editor

Parades were both a thrill and an inspiration for Stan Smith, a farm boy growing up in Argyle in Lafayette County. "I dreamt of having a collector car I could drive in parades," Stan says. "Even at a young age, I liked old things." His boyhood wish came true in 1970, when he purchased a shiny new metallic-blue Ford Mustang Mach I with help from his dad. Now



54 years old and with 76,000 miles on it, this collector car looks just as it did back then. After a hard spring rain washes away any remaining salt from the pavement, it's time to take the car out of storage and on to parade routes in Juneau, where Stan now lives, and the rest of Dodge County too. And once in a while, it rolls down the road to Lafayette County, where the story began. Stan grew up on a dairy farm in Argyle and met his future wife, Barbara, in high school. They married in 1967 and had a daughter, Maria, a few years later. Studying comprehensive agriculture education at what is now UW-Platteville. While attending UW-Platteville, Stan was among the group of young men that organized to form a Colony of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. Stan graduated in 1969 and landed a job teaching vocational agriculture and advising FFA students at Barneveld High School. In April 1970 the Lafayette County Draft Board sent a notice to Stan. His draft letter was unexpected, though he was proud to serve his country. He was teaching agriculture, married and had a daughter, which should've kept him stateside at least temporarily.

Little did he realize, this "mistake" put him closer to his dream. It set about a need for a dependable car for Barbara, who worked 1 S miles away at St. Clare Hospital in Monroe. Stan's dad, Francis, was concerned his son's family car, a Chevelle Super Sport, wasn't reliable enough for her commute. The only problem was, Stan and Barbara didn't have the money for a new car. The search started at Phillipson's Garage, where Francis bought all his John Deere equipment and Ford vehicles, Francis was a thrifty dairy farmer and only purchased used.

But he was willing to cosign a loan if it meant a better car for his son's family. And there it was sitting in the showroom window—a 1970 Ford Mustang Mach 1 with a 351 c.i. Cleveland engine and sticker price of \$3,271 plus extras. Some of the features on the window sticker told of a special car Cruise-O-Matic, sport roof, power steering, vinyl hi-back seats,

hood scoop, competition suspension, deluxe steering wheel, deep-dish sports wheel covers and color-keyed carpet. Stan had his car, but his career and life went on hold. In July 1970, he headed to basic training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Then it was on to Fort Bliss, Texas and finally, South Korea. For the next 2 years, Barbara drove the Mustang to work.

In the years after Stan's service, he and Barbara restored the Mustang to honor Francis for making the purchase possible. It been in 1984 with new quarter panels, paint replicating the original metallic blue, a new exhaust system and more. The Mustang looked just as it did at Phillipson's Garage years earlier. Now it was ready for show! "One of my favorite parades was on return to Argyle years later," Stan recalls. And seeing my father sitting along a curb waving to me in the car he helped purchase. "When we decided to restore it, the job cost money. During the parade when Dad and Mom were watching, I saw him smiling like heck and realized I was living my dream. They were proud to have helped my family. And I'm a proud veteran. It was tough at the time, but we made it." Over the past 4 decades, Stan drove his Mustang in parades throughout Dodge County with Barbara by his side. After she passed away in 2012, his granddaughter Selena would sometimes take Barbara's seat. Stan says he'll never sell the car due to the memories it holds. Someday, he'll gift his prized possession So it stays in the family, "I wouldn't trade it for anything," he says. His boyhood dream of driving in parades revs on.

Notice of 2025 Alumni Dues

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I would like my donation applied toward:

☐ 2025 Alumni Dues \$40.00

☐ Other Donation \$ _____

To pay by check: Make your check payable to Platteville AGR Alumni and mail to:

Colin Bays, 2106 W 10th Lane, Adams, WI 53910

To pay online: Visit <https://2025-alumni-dues.cheddarup.com/> or scan this QR code.



Your Financial Support Is Needed

- **Pay your annual dues** - Make your check payable to Platteville AGR Alumni and mail to: Collin Bays, Treasurer, 2106 W 10th Lane, Adams, WI 53910. To pay online: Visit <https://2025-alumni-dues.cheddarup.com/> or scan this QR code:
- **Donate to our Scholarship Funds** - go to <http://www.alphagammarho.org/donate>. On the Donation page scroll down and select Scholarship Funds, on the next page click "I Want to Support" and in the drop-down box choose either Beta Gamma or Dennis Valstad Memorial. These donations are tax deductible and can be one time or reoccurring. Donations to the Beta Gamma Funds will be recognized by both Beta Gamma and National AGR
- **Donate directly to Beta Gamma**. Funds will be used for alumni operations and house projects. Gifts to the chapter are not tax deductible. Mail check to treasurer Colin Bays
- **Keep in mind that the Alpha Gamma Rho Foundation also has many ways to give other than cash**. Please contact Carol Johnson for options on non-cash gifts at carol@alphagammarho.org or 816-891-9200 x121.
- If you have any questions on gifts made to National contact: Carol Johnson, Ed.D. Chief Development Officer, carol@alphagammarho.org or 816.891.9200, ext. 121
- **Note that only National Donations made to the Beta Gamma or Valstad funds are recognized by both National and Beta Gamma**



Please Donate Today!

Thank you for your support!

We thank the following brothers for having paid alumni dues in 2024.

3 Michael Sands	65 John Dorshorst	134 Gary Klug	334 Robert Cropp	539 Bryan Tallyn
4 Michael Krutza	78 Scott Weisinger	152 John & Nancy Meyers	336 John Oncken	585 Christopher Jefferies
7 James Timm	85 Dave Ward	181 George Kilbride	343 Richard Grulke	609 Evan Meyer
10 Mark Highland	90 Jack Ellickson	200 Stanley Jones	365 Douglas Cropp	653 Charles Steiner
13 Duane Rose	96 Daniel Dreis	207 Kerry Henning	368 Tim Wolf	659 Ryan Studnicka
14 James Jarvis	99 Richard Guenther	215 Terry McMahon	370 Duane Schaefer	685 Jordan Alf
27 Richard Jarvis	101 Gary Hansen	224 Scott Laufenberg	374 Francis Raupp	712 Ethan Olson
31 Duane Sanner	106 Daniel Adams	231 Kenneth Gibson	395 Doyle Pokorny	723 Michael Hoffmann
35 Ronald Pribnow	108 James Smith	240 Brian Donnelly	443 Michael North	727 Michael Long
38 Cyril Deitelhoff	109 Charles Miller	280 Kevin & Denise McArtor	468 Matt Badtke	762 Dakota James
40 Mark Wienkes	114 Frank Friar	282 John Scott	469 Erik Olson	776 Jacob Brokish
46 Michael Miller	118 Dennis Schmidt	304 Kevin Klubertanz	481 Luke Gierach	792 Justin Nehls
48 Jeffrey Blaska	121 Raymond Morse	317 Robert Weiglein	484 Jeff Bode	838 Collin Bays
57 Kenneth Von Rueden	127 John Hulbert	320 Michael Daniels	499 Randall Clark	874 Aaron Frey
59 Stanley Smith	127 John Hulbert	324 Vincent Bush	526 Preston Vincent	Robin Patterson

National Convention

By Austin Beitlich #875 Noble Ruler

This past summer, two undergraduates and one advisor had the incredible privilege of attending Alpha Gamma Rho's 68th National Convention in Sacramento, California - **Mr. David Heimerdinger, Jack Tarnutzer and Austin Beitlich**. Through this experience, the Beta Gamma chapter was introduced to the rich agricultural history of California. Additionally, the attendees had the opportunity to reconnect with brothers from other chapters while also meeting new brothers from across the country.

At the conclusion of the National Convention, Beta Gamma was honored to receive one of the highest accolades a chapter can earn - the Gold Chapter Award. Being awarded the Gold Chapter signifies that Beta Gamma excelled in multiple areas, including Academic Excellence, Lifelong Membership Development, Continued Alumni Engagement,

Chapter Crescents, Recruitment Excellence, Chapter Communication, Living the Promise and Values and a Committed Alumni Corporation. This achievement is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of all our undergraduates. The chapter is committed to continuing to excel in these areas as we strive for even greater success in the future.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that during the convention Brother Chad Achenbach was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from the AGR Education Foundation. Only 10 scholarships were presented for fraternal excellence. Beta Gamma was proud to be well-represented at the 68th National Convention. We look forward to continuing to build on this momentum in the coming years.

Welcome New Initiates

By Chad Achenbach #879



Darren Sickler #913 is from Brookfield, WI and is studying Mechanical Engineering. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, sports, snowmobiling, and riding ATVs. He joined AGR to get more involved on campus and to make new connections.



Braden Rogers #920 is a freshman from Stillman Valley, Illinois and is studying Civil Engineering. Braden enjoys staying active. His hobbies include hunting and fishing, riding horses, ATVing. He joined AGR to make new friends and to meet like-minded individuals.



Ryan McCord #914 is from Rock Falls, IL and is studying Construction Management. His hobbies include camping, kayaking, enjoying the outdoors and sports. He joined AGR to meet new people and make new connections.



Liam Lansing #921 is from Darlington, WI and is studying Mechanical Engineering. His hobbies are fishing and working on cars. He joined AGR to build connections and get more involved with campus activities.



Cooper Taylor #915 is from Lanark, Illinois and is a freshman studying Agribusiness and Ag Engineering. He grew up working on his family farm. Cooper joined AGR to help him gain knowledge and develop leadership skills.



Brady Grennan #922 from Rock Falls, Illinois majoring in Plant Science major. His hobbies include wrestling, fishing and golfing. He joined AGR to get to know more people on campus.



Tyce Bettenhausen #916 is from Cambridge, WI and is studying Agribusiness. Some of his hobbies include farming, hunting and hanging out with friends. He joined AGR to make lifelong friendships and to make new connections.



Samuel Martin #923 is a freshman from Clinton, Wisconsin studying Agribusiness with a minor in Crop and Soil Science. Some of his hobbies include snowmobiling, fishing, golfing and weightlifting. He joined AGR to connect with others who share the same interests in agriculture and to make new friends.



Sam Wolf #917 is from Bonduel, WI and is studying Agribusiness. He grew up on a dairy farm and showing pigs. He joined AGR to meet new people. His father is Beta Gamma alum, Gregg Wolf.



Tony Miller #924 is from a beef and crop farm in Bangor WI. His major is Animal Science with a Pre-Vet emphasis as he aspires to be a large animal veterinarian. His hobbies include farming, hunting and fishing, and spending time with family and friends. He joined AGR because he wanted to network and make friends with similar interests.



Conor DeZell #918 is from Pearl City, IL studying Agribusiness with a Finance minor. His hobbies include showing Boer goats, powersports, shooting trap, and working on his Jeep. He joined AGR to make new connections in order to help him grow as a professional and as a person.



The 2025 Executive Team



Owen Trone #919 is a freshman from Warren, Illinois studying Animal Science with a minor in Agribusiness. He grew up on a small family farm showing livestock and being heavily involved in both 4-H and FFA. Owen joined AGR to make connections with people on campus. He hopes to find a sense of home and community with people who share common interests with him.

Alumni Updates



Pat Krutza #18, Monroe, WI - Pat retired from Compeer Financial after a 47½ year career in January 2020. Pat and his wife, Gloria, spend time at lake home in Minocqua, WI during summer and in Fountain Hills, AZ during winter. Pat and Gloria's daughter Kari Nondorf lives in Waunakee and son Matt is in Menominee Falls. Gloria was a Gamma Phi Beta and enjoys spending time with their five grandchildren. In 2016 Pat and Gloria were named Wisconsin Cheese Days King and Queen.



Pat Kelly #120, Evans, CO - The Kellys celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in Sept this year with a trip to Scotland & Ireland. Photo is of Pat & Carolyn in the Scottish Highlands.



Kerry & Barb Henning #207, Chilton, WI - Wisconsin Cheesemakers Association congratulates Kerry Henning of Henning's Cheese, who asked his wife Barb to share in the celebration of a Life Membership from the Eastern Wisconsin Cheesemakers and Buttermakers Association at its annual meeting.



Robert Klahn #284, Oregon, WI - Robert is retiring from Epic Systems, Verona, WI in January after having spent 17+ years in general building maintenance. They have moved into an age 55+ condo in Oregon. Robert and his wife, Brenda, are expecting their third and fourth grandchildren in December and January respectively. They are planning to spend more time with them and at their lake house along with helping Robert's brother on his cash grain farm near Brooklyn.



Kenneth Updike #346, Evansville, WI - Brother Updike was recently inducted into the National Farm Toy Hall of Fame in 2024.

Matt Miller #672, Shannon, IL - Matt is the owner/operator of Miller's Sport Center in Lanark, IL. They sell, service and store boats and personal watercraft. They also sell dock and lift parts and install them on a small Lake in the area.



Jordan Alf #685, Janesville, WI - On October 5, 2024, Jordan and Melissa Watkins (Stoughton, WI) were married at the Gathering Barn in Fort Atkinson, WI. The couple live in Janesville, WI and are currently working through the planning stages of building a new home together on family farm land. Jordan is employed by CNH as a Field After Sales Manager, supporting Case IH dealers in Wisconsin and Northern Illinois. Melissa is employed by Kerry in Beloit, WI as an Operations Finance Manager.

Beta Gamma Standing Committees

House and Grounds

- Kevin Klubertanz - Chair
- VNR-Operations - Ryan McCord
- Frank Raupp

Scholarship

- Scott Laufenberg - Chair
- Michael Long
- Ron Goplin
- Ken Von Rueden
- Noble Ruler - Trent Laufenberg
- VNR Scholarship - Ethan Bode
- VNR Recruitment - Jack Tarnutzer
- Chapter Advisor - Dr. Ryan Pralle

Crescent Publication

- Chuck Miller - Chair
- Dave Ward - Regional Correspondent
- VNR-Alumni Relations - Gabe Mentink
- Chapter Advisor - Dr. Ryan Pralle
- Layout Editor - Ashley Yager

Activities

- VNR Activities - Tyce Bettenhausen
- Open Positions

If you would like to join a committee or if you have input for any of these activities, please contact Michael Long or the committee chair.



Blake Gieke #858, Cambridge, WI - Blake was newly appointed as the Policy Coordinator with the Wisconsin Farmers Union. He is also working on his Law degree at Regent University.



Jay Long #864, Davis, IL - In November 2024 Jay relocated to Illinois and took a role with Pivot Bio, a microbial nitrogen company, as the Commercial Agronomist for northern IL and southern WI. His role is supporting our various dealers within the territory with agronomic advice and recommendations, trials, plots, customer support and sales.



Brothers gather in December at the in Fort Atkinson to see The Miracle on 34th Street at Fireside Dinner Theatre. Pictured are Kim Viesselman, John Meyers, Larry Voigts, Mark Martz, George Kilbride, Jim Kruger and Dale Pertzborn along with their spouses/significant others.

State of the Chapter

By Austin Beitlich #875, Noble Ruler



I hope this report finds all of you well and in good health. It is hard to believe we are nearing the close of the fall semester. The brothers of Beta Gamma have continued to live out the promises and values of Alpha Gamma Rho through brotherhood, community service, scholarship, and professionalism.

Currently, our chapter has 38 brothers, 19 of whom live in the chapter house. We will be sending off 2 seniors this December and 6 more in the spring. As a result, our chapter house will have 19 brothers in residence this coming spring.

This fall has been a great one for Beta Gamma. We continue to be the most prominent agricultural fraternity on the UW-Platteville campus. I am pleased to report that Beta Gamma initiated 12 exceptional men into our fraternity this fall. The Delta Pi initiation class is full of promising individuals who are dedicated to upholding the values of Alpha Gamma Rho.

Beta Gamma is proud to continue supporting young men through our Making Better Men scholarship. This year, brothers Braden Rodgers and Ryan McCord were selected as recipients of the \$250 scholarship. We are excited to invest in their growth and development as they embody the values of our fraternity.

Beta Gamma continues to be recognized for academic excellence, maintaining one of the highest-grade point averages on campus. This semester, we ranked 3rd among the men's fraternities and 6th across all Greek Life organizations. Our chapter's cumulative GPA of 3.331 is above both the Greek life and university averages. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our brothers. It allows us to continue recruiting the best men on campus. We strive to bring in brothers from all majors who have a strong appreciation for and a connection to agriculture.

In addition to our academic success, Beta Gamma is well-represented in student governance. We have active participation in key committees, including the United Greek Council and the Interfraternity Council. Our brothers also remain deeply involved in other campus organizations such as the Dairy Club, Block and Bridle, the Soils Team, and many others. These involvements not only enrich our individual brothers but also help to strengthen the presence of Beta Gamma across campus. We are proud of all the ways our chapter continues to contribute to both the academic and extracurricular life of the University.

This past semester, we were fortunate to have several alumni return to the house to reconnect with the undergraduates. Many of these

alumni shared their wisdom with us, either in person or via Zoom, offering advice as we face new life experiences and prepare for graduation. A highlight of the semester was having our founding member, Brother Lynden Snetcher, return to speak with the chapter. This was his first visit since graduating, and his insights were invaluable as he helped guide us through the next steps in our journeys. We encourage any other alumni interested in reconnecting with the chapter to reach out. Our meetings are held every Monday night at 7:00 PM. We look forward to welcoming more brothers back to share their experiences!

As I reflect on this past semester, I am proud to say that the state of our chapter is excellent. The new executive board, though young, is skilled, talented, and deeply committed to making a positive impact. They all have the best interests of Beta Gamma at heart and are devoted, hard-working men who consistently uphold the promises and values of Alpha Gamma Rho. To the seniors graduating, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your dedication and hard work in making AGR the best men's fraternity on campus. Your efforts will not be forgotten and will continue to guide younger brothers for years to come. I am confident that the undergraduates will carry on the traditions and ideals of Alpha Gamma Rho, building lasting relationships and strengthening our fraternity. As Noble Ruler, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all alumni who have donated time, money, or other resources to the undergraduate chapter. Your support has been instrumental in getting us to where we are today. I also want to thank the Alumni Board of Directors for their unwavering dedication to our mission of 'Making Better Men.' Additionally, I would like to offer my thanks to our three advisors - David Heimerdinger, Charles Steiner and Ryan Pralle for their continuous guidance and selflessness. Your contributions have been key to Beta Gamma's success. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as Noble Ruler this semester. I am incredibly thankful for what this fraternity has provided me, both professionally and socially. Beta Gamma has truly become a college "home" for many brothers, myself included. Thank you for trusting me to help guide the undergraduate chapter. I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable winter, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us or stop by 845 West Madison Street!

The Platteville Alumni Association of Alpha Gamma - Board of Directors

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New Member Recruitment

By Chad Achenbach #879



The Fall 2024 recruitment class is full of young promising leaders. This is one of the largest classes the Beta Gamma chapter has had in years. All twelve are "textbook" Alpha Gamma Rho brothers. The great success in size and quality of this class was starting early. I took on a new approach of starting to recruit the next generation of AGR brothers late last spring and throughout the summer. I began name drives with brothers to generate a names list of young men that were coming to UW-Platteville in the fall. I then cold-called around 15 men throughout the summer and introduced them to what Alpha Gamma Rho was and had them apply for our Making Better Men Scholarship.

Graduating Seniors

By Brody Mahon #894



Ryan Parchert #889 – Ryan is from Illinois City, IL. He majored in Agribusiness with an Emphasis in Business Management. Ryan is returning home upon graduation to work as a retail salesman and agronomist for Liqui-Grow Suspension Fertilizers. Ryan said, "AGR has been a home away from home for me. I felt an immediate connection with this place from the start."



Max Schneider #897 – Max is from Kaukauna, WI. He majored in Animal Science with a Pre-Veterinary Emphasis. Following graduation, he is staying in Platteville and will be performing research at the Pioneer Farm. Following this research project, Max plans to continue his academic journey and attend vet school in the fall of 2025. For him, "AGR has been a great resource

for me in networking with others in the industry, both with alumni and with current brothers."

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Donors

We wish to thank the following brothers who have made a donation to the Beta Gamma Chapter, either directly or to one of the Scholarship Funds. The list below reflects gifts recorded from May 1 to November 30, 2024.

003 Michael Sands	324 Vincent Bush
010 Mark Highland	336 John Oncken
035 Ronald Pribnow	370 Duane Schaefer
057 Kenneth Von Rueden	395 Doyle Pokorny
094 Kenneth Whitmore	443 Mike North
109 Charles Miller	468 Matthew Badtke
114 Frank Friar	499 Randall Clark
118 Dennis Schmidt	653 Charles Steiner
121 Ray Morse	685 Jordan Alf
134 Gary Klug	776 Jake Brokish
224 Scott Laufenberg	838 Collin Bays
231 Kenneth Gibson	Robin Patterson
280 Kevin McArtor	

By doing this, these young men were able to research and talk of Alpha Gamma Rho with their families before they even arrived at campus. It also allowed us undergraduates a way to get them over to the chapter house as soon as they arrived at Platteville as we already had all their contact information. I am looking forward to seeing each of them grow as a brother.

I would like to thank everyone who helped with recruitment over the last year and am very thankful for my time spent on the undergraduate executive board the last two years. If you have any information or suggestions about recruitment, please contact the newly elected VNR-Recruitment, Jack Tarnutzer at 608-370-0694.

Ag Fest

By Chad Achenbach #879

This year's Ag Fest, held in September, was a great success with continued growth. Undergraduate brothers of Beta Gamma took another step toward enhancing the experience, introducing new attractions and initiatives to make the event even more memorable.

In addition to the live music that has become a staple of the event, this year we introduced exciting new entertainment options, including a dunk tank and a mechanical bull, which were huge hits with our guests. Brothers also partnered with local companies to organize a mini career fair, providing students with valuable networking opportunities. Four companies participated in the inaugural fair, showing their confidence in our chapter's ability to execute this new initiative.

Additionally, we expanded our outreach to businesses for food donations, and several campus clubs generously contributed to the success of Ag Fest, helping to give back to the School of Agriculture.

We were honored to have Chancellor Evetovich share some remarks once again at the event, and this year's keynote speaker was our own Mike North from EverAg. Mike offered valuable life advice, leaving guests with insights they can carry forward in both their professional and personal lives.

In keeping with our commitment to supporting the School of Agriculture, this year we decided to take a different approach to our donation. Rather than providing a traditional monetary gift, we focused on projects that would have an immediate, physical impact on students and faculty. We designed and made a portable sign showcasing the School of Ag, which students can use for photos during graduation and at major events such as Ag Fest and Ag Day on campus. Additionally, we made a donation toward new furniture for Russel Hall, providing students with a more comfortable and productive space for studying and working on assignments.

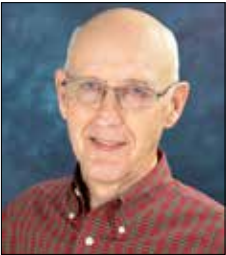
We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of Ag Fest this year, particularly those who made generous donations. Your support is truly appreciated. Mark your calendars for next year's Ag Fest, which will take place on Friday, September 12, 2025. We look forward to seeing you there!



Wisconsin FFA Honors Impactful Leaders

From the Midwest Farm Report

The Wisconsin FFA Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have remained committed to the organization throughout their entire lives and have immensely impacted it in a positive manner. The members of the Wisconsin FFA Hall of Fame are recognized by a plaque in their honor at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The Hall of Fame Recognition plaque is made possible by the Wisconsin FFA Foundation. The following individuals were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 95th Wisconsin FFA Convention:



Frank Friar #114 - Mr. Frank Friar has served agriculture as an educator, business leader, mentor, consultant and financial advisor. He learned farming growing up on a small family farm in Grant County which led to his very practical approach and understanding for farm management. Following college and military service, he taught high school and community college classes and proceeded to work for 30 years in agriculture lending with Farm Credit Services. He then joined the Farm Center at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection as an Economic Development Consultant for 15 years. In total he consulted Wisconsin farmers for 45 years. He has always been a strong supporter of agricultural education too. He served on the implementation committee creating the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council and the WDATP Secretary's Panel on Agriculture Education making recommendations for all levels of agricultural education. During State FFA Conventions, Mr. Friar has served as a judge for numerous years in many different areas.



Dr. Mark Zidon #651 - Dr. Mark Zidon grew up in North Dakota where he was an FFA member while in high school. He attended North Dakota State University and then taught high school agriculture in both North and South Dakota. He then moved to Iowa teaching at Iowa State University and finally onto Platteville. It was at UW-Platteville where Dr. Zidon found his perfect fit as the position combined both his love for Ag Education and Ag Mechanics. For 34 years he taught and mentored at UW-Platteville for those becoming agricultural educators. He shared his passion for teaching students in every situation for real-world jobs. Having taught himself basic computer programming skills, Dr. Zidon pioneered a computer scoring program for CDEs. This breakthrough technology led to him sharing his leadership and skills with CDE events. For 38 years he served on the National FFA Agricultural Technology and Mechanical Systems CDE team and was the superintendent for 6 years. In Wisconsin, he served as the superintendent of the UW-Platteville FFA career development events for 33 years, and the same number of years supervising the FFA events at World Dairy Expo. He has been a judge for the FFA Parliamentary Procedure contest at every level and was the University Representative on the Wisconsin FFA Foundation Board of Directors.

Both Frank Friar and Dr. Mark Zidon have strong ties to Beta Gamma. Frank Friar #114 was a Founder and played a key role in the purchase of the first house at 350 W Pine Street. Dr. Mark Zidon #651 was an Advisor to the undergraduate Chapter. Congratulation to Frank and Mark.

Used with permission from the Midwest Farm Report, www.midwestfarmreport.com

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2025 Events

January

27 Spring Semester Begins

February

16 UWP Alumni Gathering, The Villages, Palmer Legends

18 UWP Alum. Gather. Fort Myers, Lexington Country Club

March

10 UWP Alumni Gathering, Fat Willy's, Meza, AZ

11 UWP Alumni Gathering, Brewers v Cubs, AZ

12 UWP Alumni Gathering, Tucson, AZ

April

5 Founders Day, Platteville

May

17 Commencement

23 Spring Semester Ends

August

15 BILSA Golf Outing, The Oaks, Cottage Grove

September

2 Fall Semester Begins

12 AgFest, Platteville

14 Oaktoberfest, The Oaks, Cottage Grove

October

8 UWP Homecoming

We Need Your Email Address!

Although we are sending two issues of the Crescent each year to all brothers by postal mail, we also send additional communication by email. These email messages include information on meeting dates, social gathering, and items that might need notification of before the next issue of the Crescent is published.

Please send your email address to Chuck Miller at cmiller4424@gmail.com or 608-628-5799.

Your Dues Support the Crescent

If you find the Crescent publication valuable and informative, please support the newsletter with your dues. We now have over 800 brothers on our mailing list. As our membership list grows so does the expense to print and mail the Crescent. Costs average over \$2,000 per issue. We sincerely thank those that regularly support Beta Gamma with their alumni dues.