

The Grip Newsletter

February 2009

Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity International

www.gammadeltapsi.com

Why I'll See You At The Reunion

Michael Kuch Gamma Alpha #114
Chairman – Board of Trustees

I skipped my High School Reunion on purpose. In the day, I could barely coexist with so many of the same insufferable dopes I went to school with, let alone decades later sharing space and time with them as an adult. Then again, few tears were probably shed at my absence. I am a realist. I get it.

And, yes, for the record, my wife will remind you that I nearly missed the birth of my second child eight years ago but for entirely different reasons. I decided to grab a drive-thru breakfast in route to the hospital and then ended up driving 15 miles past it in a daze.

The wildly anticipated 130th Anniversary of Gamma Delta Psi Fraternity International, I would categorize as one of those exceptionally rare events, which falls into the latter grouping. Miss it, and you will never absolve yourself from the resulting guilt, or the lost opportunity to gather with your Brethren you so affectionately bonded with so many years ago.

Perhaps, not unlike you, I have made the same mistake of considering a close acquaintance as a friend, and just as often a friend as something more – family, a brother – only to feel disappointed by the lack of trust or disillusionment in doing so.

Why bother making plans, coordinating a travel schedule, finding accommodations, calling or emailing a Brother or two beforehand? Heck, that would take effort, and then you would feel lousy after seeing all those smiling faces, familiar voices, and your hand will probably hurt for days after passing the Grip all weekend. You're right, what a hassle. Besides, didn't the new season of "Hey, there's nothing on TV, again, Hon" just start? Almost forgot, you have a 'Bored-to-Hell' association meeting to attend.

Then again, you have probably done everything in Life that you had set your sights set upon as an overly ambitious youth: climbed Mount Everest, trekked to both Poles, discovered a cure for couch-potatoes, married a Super Model. Maybe you're so self-absorbed to worry that your kids look just marginally enough like you not to bother with DNA testing. Now, you're sitting on top of the world; your pedigree dog actually comes when his name is called; you sold your Dotcom start-up for a few hundred million and it's locked down securely in Wall Street. Oops!

Somewhere on the road to Oblivion, your Life turned out 'remarkably' normal, and you couldn't be happier. So, the wife's not a cosmetically-altered bimbo (but she's the most beautiful woman in your eyes and heart), the dog's as dumb as the cat is lazy, your kids have too much of your Gene pool, and the farthest you have been from home is camping up state.

And just about now, you could use an old friend, better yet, a Brother you have not seen in half a life time. A guy you had so much in common with that you practically finished one another's sentences, would always have a drink in line or a story or joke at the ready.

So, why am I going? Well, for one my wife wants me to, and besides, I really regret missing the opportunity to sneer at my old High School mates and was hoping I could make up for it in April.

Share the Brotherhood, and Laugh Out Loud.

IN THIS ISSUE

Why I'll See You At The Reunion

Michael Kuch

Photo Flashback

Beta Alpha 1963-64

Virginia Alumni

Breakfast

Class of 1972

Kirk McClure

1966: A Day in the life of Goat Smith

Johnnie H Smith

The Old Girl

Michael Kuch

Gamma's Most Wanted

Michael Kuch

130/40 Reunion

April 17-19, 2009

Tri-City, Virginia

Quotes

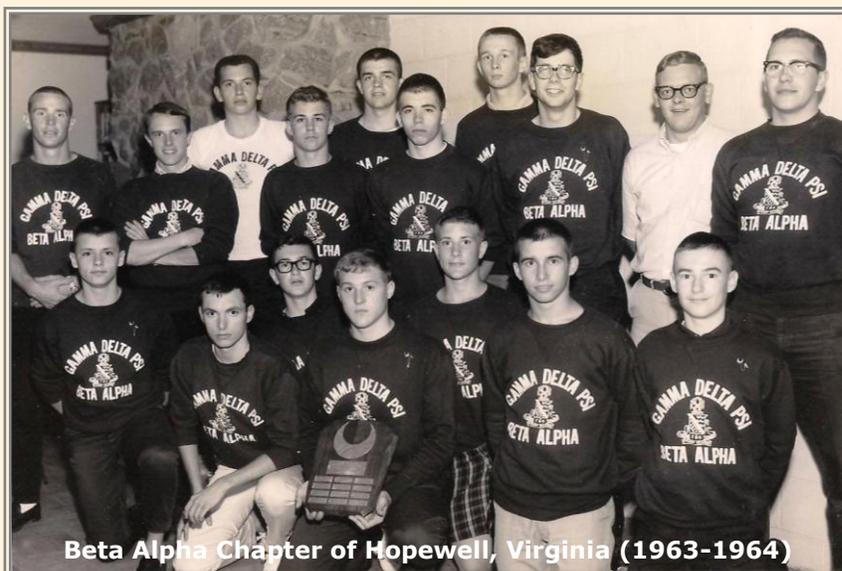
Ernest Hemingway

Victor Hugo



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Photo Flashback

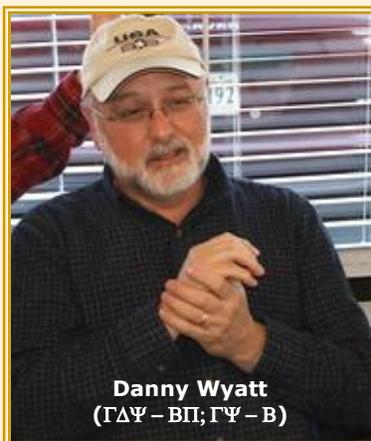


Beta Alpha Chapter of Hopewell, Virginia (1963-1964)



Virginia Alumni Breakfast (Saturday, February 14, 2009)

L - R (Clockwise Seated): Randy Picardat (ΓΔΨ - ΓΕ; ΓΨ - Β), Richard Taylor (ΓΔΨ - ΒΑ), Tony Zevgolts (ΓΔΨ - ΒΑ), Wayne Walton (ΓΔΨ - ΒΑ); (Background Standing): John Slate (ΓΔΨ - ΓΘ)



Danny Wyatt
(ΓΔΨ - ΒΠ; ΓΨ - Β)



Darrell Sears (ΓΔΨ - ΓΘ)

Gamma's Most Wanted

Michael Kuch Gamma Alpha #114

There are several joint Committees presently at work within Gamma Delta Psi and Gamma Psi, endeavoring to rebuild two Great Fraternities in a variety of projects and tasks.

One of the monumental challenges at hand is a shared goal of searching, locating and contacting what we have affectionately termed, "Lost Brothers". Established at last September's Williamsport Conclave, the 'Lost & Found' Committee and the 'Alumni Committee' form two connected but substantially different facets as it pertains to the aforementioned objective.

The L & F – headed by Kevin Stockdale, Bill Schmitt and Bruce Johnstone – routinely seek out Alumni from long-time dormant Chapters; in general terms, everything from our Mother Chapter Alpha to the end of the 1960s.

They have spear-headed a campaign, which has them contacting the Administrations and Reunion Committees of the high schools where Gamma Chapters were founded long ago. Their result to date have been encouraging with many unbelievable 'finds', but just as often filled with news of Alumni Brothers passing, or promising leads gone dry.

The Alumni Committee consists of several Brothers – most Board of Trustee and Board of Adviser members – who pick up where the L & F search concludes; chiefly covering the past four decades. Most of the Brothers we search for through a variety of channels: Internet, telephone directories, networking, etc. range in age from about 30 to 65.

Listed below is a compilation summary of just a few Brothers currently sought after. We have list of hundreds. Your interest and consideration in these matters are of the utmost importance to not only the individuals who give of their time and resources to locate others, but to the Fraternity as we seek to rebuild.

As mentioned several times, one year ago at last February's Brother Education Weekend sponsored by Eta Chapter of Gamma Psi in Farmville, Virginia, I attended the event with 6 email addresses. To-date, that number is approaching 300. With your attention and the smallest of effort that number will grow to unprecedented heights.

Alpha Eta – Tony Pascuzzi

Alpha Phi – Keith Comeau, Dan Gardiner, Eric Maginnis, Dan Schirrali, Geoff Smith, Mac Stoodley

Alpha Chi – Ron Flemming, Dave Flemmington, Dave Myers

Beta Alpha – Dennis Taylor

Beta Zeta – Mark Courtemanche, John Miszuk

Beta Eta – Bill Stewart, Rob Stewart

Beta Xi – Darrell Tufford, Malcolm Allen

Beta Pi – Doug Darby

Beta Phi – John Roe

Beta Tau – Ron Hartman

Beta Psi – Dick Bonfanti (also Gamma Psi – Alpha)

Beta Sigma – Paul Auger, Kirk Bolton, Gary Cromie, Paul Holroyd, Hartmut Pleschke,

Gamma Eta – Stew Sweet

Gamma Theta – David Stephens

The Fraternal Brotherhood of
Gamma Delta Psi + Gamma Psi

Cordially Invites You to Celebrate their
130th + 40th Reunion

Dinner & Social Mixer

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2009

Olde Towne Catering Company (Petersburg, VA)
Catered Buffet Dinner
All-You-Can-Eat (Menu TBA)
Keg compliments of The Fraternity
Cash Bar for Mixed Drinks
\$25.00 per Person

Semi-Formal Dance

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2009

Olde Towne Civic Center (Petersburg, VA)
8 pm until Midnight
Live Music by "**The Unnaturals**"
BYOB (Set-ups Available)
- Advanced Ticket Sales Only -
(No Tickets Sold At Door)
\$15.00 per Person

Gamma Family Picnic

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2009

White Bank Park (Colonial Heights, VA)
Noon until Dark
Food, Beverage (non-alcoholic),
DJ Music by "**Southwind Sound Productions**"
Playground for the kids (Young and Old)
\$5.00 per Person / \$10.00 per Family

RSVP by March 15, 2009 (for tickets)
Request via e-mail to rpicardat@comcast.net
Randy Picardat @ (804) 931-8245

The Old Girl ~ Look Her Up Now & Again

Michael Kuch Gamma Alpha #114

The Great Crescent was there well before you swore an allegiance to her, or even had an inkling of her existence. Later, as an adolescent unsure of yourself or your place in life, she afforded you the luxury of a well-sought identity infinitely beyond your means. Envied by others, resplendent in Greek Letters, a tide of Garnet all around you; Brother, you had it made even if you didn't know it.

You fit into any one of the myriad of social cliques, which high school so conveniently casts its 9th grade students into. You arrived as something akin to a man-child, and perhaps, like me a raw-mouthed, skinny punk with more attitude than substance. Or maybe, you were a hapless underachiever, a geek; or an over-confident, ego-maniacal jock, self-proclaimed BMOOC; an outsider, loner. It didn't matter; Gamma gave you all – and more – than you could ever hope for.

In life, you used her fine name and title on a resume, bathed in her glory within professional circles, at social engagements, certainly to charm and maneuver into the arms of many you sought carnal knowledge.

She taught you how to be tolerant with grace, to understand and accept others of different creeds, races and religions. She was the best friend for life, never asking anything in return.

She was there when you lost a loved one, the moment a girl friend beat down your heart, and she comforted you in solace, and did what a good friend always does. She listened, comforted.

She was the father you wanted when one couldn't be found; the goofy and loveable uncle when you needed one. She was the best bigger brother you could ever dream about.

She cost you nothing, except a little time every once in a while, and the understanding that you both needed each other.

When she grew older, you reconnected and knew that your roles had changed forever. She now needs your help more than you did when you first connected.

Tired, and defenseless against the imminent decline and frantic pace of an ever changing world in which you started your life time affair. Now your turn to give back a little what she gave endlessly.

She discovered the "Fountain of Youth", keeping it secret only when utterly impossible to do so, as she grew closer to termination. She lay alone, stoic, and comatose for more than a decade until the heart and eternal spirit of a few around her, huddled, to again comfort and support her.

She has awakened with optimism and hope that what has afflicted her for so many decades may be cured if those around her care enough to do what they had pledged to do so many years before.

She longs for youth, a return to the days of innocence and learning. To a time where she was a vibrant and relevant teacher, to when others looked up to her with reverence, and a clear yearning to be as she is, do as she teaches.

Precarious in health, she maintains faith for a future, one where her arms are spread wide and far to guide others on to a path that countless others have followed for thirteen decades.

She's not asking you to help her regain the effervescence and vigor she had for life. No, she may be too proud for that. She knows you will come to her side, because she picked you in the beginning and you answered her call then.

So, you return to her, faithfully, with purpose and resolution to make it just as it was back in the day.

She's the reason you ache for her company, and the answer to fill that existed when you left.

A Day in The Life of Goat Smith

Johnnie H Smith Beta Psi

Mid-July 1966:

Up at 6 am, have to be at Mr. Bonfanti's house by 8 am. No car had to use thumb. Arrived 8:05, received 2 black marks. Mr. Bonfanti. Mr., Wayne Bennett, Mr. Danny Clifton, Mr. Mike Dingas, Mr. Bill Malone, Mr. Bill Warren, all waiting for me.

Have breakfast of raw eggs, buttermilk, hot sauce, sour pickle juice all mixed together. It was sooo good. Next jumping jacks, sit ups with pinecone in my pants. Next cut grass, use hand trimmer around the house. Water flowers, as well as the garden. Lunch: Ivory soap, hot sauce, sooo good. Done at Mr. Bonfanti's house.

Next ride to Mr. Malone's house to wash his car. First raw eggs only, thank you, Lord. Mr. Malone and Mr. Bill Warren left to get adult beverages. Sneak in Mr. Malone's house to make-out with his sister Arlene. Oh sh*t got caught. Now, I have to wash Mr. Warren's car, as well.

Next over to Mr. Wayne Bennett's house. His grass needs cutting also. Thankfully, he lets me go when I'm finished.

Next stop Mr. Darrell Sears' house. He is my BIG BROTHER so this should be better. He stresses that I need to learn my history of GDP. Did not pass his first test – 2 more black marks. Passed second test – 1 black mark removed.

Next Mr. Sears' sister gives us a ride to downtown Hopewell. Too many members to report to; members from Beta Psi, Beta Alpha. Mr. Sears tells me to report to Beta Psi members first. Stay downtown all afternoon.

Next home for dinner, Dad wants breakfast for dinner: EGGS, bacon, buttermilk biscuits, sooo good.

Next Cousin Billie Jean picks me up for a trip to Petersburg Kelly's, Shoney's. Meet Mr. Kevin Lacks at Shoney's. In the dining room having a nice break from running around. Mr. Lacks has heard about me making-out with Mr. Malone's sister. He orders me to go make out with Shoney's BIG BOY. Everyone inside laughing and pointing at me.

Next back to Hopewell and the Frontier Room at Crystal Lake. Only two members there. Mr. Mike Dingas and Mr. Joe Jacobs. Mr. Dingas orders me home. No car had to use thumb again. Got a ride with some girls in GPGC.

Oh, by the way Mr. Malone's sister was in GPGC, it was a long ride home.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Quotes

"The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them."
~ Ernest Hemingway

"To love another person is to see the face of God."
~ Victor Hugo

Class of 1972

Kirk McClure Beta Alpha #144

Brothers, as I swiftly approach 55 years of age, I'm often surprised that I still remember so much of "the good old days" so vividly. I, for one, am very proud to have experienced such an important part of a teenager's formative years. As a young man then, "just belonging" was special, but to have been a "Brother" meant quite a lot to this once skinny, goofy and insecure kid.

Let's just say for some of us growing up, home life wasn't like the Cleavers or the Brady Bunch! Being a part of Gamma Delta Psi in high school made me feel like "somebody" and I will always cherish the happy times and the bonds of brotherhood that were established then.

Every time we have a Hopewell Class of 1972 reunion, all the Beta Alpha Brothers have a picture taken. Maybe Kevin and I can come up with a few, but the point is, when a bunch of old Brothers gather together, it reminds me of a memorable line from those carefree days of long ago: "Once a Brother, Always a Brother!"

Now, Kevin and Darrell Sears may have to later correct some the following, but I will try to share a few things from my days as a Goat and beyond. Kevin Stockdale, of course was in my Goat class. The others were David Ameen, David Atkins, Curtis Butterworth, Eddie Clarke, Alan Keener, the late Tommy Lee, Tommy Leftwich and Camm Moore, who was deemed "permanently inactive", not long after induction.

We had two hell nights. The first was at the gravel pits by Shirley Plantation on the James River. The Brothers left us there to find our way back to town. We did manage to hitch a ride once in Prince George and all piled in Ban Rafey's mom's station wagon. Our second hell night was at the site of what is now Mathis Field, next to old Crystal Lake in Hopewell. At the end, they made us run uphill to Brother Dale Kitchen's house, who was Kevin's big brother. We were taken in that night in August of 1968. Later that month, we were inducted at Brother Stan Bishop's, who was Eddie Clarke's Big Brother. My Big Brother was Frank Whipp.

During the next few years, Kevin moved "up north", but a few of us used to make the road trip for weekend visits.

Around the time I was chapter president, Barry Yeates – didn't he have a flat top then? – was VP of the North, and George Longsworth, Gamma Theta, was VP of the South. Our District Deputy was Frank Judkins of Beta Tau.

In 1970, I rode with Wayne Bennett and Dick Bonfanti, both of Beta Psi, along with BA Brothers Butch Carraway and Rocky Glass to the Convention in Niagara Falls, Canadian side of course. Robbie Abernathy and Tommy Lee of BA were there too, and I believe Tommy rode with Kevin and some of his chapter, along with the unforgettable Darrell Sears, also of Beta Psi.

As we busy ourselves tracking brothers down, preparing for our anniversary and just keeping up with the joys, trials and tribulations of our everyday lives, please take a moment to reflect on this:

Remember those Brothers we loved and lost along the way. Remember what it was like to wear that goat hat and bow tie. How we proudly wore that beautiful gold crescent pin, especially with that gold BA at the end of the tiny chain. Remember proudly wearing the colors of Garnet and Silver on our windbreakers and sweatshirts and all the games, dances and fraternity - sorority functions we all went to wearing? It meant a lot to be a Brother in Gamma Delta Psi then didn't it?

It still does to me!