



310 N. BISHOP HAPPENINGS

Gamma Kappa of Theta Chi Alumni Newsletter

President's Report



Hello brothers! It's springtime in Oxford and it's time for another update from the house corporation. Well, in full transparency, it's passed time. I owed you an update in the Fall and I was just unable to get it pulled together. My apologies! I assure you, though, that the house corporation has been hard at work over the past year, and the chapter continues to thrive. As a house corporation, we have made significant progress toward a whole home renovation, laying a lot of the necessary groundwork for a project that, some say, is "50 years overdue!"

However, house corp optimism is tempered with the news that our treasurer of the past 5 years, Wesley J. Ernst ('06), is resigning at the end of the fiscal year (6/30/2024). Wes has served the role immeasurably well, growing the house bank account 330% since he took office! He has kept impeccable records, crafted shrewd budgets, and garnered a reputation on behalf of the chapter for timely payment of invoices. This chapter and house corporation may well not exist today without the astounding work of Wes Ernst.

With that said, the house corporation cannot continue on without a treasurer. Wes guided the house corporation through what we've affectionately called "phase 1" of the chapter resurrection process— achieving financial stability. This has been completed. "Phase 2" - the forward thinking part of the process – is ready to begin, however we are in desperate need of a brother to step forward and own this treasurer role. Wes would be happy to help transition the duties to the next treasurer, and this brother will be well-supported by the rest of the house corporation board. This is the biggest need area at present, please consider volunteering for this role.

Live In Advisor Update

Where has the year gone? It feels like just yesterday that I (Ladonna) was looking with great anticipation at the guys once again converging on the house and the flurry of move-in. We are just days from move-out and our house has a whole different kind of energy. We vacillate between end-of-year activities and the solemn seriousness of exams.

The Sophomores ("the 23's") have already started thinking about move-out, but many don't want to leave. I have come to expect the cicada like buzz April brings: "Can we stay another year?" "Do we have to move out?" "Please, please don't talk about move-out yet; I'm just not ready for that." I assure they will always be welcome. I will be here and they can come back anytime.

The Freshmen ("the 24's") are simply at high frequency vibrations –excited to be done with the dorms. Anticipating their move-in in August and excited to continue to build on the legacy of those before them. They voice their determination that "next year will be the best year ever."

It is easy to hear them banter around the phrase "it will be the best year ever" and feel a bit jaded. This is closing the end of my second year as advisor, and this is a phrase that I hear so often that it almost becomes a mantra. I wonder if they will put real effort into that phrase they seem to carelessly toss around. Even in my bemusement I take their vows "to do better next year" seriously. I tell them the only thing standing in the way of their success is them. Their efforts, or lack thereof; their enthusiasm, will it be maintained and carried through out the year or will it wither when things get challenging in November or even February as we try to ride out the winter doldrums. I always cast off my skepticism and give them the benefit of the doubt they deserve.

When I agreed in August 2022 to accept the role of advisor, I never expected change to be a straight upward trajectory. We knew, though, that change was inevitable, and had to be dynamic and dramatic. It had to be measurable and it had to be obtainable.

Live-In Advisor Update Continued...

I was fully aware that we were not going to rocket to the moon in one giant blast but that it would be micro steps, small movements of the needle and change would most likely only be measured upon reflection. During the midst of the school year, change may not even be perceivable.

Coming into the 2023-2024 academic year, I wasn't sure what to expect. Most of the 23's executive board was not local (as in not within Ohio) as the 22's board had been. I facilitated several Zoom meetings throughout the summer with the incoming board in an effort to lay clear expectations and set them up for the best chance of success. At the end of the day, I still wasn't sure what to expect.

We got moved in, the school year launched and I repeatedly remarked to Kyle that I was "holding my breath". I'd tell him "lets get though this semester then I will have a better feel for it." Oddly enough, it felt like things were going too well, and that if I acknowledged it, the bottom would fall out. I was actually astonished at how much cleaner the halls, their rooms, the bathrooms and hang out areas were kept. This continued through the entire year! Not one time did I go upstairs and find unmanageable amounts of trash and/or mess. An improvised pickle ball court was set up on the first floor. I even saw that the Juniors were coming over and hanging out, playing pickle ball and as a whole there was a shift. We continued into the fall just as we had been at the end of May, 2023 but a 2.0 more improved version.

Winter Break ended and we came roaring back with the flurry of Rush. One Friday night about 3-4 weeks into the semester I left about 8 pm to have dinner with friends. As I was leaving I noticed first floor was being scoured and cleaned within an inch of its life. I started to wonder if there would be any flooring left once they had finished the scrubbing. Being nosy I asked: "What was going on, why are we so fanatically cleaning?" "Poker" was the reply. Poker? Yes, the party chair said we are having a chapter wide poker game. I returned several hours later, they were still playing. I was told it was the last round of a "winner take all" game. Looking around I saw a good mix of the 23's, 24's and even the newly minted 25's. I have to say I was very proud of them. I was even more proud when Saturday (the next day) they were up at 10am cleaning up the residual mess that had remained once the game was over and the stakes were won. That was the first poker night here this semester, but not the last. On Friday nights I often find impromptu pop-up poker games.

This semester has also brought several other unexpected surprises. Almost the entire house skipped the meal plans this semester and cooked here. They exhibited a level of responsibility I wasn't at all expecting. They established a rotation where 2-3 of them at a time would meal prep for the week together. These groups would go in at the designated times, get their meal prep done, get the kitchen cleaned up (including dishes) and have it ready to go for the next group. Often, I would wander down, hang out in the kitchen as they cooked and chat with them. I could tell what day of the week it was by the smells coming from the kitchen. (It seems each of the groups have a favorite dish/cuisine that they preferred.) The smells would waft into my apartment and surprisingly it smelled (and looked) quiet tasty.

I am so impressed at how this year has turned out so far. We definitely are ahead of where I expected us to be. Understand I am still not saying that we never have missteps, never make mistakes and are always perfect. We have had our ups and downs, but overall achieved great positive momentum. I don't expect perfection, I asked for solid continued improvement. I continue to remind them that I don't expect them to adult like me, I just need them to adult to their highest level.

As we say farewell to this year, already looking towards next year, I can honestly say that I can't wait to see what the next year brings us.

**OX GAMMA KAPPA
THETA CHI**

ON-SITE ADVISOR
SINCE AUG, 2022

*LaDonna Rae
Taylor*

513-601-1214

310 Bishop, 1A
Oxford, OH 45056

OxGammaKappaAdvisor@gmail.com

House Improvement

The presence of the same adult live-in advisor (LaDonna) spanning multiple incoming classes of New Members has helped the chapter turn a new leaf with regard to home ownership. The era of “house destruction and dereliction” have passed. The guys continue to have parties and make plenty of trash, the main difference now, though, is that they clean up in a timely fashion (LaDonna will not tolerate it any other way!).

The changing culture of the chapter over the last two years, coupled with sound fiscal stewardship and the debt-free nature of the property, has led the house corporation to begin looking to the future at 310 N. Bishop Street. This year marks 53 years since our fraternity house became the cornerstone of our shared experiences. It is with great excitement that we announce our plans to embark on a renovation endeavor. This renovation is long overdue - a bold step forward to ensure that Gamma Kappa continues to serve as a beacon of brotherhood for generations to come. The feasibility study conducted over the past two months has shown us that while we face challenges, our potential for success is boundless with the collective effort of our alumni. However, our current alumni engagement levels show that we are in dire need of reconnecting with many of you.

Join Us! We invite you to join us in helping breathe new life into Gamma Kappa and ensure it remains a place where the values of Theta Chi can flourish. We are poised to launch this campaign within the next 6 months, but we can only succeed with your active participation. Specifically, we will need brothers to volunteer to help lead/organize/run the capital campaign. This is ideally a separate group of brothers from those currently serving on the house corporation to prevent any conflict of interest. These duties, in collaboration with a fundraising firm, will include: alumni outreach, data collation, and possibly hosting regional social functions. The house corporation will continue to run the day-to-day operations of the chapter, and provide general project oversight.

Additionally, the next step in the process would be to explore financing options. We have had had initial conversations with a mortgage broker, however there are very likely many finance-savvy alumni within the brotherhood that could help us create a pro forma to shop for a construction to permanent loan. This service, if kept in-house, could save the chapter as much as \$50,000! Please let us know if this is part of your skillset.

[Please click here if you are interested in serving on the Capital Campaign Committee](#)



Initial mockups of proposed new house at 310 N. Bishop St.

Chapter Update

Gamma Kappa continues to remain a strong, and competitive chapter on Miami's campus. The chapter has 104 active members, making it the 8th largest of Miami's 24 fraternities.

Recruitment– The Gamma Kappa chapter recently initiated 28 new members, one of the largest classes on campus and thus qualifying for the *Phil S. Randall Success in Recruitment* Award from IHQ.

Philanthropy– Last semester, Gamma Kappa co-hosted “The Frozen Four” (mud hockey tournament), and raised \$8,000 to benefit homeless veterans. This semester, the chapter co-hosted a Flag Football tournament that raised over \$2,000 for [CancerFree KIDS!](#)



Academics– The chapter has continued to meet regularly with, and be mentored by Farmer School of Business professor, Rocco Manzo. Through Rocco's mentorship, the chapter concluded the last semester with a cumulative GPA of 3.19.

Social– Gamma Kappa's social prowess has never been disputed (see below), Galaxy Party, a Christmas party, and of course, Champagne Brunch remain highlights on the social calendar.



The Helping Hand Award

To acknowledge those alumni that go above and beyond in bettering the chapter experience. The *Gamma Kappa Alumni Helping Hand Award* will go to 1-2 alumni bi-annually to acknowledge their generosity and embodiment of the fraternal spirit.



The alumni that has contributed most significantly this past semester, and thus very deserving of *The Gamma Kappa Alumni Helping Hand Award*, is brother **Branden Piks ('16)**.



Branden is an architect and interior designer, Founder of [Cradle Design Studio](#), and one of Gamma Kappa's very own. Branden has been instrumental in influencing the exterior elevations for the proposed house renovation (as seen on the previous page), and has been retained as co-architect on the project! Branden's knowledge of the chapter's culture and needs will be essential to the design and layout of the interior.

Previous Winners:

- Spring 2023: Alex Warner ('71)
- Fall 2022: Gary Moore ('02)
- Spring 2022: Chris Norman ('75) and Steve Davis ('74)
- Fall 2021: John Newell ('03) and the rest of the CAB



Call to action:

I. **We need alumni volunteers!** There are many opportunities (with varying time commitments) to get involved. We need more Board Members for the House Corporation and the Chapter Advisory Board. We would like to have a diverse set of alumni on these boards, grads from the past 5 years as well as those from 50 years ago (and everything in between).

There are also opportunities for web design/updating, social media management, fundraising events and more! We'll take you for as little as 10 minutes a month!

II. Please update your contact information (including profession, location, and graduation year) on our [constant contact account](#). This will help us begin to organize our vast alumni network!

III. Forward this on to more Gamma Kappa alumni, especially if you did this with previous Gamma Kappa-related communications.

IV. RE-ENGAGE WITH THE CHAPTER!!! We plan to host multiple alumni-centered events in Oxford over the coming months!

- Alumni Weekend Open House at 310 N. Bishop
 - Friday June 7th 5pm-7pm AND Saturday June 8th 2pm-4pm
- Annual House Corporation Board of Directors Meeting (Saturday, September 14th)
 - All Gamma Kappa alumni are invited to attend ([RSVP](#))
 - Will discuss current chapter progress, and future renovation plans
- Tailgate for Miami/UC football game (September 14th, 2025)





A drawing of the original Gamma Kappa Theta Chi house

Gamma Kappa House Corporation of Theta Chi Fraternity Board Members

President:

Kyle Morgan ('06), M.D. ('10, Ross University School of Medicine)
Pediatric anesthesiologist - Pediatric Dental Anesthesia Associates
Memphis, TN

Vice President:

Douglas Grove ('06), CPA
Corporate Tax Manager- AptarGroup, Inc.
Libertyville, IL

Treasurer:

Wes Ernst ('06), CPA
Director- FORVIS, LLP
Cincinnati, OH

Secretary:

Michael Roney ('08), J.D. ('14, Capital University Law School)
Senior Managing Consultant- FORVIS, LLP
Twinsburg, OH

Officer:

Christian Manos ('18), B.A.
Associate Client Partner- The Wall Street Journal
New York, NY

Officer:

Alex Warner ('71), Masters Educational Administration ('77, Miami University), DC ('86, Logan University)
Retired
Greenville, OH

(Please join us!!!)