

THE MU COW

A WORD FROM THE MASTER

By Saul Brodsky

My experiences here at the University of Virginia have been colored quite a different shade than most other students, I would conjecture. Yet nowhere have I found a brotherhood as strong as that of Alpha Epsilon Pi. I have had both brief and enduring involvement with many different organizations, including Campus Kitchen, Chabad and Hillel, and the local SPCA. I both formed and broke bonds with my peers at the University and saw myself change in ways I would have never thought possible. But one element has always run through me, even before I got to college – and that is fraternity. Brotherhood. Filial love. As a child, I found this at summer camp and in sports, swapping stories and sharing rituals with my peers. As an adolescent, I joined AZA, reveling in the ritual, the humor, and the strength of the bonds I formed with my brothers.

Yet nowhere have I found a brotherhood as strong as that of Alpha Epsilon Pi. This fraternity has brought me across the country, connecting me with brothers from other schools and providing me with invaluable resources as a chapter leader. This fraternity has given me a home away from home, a place where I can show my true colors amongst friends. And this fraternity has cultivated an environment of academic integrity and studiousness, compelling its members to hold themselves to the highest academic standards. Earning the 2nd place overall highest GPA amongst all UVA IFC fraternities for the 2012–2013 school year is a prize achievement for us, and we hope to claim 1st place in the coming years.

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It would be simple for us to stand here and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done, but true growth can only be achieved if we commit to re-evaluating the fraternity at every step, demanding of ourselves that we exceed the high standards we have set. The work of the past 12 months has finally come due, and this brotherhood of 55 is staged to grow at an ever-greater pace for the next 5 years. I am committed to seeing through the next few years of growth for the Mu chapter, and look forward to working with brothers in the coming years to establish strong relations with both our past and recent alumni.

Fraternally Submitted,
Saul Brodsky

PHILANTHROPY RECAP

By Jason Warren

This year the Mu Chapter made solid strides with our efforts to raise money for Save a Child's Heart, an organization that provides life-saving cardiac care to children across the Middle East. In the fall, we brought back our popular Concert for a Cause event, but added a week of promotional fundraising events leading up to the show. Brothers set up tables on Beta Bridge and the Corner in groups of three, with a theme of 'AE Pie a Brother'. Each donation allowed passer-by to hit one of our brothers with a whip cream pie. Local grocery stores generously donated part of our whip cream supply, which helped make the philanthropy financially sustainable. At the end of the week we raised over 1100 dollars for SACH, and the concert itself was a success, thanks to our tremendous headliner, RDGLDGRN!

During spring semester we held a 3-week long series of events in February, which played into the Valentine's Day heart theme, as well as an international campaign that SACH was promoting. Our events consisted of four nights of Drink Your Heart Out events at 5 different bars on the corner, through which purchasing a \$5 wristband granted various drink specials. We also had bake sales three times a week on the lawn to promote the bar nights. In total we were able to raise over \$2,000. To execute these events, we worked in collaboration with 'Hoos for Israel, the Jewish Social Justice Connection, and the Israel Campus Coalition, and we hope to continue this in the future and make it an annual event!

BROTHERHOOD CAMPING TRIP REPORT

By Reuben Han

On Friday, April 19th— and well into the early hours of Saturday the 20th— nearly all of the fifty-five Mu Colony brothers congressed for our Third Annual Brotherhood Camping Trip. The trip has quickly become a semester highlight for Mu's newly initiated brothers, and a recurring favorite for the upperclassmen. "I look forward to the camping trip every year," reported Seth Kramer (Commerce '15), "It's a really great and fun bonding experience for everyone."

Many see the trip as a rite of passage, a hearkening back to the days of primitive men — men who roughed it each night against the trials of too-cold air-conditioning, men who made it through the night against the unending clamor of their brothers' snoring, men who had nothing but 90's carpeting and sleeping mats to call a bed. We go through the trials of these men because they knew the meaning of brotherhood — a lesson that each year humbles and yet strengthens the bonds of our soon-to-be Chapter.

Brothers-at-Large Jonah Zaleznick (SEAS '15) and Jason Schwarz (CLAS '15) orchestrated a meaningful program about the direction of the fraternity and the importance of brotherhood. When these activities met their conclusion, brothers spent the good remainder of their evening playing basketball and reveling by the campfire. Patrick McQuade (SEAS '15) assured us that Brothers-at-Large are pluralized just like "Surgeons-General" are.

Past Master Josh Cohen (CLAS '13) made a point to visit and spend time with our expanding brotherhood. "It was a great feeling to not only see how the chapter has grown," he shared, "but to hear that guys are eager to improve it even further." Cohen, also a onetime Mexican Basketball participant, told our sources that "[no one] dunked on me." For brother Cohen, and all interested Mu brothers who "still got it," there's always next year. We look forward to sharing our camping stories then.

Author's Note: Staff Reporter Reuben Han was in a celebratory mood after learning this article was written, in fact, on the last day of classes—a fact of which he was previously unaware. Please excuse any unrelated ~~or drunken~~ commentary.

JEWISH IDENTITY EVENTS

By Gil Vizner

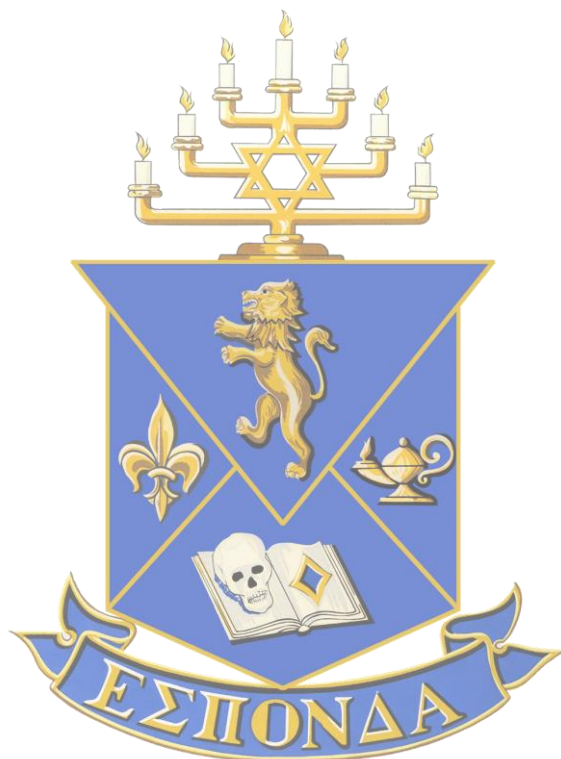
This year the brothers of AEPI have engaged in a number of great Jewish experiences. Things got started early on with Sukkot. A group of brothers spent an afternoon constructing a traditional Sukkah on the porch that would be used throughout the week for dining, study, and fulfilling the mitzvah of shaking the lulav. A few weeks later, Rabbi Shlomo Mayer came to the house to lead a text study with the entire colony on the nature of brotherhood and forgiveness as it is presented in the Torah. The study session was very informative and sparked some great discussions amongst the brothers for days to come. The week before winter break, our chapter had its first Farbrengen – a traditional Jewish practice of gathering after Shabbat dinner to share words of Torah and offer toasts to positive experiences and life lessons learned. This was a great opportunity for the brothers to not only learn some words of Torah, but also to reflect on the past semesters activities and to share our reflections others experiences together.

Over winter break 11 brothers participated in 3 different trips to Israel. (Insert names) participated in the 2 week Taglit Israel birthright trip. This program provides a free trip to Israel for every young Jewish adult who has not had the opportunity to go. Over the course of the trip our brothers traveled across the country connecting with our homeland and getting a feel for the everyday lives of Israeli Jews. I participated in the Israel Links program, which focused on Torah study and Chassidic practices in the mystical city of Tzfat, and Master Saul Brodsky studied with the Akiva program. In the spring semester, AEPI participated in Hillel's annual Shabbat Around Grounds program. ShAG encourages members of UVA Jewish student body to bring Shabbat into their homes by hosting dinners in multiple settings around grounds. AEPI did just that, hosting a full meal open to brothers and other members of the community. We concluded the year by holding a Passover Seder at the house. Led by two newly initiated brothers, Zak Krooks and Ben Gilbert, the fraternity retold the story of the exodus from Egypt while also celebrating the end of our pledge program and the growth of our brotherhood. Overall, these experiences have provided valuable opportunities for each brother to further explore his own identity, and for the chapter as a whole to grow closer to each other and to our brothers around the world.

EXPERIENCES ON BIRTHRIGHT

By Joe DuBois

Over winter break this year, I had the privilege of traveling to Israel with 80 of my closest friends on Birthright. However, there is a difference between traveling with your friends and traveling with your brothers; I was lucky enough to have several other AEPi brothers on my trip with whom to share the experience. We traveled together for 10 days, going from Tel Aviv to the Golan to the Negev and seeing everything in between, and it was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. I had been before to Israel with family, but never with my friends and brothers. Additionally, I was in something of a unique situation – during the trip, I celebrated my 20th birthday. Reaching this milestone while on Birthright allowed me to re-examine my beliefs, my relation to Judaism, my goals, and ultimately who I want to be and what I want out of my life. It brought me closer to my AEPi brothers and I am forever grateful that I got the opportunity to embark on such a life-changing trip with such incredible people.



HOUSE UPDATE

By Troy Singer

This year has been a successful one at 1707 Grady. After a year with seven residents, we increased our occupancy to a full house of fifteen residents, which has completely changed the dynamic of our home. We also began a fraternity meal plan program for several days of the week, with catering provided by current brother Seth Kramer, and '13 alum Josh Cohen. Overall, this has made the house more of a place to hang out than it was last year. Each day has seen a livelier home, where brothers and friends can gather to both socialize and study. Next year we will be welcoming fourteen residents into the house, including a brother from one of AEPi's UK chapters, who will be studying abroad at the University of Virginia during the fall semester. We're incredibly excited to be able to share with him what the Mu Chapter is all about.

As for improvements, after adding some essential appliances and building a storage shed, we are still attempting to add on to our somewhat bare kitchen, as we look towards getting funds to build cabinets and countertops. We're happy to announce that this year saw the restoration and return of the beautiful Mu Chapter CofA (Coat of Arms), as well as the return of several old composites. Both the '89 and '03 composites have been re-mounted on the wall of our chapter room, and we also have several medium-sized prints of other composites from the 80s. We're still hoping that more composites are returned in the future, but alternatively, our composite company can re-make almost any AEPi composite from their archives.

If you are interested in funding the restoration of a composite from your years as an active brother, we'd be happy to work with you to make it happen, and can dedicate the finished product upon request. Aside from composites, there are numerous improvements that can be made to the house, from major projects to minor purchases. If you'd like to help out, either through monetary or physical donations, you can check our website (aepimu.com) for a comprehensive outline of our goals for house development. Of course, feel free to stop by the house whenever you find yourself in Charlottesville – our doors are always open to alumni, and we'd be happy to show you around and help you relive some old memories!

REFLECTIONS OF A 4TH YEAR

By Adam Rosen

A man is defined by both his words and his actions. The oath I took when I joined Alpha Epsilon Pi were words that bound me to a group of men I barely knew, but my actions – all of our actions – created a brotherhood I could not be prouder of. We took a leap of faith 3 years ago when we re-founded the Mu chapter of the Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity, then just a wee colony. Lots of blood, sweat and beer went into the process and I would gladly repeat it, especially for the beer. Like many brothers before us, we wanted to create a place where young men with Jewish values could fraternize and drink Manishevitz in peace. Alpha Epsilon Pi has had a strong history at the University of Virginia. My grandfather was a Mu in the 1950s when he went here, and I am honored to be able to carry on the tradition.

These past three years have shaped my experience here at UVA more than I can fit into a few paragraphs. I have lived with my brothers, consumed more Matzo balls than a man should with my brothers, I have argued with my brothers, I have gone on spontaneous road trips with my brothers, I have laughed with my brothers (even when their jokes were horrendous), but more than anything, I have loved my brothers. I have been there for them and they have been there for me. I know the chapter will continue to grow and do great things. I encourage any Mu, from any year, to come back and visit. Come see the legacy that you helped create, that we continued, and that those after us will further even more.

AEPI was one of the best decisions of my college experience, and I know it will continue to be one the best decisions of my entire life. It saddens me to graduate, but I know I will always have a home to return to when I need to escape my job and remind myself that there are in fact Jews still living in the south. Finally, I end with a shameless plug. I am moving to Washington D.C. in the coming months and would love to meet some fellow Mu's. Come buy me a drink and I will repay it in 5 years when I am no longer a poor new graduate, still wet behind the ears. Email me (adaminva@gmail.com), but not to correct my grammar – it's exam season and I'm running on little amounts of sleep.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER ADVISOR

By Dr. Adam Salzberg (Mu '98)

I hope this Mu Cow finds all of you doing well. Like you, I was obviously saddened and frustrated to see our house fall into disrepair, and the chapter close in the spring of 2009 due to financial distress after only three brothers had signed leases to live in the house for the fall of 2009. However, since the re-opening of our chapter and renovated house in the fall of 2012, the brotherhood has grown to 55 strong, including 16 newly initiated brothers. For my fellow alumni that participated in the Jewlympics at the house in February 2013 or have met any of the current brothers in other settings, I think you would agree with my assessment that they are quality young men. I am proud to have them as representatives of our Mu chapter, and I commend them for their efforts in rebuilding to such a high level of strength in such a short period of time.

I encourage you to check out the website aepimu.com. The House Plan for 2013 under the Support Mu tab has a very detailed description of needed improvements. Some of the most pressing needs are the kitchen and chapter room (formerly the green room, but it now has luxury vinyl tile with a nice oak wood appearance). You can make a tax-deductible donation to the UVa Fund for the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity by clicking on the Donate Now link under the Support Mu tab. The fund is administered by alumni hall, disbursements are controlled by myself and Jay Levine, and your gift is considered a donation to the University of Virginia. You have the option to designate your contribution to a particular house improvement project by contacting me at adamsalzberg@gmail.com or 804-301-0771. You can also reach Master Jeff Kerbel at aepiuvamaster@gmail.com or 973-960-3234.

I made a sizable donation last week to our UVa Fund, because I am proud of the brothers' individual and collective accomplishments on and off grounds. It will require a significant fundraising effort on our part as Mu alumni to achieve all of the needed improvements (including replacing missing composites), but with your generosity it is absolutely attainable, so give what you can. Finally, I encourage you to come by the house and meet the brothers during your next trip to Charlottesville – I know they will be hosting football tailgates at the house this fall. I thank you in advance for your support of your Mu Chapter.

THE YEAR IN PICTURES...







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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The brothers of the Mu Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi would like to sincerely thank the individuals below for their contributions towards the continued development of our brotherhood:

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