

# THE TAU NEWS

Official Graduate Brother Newsletter - Tau Nu Chapter of Phi Gamma Delta

Volume AD, Issue 1

Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014

82 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Troy, NY

## The Winter 2014 Issue

### *Contents*

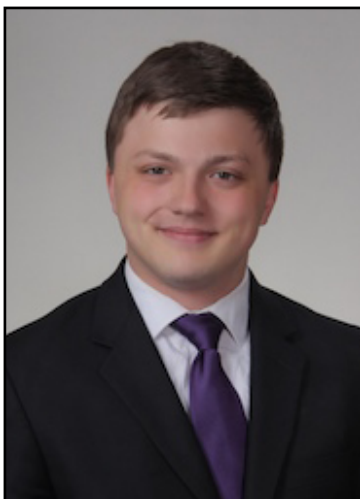
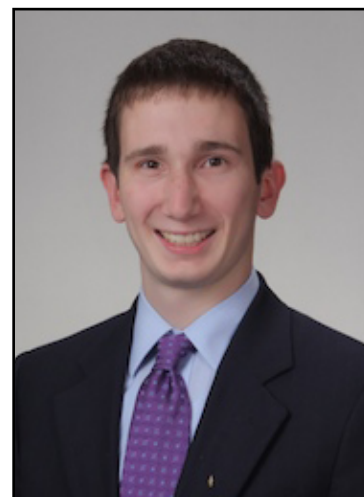
Farewell, Old Cabinet! .....	2
Hello, New Cabinet! .....	4
Graduating Brothers .....	8
Black Diamond .....	9
Victorian Stroll .....	10
Pledge Activities .....	11
Housewarming Party .....	12
Phantom .....	13
Community Service .....	15
Sports .....	16
Holiday Cards .....	17

## *Farewell, Old Cabinet!*

The passing of the baton happened as planned this semester. Our previous President Garrett Szafman has now graduated and passed his position to our previous Corresponding Secretary, Brad Schwartz. We are eternally thankful to the old cabinet for all the work they've given to this chapter—especially the copious amounts of effort they sustained to transitioned us into our new house. This past year has been pivotal for the chapter, and we are confident their shared expertise will be passed on to the new members of cabinet.

“It’s crazy to think about how different the FIJI that elected me to Recording Secretary in November 2012 is from today’s group of fine individuals. It was great to be a part of the transition out of RAHPs and I feel really good about where our chapter is now. Hell, if we were able to get such great pledges rushing out of North Hall, just think of what we can do out of our new house. I’m excited to be passing the gavel on to my little bro Brad, and I hope he enjoys it as much as I did.”

**-Garrett Szafman** (*Class of 2015, President*)



“Serving on cabinet has been one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve ever had. As Treasurer, I created a savings account, moved dues to bursar billing, and formalized a discretionary fund. The first two are quality-of-life improvements necessitated by the new house while the discretionary fund is a major change to the way we plan events. We’ve already seen some awesome impromptu events, and I’m excited to see new creative uses for it in the future.”

**-Nick Payne** (*Class of 2015, Treasurer*)

## *Farewell, Old Cabinet! (continued)*



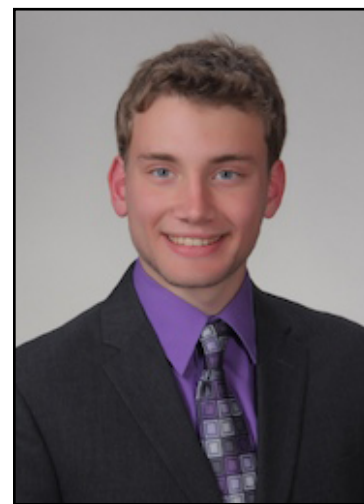
“During my time as Recording Secretary, I made some changes to streamline chapter meetings and cut down on their length, and it’s good to hear Chris plans on continuing the new policies. I want to stress the importance of cabinet’s role as the committee advisors—when a committee has any questions, cabinet is there to help. I’m positive the new cabinet will continue to support the chapter.”

**-Brandon McLear** (*Class of 2015, Recording Secretary*)

“It’s been a great year as corresponding secretary; I can’t believe it’s already over! It seems like just yesterday that I was driving to Fiji Academy through a blizzard, full of excitement for the coming year.

I am as excited for the next term as President as I was for my term as Corresponding Secretary. Because my old position did not have many explicit responsibilities, I have tried to bolster external relations through both my duties and through advising my committee VPs.”

**-Brad Schwartz** (*Class of 2016, Corresponding Secretary*)



“As our house was cleaned up moving into the church, I updated the brotherhood board and similar chapter artifacts, cleaned the historian artifacts, and organized them in the chapter safe. I think the “other” Zach has the proper attitude to foster brotherhood and help lead the chapter. Our current pledges are amazing and I believe that we will be able to continue to grow in the Church and recruit the best of the best.”

**-Zach Shute** (*Class of 2016, Historian*)

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## *Hello, New Cabinet!*

Our new cabinet is a diverse mix of brothers focused on bringing our house forward. Our Historian and Corresponding Secretary are cousins, our Recording Secretary is the former head of *The Poly*, our Treasurer is a sophomore, and our President is last year's Corresponding Secretary. What these new leaders all share is an enthusiasm for Phi Gamma Delta and the courage to lead us into our first full year in the church. The chapter is as strong as ever, and we are proud to have these five brothers leading us.

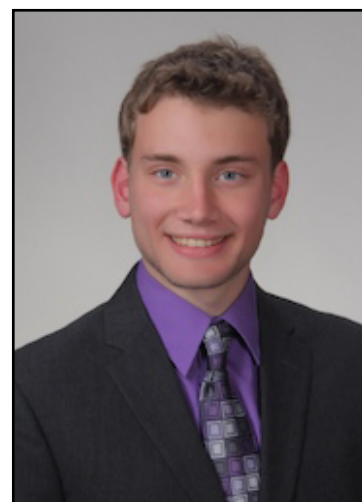
“Dear Graduates,

I am incredibly excited to take over as the first president to have a full term in the new house. For those of you that do not know me yet, I am working towards a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering, as well as an MBA, set for graduation from RPI in the Fall of 2016. I sing *a capella* in the Rusty Pipes, play trombone in the Jazz Band, and am highly involved with Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society.

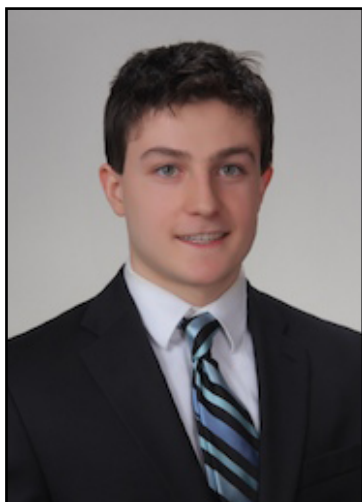
It is an incredible honor to take over as the president of the chapter at such an historic time. There will need to be many new decisions and precedents set by me and the other chapter leaders as we continue to grow accustomed to our new house. I can't wait to continue and expand upon the work of the outgoing chapter leadership. Garrett was an amazing President, and I know I will be continuing to seek his guidance throughout my term. It would be hard to summarize all of the goals and objectives I have for this chapter in the next year; because the influence of president is so far-reaching, there are too many to list. Instead, I will simply express my excitement, as well as my confidence in the other chapter leaders. This cabinet is incredibly promising, and I cannot wait to see where we take the chapter!

Perge!”

-**Brad Schwartz** (*Class of 2016, President*)



## *Hello, New Cabinet! (continued)*



“For those of you whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Nicholas Seguljic. I am pursuing a bachelors degree in Chemical Engineering and will be graduating in 2017. I am truly honored to have been elected for this position in the brotherhood. The movement of the chapter from RAHPs to the church marks an epoch as grand as the inception of our chapter. As such it is important that as Treasurer I set the correct standard for those who are to come after me, and as a cabinet to set the right goals to better our chapter. My predecessor Nick Payne was a leader throughout the transitional period to our new house. Most notably he introduced a convenient way for brothers to pay through the RPI bursar and established the discretionary fund. Continuing in his innovative foot steps I am ready to take on the changes necessary for us to adapt to our new environment. Perge!”

**-Nick Seguljic** (*Class of 2016, Treasurer*)

“My name is Chris Leong, and I’m pursuing a degree in Chemical Engineering at RPI. I’m the current Recording Secretary at FIJI. Having just received our new house, there are many rules and procedures that need to be overhauled following the transition from RAHPs. As the keeper of our *Constitution* and *Bylaws*, it is my responsibility to oversee the wording and amending of bylaws. A few amendments that are currently in process relate to housing and the fraternity budget. Some others that I’m working on amending are those relating to parking and other housing regulations. Additionally, I know that my experience as Editor in Chief of *The Polytechnic* will ...



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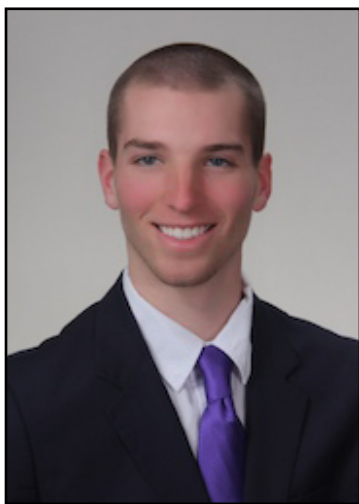
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## *Hello, New Cabinet! (continued)*

... aid in my management of committees and committee heads to their full potential. I believe that our Tau Nu chapter of FIJI is on an exponential upward trend. We are blessed to have a phenomenal chapter house with which we can hold communal events, such as the Rensselaer Music Association for the annual Victorian Stroll and our last social event, which held more than a tenth of RPI's student population. As a fraternity, we are not only getting our name out to not just the RPI community and Troy, but we are also being mentioned on other campuses, such as Syracuse University. And that makes me mighty proud to be a Tau Nu FIJI.

Perge!"

**-Chris Leong** (*Class of 2016, Recording Secretary*)



"Dear Graduates,

I am very excited to be the 30<sup>th</sup> Corresponding Secretary of our chapter. For those of you that don't know me, I am a senior from Cohoes, NY studying Computer Science dualing with GSAS. I am on the RPI ski team and am in the Outing Club. FIJI deserves to be the biggest name on campus, and I will work hard to get us there. I plan in involving us in every inter-Greek event possible to increase involvement on campus. I also want to create a long lasting event as a tradition hosted by FIJI in the Greek community. I also plan on

improving and solidifying the strong relationships with other fraternities and sororities that I started to build as social chair. The last Corresponding Secretary, Brad Schwartz did a great job paving the path for me. Brad oversaw my committee and helped me build lasting relationships with Sigma Chi and Sigma Delta. He led us to victory in Greek Week for FIJI against all other Greek houses. He now continues to lead as the 30th President of our chapter, and I very much look forward to continuing my work with him. FIJI will be known throughout Troy for our community service while being known on campus as one of the most involved houses.

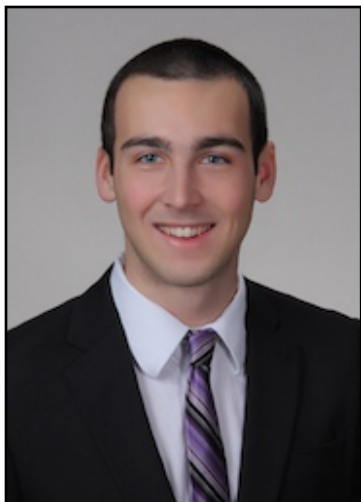
P!"

**-Dave Vanderzee** (*Class of 2016, Corresponding Secretary*)

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## *Hello, New Cabinet! (continued)*



“Dear Grads,

For those of you that perhaps don't know me, my name is Zachary Vanderzee. I am currently one of the many Computer Science majors in the house and will be graduating in 2016. I am a member of both the Cross Country and Track and Field teams and am the new Historian for our chapter.

I can't express how excellent it feels to have been chosen as the new Historian for our chapter. At such a critical and pivotal point in our chapter's history, our actions and choices set the tone for our future

and it is truly an honor to be selected as one of the leaders at this time.

Being given such a huge and wonderful home, it is now the chapter's job to fill it with young and hardworking members. As the Historian, it is my job to record, maintain, and teach our history and traditions to these new members. It is also my job to shape them into strong leaders that will one day fill the very roles that we, the current cabinet, now hold.

Of course, not all traditions can stay exactly the same as they were back in RAHPs. Some of our traditions and practices will have to be amended and updated to work with in our new home. We have already amended several bylaws this semester related to the new home and we will continue to do more as they come up. During my term, I plan to set the example for how important events and rituals will be organized and run from now on. The old Historian, Zachary Shute, did a wonderful job with initiating the most recent pledge class during a tough transitional period. I look forward to working with him on solidifying this process in our new home and making it a truly special event semester after semester.

P!”

*-Zach Vanderzee (Class of 2016, Historian)*

*You can always email our leaders at [cabinet@taunufiji.com](mailto:cabinet@taunufiji.com).*

## *Graduating Brothers*

It is with a heavy heart that we send off this semester's graduating brothers. These three have contributed countless hours to Tau Nu, and we will sorely miss their contributions to (and presence at) the house. We're not just saying goodbye to half our driving force behind the new house, a long-time cherished brother, and our most recent President—we're saying goodbye to three of our best friends. We'll miss you three!



**Brendan Edward Cazier**

PCF'10

Class of 2015, B.S. Mechanical Engineering

Plans: Maintenance engineering with American Airlines

Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma



**Garrett Mitchell Szafman**

PCF'11

Class of 2015, B.S. Chemical Engineering

Plans: Relaxing at the church before starting work

Location: Still here, guys!



**Altan Kaya Gulen, PCF'12**

Class of 2014, B.S. Computer Science

Class of 2015, M.S. Information Technology & Web Science

Plans: Software development at Microsoft

Location: Seattle, Washington

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## Black Diamond

As always, the FIJI members started their adventurous night out with our famous poem spoken by social chair Dave Vanderzee at our 6:48 pm toast. This was the first time those words were used as a Black Diamond toast in our new fraternity house. Over 70 FIJIs and dates raised their glasses of champagne to celebrate our excitement and pride in our chapter.

*Here's to the breezes that blow through the trees  
And lifts the skirts above the knees  
Its teases, it pleases, it spreads diseases  
Oh what a snatch, down the hatch.  
Here's to Delta!*

We arrived at Birch Hill at 7:30 pm, dressed to the 9s in our matching tuxedos, to enjoy six food serving stations and an open bar. Shortly after we had eaten too much steak and pasta, the urge to dance had started for many of our brothers. Eventually, the DJ started to play the requested songs for individual pledge classes to get up and shake it with their pledge brothers. From “Allstar” by Smash Mouth to “Fireball” by Pitbull, the pledge classes bonded in their own ways. Brother Altan Gulen received the honor of the slow dance this year for his seven year strong relationship with his girlfriend Michelle to “I Won’t Give Up” by Jason Miraz. After 11:30 pm, our buses came to bring us back home, where we continued celebrating with our dates until the fatigue of the night caught up with us.

This year, our glassware favors are a customized ale glass. The glass opens up more toward the top and is topped off with a golden rim to give it an elegant touch. On the side of the glass, two palm trees are printed on with “FIJI” written between them, and “Black Diamond 2014” above.



## *Victorian Stroll*

Every year during the holiday season, downtown Troy transforms into a “magical stage of song, dance, and family enjoyment.” The Troy Victorian Stroll marked its 32<sup>nd</sup> year as the region’s premier free holiday event.

All afternoon on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the historic downtown of Troy offered more than 100 free attractions in the form of the region’s best performers, musicians, dancers, magicians, and storytellers. Typically the event brings in around 20,000 people to the streets, and despite the cold many organizers agreed this was the best stroll yet. We opened our doors to host much of the event, helped prepare Barker Park, and sent Brother Spencer Pilcher as Santa Claus.

Our chapter utilized this event to as our grand opening and appearance to downtown. Our doors were open to the community for the whole stroll, from 11 am – 5 pm, as we hosted a Stars for our Troops event with Susan Wells. The main event that drew in the crowds was the performance of four of RPI’s jazz ensembles. The show, running from 2 – 5 pm, drew in hundreds of stroll-goers - filling every seat we could lay out in the sanctuary. The full house paired with the great performances made this event truly amazing for everyone. All who passed through were amazed with our dedication to the house and the community, and how well organized and neat the house was. Plus, everyone was very appreciative of the free hot chocolate to warm them up from the cold!



## *Pledge Activities*

It is with a clogged heart and full stomachs that we can happily report PCF14 is doing quite well with their food preparations.



Their first meal was well-prepared mac and cheese with bacon, breadcrumbs, and seasoning—not the most creative, but executed with a bit more finesse than PCF13's. They followed it up with a high-quality Thanksgiving meal (impressive given the single oven they could use), and concluded their meals with a refreshingly out-of-season grill-themed burgers & hot dogs night. The pledges finished their semester by presenting their gift to the house. The ten freshmen and sophomores worked hard to build us a Slap Cup table! FIJI Pong will always be first and foremost in our hearts but the chapter will benefit from this table during larger get-togethers. The table is six feet long by two feet wide, painted royal purple with our black diamond in the center.



## *Housewarming Party*

How would you feel if you held a party attended by a tenth of your college campus? According to Brother Josh Goldberg, “pretty damn good!”

It’s hard to describe how jubilant we are having held Tau Nu FIJI’s largest and greatest in-house party yet. We attracted about 550 partygoers in our housewarming party, co-hosted with Sigma Chi on November 14th. Everything from brother turnout (100%!) to pledge turnout (also 100%!) to the line outside was on an epic scale.

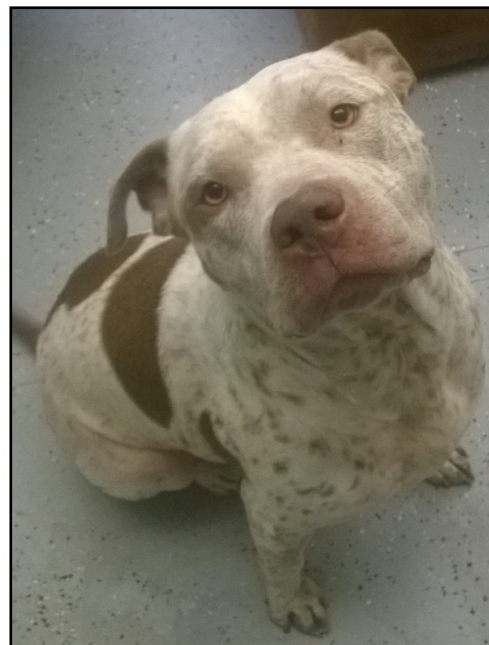
“I think it’s great that we’re going strong right out of the gate with a successful social event after just obtaining our new house. If students at RPI didn’t know about FIJI before, they sure do now,” says brother Chris Leong. “Events like this and Victorian Stroll are what will make our house flourish.” The crowd got to the point where, despite having our massive rec room, we found ourselves at capacity and were forced to halt new entrances at the door.

Despite the incredible surge of guests we managed to keep the party safe and prevent risky situations at the house. The only part of the party we didn’t enjoy was the cleanup, but when you have hundreds of people in a room, that’s to be expected.



## *Phantom*

On November 11th, a pitbull/bulldog mix with the name “Phantom” was unexpectedly dropped off and abandoned by his owner at Graduate Brother Colin Pyzza’s apartment in the middle of the night. Colin took Phantom, about 3 ½ years old, to our house, not knowing what to do. The undergrads took the dog in and reached out to a local rescue group that a number of brothers volunteer with, Peppertree Rescue, to try to find him a home. The situation was also discussed with our Housing Corporation, and a one-week time frame was given to allow Phantom to stay in the house. Brother Terrance McGovern, who has already done extensive volunteer work with Peppertree, took the lead on caring for Phantom.



Phantom ended up being a wonderful dog and brought hours of joy to many of the brothers in-house. During his time in the house, many of the brothers took it on themselves to make sure this pup was always cared for. An evaluation was arranged for Phantom by Peppertree, which is required of all dogs coming into their Rescue. He is now being fostered through Peppertree after immediate approval by their board, and is in search of an adopter for a permanent home.



## Community Service



### Puck Run 2014

Nothing is better than a good rivalry, especially like the RPI-Union Hockey rivalry. But, instead of tailgating, brothers were hard at work partnering with Union's Chi chapter to make the second annual Puck Run happen. Last year, our chapter and the then-colony organized a relay run from RPI's Houston Field House to Union's Messa Center, carrying the game hockey puck over twenty miles to be dropped for the faceoff. This year, we ran the puck to our home game, the Black Friday RPI-Union faceoff on October 31st. Tau Nu reached out to a number of our new small business neighbors for support. Many sponsored the event, and along with backing from individual donors, we raised just shy of \$1000 for the United Services Organization. Any grads interested in purchasing a shirt should email Terrance at [tkmcgov@gmail.com](mailto:tkmcgov@gmail.com).

### Hour of Code

The second week in December marked the 2014 Hour of Code, a nationwide weeklong event in which students are encouraged by teachers to try simple programming activities for an hour. Brother Josh Goldberg, who has been traveling to the local Shaker High School weekly to teach programming, opted to travel to Latham Ridge Elementary School to help with the coding activities there as a FIJI brother and Microsoft Intern Ambassador. The school's teachers were happy for the extra help, and a school reporter featured him on the district's Hour of Code article online. We'll be starting more outreach programs in conjunction with RPI's CS Club at schools like Shaker Junior High and Shenendehowa High School this coming semester. Stay tuned for more exciting news!



[http://northcolonie.org/news/2014-15/141209\\_LR\\_hour\\_of\\_code.htm](http://northcolonie.org/news/2014-15/141209_LR_hour_of_code.htm)

## *Community Service (continued)*

### **Dyken Pond**

Our chapter has had a great relation with the Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center over the past few years. This semester, we continued to foster that relationship, and headed out to the Cropseyville area, about 40 minutes east of campus. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, we helped haul wood out of the forest and split it into firewood for the winter. Despite the cold and the rain, we (along with the other volunteers) cut, hauled, loaded, unloaded, split, and stacked over three cords of wood in about 3 hours. To express their gratitude, we were invited to stay for dinner, where they praised us and appreciated our work over the years. Later, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, we also sent a few brothers to help make wreaths for a fundraiser they run. We plan on continuing our great relationship with Dyken Pond in the years to come!

### **Edna's 97<sup>th</sup>**

Susan and Edna Wells have been great friends of ours—as members of the former First Baptist Church, they've been supportive throughout our entire transition process. Edna just celebrated her 97<sup>th</sup> birthday, so we sent a few brothers with a card and snacks to the party congratulate her. A collection of interesting artifacts owned by Edna were on display, such as a blanket from the only rescue ship at the Titanic, as well as signed congratulatory letters by President Obama and Governor Cuomo.

Not only was she active with us, she played an impromptu piano performance of the songs throughout her life for the party. No wonder this is the lady who's been helping her daughter with Stars for our Troops.

*We served up 338 reported hours of community service this semester. That's 14 consecutive days of service!*

*If you have a project for us to do, please email us at [community\\_service@taunufiji.com](mailto:community_service@taunufiji.com)!*

## *Sports*

### **Ultimate Frisbee**

Our run at a third ultimate frisbee title in three years almost came to an early end in the semifinals. It took place on a Sunday night that just happened to be at the same time as our second round of elections. Luckily, our pledges came through in a big way for us and showed up to make sure we didn't have to forfeit and held the game within reach until the rest of the team could get there and claim victory. The finals took place on a snowy, windy night against Chi Phi, who proved to be no match for us. The game ended in a 9-3 victory and another frisbee title for FIJI.

### **Volleyball**

After a very promising undefeated volleyball season, we went into the playoffs strong and steamrolled through Phi Mu Delta in the semifinals. Unfortunately, we never made it to the finals due to the fact that it was scheduled day of and we were never notified (coordinators, right?). At any rate, we know who truly deserved to win and that's all that really matters.

### **Other Intramurals**

The last two sports, indoor soccer and walleyball, were somewhat less successful. After an easy schedule in the regular season of indoor soccer, we entered playoffs undefeated. The semifinal round started off promising, with a goal scored on the first play of the game, but in the end we just couldn't hold together on defense well enough and failed to move on. The walleyball season took place in the form of a double elimination tournament. Our first game looked like it would be an easy win after dominating the first set against Phi Tau, but we dropped the second two and were sent to the losers bracket. We came back strong in our next couple games, taking out Ski Lodge and Pikes before facing Phi Tau again. Like before, it was a very hard fought game that could have gone either way, and we split the first two sets, but ended up dropping the third and getting knocked out of the tournament.

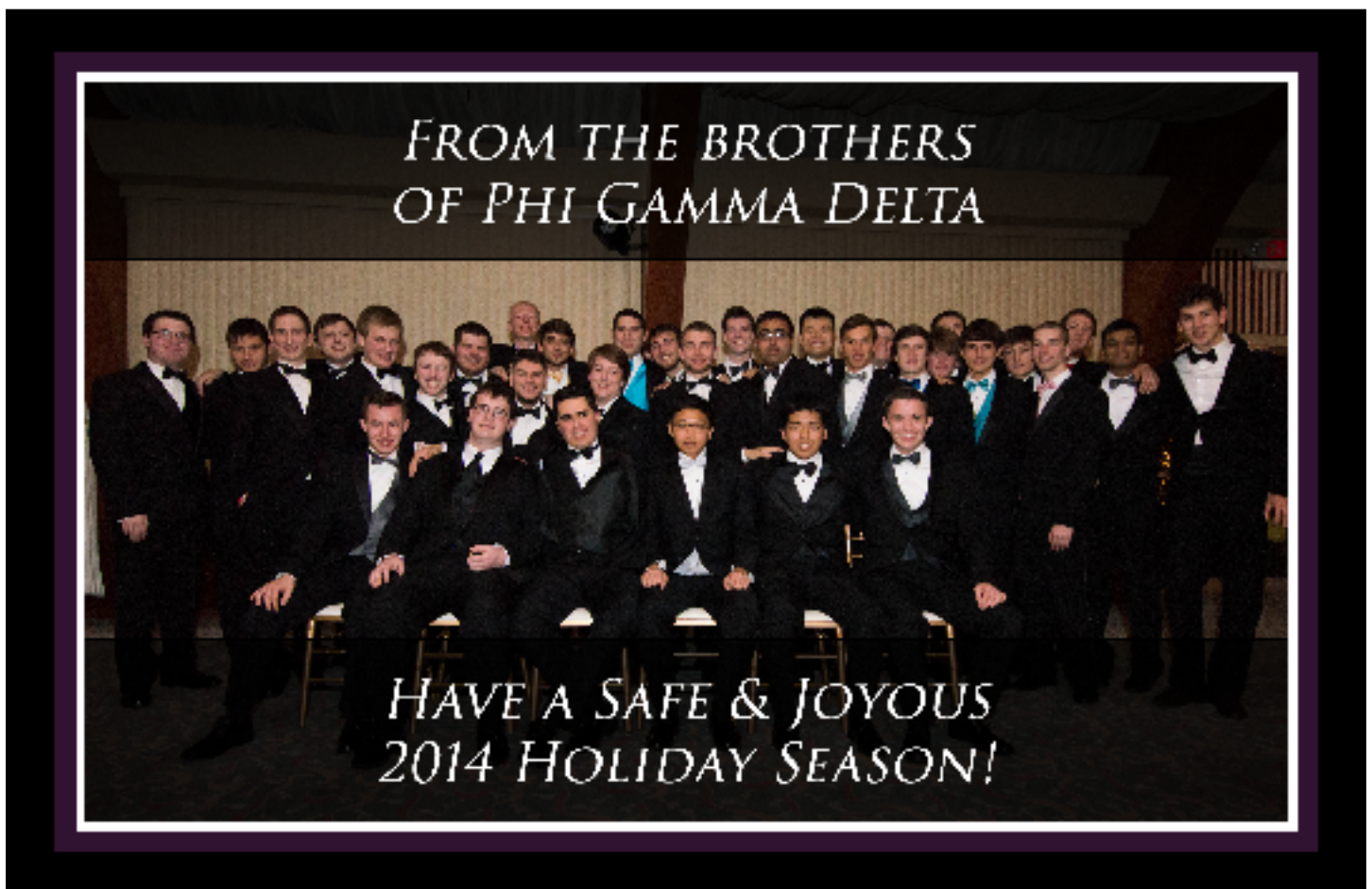
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## *Holiday Cards*

We're starting a new tradition of sending out Tau Nu Phi Gamma Delta holiday cards to the surrounding businesses & friends of the chapter. We've already received a few cards from kind locals like Edna Wells, so it's natural we extend this gesture of friendship to our new neighbors.

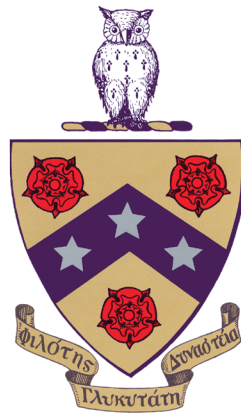


The cards are two-sided 5x7 matte paper. The top of the card is black with white and purple trim with "Happy Holidays" in white text, while the inside is blank white (for personal notes) on the top with the above graphic on the bottom. The back is white with a small graphic of our seal in the center. We delivered these in person the week before Christmas with candy canes to very positive feedback from the community. Looking forward to doing this again next year!

## Recognition

Many thanks to the generous graduate brothers who have contributed to the Tau Nu chapter of Phi Gamma Delta. Without your hard work and generosity, especially considering the work of the House Corporation, neither this article nor its contents would have been possible.

Additional thanks to Brendan Cazier, Josh Goldberg, Altan Kaya Gulen, Tyler Gumina, Chris Leong, Terrance McGovern, Brandon McLearn, Jacob Merson, Spencer Pilcher, Nick Payne, Joseph Pringle, Geoffrey Rosenthal, Brad Schwartz, Nick Seguljic, Zach Shute, Kirk Smith, Ananth Sridhar, Garrett Szafman, Dave Vanderzee, and Zach Vanderzee for providing content inception, writing, and editing services.



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