

ALPHA GAMMA RHO BETA GAMMA CRESCENT

May 2025

Alumni Spotlight - Mike Sands #003

By David Ward #085

Brother Mike Sands grew up on a dairy farm near Wonewoc, Wisconsin. After graduation from Wonewoc-Center High School in 1966 Mike chose to further his education over a life of milking cows. He chose UW-Platteville over UW-Madison in part because of the smaller class size. The first in his family to attend college Platteville was also close to home so he could help out on the farm. At Platteville Mike Majored in Agricultural Industries. He feels that young professors like Dr. Ambrosius, Dr. Cropp and Dr. Cottingham made a lasting impression on him that has helped him in his academic and professional life.

Brother Sands was a member of the start-up Colony of Alpha Gamma Rho at UW-Platteville. Dr. Campbell #001 and John Wegmueller #002 were instrumental in his decision to join. Mike went on to become the second Noble Ruler of the Colony. Mike recalls the initial reception that the AGR Colony got from other Greek organizations was not the greatest as they were viewed as outsiders and interlopers. He credits those brothers who followed him as the ones responsible for building the strong presence that the AGRs now have on the UW-Platteville campus. Mike feels that AGR helped him throughout his career as it taught him the importance of working together to define and achieve common goals. Mike and Ann attended the 50th Anniversary celebration they enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new people. He takes great pride in seeing what AGR at Platteville has become.

Mike graduated in the spring of 1970. A week after graduation he married Ann, his high school sweetheart. Brother Sands went on to further his education at the University of Illinois where he received his Masters and PhD in Agricultural Economics. In 1974 Mike took a position at Purdue University where he taught undergraduate courses in livestock marketing and commodity futures and worked on some research projects in similar areas. In addition, he did Extension work in market analysis and risk management with Indiana hog and grain producers along with meat packers. In 1979 Mike went to Kansas State where he helped grow the ag econ department's program in livestock and meat marketing and risk management, targeting Kansas livestock producers. From 1986 to 1993 Mike was at Colorado State, serving as director of the Livestock Marketing Information Center, a consortium of livestock marketing extension programs in the 17 Western States; along with USDA; to further data availability, research, and livestock and meat market analysis.

In 1993 Mike left academia to accept a position in the private sector as Vice-President with Sparks Companies, Inc., (SCI), an agricultural research and consulting firm in Memphis, Tennessee. SCI, owned by Willard Sparks, had been a leader in grain market analysis and research for years and was looking to expand their expertise and engagement in the livestock and meat markets, in conjunction with their growing involvement in the cattle feeding industry, which reached near 250,000 head one-time capacity in the early 2000s. SCI was sold to Informa Economics in 2005 and Mike continued to provide market analysis and risk management expertise to clients at every stage of the cattle and beef industry from the ranch to retail and foodservice. In 2017 Informa downsized and, a self-described workaholic, Mike started his own consulting business, MBS Research where he continues to work with a small group of cattle feeders, commodity traders, and hedge fund managers. He says working keeps him out of Ann's hair. In his spare time he does woodworking and photography. His other enjoyment was riding his BMW motorcycle but an accident last fall may have ended his motorcycling days.

Mike and Ann will mark 55 years of wedded bliss in June. They have two children and two grandchildren. Their daughter heads up the DUI testing and enforcement division of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and their son manages the body shop for a Cadillac dealership in Denver.



Advisor Report

By Dr. Charles Steiner #653, Beta Gamma Advisor



The month of May is always an exciting time as our graduates cross the stage and celebrate the completion of their college degree. Others begin their summer internship experience, summer school or travel on a short-term international experience. The UW-Platteville campus is beautiful this time of year with all the colors and sounds of spring. Soon campus and the city of Platteville will be less busy

as many of the college students move to their summer destinations. Our spring semester officially ends on Friday, May 23 this year.

UW-Platteville held the 214th commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 17. Beta Gamma Alumnus David Ward served as the Commencement Marshal and carried the university Mace for the College of BILSA ceremony. The Mace is used by universities to represent order, authority, and the power of knowledge. The Mace is made of black walnut and brass, the university seal is the most prominent feature, which includes the founding date (1866), a bell, representing our roots in education, and an “M”, signifying our mining heritage. An estimated 900 students walked across the stage over the three ceremonies.

The university recently completed an extensive strategic planning process. The 2025-2031 Strategic Plan is built upon our mission and vision, with a focus on fostering a culture where innovation and authenticity can flourish to meet the ever-changing needs of our students. Details on the strategic plan can be found here: <https://www.uwplatt.edu/strategic-plan>

If you like to golf or just want an excuse to get together with faculty, staff and alumni, the Annual Golf Outing Supporting BILSA Scholarships and social will be held on Friday, August 15th at The Oaks Golf Course in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin. Proceeds from the golf outing are used to fund scholarships for new and continuing students in the College of BILSA. The Alpha Gamma Rho Alumni Board annually sponsors a golf hole at the outing and many Beta Gamma Alumni attend the outing and social. For more information or to register please visit: <https://www.uwplatt.edu/events/2025/08/alumni-golf-outing-supporting-bilsa-scholarships>

In the School of Agriculture (SOA), we recently completed a national search for a Dairy Innovation Hub funded tenure track assistant professor position in the Agribusiness program area. Kelvin Amon is completing a Ph.D. at the University of Florida and will be joining the SOA in August 2025. He has experience in applied agricultural economics and, in this new faculty position, will specialize in Dairy Business and Economic Development with a focus on regional dairy business development. Advisor, Dr. Ryan Pralle, started a new position earlier this year as a Technical Services Specialist at Balchem Animal Nutrition and Health. In that role, he provides technical support and product education to dairy nutritionists and farmers in the Midwest and western Canada. We will miss Ryan’s involvement and engagement on campus while appreciating his willingness to stay on as an advisor. If you are looking to stay current with SOA activities check out the Pioneer Junction, a newsletter published regularly throughout the academic year. You can find the SOA Pioneer Junction newsletters here: <https://www.uwplatt.edu/departments/school-agriculture>

As advisers, we are excited to be working with a motivated group of officers and undergraduates to continue our traditions while preparing for the future of higher education and fraternal life. We appreciate the opportunity to engage with the undergraduates and alumni throughout the year. We wish everyone an enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing you at the Annual golf outing supporting BILSA scholarships, homecoming (October 4, 2025) or other AGR related events.

Beta Gamma Key Contacts

May 2025

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55th Founders Day Anniversary

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House and Grounds Report

By George Kilbride #181



The Platteville area got hit by a nasty hail storm the morning of Good Friday, April 18. The house experienced extensive damage to the siding on the north (street side) and west side of the house as well the roof. The hail was larger than a golf

ball but smaller than baseball size. Many cars in the area had windows broken and destroyed sheet metal including a couple of the active's vehicles. The insurance adjuster has been there and we are waiting for an estimate of damage from the insurance company at the moment.

Message From the President

By Michael Long #727, Alumni Board President



Five years ago, I took over the role as Alumni President for Beta Gamma. Time really does fly. Today I wanted to take a look back and celebrate all of the growth this chapter has had in just five years.

The first major accomplishment is the establishment of scholarship funds. Now with \$150,000 in endowed funds we are able to give over \$6,000 per year in scholarship and leadership training to our deserving undergraduate brothers. This is incredible. I want to thank the brothers who all made this possible, from the matching funds, donations of all sizes and the very generous gift from Dennis Valstad on his passing. Every dollar is making a difference.

Speaking of Dennis Valstad. Half of his gift to Beta Gamma was used as a jump start to the housing updates that were completed before the 50th Anniversary. By making a very well-timed refinance of the house the alumni board was able to take a cash out refinance on the chapter house without adding additional time or larger payments to the mortgage. As a result over \$100,000 was reinvested into our property without a major fundraising drive.

Another major accomplishment has been the success of our Crescent. As many know, Chuck Miller stepped up to the challenge of making our Crescent one of the best publications in the country. Together

with the help of Dave Ward and all of the other article contributors we are able to learn about the successes of our membership and history of the chapter in each issue. Originally, we wondered how to fill 8 pages every 6 months, now 12 pages doesn't seem like enough space!

The 50th Anniversary of Beta Gamma truly brought this chapter together. At the time the task of hosting over 400 brothers and their spouses for a weekend in Platteville was special to all the board members and committee members. We surpassed our expectations. What I had not expected was how many brothers an event of this size can impact. Since the 50th it has been incredible to see more and more brothers step up in different ways to help the brotherhood thrive.

I have decided it's my time to step off the board of directors and allow a new energy to fill the board for our next great journey. The stage is set for our board of directors as well as the revamped committees to run with new initiatives which are set in place. I have full faith in the strength of our membership. Some of these new initiatives include: bathroom remodel, basement remodel, kitchen remodel, educational space improvements, outdoor space improvements, new Beta Gamma website, more scholarships and leadership training and a tax-deductible housing fund.

Lastly, I want to thank Jordan Alf who is also stepping off the board of directors for all his dedication as our alumni treasurer for over 6 years and all of the other directors and volunteers that stepped up to make this chapter what it is today.

Scholarship Program Update

By Scott Laufenberg #224



Our "Making Better Men" scholarship to drive recruitment in the fall has worked very well. We will continue our partnership with UWP announcing the AGR-Beta Gamma scholarships. Our scholarship is included with the scholarship packages going out to all incoming freshmen. We have adjusted the scholarship amount from \$250 to \$500 each. The undergrad chapter reviews the applications and awards scholarships to deserving students that are likely to join AGR. The scholarship also provides us with an opportunity to share our narrative beyond the College of Agriculture. Two individuals, Ryan McCord and Braden Rogers, were selected as recipients of \$250 scholarships last fall and have been initiated accordingly.

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 thirteen new members for the current school year. The scholarship has been a useful tool to push some prospects off the fence and bring them into our brotherhood.

We announced the following scholarship winners at the Annual Meeting in April.

Grulke Scholarship	Trent Laufenberg	\$1,000	Matching Funds Awards		
Valstad Scholarship	Ryan McCord	\$750	High GPA	Ethan Bode	\$250
New Initiates (Spring)	Jacob Brouillard	\$200	Most Improved GPA	Issac Ward	\$250
	Joe Gibbs	\$200	Key Committee Man	Braden Peter	\$250
	Marcus Prigge	\$200	Outstanding Undergrad	Trent Laufenberg	\$250

As of March 1, 2025 the total value of the Beta Gamma scholarship funds is **\$144,447**. We can gift 4% of the total each year.

Beta Gamma Annual Meeting

By Dave Ward #85



The Annual Meeting of the Beta Gamma Alumni Association was held on April 5, 2025 at 3pm in Russel Hall on the UW-Platteville campus. Micheal Long #727 called the meeting to order. Ther meeting began with a moment of silence to remember those brothers who have passed. Micheal then introduced the Board of Directors. Alumni, Advisors and Undergrads introduced themselves there were 60 brothers in attendance in person and 4 attended online.

Board Secretary Kevin McArtor #280 read the minutes of the 2024 meeting. The minutes were approved by the members present.

President Long gave his report in which he explained why the board is proposing a change to the By-Laws (see separate article). Long also explained the new committees that the board has put in place to help even out the work load. A new Fundraising Committee will solicit funds to help meet the financial needs of the Alumni Association. The Alumni have been very supportive as over \$475,000 has been donated to help with scholarships and to keep the house up-to-date, Long explained that up till now fundraising has been on an as-needed basis. The Board hopes the Fundraising Committee will provide a more coordinated approach. Dave Welch #355 and Dave Bohnhoff #164 will head up a committee to plan for our 55th Founders Day Anniversary Celebration in 2027.

Jordan Alf #685 reviewed the financial statement of the Association. He explained that our income exceeded our expenses. He also told members that our outstanding mortgage is now at \$207,669. The chapter's net worth is \$512,826, up \$22,000 from last year. Jordan thanked those who have paid their alumni dues. We collected \$3,600 last year.

Chuck Miller #109 gave an update on the Crescent. He asked members to submit articles or ideas for articles to himself and David Ward #85. Chuck reviewed the mailing and layout costs associated with the Crescent which is approximately \$2,700 per issue.

Kevin Klubertanz #304 reported on projects that were undertaken to keep the house up-to-date. The Alumni Association spent around \$5,000 on house maintenance last year. He mentioned that it's been 15 years since the last major remodeling project. 15 years of wear and tear show the need to consider some big projects especially in the basement.

Advisor David Heimerdinger #513 reported on the state of the UW-Platteville. After a couple years of declining enrollment there was

a slight increase this year to 6,395 students. The College of Agriculture has 475 students with the Animal Science major having the largest number of students. Of concern for an Ag Fraternity is that 73% of the College of Agriculture students are female. Heimerdinger also mentioned that Chapter Advisor Chuck Steiner #653 has returned to his position as manager of the college farm. Heimerdinger reported that Chapter Advisor Ryan Pralle (Iota #1568) has left UWP to take a job in the private sector. Pralle will remain as a Beta gamma advisor.

Noble Ruler Trent Laufenberg #886 reported that there are 37 Undergrads with 18 living in the house. He thinks there will be 19 brothers in the house next fall. Brother Nathan Schley #900 has led an effort by the Undergrad Chapter to start a "Ducks Unlimited" (DU) Chapter in the Platteville area they have helped raise over \$15,000 for the Platteville DU. Trent also reported that AG Fest will be September 12th. The Undergrads are planning to have a live band and a career fair again at this year's AG Fest.

Four new brothers were elected to the Board. They are Ken Gibson #231, George Kilbride #181, Mark Keesy #222 and Jay Long #864. These brothers are replacing Micheal Long, Jordan Alf, Colin Bays #838 and Kevin Klubertanz. We thank these brothers for their service to the Alumni Association.

After the meeting there was a social at Steve's Pizza.

By-Law Changes

At the Annual Meeting of the Beta Gamma Alumni Association the brothers voted to make changes to the By-Laws of the Association. The changes are:

- Increase the number of Directors on the Board from 7 to 9.
- Add provisions to remove officers and directors from the board
- Update the by-laws related to communication and technology
- Change the time for the Annual Meeting

President Long outlined the need for the changes. The Board felt that increasing the number of Directors will help spread out the work load of the Board. There is no language in the by-laws to deal with removing a director or officer on the Board. The original By-Laws were written and approved in 1969 which was before the internet, cell phones, email and zoom meetings. The new language will better reflect the technology of today. The 1969 By-Laws state that the Annual Meeting was to be held on Homecoming weekend. This change will better reflect the current tradition of meeting on or near Founders Day. The members voted to approve the above changes to the By-Laws.

A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Donors

Sincere thanks to the following brothers that have made a donation to a chapter scholarship fund, housing fund or the general treasury since the last Crescent was issued (12/1/2024). 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.

003 Mike Sands
007 James Timm
010 Mark Highland

050 Dewight Horkheimer
085 David Ward
222 Mark Keesey

304 Kevin Klubertanz
343 Richard Grukke
367 Jeff Radl

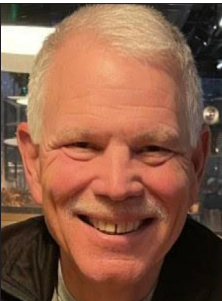
Your Dues Support the Crescent

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 \$2,700 per issue. We sincerely thank those that regularly support Beta Gamma with their alumni dues.

Meet the New Members of the Board



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 a from a central California citrus farm girl. 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. 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: Hardi Sprayers out of Denmark and Krone North America. Upon retirement George and Lesle moved back to Wisconsin to help take care of George's elderly mother. 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 says that he received so much from this brotherhood not only in my college years but later in life that it's time to give back. It's a special group!

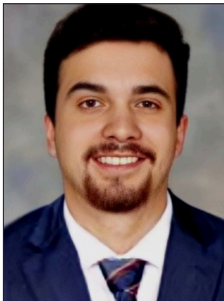


Mark Keesey #222, Waukesha, WI – Please see Mark's bio on page 6, Phi Pledge Class. Mark is interested in serving on the board as he has transitioned into the next chapter of his life where he has more time and found it rewarding to volunteer (or give back) to organizations / causes that are important to him. Alpha Gamma Rho is one of those. And although he has not been extremely engaged in the Beta Gam-



ma chapter since I left Platteville, it doesn't mean I was not interested or has forgotten about the men of our Chapter. He's looking forward to offering up his life and professional experiences as well as any skills / abilities that will contribute to "making better men" for AGR and the Beta Gamma chapter.

Ken Gibson #231, Woodstock, Illinois - Ken is originally from Kewanee, Illinois. He is married to Yvonne and has a dog named Bob. Ken is retired from over thirty years as an ordained Pastor. He has beautiful daughter, Joy, who is expecting a child in early June. Ken lost his oldest daughter three years ago. She left behind two wonderful boys who live in Colorado Springs, Colorado with their father who is a retired Army Green Beret special operations soldier. Ken and Yvonne, combined, have seven grandkids, soon to be eight. They love spending time with all of them. Ken's favorite memory of his time living in the house was and still is, the amazing relationships of brotherhood that lifted him up while an active and still to this day carry him as an alum. Being a Beta Gamma AGR is a life changing reality. Ken is proud to serve on the board to help carry on that reality for brothers yet unknown.



Jay Long #864, Davis, Illinois – Jay is originally from Ashton, Illinois. He is employed by Pivot Bio as an Agronomist. Jay says AGR has helped him in my professional career by building many useful connections in the agriculture industry. Many of his colleagues and supervisors are AGR Alums. Jay served on the leadership team when he was an undergrad and believes that he should serve on the alumni board to give back to the fraternity and the active chapter. He looks forward to working closely with our alumni brothers as well as the active chapter.

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:
Platteville AGR Alumni Treasurer, PO Box 7, Platteville WI 53818

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



Phi Pledge Class – Spring 1979

By Mark Keesey #222



Mark Binversie #220, Cedarburg, WI – Mark's hometown is Kiel WI. Mark's journey of life has taken him many directions: Selling Harvestore silos in the 80's in Ohio, owning a Dairy Farm (which had a major barn fire) and then spending 99% of his career in the banking industry at Firststar bank in Manitowoc, WI for 15 years managing the Ag Loan department which grew to be the largest Ag bank in Wisconsin and the 10th largest in the

nation. It was a great challenge as they worked with farmers helping to develop the FSA guarantee program to offset price swings and high interest rates (Prime rate peaked at 22%).

Then in 1996, Mark and 3 other employees from Firststar Bank in Manitowoc had the opportunity to start the Investors Community Bank (ICBK) from scratch. Mark served as President until December 2022 when they merged with Nicolet Bank of Green Bay. ICBK started with 6 million of capital, working out a department storefront. The company grew over the years to 160 employees and 1.6 billion in total assets. ICBK's niche was agriculture which grew from an idea to 1.4 billion in agriculture loans. The farming industry forced ICBK to raise capital to keep up with the strong loan demand. Our market had developed to cover Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and the UP.

In 2017, needing capital (stock) they decided to go Public (ICBK) thus giving Mark the opportunity to experience ringing the bell on Wallstreet. This created liquidity for stockholders and allowed them to work with larger client's financial needs. ICBK was a tremendous opportunity for Mark, being able to work in a career that he loved and be a small part of ever-changing AG industry.

Mark is married to Sandy and has 4 sons and 2 grandchildren. He still plays softball 2 times a week in over 55 and over 65 leagues. He also still enjoys showing and caring for a Registered Holstein cow.



Paul Wegmann #221 - Paul currently lives on the home farm near Bloomington, WI with his wife, Maria, of 15 years. They have three adult daughters and four grandchildren. The oldest daughter and their 5-year-old granddaughter live in the St. Louis area. The next daughter lives with her husband in Waunakee WI. And their youngest daughter lives with her husband and three boys ages 6, 4, and 1 in Hudson, WI.

Paul's wife is now retired after a long career in nursing. Two years ago, Paul retired from Foremost Farms cheese factory in Lancaster after 28 years. They plan to rent out the farm for 2025.

Paul wishes their grandchildren lived closer to Bloomington. Since retirement they have spent a lot of time taking care of their elderly parents. Lions Club, parish council and farming have kept Paul busy. Paul remembers that Beta Gamma was fortunate to have a wonderful cook named Annie Kemnitzer. She had to put up with so much, yet she kept us well-fed. Our chapter of Alpha Gamma Rho had a lot of positive energy. I think other organizations were somewhat jealous of us.



Mark Keesey #222 - Mark currently lives in Waukesha, WI (since 2011) with his wife of 41 years. During these years, Mark and his wife had 3 children and now 7 grandchildren. One family lives in the Houston, TX area (2 grandchildren), another family lives in the Detroit, MI area (3 grandchildren), and the last family lives in the Milwaukee area (2 grandchildren). Anyone that has family distributed

across the country understands how "fun" holidays can be! Mark is originally from Orfordville, WI. He graduated with an Ag Engineering degree in 1981 (pledging in 1979). During his time on campus with the Chapter, Mark served as the Chapter Chaplain. Mark has been involved in the quality, continuous improvement and leadership processes spanning his 39-year professional career (retiring in April 2021). He had valuable experience as both a Quality Practitioner as well as at a leadership level arising from his various roles at UFE Inc., Johnson Controls, Magnetek, Cooper Industries, and Eaton Corporation (27 yrs). He had extensive experience in both manufacturing and office processes from working in numerous industries including automotive, electrical power management and distribution, HVAC components, and injection molding. His expertise included daily problem solving, process improvement, leadership coaching / mentoring, and design project management. Mark now spends his time keeping up with the grandchildren (especially the ones in the Milwaukee area), playing pickleball, camping, and traveling (mainly the US). Mark states one of the most impactful experiences he had with pledging (and Chapter life) is the lesson of teamwork ("many hands make light work") which he used to great effect throughout his professional career.



Tom Hamm #223, Platteville, WI - Tom graduated in 1980 and married his wife, Debbie, in 1981. After graduation they moved to New York where Tom was born and raised. They dairy farmed there for 5 years. In 1986 they moved back to Wisconsin to take over Debbie's parents' dairy farm. They sold the cows in 2011 and now are cash grain farming. Tom is now semi-retired. When he's not planting or harvesting, he's usually helping someone else.

He says there is a lot less stress helping someone else than doing his own work! Tom has gone on many Mission trips to Romania and Mexico. All have been rewarding beyond description and he plans to continue to make these trips. The people he works with are unselfish, hardworking and a blast to work with. Tom says growing up in agriculture and joining AGR set him up with a good life in agriculture which helped enormously in aiding others around the world.



Scott Laufenberg #224 – Scott has lived in DeForest WI since 1982 with his wife of 42 years Julie. Scott and Julie have two daughters and one grandchild. Older daughter Jamie and her husband live in Appleton, younger daughter Linsey and her husband live in Madison with our granddaughter Constance. Scott grew up on the family farm in Iron Ridge WI. Scott pledged in the spring of 1979 and graduated from UWP in December

1981 with a degree in Technical Agriculture. Scott served as assistant pledge trainer and social chairman as an undergrad. Scott has remained active in Alpha Gamma Rho serving on the Alumni Board three different times from 1991 – 2023 serving as President for two terms and chaired fund raising for the house addition in 2007. Scott currently chairs the Scholarship Committee and maintains donation records and the Giving Tree. Scott spent his working career in the Animal Health Industry with Fort Dodge and Boehringer Ingelheim managing the dairy business in the upper Midwest for the last 20 years. Time at the family farm was a big part of life for many years till the farm was sold in 2005 with dad and uncles all retiring. Scott retired January of 2021 spending time with his adult children and now with our granddaughter. Scott remains active with AGR and is on the board of directors for the Waunakee Gun Club, Scott keeps busy with the club, hunting and traveling with Julie and the kids.

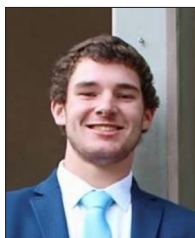
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Graduating Seniors

By Cole Krueger #877



Austin Beitlich #875 - Austin is from Stoddard, Wisconsin and is graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. After graduation, he plans to start his career as a sales application engineer at Chart Industries in La Crosse. AGR has given Austin a true college home, providing him with a strong connection to agriculture and introducing him to a network of like-minded individuals who share his passion. Austin served as Noble Ruler in 2024.



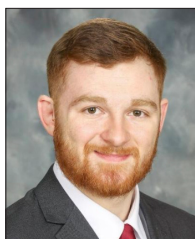
Chad Achenbach #879 - Chad Achenbach is an Agricultural Business and Animal Science major from Eastman, Wisconsin. After graduation he will be working as an Ag Relationship Manager with Peoples State Bank in Prairie du Chien. AGR has made his college experience very memorable, from the friendships formed across the country to the meaningful experiences he's been privileged to be part of. Serving in leadership roles such as Noble Ruler and VNR-Recruitment has shaped him into a strong leader within both the fraternity and the broader community.



Joey Slack #891 - Joey is from Lake Geneva, Wisconsin and is graduating with a degree in Animal Science. He is looking forward to working in a professional career where he can apply his knowledge and skills to make an impact in the animal ag industry. His experience at AGR has very impactful, shaping him into a well-rounded individual through leadership, industry networking, and community involvement. Through the mentorship of his AGR brothers, Joey has gained valuable communication and professional skills that will serve him well beyond college. Most importantly, AGR has given him lifelong friendships and experiences that he will cherish forever.



Alex Ashauer #898 - Alex is from Kaukauna, Wisconsin and is pursuing a major in business management with a minor in ag business. After graduation, Al plans to work for Ritchie's Implement in Lancaster, Wisconsin as a service manager. He also plans to further his education at Loras College to obtain a master's degree in analytics. During his time in AGR, Al was able to connect with individuals involved in agriculture and business, and even obtain a full-time job before graduation.



Jacob Seward #899 - Jacob is from Salem, Wisconsin and will be graduating with a Biology major and a Chemistry minor. Following graduation, he plans to work as a CNA at SSM Health in Madison while pursuing his dream of becoming a physician by applying to medical school. Jacob joined AGR to further develop himself as a leader and communicator. His experiences within the fraternity have strengthened his leadership and public speaking skills, leaving a meaningful mark on his college journey.



Nate Schley #900 - Nate is from Navarino, Wisconsin and is graduating with a degree in Construction Management. After graduation, he plans to move back to Navarino and begin his career as a Project Manager with Miron Construction, based out of the Green Bay area. In addition to starting his professional career, he will pursue a Master's degree in Project Management through UW-Platteville and continue his service in the U.S. Army Reserves. Nate joined AGR in the Spring of 2023 for the professional development and brotherhood, but what he remembers most are the lifelong friendships he will take with him. He is grateful for the opportunities AGR has provided him with, and looks forward to staying involved as an alumnus.

Welcome New Initiates



Joseph Gibbs #925 is a sophomore majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He is from Salem, Wisconsin. He likes to play guitar, go camping, snowboard, boating, fishing, and spend quality time with friends and family. Joseph joined AGR to get more involved on campus.



Jacob Brouillard #926 is a sophomore majoring in Construction Management. Jacob is from Wadsworth, Illinois. He enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking, and video games. Jacob joined AGR to help increase his network.



Markus Prigge #927 is a freshman and is majoring in mechanical Engineering. Markus is originally from Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. He enjoys being outdoors, watching movies, and spending time with family and friends. Markus joined AGR to be among like-minded people.

Do You Know Someone Who Will be Attending UW-P?

If so, please contact Jack Tarnutzer at 608-370-0694 or tarnutzerj@uwplatt.edu or Trent Laufenberg at laufenbergtr@uwplatt.edu or 715-299-5259.

Alumni Updates



Don and Donna Von Rueden #58, Troutman, NC – They will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on May 31, 2025. Don and Donna have two adult children and 4 grandchildren – son Ryan in North Carolina and daughter Kristen in Wisconsin. Don was one of our Founders. He was employed by Purina/Land O Lakes for 47 years and retired in 2021.

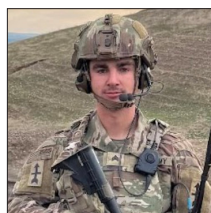


Greg and Barb Nelson #77, Geneseo, IL – They will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on June 14th, 2025. Greg and Barb have 2 children, Kim and Jeff, and 5 grandchildren (all boys). They are cash grain farmers in northwestern Illinois along with their daughter and son-in-law.



Tim Haldiman #93, Waterloo, WI - Tim officiated his last high school basketball game at the Kohl Center in Madison this year working the D4 semi-final game for the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Assn (WIAA). Tim says thirty-seven years on the hardwood is enough. However, he is still continuing to umpire college baseball in the Midwest and is enjoying every minute of it.

Tim also enjoys mentoring many young people and encouraging them to join in the fun of officiating.



Gavin Lankey #862, Delta Eta Class, Spring Green, WI – Gavin has been deployed to the Middle East with the Wisconsin Army National Guard since September of 2024. He has been to Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the U.A.E. We thank Gavin for his service.

Beta Gamma Standing Committees

House and Grounds

- Planning and managing housing projects including maintenance and renovations
- Works with the fundraising committee to prioritize funds for future projects
- Works with the active chapter to maintain the chapter house
 - George Kilbride - Chair
 - Frank Raupp
 - Kevin Klubertanz
 - Open
 - VNR-Operations- Ryan McCord

Scholarship

- Administers the scholarship program incl. picking scholarship winners
- Advances leadership opportunities within the chapter with AGR foundation funds
- Identifies new ways the alumni can support the educational excellence of the chapter
- Works with the fundraising committee to grow the scholarship funds
 - Scott Laufenberg - Chair
 - Ron Goplin
 - Ken Von Rueden
 - Richard Grulke
 - Open
 - VNR Scholarship - Ethan Bode
 - Chapter Advisor - Dr. Ryan Pralle

Communication

- Coordinates content for twice yearly Crescent publications
- Builds and maintains website including relevant alumni and chapter information
- Maintains list of names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of Alumni
- Informs alumni of any alumni news, events or information via email, Facebook and mail
 - Chuck Miller - Chair & Crescent Editor
 - David Ward - Crescent Articles
 - Mark Keesey - Website Design
 - Open
 - VNR Public Relations – Cole Krueger
 - Ashley Yager – Layout editor

Alumni Relations

- Plan alumni events
- Works with the chapter to have alumni and chapter joint events
- Runs the mentor program to build relationships with alumni and undergraduates
 - Kim Keesey - Chair, Mentor Program
 - Open
 - VNR Alumni Relations - Gabe Mentink
 - Larry Raupp
 - Open

Fundraising

- Plans and execute fundraising drives for the alumni association
- Works with the scholarship committee to identify scholarship fundraising needs
- Works with the housing and grounds committee to identify fundraising needs
- Keep lifetime giving records and manage the house giving tree
- Manages the Beta Gamma Fund, Valstad Fund and future housing fund
 - Ken Gibson - Chair
 - Jay Long
 - Scott Laufenberg
 - Michael Long
 - Brian Donnelly
 - Open

55th Alumni Banquet/events

- Evaluate and recommend options to accommodate alumni needs
- Reserve facilities and cater, communication, etc.
- Coordinate alumni and actives to help with logistics
 - Dave & Kris Welsh – Co-director
 - Dave Bohnhoff – Co-director
 - Larry Raupp
 - VNR Alumni Relations - Gabe Mentink
 - VNR Planning – Tyce Bettenhausen
 - VNR Activities – Owen Trone
 - Open

Semester Review

By Trent Laufenberg #886, Noble Ruler



State of the chapter - Hello fellow brothers. I hope you all are doing well and are having a good start to your year. These past five months have gone by quickly and have been full of events and activities here at the Beta Gamma chapter. It's that time of year to sit down and reflect back on all the great things that have happened here over the past few months.

When it comes to the population of the chapter we are doing well. As of May 2025, AGR has 36 brothers which makes us the largest fraternity on campus. 18 of our brothers are living in the chapter house this spring. This upcoming fall semester we will be having 19 brothers living in a house. At the end of the semester, we will be saying farewell to 6 of our brothers as they leave and go off to make their path in the world. We wish them all the very best. I'm happy to say that this spring we initiated three high quality brothers into the fraternity. Each one of them is a quality young man and they show great promise, and we look forward to growing with them as we make better men. When it comes to national's we are doing phenomenally. We are one of, if not the best Midwest chapter when it comes to chapter excellence and we continue to be a competitive chapter nationwide even when compared to chapters that have existed +/-50 years longer than we have.

As always, our chapter realizes the importance of taking our academics seriously. We continue to maintain one of the top grade point averages on campus. This past fall we achieved a 3.33 cumulative GPA which ranks us third among men's fraternities and Greek life as a whole. This success could only be achieved by the exceptional efforts our brothers put into their academics, we make every effort to continue that academic drive across all members new or otherwise.

We are always continuing to strive to improve our brotherhood's quality and reach by increasing our involvement in campus government and organizations as well. We hold positions on both the United Greek Council and the Inter-Fraternal Council. We also have started the process of applying to hold positions in student government and hope to have multiple brothers on that executive team within the next year. The brothers here in Platteville continue to exceed expectations when it comes to involvement in clubs on campus with Ag-ambassadors, Block and Bridle, Farm Bureau and Ag Business Club being only four of over 15 clubs that brothers are involved with. As some of you may know, the spring holds several big events that are put on by organizations that are chaired and led by the brothers, I'd like to highlight two of those. The Pioneer Showdown Livestock Show that is put on by the Block and Bride Club has five brothers on its executive team. This year's show went exceptionally well, especially considering that the number of exhibitors was higher than they'd ever been. Many of our brothers also had their second annual Ducks Unlimited banquet this April. A handful

of AGR members came together to establish the Platteville Ducks Unlimited chapter. It has had great success since its start and has had a warm welcome from the community as well. The banquet went better than we could have hoped for as we were joined by the president of the Wisconsin Ducks Unlimited and were awarded gold chapter status for our outstanding work in the conservation of Wisconsin's wetlands. The organizations that our members are involved with help to develop the kind of leadership skills that will serve not just the individual for the rest of their life but also Alpha Gamma Rho as a whole.

On behalf of the undergraduate chapter, I am proud to say that the state of the chapter is outstanding. The executive team is working hard to come up with new and innovative ideas to make our chapter better and we're finding great success in doing so. However, we cannot forget that we stand on the shoulders of giants and that we owe our achievements to those who have come before us. We will continue to work hard to uphold the promises and values of Alpha Gamma Rho.

I would like to give special thanks to all of the alumni that have been so involved with us this last year whether it's coming and speaking at chapter meetings, taking on new roles on the alumni board, or even just stopping by to say hello. It is more important than ever to have that support system from our alumni brothers, and it has been a phenomenal experience to get to know many of you. Your involvement affords us the best possible college experience, and we truly appreciate it. I would also like to thank our advisors David Heimerdinger, Charles Steiner, and Ryan Pralle for their continued support and their willingness to offer advice and guidance whenever we ask for it.

I look forward to this coming semester and I wish all of you a safe and healthy rest of your year, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us or stop by 845 West Madison Street, we'd love to hear from you!

Top Leaders Institute - On the weekend of January 24th this year the executive team of Beta Gamma once again attended Top Leaders Institute in Chicago, IL. This conference is geared to give the new officer team the knowledge to lead effectively. Each officer had sessions on their respective position as well as sessions that pertain to more broad topics like conflict resolution and recruitment. In attendance with our chapters officers was two of our advisors, David Heimerdinger and Charles Steiner, as well as both of the other Alpha Gamma Rho chapters from Wisconsin. This year we had our strategic planning meeting at the event. This meeting is where the new officers of Beta Gamma lay out what their goals are for their term and what facets of the fraternity they feel need to be focused on. The conference was a great way to improve our knowledge of our positions and our brotherhood. We came home with many fantastic ideas and plans that should help Beta Gamma to continue to succeed.

Hire an AGR!

Do you have a job opening at your business or operation?

Are you looking for a quality employee?

If so, please consider posting your opportunity on the AGR Facebook page – Alpha Gamma Rho – Beta Gamma Alumni & Undergraduates

New Member Recruitment

By Jack Tarnutzer #905 – VNR Recruitment



The Spring 2025 recruitment semester brought strong energy and results to Alpha Gamma Rho, with the successful addition of three new members. While spring classes are typically more selective, we're proud of the quality and character of the men we welcomed this semester.

This spring, we hosted four recruitment events, each offering a unique way for potential new members to engage with our brotherhood. From casual meet-and-greets to more structured house events, each gathering helped strengthen our presence and build lasting connections. A major highlight was the positive response to some newly introduced event formats, which we plan to continue developing in the future.

Looking ahead, I've implemented a new approach to summer recruitment by launching a scholarship event to be held at the house on

July 26th. This initiative, continuing the work of my predecessor Chad Achenbach, is designed to get incoming freshmen and transfer students acclimated to AGR before the school year begins. This event will allow us to meet and interview incoming freshman so they are able to put faces to the name of Alpha Gamma Rho. Alumni are encouraged to attend and help showcase the strength and legacy of our chapter.

If you know any students attending UW-Platteville in the fall who would be a strong fit for AGR, please reach out. I'd love to connect with them this summer and get a head start on fall recruitment. I can be contacted directly at (608) 370-0694.

Incoming student information form:

<https://form.jotform.com/251270121410134>



55th Anniversary Celebration

By Dave & Kris Welsh #355

Brothers, mark your calendars! We're excited to announce that the 55th Beta Gamma-Alpha Gamma Rho Anniversary will be held on Saturday, March 13th, 2027 in Platteville, Wisconsin! It'll be a great time to reconnect with your fellow brothers, reminisce about the good old days and see how the chapter is thriving. Platteville holds a special place in our AGR history, and we can't wait to gather there once again. More details regarding the location, schedule of events, and registration information will be shared in the coming months. In the meantime, spread the word and start making plans to join us for this milestone reunion. We look forward to seeing you in Platteville!

AGR's Participate in China Trade Discussion

By Dave Ward #85

In February 2025 trade officials from The Peoples Republic of China toured farms and agribusinesses in Iowa County, Wisconsin. One stop on the tour was to Dodgeville Agri-Service/Vita Plus which used to be managed by Brother Ken Von Rueden #57. David Heimerdinger represented UW-Platteville on the tour. After the tour a luncheon was held at the "China One" restaurant in Dodgeville. According to the Chinese Officials the goal of the tour was to help each nation understand each other. The end goal was to help the betterment of both nations and their people.

Brother Ken Von Rueden, Dan Adams #106 and David Heimerdinger #513 attended the luncheon. Ken felt the visit was to enhance the trade between the two counties. He recalled that some of the grain from the Agri-Services Dodgeville elevator was sold to China by way of Prairie du Chien and New Orleans. Dan represented the Iowa County Farm Bureau. He was impressed by the Chinese officials that attended from the Consolette Office in Chicago. Dan learned that Chinese are interested in increasing trade of dairy products.



Fundraising - News Coming Soon!

By Ken Gibson #231



I hope this Crescent finds you well. I have been elected and approved by the Alumni Board to spearhead an effort to advance the mission of our Beta Gamma chapter. Okay, perhaps this is just a fancy way to say that I will be chairing a fundraising effort that will be introduced in the coming months. You may ask, "Why me?" Well, that is a valid question, and it is one I have asked myself.

I do have experience in the fundraising world, in that, I served as vice president for mission support at Wartburg Theological Seminary for many years. For that reason, it was not difficult for me to consider and accept the role, and it excites me to think about what we will be able to accomplish on behalf of our beloved Beta Gamma.

I invite you to watch for further information on this project in the next several months. The initiative will include scholarship support as well as much-needed house improvements, and we will be utilizing new and exciting ways to give. Be well brothers, Ken Gibson

BILSA Golf Outing

By Dave Ward #85

Each year the Beta Gamma Alumni Association is a Hole Sponsor at the "Alumni Golf Outing" that supports BILSA Scholarships. This year's outing will be held on August 15th at the Oaks Golf Course near Cottage Grove (10am-3pm). The Oaks is owned by Brother John Blaska #005. The outing is a great opportunity to see many AGR brothers and old college classmates. Scan the QR code below to register. Once you have registered contact Dave Ward #85 at 920-723-1211 or Jeff Blaska #43 at 608-628-0197 so that they can organize foursomes of AGRs. If you're not a golfer please plan to attend the reception and silent auction after the golfing ends.



Honoring Those Who Served - Stan Smith #059



Stan Smith #59 enrolled at UW-Platteville after graduation from Argyle High School in the fall of 1966. He knew he wanted to major in Agriculture and he found Madison too big and River Falls was too far away from his home, Mud Branch which is just outside of Argyle, Wisconsin. Stan decided to stay close to home and enrolled at UW-Platteville.

In 1968 when Stan was a Junior, he joined the Platteville Colony of AGR. Stan was already married to Barb and she was called the AGR House Mother. Stan credits Dr Campell, John Wegmueller #2, Mike Sands #3 and Don Von Rueden #58 as Brothers who influenced him to join.

After graduation Stan taught Agriculture at Barneveld High School. During his time at Barneveld, he and Barb were blessed with a daughter. Soon after her birth Stan was contacted by the Lafayette County Draft Board informing him that Uncle Sam wanted him. Stan recalls that UW-Platteville and others sent letters to the Draft Board stressing that there was a shortage of Ag teachers and that he was needed in Barneveld. The Draft Board was not convinced.

In July 1970 Stan said good bye to Barb and their daughter and reported to Fort Campbell, Kentucky for "Boot Camp". Stan was glad that he was a farm boy as he thinks it gave him a toughness that some of the other soldiers lacked. After "Boot Camp" Stan was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas for Advanced Infantry Training. After he finished training, he was sent to South Korea for 13 months. In Korea Stan became a clerk in headquarters at a base near the Demilitarized Zone (near the border between South and North Korea). He said his job was similar to "Radar O'Reilly" from the popular TV show "M.A.S.H.". Stan thinks that his college education benefited him in the military. Tensions between North and South Korea were high. They had to

be on alert for an invasion by North Korea. After 13 months in Korea Stan was sent back to the United States to finish out his military commitment. About that time then President Richard Nixon instituted the "Man Power Cut Down" and Stan was discharged upon his return to the United States.

After his return Stan contacted Barneveld High School about getting his teaching job back. Barneveld had already hired someone else and told him they didn't need him. Soon after that Barneveld's School Superintendent got a letter from the U.S. Defense Department telling him that they had to rehire Stan or they were in violation of Federal Law which required employers to rehire soldiers to their old jobs after they completed their military service. However, with the help of the UW-P Placement Office Stan found a teaching job in Plymouth, Wisconsin so Barneveld did not have to rehire him. While teaching in Plymouth Stan was contacted by a Production Credit Association (PCA) loan officer about working for them at their Juneau, Wisconsin office. In February of 1975 Stan started his long career in agriculture credit. He worked for PCA for 12 years, then took a job with Bank One. After some disagreements with Bank One over their lending policies Stan went to work for Farmers and Union Bank in Columbus, Wisconsin.

Stan worked for 36 years in agricultural lending and feels fortunate that he has never left Juneau. He has become involved in the community as an Alderman, Dodge County Pork Producers and the Juneau Lions Club. Now retired Stan is avid collector of farm toys and memorabilia, military toys and Christmas ornaments. Stan also has a 1970 Ford Mustang and 1949 Ford truck that he is restoring with the help of his son-in-law. Stan was married to Barb in 1967 they had one daughter and one granddaughter. Unfortunately Stan lost Barb to cancer 12 years ago.

Stan is very proud of his military service and is a member of the American Legion. Stan has served as an Honor Guard for military funerals in the Juneau area numerous times. Thank you, Brother Stan Smith, for your service to your Country and to the agricultural community.

continued from page 6

Scott and Julie are now spending more time at the lake house in Door County and enjoying a slower pace. Many life lessons were learned at AGR the most rewarding was working with a great group of brothers during the house remodel project.



John Massey #225, Hollandale, WI - John has worked in Madison Public School District teaching special education since 2001. John also worked at a sourdough bakery but retired after 20 years and moved from Madison to Hollandale. Changes brought on by the Covid pandemic. He lives in the country and spends time taking care of the house and land. He enjoys chain sawing wind-fallen trees, cutting them into firewood and biking. John

has taken bike trips the each of last two summers and is planning another trip this summer.



Terry Pink #227, Felton, CA - After graduating from UW-Platteville, Terry moved to California, where he built a rewarding career with Pacific Scientific. Over the years, Terry worked on cutting-edge projects involving extremely fast-acting explosives designed to save lives, including automotive airbags, aircraft ejection systems, and missile-to-missile interception technologies, among many other applications. He and his wife, Sarah, have been happily married for 41 years. They have two children and two wonderful granddaughters who are the light of their lives. Now retired, Terry spends time helping Sarah with her

floral business, assisting on the family farm, and traveling to visit their granddaughters. Before COVID, playing hockey was Terry's favorite hobby and a great way to stay active. These days, Terry enjoys focusing on family and community. Terry states the leadership skills he developed through Alpha Gamma Rho have been invaluable in both his professional and personal life, giving him the confidence and experience to succeed in his career and beyond. Terry also stated he is forever grateful for the lifelong connections and lessons AGR provided.



Mark Fassler #228, Dixon, IL - Mark and his wife, Margaret have four grown daughters; Sarah, Abby, Emily, and Rebecca, as well as 6 grandkids. Mark attended UW-P his freshman year and pledged AGR at that time. He then transferred to Iowa State where he lived in the AGR house for the next three years. Mark graduated from ISU in 1982 with a degree in Animal

Science. He worked for ADM in feed sales in Iowa after graduation and returned home to farm with his dad and brother in 1985. They grew a little over 4,000 acres in a 50/50 corn bean rotation. Mark recently retired from farming and has rented the ground out and is preparing for their equipment sale in December. Mark and Margaret have a little house in Green Lake, WI where we love to go and boat on the lake during the summer. They also are planning on traveling to Florida this winter. One memory he has from his pledge class is the large spaghetti dinner the active's served them followed by a brutal marathon run they had to do!

Other members of the Phi Pledge Class:

Ron Keil #226, Springfield, PA

Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity
1119 Caswell St
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

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2025 Events

May

- 17 Commencement
- 23 Spring Semester Ends

July

- 26 New Member Recruitment Event,
Chapter House

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

Would you like to donate to a Chapter Scholarship Fund?

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 Platteville AGR Alumni Treasurer, PO Box 7, Platteville WI 53818. In the memo section of your check please indicate which fund you wish to donate to.

To give by credit card, note that National AGR has changed this process to reduce transaction fees. Go to <http://www.alphagammarho.org/donate>. On the Donation page scroll down and select "Local Chapter Scholarships", on the next page enter an amount, then provide your credit card information. Next click "Continue to Options", then "I'd like to support" and choose either Beta Gamma Scholarship or Dennis Valstad Memorial. Next click "Continue to information". Here enter your contact info. Last, click "Donate" to process your payment.