

ALPHA GAMMA RHO BETA GAMMA CRESCENT

May 2024

Alumni Spotlight Steve Mergen #071

By David Ward #085

Brother Steve Mergen came to UW-Platteville after graduating from West Grant High School (now River Ridge). He chose Platteville because it was close to home and he could go home and help out on the weekends. Steve majored in Animal Science with minors Ag Business and Psychology. He later got his Master's in Education. While at Platteville he became one of the founding members of the Platteville Colony of Alpha Gamma Rho. Steve recalls that his brothers in Alpha Gamma Rho made him feel welcome. He also mentioned that during his long work career he has met many AGR's and they were always there to help. AGR helped Steve realize "that ag people are good people." While Steve was student teaching in Hillsboro, Wisconsin Steve rented a room from a retired teacher. She mentioned to Steve that she missed the interaction with young people. Steve knew that the AGR's at UW-Platteville were looking for a House Mother. Ms. Helen Johnson soon became our House Mother for many years.

After graduating from UW-Platteville in 1970 Steve took a job with a bank in Chadwick, Illinois. He later got an offer from the Holstien Association which he accepted. Brother Mergen spent 20 years with the Holstien Association in California and New York for a combined eight years. While working with the Holstein Association in California he helped a few UW-Platteville students get internships at large dairies (including Brother Jack Ellickson). Steve then returned to Wisconsin and was the fieldman for the Holstein Association in the northern part of the state. His work with the Holstein Association gave Steve the opportunity to travel to Venezuela, and Europe. Steve takes great pride in having helped develop three All-American cows.

After leaving the Holstein Association Steve worked for Farm Credit of Wausau prospecting for new accounts for seven years. He then worked for Monsanto for sixteen years selling BST (Bovine Growth Hormone). His next stop was at River Country Co-op where Steve did dairy nutrition work for four years. Recently he has been helping families settle their estates. In these instances, he is appointed by a judge to help beneficiaries who are not in agreement how the assets should be distributed. In another case Steve is liquidating the assets in order to establish a trust for a surviving family member who has a handicap. Throughout his career Steve has enjoyed the interaction he has had with agricultural people. One of his supervisors gave Steve some advice that has guided him for many years. He told Steve that "you will sell what Johnny buys when you see the world through Johnny's eyes." Steve enjoys getting to know his customers and finding out not only what they want but more importantly what they need.

Brother Mergen has been married to Sharon for 47 years. Sharon was a member of Gamma Phi Beta at UW-Platteville. She taught for a few years then concentrated on raising their three children, Bryan, Sharon and Jenny. Steve and Sharon have 5 grandchildren. In his spare time Steve likes to fish and he has been active in the Lions Club, serving two terms as President, and his church council. Fellow founding member Don Von Rueden #58 remembers Steve as a no-nonsense kind of guy who always could be relied upon to help get the job done.



After reading the article about the Founders of the Beta Gamma Colony by Brother Don Von Rueden, Rod Janes wrote to us and asked if we would interview and write about Brother Steve Mergen. See below. If there is a brother that you'd like to learn more about, please let us know.

Advisor Report

By Dr. Ryan Pralle #1568, Beta Gamma Advisor



Springing into the new year, the undergraduate Chapter has maintained momentum in its efforts to make improvements to the Chapter operations and facilities. In this letter, we will highlight administrative hirings, Pioneer Farm investments, and School of Agriculture hirings.

Foremost, we would like to remind our Alumni of the BILSA golf outing occurring August 16, 2024. It will be hosted at The Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove, WI. This event is an excellent opportunity to support our students with funds raised supporting BILSA scholarships. Alpha Gamma Rho has maintained a strong showing in previous years, which is well received and recognized by the university. Not only that, it is an exceptional way to reconnect with your fellow alumni and the undergraduate members that are volunteering.

Earlier this spring, Dr. Laura Reynolds was appointed as provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs; she begins May 15, 2024. Prior to this appointment, Reynolds served as provost at Missouri Western State University. This was the last major administrative position to be filled following the departure of former Chancellor Shields and the appointment of the current Chancellor (and former provost), Dr. Tammy Evetovich. Therefore, several interim appointees will shift back to their original positions on June 1, 2024. Dr. Wayne Weber will resume his role as Dean of BILSA. Our own Dr. Charles Steiner will resume his role as Director of Pioneer Farm and Assistant Dean of BILSA. The whole college is grateful for their hard work, dedication, and service. We also thank Alicia Prill-Adams who served as the Interim-Director of Pioneer Farm. Under her leadership, Pioneer Farm continued to make significant strides in its mission to serve as a premier teaching, demonstration, and research institution. Prill-Adams will continue to serve as Assistant Farm Director and supervise the swine and beef operations.

The Dairy Enterprise at Pioneer Farm has recently undergone several significant improvements thanks to investments made through the Dairy Innovation Hub. Our most significant investment is the installation

of the RIC2Discover feed intake monitoring system, replacing the feed manger for a pen of cows milked by a Lely A5 robot. This system is composed of 24 feed troughs mounted on load cells (or weigh scales). Cows are individually recognized by the system using RFID tags, enabling it to monitor the feed intake, meal time, and meal length of individual cows. Also, a built-in exclusion gate can be enabled so that specific cows can only eat out of specific troughs. That capacity will let us feed multiple diets to a single pen of cows. Coming later this year, a GreenFeed unit has been procured as part of a USDA grant awarded to Dr. Pralle. This equipment measures cow burps! Cows will walk up to the unit, eat a small amount of pellet, and burp while they eat. The burp is pulled into the unit and the gas profile is analyzed. This will allow us to monitor rumen fermentation chemistry, cow energetic status, and assess emissions from an environmental sustainability perspective.

Two new faces will be arriving in the School of Agriculture Fall 2024. Dakota Bockenbauer is hired on as a Lecturer in Agricultural Education. Dakota comes to us from Potosi High School where he taught Agriculture Education and Technology Education courses. He will be responsible for teaching the Ag Ed and Tech Ed methods and curriculum courses as well as some Agricultural Engineering Technology courses. The Ag Ed program will also continue to be supported by Dr. Tim Buttles, the Director of the School of Education and Ag Ed instructor. Rich Crow, a UW-Platteville alumnus, will be joining the faculty as an Assistant Professor, teaching agronomy courses and coaching the Crops team. Crow comes to us from Buena Vista University, where he served as Director of Agriculture.

As always, the Chapter Advisors are appreciative of the hard work and dedication the young men of Beta Gamma put into continuing and improving upon our legacy. Thank you. This is especially true for the 10 young men graduating this semester. Congratulations! Your leadership and comradery will be missed, but we look forward to continuing our relationship with you as fellow alumni in the business of making better men. *Faternally, The Advisor Team: Dr. Ryan Pralle, Dr. Chuck Steiner and Dr David Heimerdinger*

Mr. Volunteer John Elvekrog #032

By Dave Ward #085



On April 19, 2024 Brother John Elvekrog received the "Volunteer of the Year" award from Stoughton Mayor Tim Swadley. Each year the mayor honors people of the Stoughton community for being a "Friend of Youth", "Business of the Year" and "Volunteer of the Year". John was nominated by his fellow Pickle Ball players for the award. In addition to

helping organize the Pickle Ball league in Stoughton John, has been an active member of the Stoughton Lions Club for over 45 years, He has been the Treasurer of the Stoughton FFA Alumni, works with the

Lions Eye Bank and helps out at the Food Bank. The Stoughton area are not the only ones who benefit from John's hard work as he has served on the Beta Gamma Alumni Board and supports the BILSA scholarship and Pioneering Forward Athletic Fund at UW-Platteville. In accepting his award John mentioned the support he received growing up in Stoughton. He also mentioned how he learned how to give back while being a member of Alpha Gamma Rho at UW-Platteville. Brother Chuck Miller #109 who attend the award ceremony summed it up best when he said "you can take John out of Stoughton, but you can't take the Stoughton out of John." Congratulations Brother John Elvekrog.

Editor's note - The past two issues of the Crescent have featured Brothers who have served our country in the military, "Remembering Those Who Served". If you would like to tell your story or know of a brother who is a veteran, send his contact information to David Ward at palum76@yahoo.com.

Chapter House Update

By Kevin Klubertanz #304



The Board took a tour of the house before the Alumni Annual Meeting/Social and were pleased to see the effort the active chapter made to repaint a large part of the house. They also worked together as a team to have it cleaned and ready for those alumni that took time before the meeting to tour and see the condition for themselves.

We have been working on options for an update to the basement. This is still a key gathering space and the

actives put it high on their list of things that need improvement. Updates to tired red brick and rough looking floor are key items that we were budgeting for, but like any house there is always something else that comes up as a new priority. A new hot water heater, some flooring repairs in the first-floor bathroom, windows that are fogging up are just a few of those new projects that are taking away funds.

Please think about how you might be able to help donate to the Alumni Chapter a bit more than you have to help us move our basement renovation project along.

Message From the President

By Michael Long #727, Alumni Board President



The Annual Meeting was well attended again this year, especially the social at Steve's Pizza. I personally enjoyed having a chance to talk with many of this school year's new brothers. It's also great to catch up with familiar faces and hear updates from some of the recent graduates. One of the main topics each year at the Annual Meeting is always finances. I am happy to

report that Beta Gamma Alumni is still sitting in a very strong position. Active brothers are paying their bills on time, the mortgage is being paid and housing projects continue at a steady pace. We all are aware that expenses keep going up. Thank you to brothers that have donated to the alumni association. Your support continues to help keep our house in the best shape possible.

This year there were two positions up for election on the alumni board, Rodger Williams #791 and Jim Krueger #148. Rodger has decided to step off the board. We all want to thank him for his time on the board and for his time as secretary. Jim Krueger was elected to another term on the board and our newest board member is Collin Bays #838 who has promptly taken the role as our new treasurer. Jordan Alf #685 has decided to step back from the treasurer role after many years in the position. Thank you, Jordan!

Lastly, please consider attending other events such as the BILSA golf outing at the Oaks in Cottage Grove, WI in August, the Chicago Area AGR tailgate at the Chicago White Sox game in July, the Chicago Area AGR Golf outing in Bolingbrook in September, and of course Ag Fest again this September at the AGR House. I really look forward to having more events together to continue Making Better Men through Beta Gamma AGR.

2024 Beta Gamma Alumni Association Annual Meeting

By David Ward #85



The Annual Meeting of The Platteville Association of Alpha Gamma Rho was held on April 6th in Russell Hall on the UW-Platteville campus. In attendance were 40 alumni, undergrads and advisors. Another seven alums attended online.

President **Michael Long #727** called the meeting to order and gave a brief review of the past year. Long said that the Alumni

Board is exploring new opportunities for Alumni to give to the fraternity. Brother Long also reminded those in attendance that it is time to start thinking of our 55th Anniversary in 2027.

Treasurer **Jordan Alf #685** reviewed the Profit and Loss statement and reported that the Alumni Association is in good financial condition. Alf reported that the mortgages is around \$222,000. Using the property values on the real estate tax statement, Alf told those in attendance that the Association's net worth is \$489,000, up \$9,000 over last year.

Director **Kevin Klubertanz #304** gave a review of the condition of the house and grounds. He mentioned the major project of the previous year was seal coating the parking lot. Klubertanz said that repairing the brick work around the fireplace and chimney and the basement floor will be a future project.

Director **Kim Keesey #180** reported on the new "Mentorship Program", The program is designed to help bothers who are juniors and seniors bridge the gap from being students into the early stages of their careers.

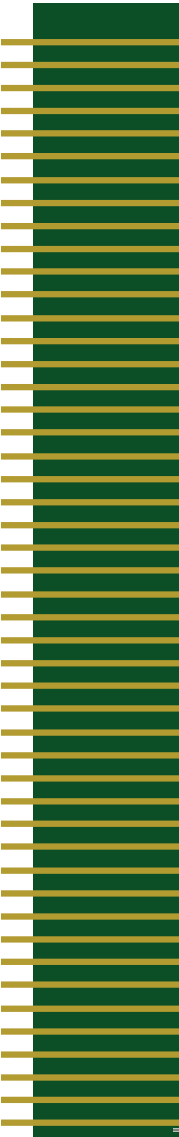
David Heimerdinger and Chuck Steiner, undergrad chapter advisors reported on the state of UW-Platteville and the School of Agriculture (SOA). Shortly after last year's annual meeting UW-Platteville named Dr. Tammy Evetovich was named as the 15th Chancellor at UW-Platteville. Recently Dr. Laura Reynolds was named Provost. Dr. Wayne Weber who was Interim Provost will return as Dean of BILSA and Dr. Chuck Steiner who was Interim Dean of BILSA will return as Director of the College Farm.

There was much discussion on enrollment at UW-Platteville. Enrollment is around 6,000 students which is down from the all-time high of 8,000. This is due to lower high school graduation numbers, especially in southwest Wisconsin. Enrollment increased slightly in 2023-24, however, total enrollment is expected to decline for the next five years; after which a turnaround is expected. Enrollment in the School of Ag is 452 students, although 72% of SOA students are female.

Undergrad Noble Ruler **Austin Beitlich #875** reported that the Undergrad Chapter has 36 brothers. Living in the house are 15 brothers, however, they expect that number to be 18 next semester. Brother Beitlich announced that the undergrads have the 2nd highest GPA of all fraternities on campus at 3.2. Last fall, Alpha Gamma Rho at UW-Platteville organized and hosted a very successful AG Fest. 300 people attended and over \$4,000 was raised for the School of Agriculture.

Two Brothers were elected to the Board of Directors. Brother **Jim Krueger #148** elected to another term and Brother **Collin Bays #838** was elected to his first term to replace the retiring Roger Williams.

After the meeting a social was held at Steve's Pizza, downtown Platteville.



Featuring the Pi Pledge Class

Special thanks to Brother Kim Keesey for his idea to feature his pledge class in an issue of the Crescent and for his initiative in contacting his fellow pledge brothers. Below is an update on the brothers that responded to his inquiry.



Dr. Michael Fisher #175 - Mike is married to Lori and they live in rural Dodgeville. Email: swda@mhtc.net. Mike is originally from Milton, WI. His big brother was Kim Viesselman. Mike graduated in 1980 with a degree in Agriculture Education. As an active, Mike served as Noble Ruler. Then as an alum he served as Alumni Secretary. Mike's career includes attending Grad School at

UW Madison studying Agronomy, teaching HS agriculture and adults at Madison College in Deforest, WI for 2 years, attending Marquette University School of Dentistry obtaining a DDS Degree, residency in general practice at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio and as owner of Southwest Dental Associates in Dodgeville, WI for 30 years, now retired. Mike's hobbies include commercial real estate, farm land ownership, Golden Retriever Rescue volunteer driving and railroad history. Mike remembers being homesick during his freshman semester. If not for pledging AGR that semester he thinks that he would have dropped out. Having pledged AGR kept his focus on staying in school. Mike says that it has been a great ride!



Daniel McGowan #176 - Dan is originally from Marseilles, IL but now lives in Stillwater, MN. Dan graduated in 1979 with a degree in Ag Business & Accounting. Dan is married to Marcia (44 years) and they have 2 daughters; Angela 40 and Lauren 37. Angela and her husband, Brian, and their 2 daughters live in Angola, NY. Lauren and her husband, Zachary, and their four sons (soon to be

5) live in Afton, MN. Dan's career path included working for Ralston Purina, Ag Processing in Omaha and Countrymark Coop in Indianapolis. Countrymark was purchased by Land O'Lakes, which brought them to Minnesota. His corporate career included roles in Credit Management, Controller/Accounting, General Management and Operations. In 2004 Dan left "Corporate America," and purchased a residential cleaning franchise, MaidPro, and went into business for myself. In 2019 Dan sold the business and retired. Dan's hobbies are fishing, spending time at the cabin and hanging out with the grandkids.

Bob Pauli #177 - Bob is originally from Belleville, WI and now lives in Littleton, CO. He graduated in 1979 and majored in Soil and Crop Science. Bob is married to Janet and they have two sons, ages 35 and 37. They both live in the Des Moines, IA area. During his working career Bob had roles with Golden Harvest, dairy farming, and then 38 years with Pioneer Hi-Bred (now Corteva). Positions held at Pioneer included field research and global regulatory science. He says, retirement is on the horizon. Bob's hobbies include: Outdoor activities, woodworking, wine making, gardening, and travel.

Wayne Gerlach #178 - Wayne lives in Cascade, WI which is also his original hometown. He graduated in 1979 and majored in Animal Science. Wayne married Susan in 1983. We were blessed with two daughters Alicia and Andrea, who live in Marshfield and Plymouth, WI. Upon graduation Wayne took a position with Kraft in Galena, IL. Then in 1982, due to his father's poor health Wayne went back home to manage the dairy farm, which he still owns and operates. He says, hopefully retirement is in the near future. Wayne enjoys history documentaries, especially about the civil war. He also enjoys snowmobiling and is pres-

ident of the local snowmobile club. He and Susan like to visit regional historical sites when then travel to visit their daughter in Marshfield. A favorite AGR memory is during a pledge lineup, the late Bob Cotter, was asked to recite the Greek alphabet. Bob replied: "In Order?" And proceeded to randomly recite all the letters! Also, driving down the railroad tracks with my car full of AGR's. Wayne says being an AGR member was one of the greatest experiences of his life and he believes he is better for it.



Kim Keesey #180 - Kim lives in Bowling Green, KY. He is originally from Orfordville, WI. Kim graduated in 1979 with a degree in Ag Education. As an undergrad Kim served as Vice Noble Ruler. Kim has been married to Sue for 39 years.

They have two children: Matt (37) who resides in Green Bay, WI. He and Jenna have two boys, Benny (4) and Charlie (2). And Christina (35) who lives in Newburgh, IN with her husband Sam. They also have two children; Elayna (7) and Luke (5). Following graduation Kim took a position with Ralston Purina in Fond du Lac, WI. In 1989, Kim took a role Church & Dwight where he worked for 18 years, holding several roles from corporate marketing to sales management. In 2007, he did a brief stint for a regional feed company in Ohio and in 2009 went to work for Balchem. He worked for Balchem 13 years as a regional sales manager. On June 10th of 2022, he officially retired after 43 years of working. He joined the Beta Gamma Alumni board in June of 2023. Kim enjoys golfing, pheasant hunting with his GSP, and spending more time with family.



George Kilbride #181 - George graduated from UWP in 1979 with a degree in Ag Mech. Originally from Montello, WI, George now lives in Sun Prairie, WI with his wife, Leslie. Married for 37 years, Leslie is from a central California citrus farm girl. She is a glass fusion artist and donated some of her art to the eta Gamma 50th anniversary silent auction. They have two sons; Forrest (33) who is

a construction manager for Kiewit Power building power plants all over the country and Lance (31) who is a project manager who lives in the pacific northwest building rail and highway bridges. Neither are married and no grandchildren yet. George began his career with FMC-Ag Machinery Division working with tomato harvesters, tree shakers and spray equipment. He moved all over the country and spent some time overseas. George worked for 14 years as an employee and 7 years as dealer in central California. During the 2nd half of his career he worked with 2 European farm equipment manufacturers establishing dealer networks, company stores and parts distribution in the western region of the US: Seven years with Hardi Sprayers out of Denmark and the last 14 years with Krone North America. Upon retirement George and Leslie moved back to Wisconsin to help take care of George's elderly mother. Wisconsin weather and customs have been an adjustment for Leslie -

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Scholarship Recognition

By David Ward #85

In 2021 the Beta Gamma Alumni Association with help from the Educational Foundation of Alpha Gamma Rho started a scholarship fund. The goal was to raise funds to help undergraduate brothers pay for their college education as well as financially assisting them to attend leadership seminars held by national Alpha Gamma Rho. Shortly after the startup of the Beta Gamma fund, the estates of Brothers Mike Grulke and Dennis Valstad left money to the Alumni Association and the board decided to establish a scholarship and a scholarship fund in their names.

At the 2024 Beta Gamma Annual Meeting it was reported that the scholarship fund balances total \$133,123. These funds generated \$5,650 in scholarships for undergraduate brothers to be used to help "Build Better Men". The growth of these funds is another example of how Alpha Gamma Rho at UW-Platteville is the best fraternity or sorority on campus. Prior to the establishment of these scholarship funds the dollars used to provide scholarships came from the Alumni Association, the undergraduate chapter or from individual members.

Scholarship recipients announced at the 2024 Annual Meeting are as follows:

- Dennis Valstad Scholarship \$1,000 - Brayden Peter
- Mike Grulke Scholarship \$500 (2) - Austin Beitlich and Cameron Pokorny
- Highest GPA \$250 - Chad Achenbach
- Most Improved GPA \$250 - Issac Ward
- Key Committeeman \$250 - Chad Achenbach
- Outstanding Undergrad \$250 - Trent Laufenberg

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 Colin Bays, 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>. At Donation Type choose Scholarship Funds in the drop-down box, then at Investing choose either Beta Gamma or Dennis Valstad Memorial. These donations are tax deductible.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Donors

Sincere thanks to the following brothers that have made a donation to a chapter scholarship fund or the general treasury since the last Crescent was issued (12/1/2023). Your generous support and dedication to our mission of Building Better Men has made a meaningful impact on the future of Beta Gamma at UW-Platteville.

010 Mark Highland	215 Terry McMahon	370 Duane Schaefer	685 Jordan Alf
035 Ron Pribnow	224 Scott Laufenberg	395 Doyle Pokorny	776 Jake Brokish
074 Philip Hermesen	240 Brian Donnelly	443 Mike North	838 Collin Bays
085 David Ward	304 Kevin Klubertanz	468 Matthew Badtke	RHO Alana Skoyen
106 Daniel Adams	320 Mike Daniels	469 Erik Olson	
108 Jim Smith	336 John Oncken	489 Ed Grommes	
135 Kim Viesselmann	343 Richard Grulke	653 Charles Steiner	

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no mountains and beach on the same day anymore. George enjoys travel, golf, staining glass and helping Leslie in her glass fusion studio. Plus, he dabbles a little in the machinery business. George says, after spending most of his career on the west coast he has found it satisfying how easy it has been to reconnect with his AGR brothers after moving back to Wisconsin. George adds, as a pledge it was incredible how many people you got to know well in a short amount time. And yes, skip out to Iowa state was pretty darn fun too-what I remember of it!



Joseph Green #209 – Originally from Eldridge, IA, Joe and his wife, Trina of 43 years, live in Lena, IL. Joe graduated in 1980 with a degree in Ag Mech. Joe and Trina had two children: Joe, deceased in 2013, and Kate of Lena, IL. They have three grandchildren. Joe began his career with JI Case/International Harvester as a field service manager for Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota. This led to advanced positions in the ag equipment spere with several other companies in Wisconsin and Illinois. Joe also cofounded two companies: Green Harvest Solutions - high density compacting of materials such as wood fiber and Advanced Agriculture Inc - a regenerative custom cropping company that currently owns or rents and custom farms 2,400 acres in NW Illinois. Joe enjoys working in his home fabrication shop and working on the home farm in NE Iowa maintaining buildings, making maple syrup and preparing for the farm's 175th anniversary since the granting of the original land patent in 1851. Joe is generation six and he is teaching generation eight to make syrup these days. His favorite AGR memory is chasing cattle in NE Iowa with his pledge brothers.

Brothers **David Otte #174** and **Dan Palmer** were also members of the Pi Pledge Class but did not supply a personal update. Brothers **Ronald Hagen #179** and **Robert Cotter #232** are both deceased.

We would like to feature a pledge class in future issues of the Crescent. If you are interested in reaching out to your pledge brothers to gather updates please contact Chuck Miller.

Beta Gamma Mentor Program

By Michael Long #727 and Kim Keesey #180

Please consider becoming a mentor in our first mentorship program between Beta Gamma Alumni and our undergraduate brothers. We are in the early stages of developing this program to bridge the gap for our junior and senior undergraduates from being students into early stages of their careers. We have included information about students below that will graduate in Fall '24 Spring '25. These brothers are seeking mentors with relevant industry experience in their fields of study. The Committee is also looking for individuals to help develop and grow this program. If any of these brothers fit the experience that you have or for more information, please reach out to our Mentor Program Chair Kim Keesey at kimkeesey@yahoo.com or (270) 303-3185.

Austin Beitlich #875 - Stoddard WI (near La Crosse WI), Spring '25.
Major: Mechanical Engineering.
Future Goals: to work at John Deere or Trane Technologies.

Cole Krueger #877 - Oshkosh WI, Fall 25.
Mechanical Engineering Major.
He would like to continue interning for Georgia Pacific Consumer Products as a project engineer for the next few summers.

Chad Achenbach #879 - Eastman WI, Spring '25.
Double Major: AG Business and Animal Science.
Future Career Goal: Have a career in the animal agriculture industry and be an advocate for the industry through teaching the next generation.

Ryan Parchert #889, Illinois City, IL, Fall '24.
Major: Agribusiness with an emphasis in Business Management.
Future Goals: He would like to become a plant manager or sales man

Max Schneider #897, Kaukauna WI, Spring '25.
Major: Animal Science with a Pre-Vet Emphasis.
Future career goal: Looking to get accepted into vet school work as a large animal or wildlife veterinarian.

Alex Ashauer #898 - Kaukauna WI, Spring '25.
Major: Business Management. Future career goal: TBD (Find a job that he enjoys).

Jacob Seward #899, Salem, WI, May '25.
Major: Biology w/Health Sciences emphasis,
Minor: Chemistry.
Future career goal: Become a medical doctor.

Top Leaders Institute

By Austin Beitlich #875

Through multiple generous donations, National Alpha Gamma Rho created a new educational conference to benefit all chapter executive teams. On February 2-3, 2024 Beta Gamma's executive board attended the Top Leaders Institute in Chicago, IL. Top Leaders Institute is an educational training program for executive teams of Alpha Gamma Rho. In attendance were alumni association representatives, chapter advisors, home office staff and chapter officers. The purpose of this event was to develop chapter specific plans for long-term success, leading to local chapter excellence. A big take away from this event was that individual officer positions had their own break out sessions where they collaborated with other chapters to improve within their own office position. Many great ideas and skills learned from this conference came back with the executive board and advisors to help Beta Gamma flourish for years to come.

Notice of 2024 Alumni Dues

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____
Email: _____
Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I would like my donation applied toward:

- ☐ 2024 Alumni Dues \$40.00
☐ Other Donation \$ _____

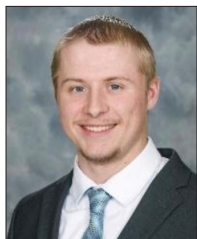
To pay by check: Make your check payable to Platteville AGR Alumni and mail to:
Colin Bays, 2106 W 10th Lane, Adams, WI 53910

To pay online: Visit <https://2024-platteville-agr-alumni-dues.cheddarup.com/> or scan this QR code.



Graduating Seniors

By Brody Mahon #894



Aaron Frey #874 - From Sauk Prairie, WI will be working with Weiser Brothers General Contractors as a field engineer at their DeForest Kwik Trip distribution center jobsite in DeForest, WI upon graduation. AGR has been nothing but a great time. It brought me out of my shell during COVID and got me involved on campus and in the community. AGR opened numerous connections in the agriculture industry and I was able to make many friendships with people within AGR, both locally and nationally



Austin Rider #893 - Austin, from Sauk City, WI is a Dairy Science major with a comprehensive emphasis. After graduation Austin will be working for CentralStar Cooperative as an A.I. Specialist. Austin says that AGR was a college home for him where he was able to make many lifelong friends and gain connections through brothers and alumni.



Anthony Robert Greco #902 - Originally from Melrose Park, Illinois, Anthony is a History and Political Science Major with an emphasis in Pre Law. After Graduation, Anthony will be going to Law School in Chicago, studying contract and business law. Anthony appreciates the connections that AGR provided, as well as, experiences and brotherly bonds that will last a lifetime.



Kael Kruse #872 - Kael is from Dyersville, Iowa. Following graduation, Kael will be attending Iowa State University, getting his Doctorate degree in Veterinary Medicine. My time at AGR has been amazing! It led me to have amazing connections and aided in my academic success and got me into Vet School. The connections I have with my brothers is something I would not have gotten to experience anywhere else.



Braden Myers #882 - Braden, from Boscobel, WI is a Professional Sales major. His future plans are to pursue a career as a Field Sales Agronomist. Braden says that AGR has provided him with a home to connect with the brothers with the same interest as him. As well as making life-long friends along the way.



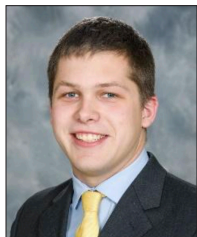
Alek Krueger #883- Alek Krueger is from Benton, Wisconsin majoring in dairy science and ag business minor. Following graduation, he's going to work with Breeze Dairy group as a health and repo assistant at their Croix Breeze location. Alek says that AGR gave him many networking opportunities from all around the country.



Kyle Haldiman #884- Kyle, from Monroe, WI is an Ag Business major with an emphasis in Ag Engineering. His future plans are to work on a post frame construction/carpentry crew for Cleary Buildings, while continuing to work on his families crop farm at home. Kyle says that AGR has made him more involved within the school of ag and provided many lifelong friendships and connections.



Mason Kruse #863 - Mason, originally from Earlville, IA is an Ag Business major with an emphasis in Commodity and Price Analysis. Mason says that AGR created a place to come together as brothers and enhance each other's knowledge of the Agriculture Industry. Through Alpha Gamma Rho, Mason has created many lifelong friendships with his brothers.



Luke Trustem #869, from Evansville WI is a Dairy Science major with an Ag Business emphasis. Post graduation Luke plans to work at Everag as a Dairy Broker/agent. AGR has given Luke the opportunity to make connections with alumni and fellow undergraduates.



Reece Franke #878- Reece, from Yuba, WI is an Ag Business major with a Soil & Crop Science minor. Following graduation, he will be working for United Cooperative as a Sales Agronomist out of their Hillsboro, WI location. Reece says that AGR allowed him to become active on campus and in the community. Through AGR he formed many life-long friendships and connections that he is thankful for.

BILSA Golf Outing – August 16, 2024



In August 2023 the UW-Platteville College of Business, Industry, Letters and Science and Agriculture (BILSA) held a golf outing. The purpose of this golf outing is to raise money for scholarships for students studying within BILSA. For the 2nd straight year, the outing was held at the Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove. The Oaks is owned by Brother John Blaska #005 and his family. The Beta Gamma Alumni Association was a sponsor of the event and approximately 15 Brothers golfed or attended the Happy Hour event after golf. Mark your calendars for 2024. This year the BILSA golf outing will be held on Friday, August 16th, again at the Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove. Please plan to attend for enjoyable afternoon of golf and comradery. To register online go to: <https://www.uwplatt.edu/events/2024/08/alumni-golf-outing-supporting-bilsa-scholarships>

Pictured left: Tim Haldiman #93, David Ward #85 and John Elvekrog #32

Alumni Updates



In March 2024 AGRs visit Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina - The first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter on April 12, 1891. Pictured above along with their spouses or friend are **Jim Kruger #148**

& **Cindy Verbsky**, **Larry & Kim Voigts #203**, **Kim & Joanne Viesselmann #135**, and **John & Nancy Meyers #152**



Ryan Gerlich #520, Madison, WI – Ryan was a 2002 graduate of UWP and majored in Soil and Crop Science. During Homecoming in the of Fall 2023 Ryan received the BILSA Outstanding Alumni Award for his volunteer work and community engagement as a First Responder, and for his volunteer work with Wounded Warriors and Down to Box non-profit for individuals with Down Syndrome. In March

2024 he was promoted to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Assistant State Conservationist - Partnerships in Madison, WI. In this role Ryan manages grants and agreements with agriculture and conservation partners. Ryan has 22 years of experience working with the NRCS in Iowa, Washington D.C. and Wisconsin.



Peetz Joins Rosy-Lane as Partner – Sam Peetz #824 (pictured left with Lexey and daughter, Ottilia) joined Rosy-Lane Holsteins, LLC as a business partner on January 1, 2024. Peetz grew on his family's dairy and grain farm near Prairie du Sac, WI. While in high school, he milked cows, fed calves, and helped make hay in the summertime for Dan and Missy Ziegler of Z&Z Farms. Sam says he would not

be where he is today without the foundation they laid for him. After attending the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, he wanted to stay close to production agriculture, although he thought that would be working as a consultant, not a farm owner. Thanks to a job shadow opportunity through Professional Dairy Producers (PDPW), he made contact with Jordan Matthews and later accepted a job on the calf care team at Rosy-Lane in April of 2020. Now, as he transitions from an employee to an owner, he aims to stay very animal-focused. That is where he excels. Peetz was initially drawn to Rosy-Lane because of the Holterman's vision of success through breeding healthy,

Beta Gamma Standing Committees

House and Grounds

- Kevin Klubertanz - Chair
- VNR-Operations - Trent Laufenburg
- Frank Raupp

Scholarship

- Scott Laufenberg - Chair
- Michael Long
- Ron Goplin
- Ken Von Rueden
- Noble Ruler - Austin Beitlich
- VNR Scholarship - Jacob Seward
- VNR Recruitment - Chad Achenbach
- Chapter Advisor - Dr. Ryan Pralle

Crescent Publication

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

Activities

- VNR Activities - Zachary Kostka
- 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.

low-maintenance cows that have a long productive life. Partners, Tim Strobel and Jordan have done an excellent job to continue that vision and build a valued team of diverse people, from the owners to full and part-time team members. Sam took advantage of Rosy-Lane's cow ownership program, in which he purchased several cows in the herd over time before buying shares of the business. As he grows in my career, he plans to bring my own personal style to the dairy. For now, his responsibilities involve anything related to calves, heifers, specific areas of cow-side care like transition at calving, and breeding decisions. Behind the scenes, he hopes to continue to influence Rosy-Lane's relationship with the world around them by managing the website and social media accounts for the farm along with several other critical contributors.

The Platteville Alumni Association of Alpha Gamma - Board of Directors

President - Micheal Long #727

11461 County Line Rd, Big Rock, IL 60511
815-508-7119, mlong18@gmail.com
2022-2025

Treasurer - Collin Bays #838

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608-547-2473, cjbays71@gmail.com
2024-2027

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Director - James Kruger #148

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2023-2026

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2022-2025

Director - Kevin Klubertanz #304

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2022-2025

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Dave Ward #85
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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 wrapping up the 2023-24 school year. The undergraduates of Beta Gamma have been living the promises and values of Alpha Gamma Rho through brotherhood, community service, scholarship, and professionalism.

Beta Gamma has had a great spring semester. We are continuing to be the most prominent agricultural fraternity on the UW-Platteville campus. I am proud to say that this spring, Beta Gamma initiated 5 quality men into our fraternity. The Delta Omicron initiation class is a class of promising men that are devoted to upholding the values of Alpha Gamma Rho. Our current chapter numbers 35 brothers. Of those 35 brothers, 15 live in the chapter house. There will be 10 seniors graduating this spring. The number of brothers in the house will rise to 19 brothers this fall.

Beta Gamma continues to be recognized as having one of the highest-grade point averages on campus. We ranked 2nd across the men's fraternities and 3rd among all Greek Life Organizations. Beta Gamma's GPA was above the Greek Life and the University average, with a cumulative grade point average of 3.381. Being recognized as a high GPA chapter allows us to continue to recruit the best men on this campus. We have strived to recruit brothers of all majors who have a deep appreciation for and connection with agriculture. In addition, Beta Gamma continues to be well represented on student governance committees such as United Greek Council and Interfraternity Council. Our brothers continue to be very involved in other clubs on campus such as dairy club, block and bridle, soils team, and many others.

This year, we sent four brothers to recruitment school in Kansas City, Mo. Our brothers were able to gain valuable tools and strategies to bring back to our chapter and help us improve recruitment. As a chapter we are continuing to become PhiredUp certified, which is a program through the home office that teaches you useful strategies on how to recruit. We are currently working on getting the entire executive team to become certified recruiters. One thing new we have started is a recruiting scholarship. This new scholarship is posted on the university's website. The scholarship has been a great way to recruit and inform UW-P students of what Alpha Gamma Rho can offer. We sent two brothers to Leadership Seminar in Philadelphia, PA. The brothers learned how to strengthen their time management skills, how to be more culturally inclusive, how to be a positive role model, and many other useful life skills. It was truly a great experience for them.

This April, the undergraduate chapter and the alumni came together to celebrate 52 years of brotherhood. The undergrads worked hard on cleaning the house, painting, and other miscellaneous tasks in preparation of the 52nd celebration. The house looks great! I want to extend our heart-felt thanks to all the brothers who were able to attend in person and virtually. It truly showed what brotherhood means and the bond Al-

pha Gamma Rho has created in all of us. Throughout the semester, we had multiple Beta Gamma alumni come back to speak to the chapter during chapter meeting. As a chapter we learned about new industries, job opportunities, and created a stronger bond with our alumni. If you are interested in speaking, please reach out, we would love to have you come.

As we depart for the summer, I wanted to inform you of a couple of upcoming events. The BILSA golf outing will be held at The Oaks Golf Course, August 16th. The undergraduates are working on getting a team together and would love to connect with some alumni! In addition, Beta Gamma is going to be attending National AGR Convention in Sacramento, California August 1st through the 3rd. I urge all brothers to attend the national convention if able. Information can be found on the national fraternity website. The executive team has been hard at work filling out the National Fraternal Excellence Awards that recognize chapters for exceptional contributions and outstanding achievements, exemplifying the Promise and Values of Alpha Gamma Rho. The categories of these awards consist of academic excellence, chapter crescents, communications, continued alumni engagement, lifelong membership development, living the promise and values, outstanding community service and philanthropic efforts, and recruiting excellence. They will be announcing the recipients at the National Convention.

As I reflect on the semester, I am proud to say that the state of the chapter is excellent. The executive board is young, but skilled and talented. The executive board has the best interest of Beta Gamma in mind. They all are devoted and hard-working men who uphold and adhere to the promises and values of Alpha Gamma Rho. To the seniors graduating, I would like to say thank you for your dedication and hard work in making AGR the best men's fraternity on campus. Your work will not be forgotten and will help guide younger brothers for years to come. I am confident that the undergraduates will continue the traditions and ideals of Alpha Gamma Rho. Trust in each other and in return you will build lifelong relationships and continue the traditions of Beta Gamma-Alpha Gamma Rho. As Noble Ruler, I want to say thank you to all alumni that have donated money, time, or other means to the undergraduate chapter. Without your help, we would not be in the position we are in today. I would also like to thank the Alumni Board of Directors. Your hard work and dedication to 'Make Better Men' is appreciated. I also want to thank our three advisors David Heimerdinger, Charles Steiner, and Ryan Pralle for the continuous help and selflessness they provide to help Beta Gamma succeed. It has been an honor and privilege to serve Beta Gamma as Noble Ruler this semester. I am thankful for what this fraternity has provided me professionally and socially. Beta Gamma has truly created a college "home" for many brothers including myself. Thank you for trusting me to help guide the undergraduate chapter. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us and stop by 845 West Madison Street!

Giving Tree Update

By Scott Laufenberg #224

We would like to recognize Brothers **Mark Highland #010** and **Terry McMahon #215** who have reached Brotherhood award level of giving (\$2,500 – 4,999). An engraved "Leaf" acknowledging their 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'.

Lost Brothers

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 026 Dan Meyer | 612 Seth Richolson |
| 251 Brian Brown | 752 Devery VanLandingham |
| 372 Gary Schultz | 755 Dylan Clarke |
| 490 Tony Leake | |

If you have contact information for any of our lost brothers please contact Chuck Miller, cmiller4424@gmail.com

New Member Recruitment

By Chad Achenbach #879



The Spring 2024 recruitment class is full of young promising leaders. Even though we had a smaller recruitment class this spring, the five guys we initiated are already some of the most active in the chapter. All five are “textbook” Alpha Gamma Rho brothers. I am looking forward to seeing each of them grow as a brother.

This spring we also had a record four brothers attend Recruitment School in Kansas City. This program, offered by National AGR, is presented by a professional recruiting company called PhiredUp. Two of the new initiates from this semester attended as well as

two from the fall semester. It will be extremely beneficial in the long run having these young brothers attend this training to gain recruitment skills as they have the most interactions in classes with young Potential New Members (PNMs.)

I have already started to dive into the fall recruitment cycle making phone calls to highschoolers that are planning to attend UW-Platteville. I have been introducing them to the new AGR scholarship called the “Making Better Men”. This scholarship is run directly through a recruitment website called ChapterBuilder which helps track information about PNMs. As always, if you know of anyone who is planning to attend UW-Platteville, please reach out to me at achenbachc@uwplatt.edu or 608-412-3325

Welcome New Initiates

By Chad Achenbach #879



Ethan Glugla #908 - Ethan is a sophomore from Oakfield, Wisconsin studying Robotic Engineering. He grew up on a ranch and played basketball every chance he got. Ethan joined AGR because he wanted to meet people and gain connections. What he found, though, instead were lifelong brothers.



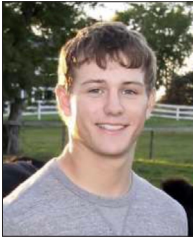
Jonas Jandrin #909 - Jonas is a freshman from Brussels, Wisconsin studying Construction management with a minor in business administration. He grew up on a beef cattle farm. Jonas joined AGR because of the connections AGR has and the brotherhood gave him a sense of home and family.



Grant Otter #910 - Grant is a freshman from Burlington, WI studying Agribusiness and Accounting. He grew up working for his family’s New Holland dealership. He joined AGR to further his connections in agriculture and make friends.



Ethan Bode #911 - Ethan is a freshman from Sycamore, IL majoring in Animal Science with a Pre-Vet emphasis. On campus, Ethan plays football and is involved in pre-vet club. He joined AGR to be surrounded by people who share his interest in agriculture and to gain experience and access to connections in the field he wishes to pursue.



Christopher Karbash #912 - Christopher is a freshman from Delavan, WI majoring in Animal Science with an Ag Business minor. He joined AGR because he saw a bright future with opportunities to make connections in the agriculture industry.

Ag Fest

By Chad Achenbach #879

Every fall, Beta Gamma hosts their annual Ag Fest at the Chapter House. Last year some of the undergraduate brothers had a vision to take the festivities above and beyond to a new level. They realized that Ag Fest lacked student, alumni, and faculty involvement since the COVID-19 pandemic.



After some brainstorming, the brothers decided to add live music to the festivities. They believed that it would be a great way to spark interest in the event. This led to a fundraising campaign throughout the summer with which the undergraduate brothers thought it would be proper to give back to the School of Agriculture as the AGR chapter would not exist on the Platteville campus without it.

This event also serves as a great recruitment vehicle for the Chapter. Through their effort and dedication, the undergraduate brothers with help from extremely supportive alumni, they were able to fundraise nearly \$7,000 for the event. After all expenses were paid and house improvements were completed for the event, the chapter was able to donate \$4,000 to the School of Agriculture. This donation will help enhance education resources and opportunities for all students in the School of Agriculture, fostering a collaborative and enriched learning environment for their collective academic and professional growth.

Keynote speakers were Chancellor Dr. Tammy Evetovich; Dan Uppena of Corteva Agriscience and Ben Huber, Insight FS and Beta Gamma alum. All gave career advice to all in attendance.

After the speakers, live music was provided by the Adam Bartels Band. More than 300 students, alumni, and faculty were in attendance.

This event, in addition to being recognized on campus, Beta Gamma’s Ag Fest was featured in the Sickle & Sheaf Magazine with articles in the last two issues.

Please join us for next year’s Ag Fest on Friday, September 13th, 2024 for food, live music, guest speakers, and brotherhood bonding.



Alumni Updates



Zach Wynstra #868 - March of 2024 Zach was promoted to Project Superintendent with Greystone Construction Company of Shakopee, MN. Zach is in the Agribusiness Division and is currently working on jobs in Lancaster and Cuba City, WI. He manages the overall construction site as well as all subcontractors.

Zach enjoys being able to use his passion for construction and merge it with his passion for agriculture. He says it's been a great experience to make connections within both industries across the country.



In April 2024 four Brothers visited Wilson Farm Meats, Elkhorn, WI and **Brother Scott Wilson #66**. Wilson Farm Meats is a farm to table retail store and that offers custom butcher-

ing, processing and packaging. Brother Wilson also raises 900 sows, farms 1,000 acres and has a catering facility that is used to hold regional events. Scott's three children, Amber, Anna and Alex are also involved in the business and the farming operation. Pictured above are John Elvekrog, Jeff Blaska, Jack Ellickson, Scott Wilson and Chuck Miller.

Your Dues Support the Crescent

If you find the Crescent publication valuable and informative, please support the newsletter with your dues. We now have 799 brothers on our mailing list. As our membership list grows so does the expense to print and mail the Crescent. Costs average nearly \$2,000 per issue. We sincerely thank those that regularly pay Beta Gamma alumni dues.

Meet Carol Johnson



Hello, I am Carol Johnson, and I am so honored to serve as YOUR Chief Development Officer for the Educational Foundation of Alpha Gamma Rho! I am a farm owner/operator from Arkansas, fundraising professional of over 20 years, and a sweetheart from Beta Epsilon, and I know the value of the Fraternal Purpose of Making Better Men and through YOU a broader and better agriculture!

As we all strive to leave our legacy with the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, it is a great idea to consider planned giving. You can be a Heritage Club Donor by leaving a specified amount or percentage of your estate to continue elevating Fraternal relevance, all the while having your name on the role of those who secure the future pathways for brothers of generations to come. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or would like to further discuss leaving a planned gift, as I am available to assist at any time: 501.730.1962! or Carol@alphagammarho.org. Also, you can visit www.alphagammarho.org/donate for more information and tools that can help you plan your legacy!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve—I can't wait to see what all we do for this brotherhood through YOUR Educational Foundation!

Gifts to Beta Gamma \$461,850

- Total gifts to the Beta Gamma Chapter not including Alumni dues
- Total membership: 839
- Number of members that have made gifts: 328 (39%)
- Average gift per man: \$1,408

ARE YOU PART OF THIS NUMBER?

Officer Team & Contact Info

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VNR-Alumni Relations – Brody Mahon, mahonb@uwplatt.edu
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2024 Events

May

17 Spring Semester Ends

August

1-3 AGR National Convention, Sacramento

16 BILSA Golf Outing

The Oaks - Cottage Grove, 10:00 a.m.

23 Alpha Psi Golf Outing, Roberts, WI

For info: agralphapsialumni@gmail.com

September

3 Fall Semester Begins

13 AgFest, AGR Chapter House, 5 p.m.

15 Oaktoberfest at The Oaks Golf Course,
10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

October

12 UW-P Homecoming

December

20 Fall Semester Ends

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.

Platteville Oldies Picnic

July 24, 2024, Brigham Park, Blue Mounds, WI, noon or anytime, pot luck, bring chairs and a dish to pass.

RSVP to Ron Goplin at rongoplin@icloud.com by July 19.