



# MU COW

Newsletter of the Mu Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi

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## Brothers of AEPi Reunite

By Owen Firnstahl, Alumni Relations Chair

Hello, it's been a while! My name is Owen Firnstahl, and I'm the current Alumni Relations Chair for AEPi's Mu chapter. The Alumni Committee is excited to release the first Mu Cow in almost four years. We hope you haven't forgotten about us and your time in AEPi at UVA. We've realized how big of a mistake it was to go so long without consistent communication with our alumni, so we're eager to reconnect. Stay tuned for more updates and exciting announcements, specifically regarding our first alumni event in two years on October 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> (with more information to come). We are especially excited to announce this given the prior limitations placed on in-person gatherings throughout the pandemic. Whether you graduated last year or have kids our age, we hope to see as many of you there who can make it. Regardless of your ability to travel or attend an in-person event, please feel free to connect with me for further information concerning the state of the chapter via phone at (757) 536-0907 or email at [aepiuvaalumni@gmail.com](mailto:aepiuvaalumni@gmail.com). Help me reach my goal of chatting with 10 new alumni before our events in October!

### Fall 2021 Officers

Master:	Jack Fechter	Social Chair:	Tillman Dean
Lieutenant Master:	Matt Nolan	Exchequer:	Ethan Gimbel
Rush Chair:	Zach Garfinkel	House Manager:	Josh Hambrecht
Pledge Master:	Todd Rissman	Scribe:	Aaron Miller



## From the Desk of the Master

By Jack Fechter, Master

Greetings brothers and friends. As this chaotic and stressful period finally comes to a close, I hope this particular issue of the Mu Cow finds you well. My name is Jack Fechter, and I have the ultimate honor to serve as Master for the Mu Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi. As a relatively older member of the Iota pledge class, I am incredibly grateful to preside over the Brotherhood, and I can say in no uncertain terms that serving in this position has been a highlight of my academic and personal career. Although this has been one of the more challenging periods for both fraternities and society as a whole, being able to lead this Brotherhood through thick and thin has been a collaborative and rewarding experience, and I can speak for us all when I say that the future of the Mu Chapter has never been brighter.

In the COVID-19 era, the Brotherhood relied on one another more than ever, initially utilizing virtual and socially-distanced strategies to not only remain cohesive, but to truly thrive. We proudly initiated 14 members this semester, during an unprecedented rush process, while also maintaining our elite academic and extracurricular achievements that have become the standard for our chapter. Our Brotherhood of 50 members includes leaders in business and political organizations, entrepreneurial app developers, and most importantly those involved with sustainable and socially-conscious philanthropic causes even throughout a period of social uncertainty.

While the accomplishments of the Brotherhood are robust, the thing I have been most proud of is the resiliency and openness that has been displayed throughout a period that was both unforeseen and stress-inducing. We were able to host socially distanced brotherhood events that gave us well-needed personal connections in a time of online isolation. This also later expanded to include a very memorable Brotherhood Passover seder, small gatherings for lunches or activities such as basketball, and eventually mixers with the ISC in socially-distanced pods that allowed us to not only uphold both our status within the community, but to grow and strengthen bonds between brothers. An emphasis on mental health, sustainability, and input from the brotherhood at large is largely what allowed us to succeed. We relied



on one another, gave advice in times of need, and I have never been part of a prouder or more genuine group that I can confidently call my brothers for life.

In the wake of these events, and as society begins to return to a place of “normalcy”, we are well-equipped and excited to use our strong foundational support to continue to grow in 2021-2022. We are excited to return to a more normal social schedule, and plan to use the building blocks from the past era to conquer obstacles and continue to build both in relation to UVA and the community at large. This brotherhood has been forged in the face of adversity, and I am waiting with eager anticipation and humbled optimism for what lies ahead.

Fraternally,

Jack Fechter

## **AEPi Through Covid**

By Jackson Wray, Former Master

With last year being tough on everyone, as a brotherhood we tried to come together virtually as much as possible. From Zoom happy-hours late into the night, random group chat discussions, and video games for hours on end, we did what we could to keep connected with one another and foster new relationships with the Iotas (who had only recently joined before COVID sent us online). Zoom chapters were a great way for the brotherhood to keep connected and hear what others were up to during the lockdowns. Additionally, as will be mentioned in detail in the philanthropy section, we coordinated virtual fundraising after the death of George Floyd to support the Richmond Bail Relief, Campaign Zero, and the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. As the fall semester began, things very slowly started heading back to normal with brothers gathering in small groups for lunches



Snowman built in a Covid winter



and dinners when they could, allowing for more personal connections to be built between brothers and the newly initiated Iotas. Throughout the school year, we continued building those relationships and finding ways to have fun—and for that we are incredibly grateful.

## Meet the Kappa Pledge Class

By Cesar Engelhard & Will Snodgrass, Kappa Representatives

AEPi’s brand new pledge class, the Kappas, is excited and thrilled to have the honor to call ourselves brothers of this great fraternity! This semester has been like no other—the majority of our classes were online, social gatherings were limited, and unfortunately the natural pompous energy of college life was sapped by the pandemic. Nevertheless, our pledge class was able to transition from strangers to brothers faster than we could have imagined. Despite all the drastic changes to the new-member experience, we spent plenty of time together while being safe about COVID. We shared meals, played IM sports, and went on hikes around Charlottesville.



A few of our newly initiated Kappas in style

It was certainly a valuable experience to pledge AEPi during such a unique semester, and we could not be happier with our pledge class. Despite all of the challenges of complying with COVID guidelines, we were still able to start forming bonds that will surely last us a lifetime. In such a tumultuous semester, it was all the more valuable to find a home on grounds, and all of the memories that we have made are all the more important in a year where so much of the typical fun and festivities of grounds have been taken away from us. Nothing can replace grounds being open and COVID-free, but joining such a wonderful brotherhood still made this semester worthwhile for all of us. We can’t wait to see what we can accomplish in the next three (or two) years here, and we couldn’t be happier to be newly initiated brothers of AEPi!



## The Status of 1702 Grady Ave.

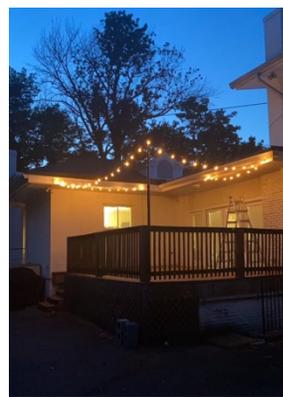
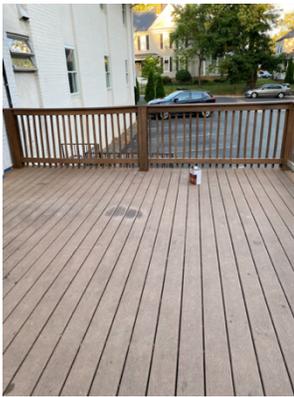
By Josh Hambrecht, House Manager

This past year has been tough for the Chapter House. One of our basement staircases flooded, breaking the main water heater. To follow, our roof had a soft spot, which led to leaks into the chapter room. Due to the constant snowfall and rain of the winter months, this problem was unable to be alleviated for many months, leaving the chapter room essentially unusable. Thankfully, by the end of the school



1702 Grady Ave in all of its glory

year, we were able to replace the water heater and patch the roof. Our former House Manager, Hayden Tickle, devoted an immense amount of his time to minimize the damages caused by the roof, but still further repairs must be made.



Resealing and staining the back deck: before and after... plus a nighttime view with lights

As the new House Manager, I have high hopes for the upcoming school year. Our plan is to devote time to smaller repairs that we were unable to address due to the roof and water heater.

Since the spring semester ended, we have already improved the stains left on the ceilings from the roof leakage and begun amenity additions in the bathrooms. This summer, we're in the process of making improvements to the house, such as rejuvenating the front lawn, resealing the back deck, brightening up the chapter room with new paint, and installing storage solutions in the bathrooms. I'm excited to help make 1702 Grady Ave more welcoming than ever before.



## Philanthropy Recap

By Rod Aryan & Matthew Simon, Co-Philanthropy Chairs

We decided to focus heavily on improving our philanthropy efforts during the 2019-2020 school year. Although our ability to host fundraisers and similar events on grounds was prohibited by the rise of COVID, we were able to adapt our plans to issues that existed beyond the Charlottesville area in order to maintain our progress in improving the chapter's philanthropy. One of the issues that gained a lot of media attention in 2020 was the systematic injustice against minorities in the U.S., more specifically the discrimination towards the black community. After meeting together over Zoom, we found that a large majority of the brotherhood was looking for a way to help these communities and to speak out against the oppression that was highlighted by the murder of George Floyd. We decided to focus our efforts to promote a social media fundraiser which raised \$6,500 for the Richmond Bail Relief, Campaign Zero, and the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. While we aimed to find an issue that was affecting those nationwide, we wanted to support Virginia-based efforts to help the fight against racism in our own state.

For our Fall 2020 event, we held a fundraiser with Fabio's Pizza to support the UVA Hospital's Family Centered Care Program. This program assists the families of children undergoing cancer treatment at the hospital by providing them with goods such as gas vouchers and children's toys. We promoted this fundraiser to the members of the UVA community by word-of-mouth and social media, and Fabio's donated a portion of the proceeds to our charity. The restaurant also delivered most of the orders to individual residences to comply with social-distancing measures. Through meal orders and donations, we raised over \$500 for the Family Centered Care Program.

## Jewish Identity

By Josh Hambrecht, Jewish Engagement Chair

Mu chapter brothers continued to show their involvement in Jewish identity and traditions throughout this COVID year. In fact, two of our brothers were elected to executive positions on the Hillel



Student Board. Maxwell Pilloff (Iota Pledge Class) was elected as Chief Financial Officer, while Jacob Borenstein (Theta Pledge Class) was elected as Vice Chair. Three members of the newest Kappa Pledge Class committed to serving as Hillel engagement interns for the following school year, providing AEPi a strong presence in the UVA Jewish community. We are excited to continue to work alongside Hillel in display of our appreciation for Jewish traditions and identity.

This semester, we took the time to celebrate the Jewish holidays of Purim and Passover. For Purim, brothers enjoyed homemade Hamantaschen. For Passover, we hosted a COVID-safe Seder, with meals provided by Hillel. We took these opportunities to continue the Jewish traditions within the Mu chapter. Non-Jewish brothers attended as well, learning about the Jewish values and its association with brotherhood that we hold highly in our organization. This summer, three brothers of the Iota Pledge class are interning in Israel with the programs Onward and TAMID.

We look forward to next semester, in hope that we can again attend Shabbat dinners and participate in Birthright to Israel.



Todd Rissman (left) and Cameron Weisfeld (right) in Jerusalem, Summer 2021



No caption needed. Yum. Courtesy of Josh Hambrecht.



## To Our Alumni: Let's Stay in Touch, Online and in Person

While all of the details aren't finalized, we are committed to hosting two alumni events from October 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, rain or shine. For more recent alumni, this coincides with YAR, so we hope that you were already planning to be in town (book your flights and hotel rooms now!) and are available that weekend.

- Join us at the AEPi house at 1702 Grady Ave., Charlottesville, VA 22903 on the evening of Friday, October 15
- Join us at our satellite house ("The O'Keeffe House") at 1212 Wertland St, Charlottesville, VA 22903 during the day for a tailgate before the homecoming football game vs. Duke

Please indicate whether you plan to attend either of these events [here](#).

In the meantime, we want to connect with you! Share any pictures you have from your time in the Mu chapter or from any gatherings with alumni after graduation. Send us pictures of any old apparel or memorabilia, and please bring it with you to Charlottesville in October! To keep our records of alumni up-to-date and make note of any questions or comments you have for me or the chapter as a whole, we ask that you fill out this [brief form](#).

## A Message from the Mu Chapter Advisor

By Dr. Adam Salzberg, Mu '98

I hope all of you and your families are doing well. I am extremely proud of our undergraduate brothers for their ability to conduct a very successful rush during the pandemic and initiate 14 new brothers. Our chapter's brothers continue to excel academically, in their extracurricular activities and with philanthropy. It has been a privilege to serve as our chapter advisor for the past 18 years (including as a co-advisor with Dr. Jay Levine from '03 – '05), and I intend to continue volunteering in this role for the foreseeable future. As a Crozet resident, it's convenient to live only 20 minutes from our Grady Ave.



house. Rather than just communicating by phone and e-mail, this proximity allows me to meet in person with the executive board and other brothers as needed and to annually attend (at a minimum) and speak at chapter meetings.

I am very pleased to announce that our Mu Chapter is kicking off a \$50,000 capital campaign led by the current brothers and with my assistance. As many of you know, our [Alpha Epsilon Pi UVA alumni fund](#) is administered by Alumni Hall, and its purpose is to assist our chapter by helping pay for repairs, maintenance and capital improvements that exceed their budget and reserves. Any disbursement requests by the house manager or executive board must be approved by either Jay or myself. No one at AEPi national headquarters has any access or control over our alumni fund. All donations are considered tax-deductible gifts to the University of Virginia.

Our Grady Ave. house (and many other AEPi chapter houses) is part of the corporate entity “University Chapter Fraternal Home Corporation” owned by nationals. Our lessor and property management company is [Esponda Associates](#). Prior to the fall of `18, Esponda Associates funded all repairs and maintenance by including those costs as part of rent. This caused our housing costs to rise substantially above market rates and become unaffordable. In the spring of `18, Jay Levine, myself and Daniel Crystal (the master at the time) negotiated a new housing agreement with Esponda that gave our chapter the control to fund and pay for repairs and maintenance (R & M) with a \$15,000 annual budget goal. In order to lower rent to keep housing costs in line with market rates, the entire R & M budget was funded with an increase in dues to all brothers. Since all brothers use the house, it’s fair that everyone contributes to its upkeep. The downside is that this required our chapter to raise dues to \$1,150 a semester, which is among the highest of UVA fraternities. `21 - `22 Mu housing costs are \$8,000 for a 9 month lease for a single (\$889 a month). That’s \$6,750 in rent payable to Esponda and \$1,250 in utilities payable to the chapter. \$8,000 is 8.1% higher (\$600 more) than comparable UVA housing costs of \$7,400.

In 2019, our house had two flooding events from torrential rains that caused over \$11,000 in damages which required expensive repairs to a heat pump and the need to purchase a new furnace, gas



tankless water heater and sump pump. Our alumni fund helped the chapter with these expenses along with paying for a new basketball pole (fixed in cement), backboard and hoop. These large disbursements depleted our fund. I have donated on an annual basis and contributed \$1,800 earlier this year to replenish it. Our current balance is a very low \$1,783.

Any repair, maintenance or capital improvement expense that exceeds the chapter's ability to pay via house funds and our alumni fund are paid with what Esponda Associates calls "trustee cash." This is an interest bearing, home equity line of credit held by nationals. Borrowing trustee cash causes increases our housing costs. In a worst case scenario, borrowing large amounts of trustee cash would cause our leases to far exceed market rates which would result in brothers unable to afford to live in our house. This would cause us to lose our house and our chapter would fold. Our current mortgage balance is \$390,000 and our trustee balance is \$99,805 for a total for \$489,805 owed to nationals. That includes approximately \$20,000 for a partial roof replacement this summer. As I wrote above, our capital campaign goal is to increase our alumni fund balance to \$50,000. Achieving this goal will prevent our chapter from having to borrow more trustee cash from nationals, it will keep our housing costs affordable and it will help ensure the long term success and viability of our chapter. Significantly increasing our fund balance will also potentially allow our chapter to lower dues. This would make us more competitive in terms of dues relative to other fraternities.

We greatly appreciate in advance any and all tax deductible donations to the University of Virginia via our [Alpha Epsilon Pi UVA alumni fund](#). Under "Designation", scroll down and select "Alpha Epsilon Pi." I hope many of you and your families are able to attend the Mu alumni weekend and Duke game on Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to a fun weekend with all of you, and we thank you again in advance for your support of your Mu chapter.

Fraternally,

Adam Salzberg

Chapter Advisor, Mu '98



## Snapshots of Brotherhood Moments



This past year's house brothers, all in the Theta pledge class



Handsome Iotas enjoying a daytime hike



Kappas (mostly) at the ZTA Run for Life 5K



Hanging out at Carter Mountain



**And lastly, congratulations to the Etas on their recent graduation. While this was a difficult way to end their college careers, we are confident that each and every one of them will find success and happiness in their future endeavors.**



**Top (from left to right):** Ben Freeman, Evan Kirsh, Ethan Marciano, Charlie Graber, Adam Marcus

**Bottom:** Max Belkin, Max Bacall

**To the Etas: We love you and we will miss you. Remember that you are AEPi alumni now, and few things top that—you are always welcome back in 1702 Grady Ave and the O’Keeffe house, and we cannot wait to see you again soon.**