
PSI THETA NEWS

Fall 2020



New name for the newsletter?

The newsletter has been called the Gamma Iota News for as long as anyone remembers, but lately some trustees have asked why? Psi Theta Nu was our original name and is now our corporate name yet some brothers only vaguely know what PTN is. So, this is the start of something fresh. Also, did you enjoy reading this newsletter? Please let us know what you think. Email your feedback or an emoji at psithetanu@gmail.com.

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SAVE THE DATE - June 5, 2021

ANNUAL CORPORATION MEETING

Maybe in person, definitely on Zoom

Just Another Brick in the Walk.

by Paul Exner '71

There are 53 commemorative bricks currently installed in the Institute Road walkway. There's room for many more at \$250 each - and God knows we could use the money. The inspiration of the donors for the bricks varies over a wide range. Some simply apply their name and class designation; others want to remember a deceased Gamma Iota friend, Brother, or family member. Some want to be humorous; some want to send a serious message to future Brothers. Campus Cooks has purchased 3 bricks to help solidify its relationship with the Chapter. One anonymously donated brick resurfaces a five decades-old mystery. Two alumni have dedicated bricks to their dads. I thought that these latter two stories told here might inspire others to also dedicate bricks. The first of these stories is below.



IN MEMORY OF: M/M MANUEL MEDEIROS

by *Paul Medeiros '70 and Bill Medeiros '72*

Our parents were born in the early 20th century and belonged to large families. Our grandparents (with the exception of our mother's mother) were immigrants from the Azores and money was hard to come by. Our dad was born in New Bedford and I've heard stories of him, as a child, working in the textile mills, cleaning the floor or doing whatever was necessary. Apparently our dad was a promising student, but his parents thought it was more important that he work and help support the family. Family lore has it that a school

official visited our grandparents to try and convince them to keep him in school, but he was unsuccessful in doing so. I believe dad's formal education ended at about the 8th grade and I'm guessing this had a profound effect on him. At some point the family moved to Cape Cod, where our mother's family already resided. Dad's father passed away when dad was about 17 and as the oldest son, he assumed a heavy responsibility in a family of five kids. He found his vocation as a carpenter, as his father did before him.

My parents were married in the early 1930's, at the beginning of the Depression. They made ends meet by raising strawberries and, of course, carpentry work, when available. The construction of the Bourne Bridge in the middle 1930's provided one opportunity, with Dad working on the concrete formwork. Dad was a little too old for World War II, so he was part of the civilian workforce constructing barracks or whatever facilities were needed for the war effort.

After the war was over, Dad decided to go out on his own and he became a very successful builder in the Upper Cape area. Always being interested in education, he was on the Falmouth School Committee and School Building Needs Committee for several years. For both our parents, providing an education for their kids was of paramount importance. I can still hear Dad say "Get an education so you don't have to work as hard as I have!". They were very proud that Bill, I and our sister Joan went to college. Having that brick on the sidewalk at Sigma Pi is one small way of saying "Look Dad - I got an education and I didn't work as hard as you did!" (Editor's note: Bill Medeiros is a current trustee of PTN.)

From the Archive - 1963

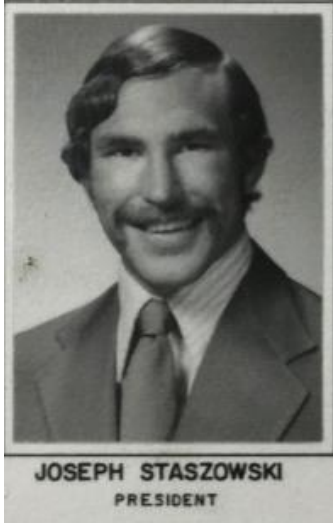
Taken at the original PTN house on Hackfeld Road, likely at the IFC Ball weekend, Nov/Dec 1963. Miss PTN, center front row, is Muriel (the future Mrs. Ken Brown), on the far left front row is Betty, who married brother Jeff Cheyne. On the far right front row is Dorothy, who married brother Joe Oswald. According to Muriel several of the girls stayed next door at the Mauros' who was the unofficial housemother/chaperone. Ken, Jeff and Joe can be found in the 1963 Sigma Pi composite. Can anyone help name the remaining ladies? Many thanks to Muriel and Ken Brown for their help in making these pictures come to life. They are the couple in the second picture.





PTN President's Update

Joe Staszowski '73



I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and in good spirits despite all that is going on.

Things have certainly changed since our last newsletter. Covid related issues are having a significant impact on everything as you can read in the high-level summary below. Despite all that has occurred, PTN remains in reasonable financial condition.

As we discussed during our first-ever “virtual” annual meeting in May, many house upgrades have been completed over the last five years, but the house is showing its age. Take a virtual house tour by [Clicking Here](#) and view the rush tour video **RUSH GOES VIRTUAL** below. Also, the annual meeting material ([Click Here](#)) discusses what maintenance items are needed down the road.

At the annual meeting, Doug Campbell 92', Sam Cuscovitch 72', Will Rose 73', Todd Becker 86', Ken Johnson 73' and Bill Medeiros 72' were elected to trustee positions. Their background information is on the PTN Website, so [Click Here](#) to meet the Trustees.

WPI has scheduled Alumni Weekend for June 3-6. Hopefully Covid does not impact it again this year. If it goes forward, our annual meeting will be June 5 with a zoom connection for those who can't attend in person. Mark your calendar, especially for those classes ending in 0, 1, 5 and 6.

PTN would welcome any suggestions, input or assistance you might offer. Email us at psithetanu@gmail.com. If you have some time, we would value your help on committees or as a trustee. No need to attend in person, virtual attendance is fine.

Stay safe,

Joe

How Covid has impacted WPI, Sigma Pi and PTN

In Mid-March, **WPI delayed the start of D term**, closed the campus and held all classes online. Alumni weekend 2020 was postponed and will occur June 3-6, 2021 with reunions for classes ending in 0, 1, 5 and 6 (Covid permitting).

WPI closed their dorms and recommended fraternity/ sorority members not return to Worcester for D term. While PTN has an annual lease with the Executive Council (EC), we strongly recommended that brothers without extenuating circumstances not return to the house for D term.

A few brothers did return for D Term. They developed a COVID-19 safety protocol which helped them to make it through without a Covid case.

WPI rebated board fees to those students living in dorms (this may have been covered by the CARES Act). Even though most of PTN's expenses are fixed (mortgage, insurance, inspection fees, etc), the trustees rebated a portion of the brother's D term rent.

Based on PTN's **reduced revenue** for D term, the possibility of remote classes for A&B term (2020) and potentially C&D term (2021), the trustees went into cash conservation mode deferring all non-emergency maintenance and eliminating any non-essential budget expenses. We also asked and received a six months deferral of our mortgage payment from the bank (enabled by the CARES act). These actions strengthened our balance sheet to create a safety net to cover potential short term revenue shortfalls, but extended our mortgages by 6 months.

In June, **WPI required** each fraternity/ sorority to develop a fall reopening plan focused on safe operation in a Covid environment. These plans included things like no guests or parties in the house, wearing masks in the house, one way stairways, limited people in the second floor bathrooms at one time, daily disinfecting, social distance seating in the mess hall and conference room, closing the projector room for general use, removing benches from the front porch and special kitchen arrangements, just to name a few provisions in the plan. (What a change to the college experience.)

Covid safety issues caused some brothers who were going to live in the house A&B term to change their plans to full distance learning from home. In addition, daily cleaning costs, a reserve for emergency deep cleaning and a significant SP national dues increase increased the undergraduates' fee significantly. Based on these issues, the EC asked for, and the trustees approved, an additional rent reduction for A&B term.

The **reopening plan** was difficult to stomach for the brothers, but they understand it must be done. No positive cases but one quarantine has occurred at the house so far. WPI has been doing well but had an increase in cases the last few weeks. Beginning Nov 17 through at least Nov. 30, WPI will further tighten its

campus-related Covid operating procedures. Students continue to be tested several times each week and reporting results daily. [Click Here](#) for the testing details. More WPI Covid related information can be found at WPI's FAQ by [Clicking Here](#).

Rush will mostly be virtual which could cause fraternity/ sorority pledge classes to be lower than anticipated. Hopefully this won't lead to fewer brothers living in the house in 2021/ 2022, but only time will tell.

PTN House Manager's Update

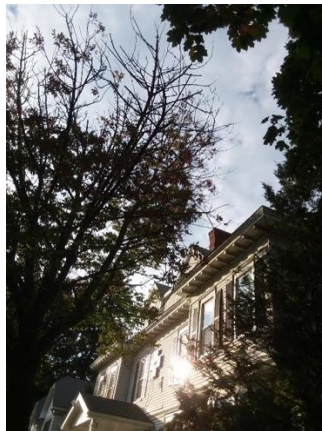
by Lorri Byrne '73



Thanks to the work of several brothers, especially Sam Cuscovich, Joe Staszowski, Paul Exner, Craig Lazenby, and Ken Johnson, we have a working report of existing and proposed conditions, repairs, and projects, with estimated costs and depreciation.

We can now better plan for the ongoing maintenance of our House. Shown are some of our current priorities:

1. **Landscaping.** There are three trees to be removed and several trees and shrubs to be trimmed, plus adding a bed of low-maintenance shrubs along the ramp on City side. We have prices of about \$2000 for all the work. We would like to get this done this fall, ASAP.



2. **Find and repair leaks.** The walls in the Dining Room are affected by leaks from above. There are noticeable issues with the dormers and the siding. This is the next major project and should be done soon. The source of the leaks must be determined and fixed before repairs to the rooms below can be made.



3. **City side kitchen access.** Chef Sean reported that the back stairs are dangerous. The concrete steps are sloped away from the building, and the rise is very different between steps. As he says, "The first step is a Wow!" Also, the steps are frequently icy because of dripping from above. The rise and run of the steps need to be changed. While fixing the steps, the broken slate around the adjoining party room door should be removed and the area leveled.



4. **Structural Engineer assessment of stairs and bedrooms.** Before we make repairs, we would like to have a professional assessment of the main stairways, which have been pulling away from the fire wall for many years. Also, the brothers have made many, many changes to the walls, doors and ceilings of the various

bedrooms. A basic walk-through should tell us if we have any major issues to be addressed. If we can get a team of volunteer structural engineers, it will be done quickly.



For questions, comments or volunteers, please contact Lorri Byrne at lorricb@verizon.net.

Structural Engineer Needed

If anyone knows of a fellow brother who might be a professional structural engineer who can evaluate our staircase issue please contact Lorri, the PTN house manager, at lorricb@verizon.net.

ZOOM REUNION FOR YOUR CLASS?

SPGI (Sigma Pi Gamma Iota) has an alum who can provide the use of his Zoom account if you would like to gather your class for a Zoom reunion. If interested please contact Trustee Todd Becker at tbecker113@gmail.com.

PTN Treasurer's Update

by Sam Cuscovitch '72



PTN ended the 3Q 2020 in very reasonable financial shape. But like all Greek organizations nationally, our immediate challenge is to artfully navigate the Covid waters. In the Spring, when students were sent home, PTN agreed on a \$20,000 rent concession. This was followed up with an \$8,000 rent concession this Fall when a few chapter members over the summer decided not to return to campus. Worst case is the "no rental" scenario, one where students are sent home for a lengthy period.

We spend a lot of time performing contingency planning should the Covid era be prolonged. On the other hand, this year PTN has collected \$138,000 in rent, is very near to making a target of \$20,000 in alumni donations, and reduced or deferred expenses to shore up our reserves and plan for capital expenditures (CapEx*) for needed repair & upgrades.

Under the CARES Act, PTN also received a six-month loan deferral from TD Bank, which holds 3 of our mortgages totaling \$450,000. A 2019 appraisal of the property listed its value at \$840,000, higher than its value as a residential property due to its income generation. We are looking to refinance and consolidate the 3 loans, each with different maturity dates, to one loan with longer maturity and lower interest rate. This would reduce short-term risks associate with Covid and possibly result in savings. Even with our 3 mortgages, PTN is generating cash.

If not for Covid, PTN's financial picture would obviously be stronger. Since July, the team has made a concerted effort to identify a comprehensive list of CapEx projects, both short & long-term. PTN's rents are strong because of Gamma Iota's member count which lends itself to a per member rental rate at or slightly below comparable rents at other houses.

To help the team plan both for 2021 budget as well as strategically, an integrated financial model has been developed to encapsulate nearly 40 CapEx items or projects, our 3 TD Banks loans, normal spending, 20 year projections and a host of "What If" parameters. With its many moving parts, we can analyze many possible scenarios. This tool can provide PTN a roadmap for yearly budgeting and setting strategy.

* **Capital expenditures (CapEx)** are funds used by a company to acquire, upgrade, and maintain physical assets such as property, plants, buildings, technology, or equipment

PTN VP/Fundraising Update

by Harry Kasparian '73



Thank you to our Alumni donors for your generosity over the past year. We are 85% of our 2019-2020 annual campaign goal with contributions thus far totaling \$17,000 towards our goal of \$20,000.

Alumni giving has enabled us to manage through planned capital improvements and address some unplanned repairs to our Chapter House.

With your contributions we were able to complete a long overdue floor-to-ceiling \$175,000 renovation of our 1970's era kitchen including replacement of our 45-year-old stove and greasy (fire hazard) ventilation system!

However, there's more to be done as we continue to restore our Chapter House after years of wear and tear and more. Funds raised from our next campaign appeal is earmarked for the restoration of the first-floor City Side and the dining area. Built in 1900, and largely untouched over the past 120 years, the woodwork, walls, and hardwood floors have taken a beating by all of us. The first floor is a reflection in our pride in our house and what the undergraduate brothers, returning alumni, pledge candidates and guests see when they walk in the door.

I ask that you please consider donating so that we can plan to start this important project in the coming months. Thanks very much for your consideration and we look forward to seeing you at the House in the Spring at WPI's Alumni weekend.



Active President's Update

by Sage Lucas Falsarella Guerreiro '21



Undergraduate Report: The academic year of 2020/2021 began in an unprecedented way. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, WPI opened its campus with a hybrid system for classes, with in-person and online classes in place. Additionally, the school set several new guidelines to maintain the safety of its students.

The chapter, with great help from PTN and guidance from WPI, created its own protocols to address the pandemic. Today, about 32 brothers live in the house. Brothers wear masks and stay socially distanced in all common areas of the house. Additional cleaning by the brothers has kept the house in great shape as well. Despite the pandemic the chapter and the house have continued to operate and maintain a presence on campus.

Brothers have had a continuous involvement as leaders of the WPI community. The chapter has leaders in the Interfraternity Council and Student Government. Additionally, many brothers hold mentorship positions for younger students, such as Resident Advisors and Community advisors. Brothers are also involved in cultural clubs. These leaders on campus have been working overtime to adapt to the new reality of the pandemic and have played a large role in keeping the WPI community safe.

While the reality today is much different than what it was year ago, the chapter has continued to perform. Instead of large fundraising and community service events, brothers are doing park clean-ups in small groups and online tutoring to give back to the community. We have continued to have events with different organizations, although the events are online. For example, a few weeks ago, brothers worked with a sorority to make dog toys and donate them to a shelter. Additionally, the Gamma Iota Chapter has earned the highest number of Standards of Excellence points in the past year in comparison to other chapters nation-wide. This is a metric used by the national organization to determine how well chapters are performing.

Although the social life around the house is not the same. Brothers have found time to focus on interactions in smaller groups. Much of what the chapter does today is online. Meetings, both for the house and individual committees, are through video calls. Also, Brothers watch movies and play games together through online software.



Brothers wearing their new rush shirts in front of the house

As of right now there is a lot of uncertainty. This time of the year marks the beginning of rush and the election of new officers for the house. Rush will be mostly online, regardless, brothers are already seeing some interest from students. Additionally, we have seen brothers already stepping up to positions of leadership in the house. While we are not sure what the future holds, this semester so far has proven how the brotherhood can adapt and staying together in trying times. Moving forward I have faith that the chapter will continue to thrive, despite the circumstances that surround us.



Brothers cleaning up Elm Park



Brothers Hiking

Visit our chapter website at the [Sigma Pi Gamma Iota Home Page](#)

RUSH 2020 Goes Virtual

Check out the link below to see the video created by the chapter to replace the traditional house tour for prospective members. It's really awesome - we promise you'll enjoy it!

[Click here to view the 2020 Rush Video](#)

New Campus Building

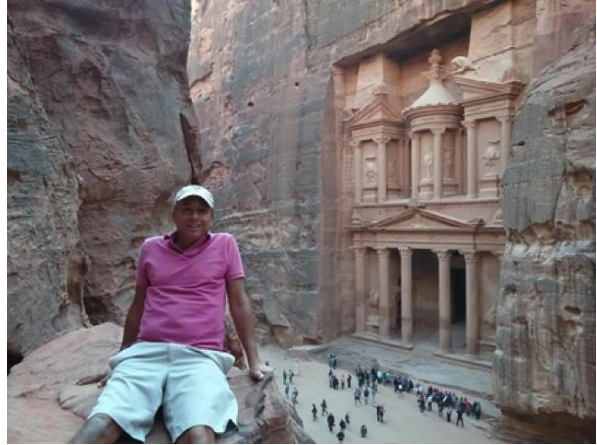
Walking to campus just isn't the same now that the new academic building is going up on the hill next to Gordon Library. (l) planned design; (r) current construction.



***** CLASS NOTES *****

1975 - Sidney Formal - Greetings from Northern Virginia. I retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ten years ago. My job allowed me the opportunity to travel to all U.S. ports and harbors. I have traveled internationally a great deal since my retirement; visiting well over 50 countries, many on cruise ships. My favorite destination is Petra.

I have two sons that I visit frequently - Elliot in Oslo, Norway and Seth in San Diego. My first grandchild was born in mid-September 2020.



1975 - Harry Danberg - Living in Oregon since 1990. Retired on 8/31/2019. Looking to spend my time with Stephanie traveling and seeing the world.



1975 - Glenn Ekwall - I've been pretty much out of touch since I moved out of New England right after graduation. I worked at UOP (Petroleum and Petrochemical processing company) for 41 years, the last 25 as manager of our pilot plant operations. I was blessed to meet my wife, Della, in 1978 and we were married for 37 years before her death due to cancer in 2016. I retired from UOP in 2017. Right now I live with my daughter in the Chicago area along with her husband and two children. Between spending time with the kids, and being active in my church (along with an occasional round of golf), I'm keeping pretty busy. Fraternaly yours, Glenn (Schlauf)

Late-80s Classes - In January Kris Rosado hosted a fun get together at his ski house in Maine. Over twenty brothers enjoyed fellowship, food, drink, foosball and the brutal Maine cold. Some of those attending include Dan Desruisseaux, Chris Menard, Dwight Morse, Hank Eppich, Jeff Carter, Decio Mendes, Paul Rocheleau, Ken Colby, Chris Barry, Keith Noe, Todd Becker, Mike Plourde, Derek Heard, and Glenn Butler.

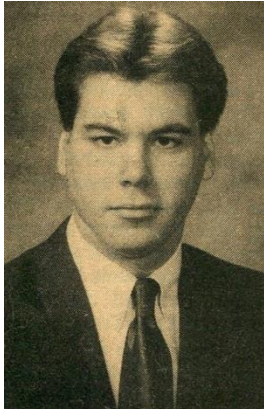




1992 - Dave Wurts ('92) is now 23 years into a Mechanical Engineering career with Lockheed Martin Space in Littleton, CO. Dave was also fortunate enough to telework the past few winters from his house in Willow, Alaska with his wife and team of 15-20 sled dogs in order to enjoy mushing the winter trails.



1993 Michael "Zippo" C. Zarozinski. 1971 - 2019



Born on August 11, 1971 and passed away on December 9, 2019. Zippo to some of his fraternity brothers, he graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in 1993, with a bachelor's degree in computer science. He was a senior software engineer at the Center for Intelligent Information Retrieval (CIIR) at the College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Mike valued his undergraduate years as an active undergraduate brother. He was very supportive of our efforts to maintain the house as a place for others that followed to have the same positive experiences.

Zippo's obituary can be found by [Clicking Here](#)

2013 - Brother David Magnano - Structural Engineer

My name is David, but everyone calls me Mango because of my last name. After graduating in 2013 with a BS in Civil Engineering, I worked briefly as a contractor for National Grid before moving to my current company, Pare Corporation. I've been at Pare for over five years, and in that time have worked on a wide variety of projects from as small as minor renovations or existing condition assessments, all the way to large projects such as the design of several new fire stations. My largest project to date is working as a lead designer on the new East Providence High School.

Outside of work, I just passed the one-year mark in my first home and split my free time (what little I have) between home improvements and volunteering as the Province Archon for Sigma Pi in New England. As a volunteer for the fraternity, I am working to build up the various alumni boards and volunteer network. With the pandemic moving most communication to virtual, we are accepting volunteers from all over and appreciate any input we can get from our alumni. If you are interested in volunteering please reach out to me at newpa@sigmapi.org. I hope to see you all at the next homecoming or clam bake we are able to have in person once gatherings of this size are allowed again.

I hope you and yours are all healthy, happy, and safe during these trying times.

Faternally,

David "Mango" Magnano

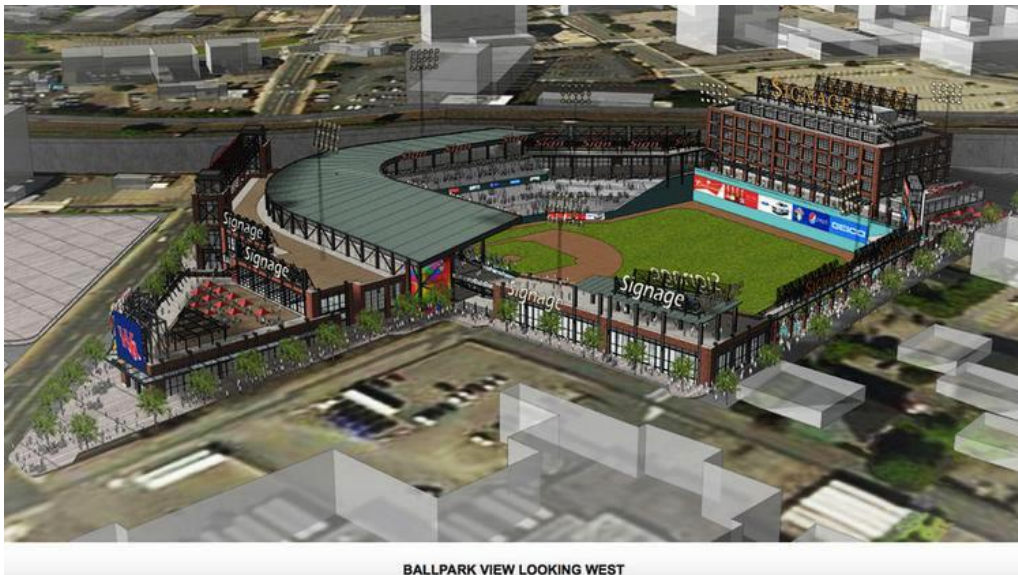
PTN Website

www.psithetanu.org

The [PTN website](http://www.psithetanu.org) continues to grow in content. You can view and add photos from the past, find upcoming events, past and current newsletters, member directory with contact information, class notes, and make donations. We encourage you to check it out.

Polar Park Progress

In case you haven't heard, the Red Sox triple A team is moving from Pawtucket RI to Worcester, and a new stadium is being built. In spite of the temporary halt in construction due to the virus, it is predicted that Polar Park will be ready to host the Worcester Red Sox for the beginning of the season in April 2021. We plan to have a Sigma Pi Alumni event at the Park, hopefully in 2021. Stay tuned!



Polar Park Plan (Top) and Current Construction (Bottom)



Let us know what you think. We can be reached at psithetanu@gmail.com or

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