

THE ALPHA PILOT

SUMMER 2024

Alpha Pi Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at the University of Wisconsin

Providing for the Brotherhood

KITCHEN UPDATES AND A NEW MEAL PROGRAM

With an eye toward 2026 and our 100th anniversary, Beta Building Association decided something was missing. The tradition of sitting down over dinner with your brothers was becoming a distant memory. Drop-off meals were quickly planned and dropped altogether. Cooking in the kitchen was generally done in small groups with the stove often left on and the dishes seldom cleaned.

HOME COOKING RETURNS

With heavy chapter input, BBA set out to bring back “home cooking” and dinner conversation in a safe and sanitary environment. First, we invested in new dining room tables. Durable enough for the Beta house, several 275-pound, stainless steel tables were delivered in April. The round tables with attached seating for six also instantly became a hit with the poker players in the house.

Next, we researched and vetted food service companies. We wanted a partner we trusted to deliver excellent meals at a reasonable price. We found that and more with Greek House Chefs. Even better, GHC’s CEO and President **Heith Sheeley, Tau Sigma ’01** is a Beta from Iowa State. Heith toured Mendota Court and helped fine tune our commercial kitchen design.

CONSTRUCTING THE NEW KITCHEN

Once the semester ended, we set our sights on building out the commercial kitchen. We saved \$10,000 by taking on the demolition of the old kitchen ourselves. **George Moore ’79** and **Bob Downing ’91** helped us with the heavy lifting. Habitat for Humanity of Dane County jump-started this effort by taking the old cabinets and lockers and moving the old appliances to the street.

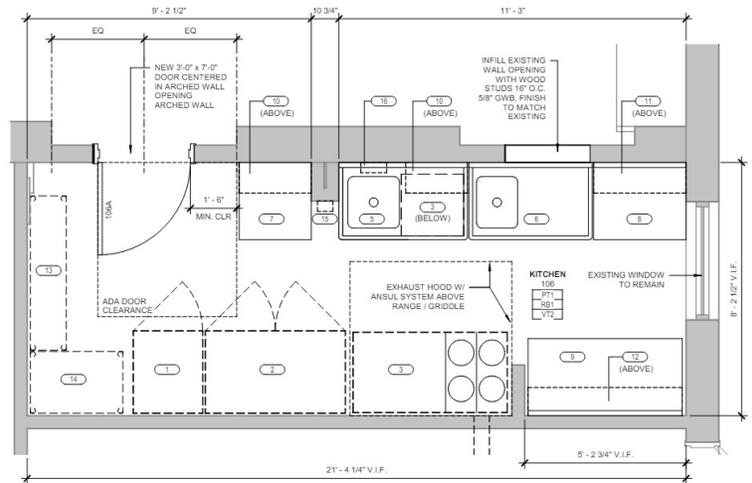


George Moore ’79 (left) and Bob Downing ’91 lend a hand with kitchen demolition.

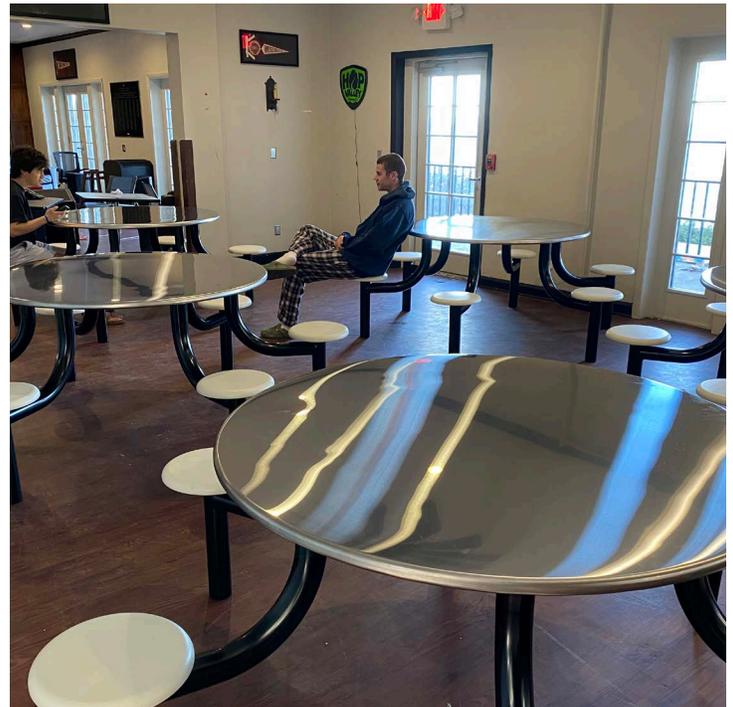
The new kitchen will be completed this summer, and GHC will start providing fresh meals in the fall!

Camaraderie, friendships, and experiences generated by living together in a Beta house are priceless. Sharing home cooked meals together as undergraduates every day and as alumni at events will once again be part of that tradition.

Yours in *_kai_*,
Bart Kocha, #1613, UW 1980
Beta Building Association



The blueprint for our renovated kitchen.



Functional and durable dining tables have encouraged sit-down meals and conversation, and the occasional poker game.



LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER

Congressional Candidate Matt Gunderson '85 on Collective Service

Greek life thrust **Matt Gunderson '85**, a rural high school graduate, into a group of personalities that didn't always mesh with his own. Alpha Pi helped him learn from types of people he might not have sought out otherwise and work toward a common goal. "Acknowledging the need for mutual respect, but not necessarily mutual affection, was a great lesson in managing people and developing leadership skills," he said. "A common goal isn't necessarily achieved via a straight line."

With two older brothers as Betas, Matt admits he didn't consider many other fraternal options. "I found a great spot on Mendota Court that welcomed me and embraced different personalities and talents yet still had a communal vision—not just of friendship and fidelity, but of purpose and patriotism." All these Beta lessons, plus a passion for service, are evident in Matt's current campaign to represent California's 49th District.

Working from the Ground Up

Matt's first postgraduate job was at Kemper Sports Management in Northbrook, Illinois, where he negotiated the first live broadcast of ABC's *Wide World of Sports* in January 1988. He then earned his MBA in marketing and finance from the University of Chicago and went on to open three "open-point" car dealerships in Southern California: first with Infiniti, followed

by Audi and then Volvo. "I didn't move to California to buy a business; I *built* a business."

After Matt and his family sold their dealerships in 2021, he was recruited to run for State Senate in California. He didn't win, but despite the district's 9% Democratic advantage and fierce competition, he lost only by 4 percentage points.

"My favorite quote comes from Ralph Waldo Emerson: 'The purpose in life is not to be happy. It is to be useful...' And there is no better way to be useful than by giving back to your community."

Matt's discussions for a potential U.S. Congress run began in December 2023, and after months of meetings and encouragement, Matt agreed he was the most viable Republican candidate to flip the 49th District in 2024. "It has never been about getting Matt Gunderson elected—something in my DNA believes public service is valuable, too few of us do it and more of us should," he explained.

Taking a Chance

Matt's transition into the political field comes from a lifetime of sincere and purposeful community involvement. During his 10 years

on the Mission Hospital Board, he chaired the \$62 million capital campaign to build Tower 2 at the medical complex. He also served on the Saddleback College Foundation Board and was a youth sports coach for years.

"If a brother is considering public service, I say go for it. Your community activities don't have to be political," Matt said. "Engage in your community, building a network of goodwill while understanding the needs and challenges of your area. Understand that you should not be doing it for celebrity, but rather for the greater good. The political process may frustrate or disappoint you, but don't give up. If we don't engage in politics, we collectively get what we deserve. If you do engage, then there is potential change and impact to be made."

Matt and his family live in Ladera Ranch, California, where he has "brainwashed" all four daughters as Badger and Packer fans since birth. He keeps up with brothers through group texts and Christmas cards and tries to attend Homecoming games and house activities when possible (including the 150th Anniversary Celebration last spring).

You can connect with him at mattgunderson@yahoo.com.



Making New Memories

'80S ALUMNI REKINDLE BROTHERHOOD

By 2019, **Tom Lathrop '84** and most of his era brothers were in their late 50s, with their kids either done or nearly finished with college.

That May, Tom met up with a fellow Beta and newly empty-nester **Jim Cornelius '84** who was in Phoenix for his youngest child's college graduation. Over drinks, they chatted about other brothers in the same stage of life, and organizing a get-together. That summer Tom reached out to about 20 mid-80's era brothers to go skiing in Park City, Utah in 2020.

Four brothers attended the trip in March 2020 (flying back home just a few days before pandemic travel restrictions). That became the group's first of now 5 annual ski trips, with up to 12 alumni gathering in places including Lake Tahoe; Vail; and other parts of Utah. In 2024 they added a non-skiing activity by doing the bobsled run at the Utah Olympic Park. For 2025, it's Steamboat Springs, with a possible day of snowmobiling.

"A little bit of nostalgia with old friends is a great way to lift your mood," Tom said. "Gathering around a physical activity like skiing enabled us to create new experiences so we didn't get stuck in a rut, telling the same stories of 40 years past. A true friendship has to

grow. If its suck in the past it's like living in the rearview mirror. The windshield is bigger for a reason." While riding the lifts, or having a drink in the hot tub, the brothers shared stories of careers, fatherhood, travel, caring for aging parents, heart attacks, and the like. "Conversations ultimately leaned toward our hopes for the future as we entered this new stage of life—for ourselves and our kids." We are sharing the wisdom we've gained over the years.

Last summer, six of the brothers gathered in northern Wisconsin at a brother's lake house and expanded the circle by including wives/girlfriends. It was the first time several significant others had met any of the Betas from their partners' stories—a new dimension Tom appreciates. "It adds a whole new dimension the relationship we have with each other."

"Much of our 'nostalgia' now comes from recounting the gatherings of the past few years—not just our days in the house," Tom added. "We're even encouraging one another to stay healthy so we can continue to get together for many years to come."

Want to share your own alumni gatherings with The Alpha Pilot? Send photos and gatherings to updatemyrecord@penningtonco.com with "BTP Wisconsin Alumni Update" in the subject line!



Six brothers at Jim Cornelius' lake house in Lac Du Flambeau in August 2023. From left: Bob Klockow '85, Jim Cornelius '75, Tim Kroenke '84, Tim Semmann '85, Gary Frings '85, and Tom Lathrop '84.

Eight brothers' Utah ski trip in April 2023. From left: Tom Lathrop '84, Gary Frings '85, Tim Kroenke '84, Jim Cornelius '85, Dave Francis '85, Tim Semmann '85, AJ Smart '84, and Bill Zink '86.



Want to share your own alumni gatherings with *The Alpha Pilot*? Send photos and gatherings to chammond@penningtonco.com with "BTP Wisconsin Update" in the subject line!



WELCOME, **NEW** MEMBERS

Henri Clarke '26
Matteo Dalessandro '26
Samuel Lagowski '26
Eli Plawker '26
Simon Ball '27
Ethan Bartos '27
Ryan Boyes '27
Braden Carlin '27
Miles Corcoran '27
Jack Fannon '27
Samuel Forero '27
Calvin Frerichs '27
Luka Givelber '27
Robert Hall '27
Charlie Hansel '27
Evan Head '27
Benjamin Hudson '27
Charles Hughes '27
John Kaiser '27
William Kessler '27
Billy Krumsiek '27
Timothy LaRosa '27
Jack Lueck '27
Matthew Malloy '27
Lawson Meier '27
Samuel Neubert '27
Aidan O'Brien '27
Conner Reid '27
Benjamin Schneider '27
Owen Schneider '27
Holden Smith '27
Patrick Smith '27
Troy Stephenson '27
Justin Torrey '27
Joseph Tortorella '27
Brody Van Eperen '27
Jack Vosters '27
Evan Weber '27
Henry Weber '27

THE CANOE HOLE ←

→ *A Relic of Alpha Pi History*

One of the surprises I noticed at last year's 150th celebration was that none of the undergraduates had any idea why we older brothers referred to the area that's now the Pagel Recreation Facility as 'The Canoe Hole.' We tend to forget that when you've been around for 151 years, you go through several fads. One of the bigger fads, particularly for the only Beta house on water, were canoes.

The Height of Canoeing

The Wooden Canoe Historical Association considers the golden age of canoeing in America to be from 1890-1925. Canoeing was such a way of life that it's been said you could walk across Boston's Charles River without getting your feet wet.

There was a good reason for this fad! The chastity of women in colleges during the 19th and early 20th centuries was as controlled as class I drugs. At Wisconsin as late as 1968, underclass women had to reside in dorms and were required to be in these dorms no later than midnight on weekends (earlier during the week). As a result, young men looked for anything that would get them some alone time with a woman beyond the prying eyes of their chaperones, hence the canoe!

The concept was so refined there was even a design called 'the courting canoe' that featured long wood decks fore and aft and just two places in its cockpit: one for a paddler and one with a slanted backrest for the woman to recline.

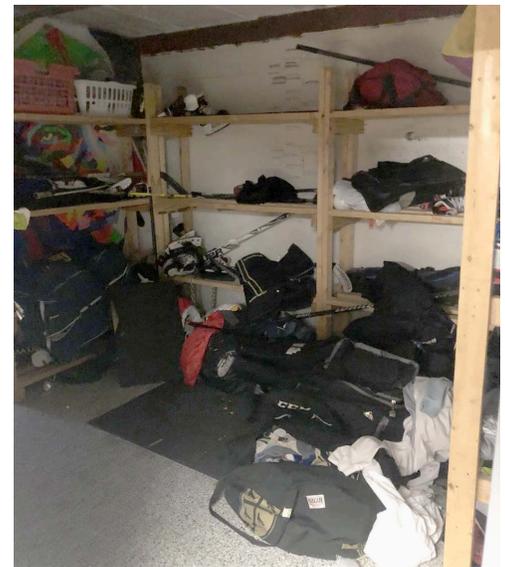
History of the Hole

Our house was designed in 1925, with construction completed in 1926. In their infinite wisdom, the architects designed a walled space behind the bar room with a built-in concrete ramp and a five-foot door to the outside so brothers could store canoes over the winter. Behold, The Canoe Hole!

Sadly, canoeing lost its luster during the late 1920s due to the increased popularity of automobiles and the Great Depression; however, the space remained. By the time I arrived in the late '60s, it had become the area where we stored our kegs as well as the sections of the pier. It also had a more notable use within the Beta house. Since the room had a gravel floor and was, of course, two floors below the nearest bathroom, it became the number one place for, well, number one! Disgusting? Somewhat. Practical? Without a doubt!

This use all came to a head during a 1971 chapter meeting when our President, '**Honest Bob**' **Feind '71**, announced we needed to clean up the canoe hole and henceforth do our business in the bathrooms. Brother **Al Kaniss '72** jumped up to agree with this suggestion, closing by saying, "The Canoe Hole is such a disgrace that I had to throw four empty half-barrels out of the way just to pee on **Ed Albright '71**'s motorcycle!" It almost goes without saying that in the ensuing pandemonium, the motion was completely forgotten.

Yours in *_kai_*,
Roderick Taylor, #1448, UW 1972



The current canoe hole has two rooms. Undergraduates use shelving in the first room for their hockey equipment.



Thank You, Generous Donors

JOIN THE LIST TODAY!

We appreciate the alumni below who have financially supported Alpha Pi Chapter over the past two years. Your devotion to Beta has not gone unnoticed, and we are incredibly grateful for your contributions toward our bright future.

Scan the QR code to visit tinyurl.com/AlphaPiAnnualFund to make your donation and add your name to this list.



Or mail a check to:

Alpha Pi Alliance - University of Wisconsin c/o Travis Lemke
1254 Scenic Ridge Dr, Verona, WI 53593-2265

Walter Richard Ebling '54	Michael R. Haas '74	Thomas J. Halquist '86
David G. Meissner '59	Michael D. Muoio '74	James M. Gould '87
James B. Gollhardt '60	In memory of	John R. Curtis '88
Thomas M. Hughbanks '62	Jamie Muoio	Scott R. Running '89
Peter O. Mueller '62	Timothy E. Sanders '73	Frederic J. Goetzke '92
John H. Bargren, M.D. '63	Peter J. Stone '73	Scott D. Braun '93
Gregory M. Gallo '63	Karl L. Hilgendorf '75	Andrew R. Danner '94
Jerry R. Lyman '63	Bruce D. Huijbregtse '76	Michael M. Goggin '96
Jan J. Weisberg '63	Robert J. Moore '77	Michael Powers '96
Charles W. Giesen '68	Bart J. Kocha '80	Mark J. Zenkner '97
Ted D. Kellner '69	H. Robert Foerster III '83	Jacob S. Weinand '06
James T. Pearce '68	Mark A. Hoffmeister '83	Drew Manderfeld '22
John T. Evans '70	Andrew J. Smart '84	Ryan Oppegaard '22
Robert L. Feind Jr. '71	John B. Hay '85	
John M. Kelly '71	In honor of	
Alan C. Kaniss '72	John Hastings Hay '54	
Charles N. Lucas '72	Andrew G. Sylke '85	

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Vice President Charles Van Ness '26	VP of Alumni Relations George Wied '26
VP of Finance Jacob Tomlinson '26	VP of Philanthropy Dominic Burclaw '26
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VPs of Recruitment Beran Evran '26 (262) 225-1010	Athletic Chairman Carson Lindell '26
Erik Messmer '26 (216) 317-2290	House Manager Andrew McDonagh '26
VPs of Risk Management Benjamin Miller '26 Ryan Zunenshine '26	Steward <i>(new Officer position coming Fall 2024)</i>

Following Alpha Pi's Lead

In the winter issue of the Beta magazine, Alpha Pi Chapter carefully explained the exceptional rehabilitation of their handsome chapter house. (Need a refresher? Find the digital copy at tinyurl.com/BetaMagazineFall2023)

The workmanship in the restoration is exceptional to include the rebuilding of the famous dock.

As a U of Arizona Delta Beta burdened with "holding the fort together" in managing the Delta Beta Chapter house while the chapter has been closed for the past four years, I found the article stimulating given the careful structure of the 501(c)(7) and its relationship with a 501(c)(3) set up to capitalize a historical building restoration and management. Everything Alpha Pi leadership did could be applied to the old Delta Beta house.

I called the chapter and was eventually referred to **Bart Kocha '80**. Bart and many of his peers have helped guide the board of University of Arizona Beta Theta Pi Alumni Association through the steps of

getting our chapter house at 638 E. University Boulevard in Tucson designated historically significant. They also helped with how to request recognition by the Department of Interior the need for a proactive nonprofit to be established to raise tax-deductible funds to be used to restore and maintain our neo-classic building and grounds.

We hope to have the 501(c)(3) in operation by July this year, which will tie into the recolonization of Delta Beta Chapter by Beta Theta Pi.

We can only hope to do as good a job as your chapter's leadership over the next 10 years.

Members of Alpha Pi, thanks for your creativity, leadership, and willingness to share.

Yours in *_kai_*,
J. Fred Oliver, Delta Beta '67
President of the University of Arizona
Beta Theta Pi Alumni Association



Help Us Grow the Brotherhood

Submit a Recruitment Referral



THE ALPHA PILOT

BETA THETA PI

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Verona, WI 53593

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Do you know a young man attending UW-Madison who would be a great fit for Beta Theta Pi? Let us know!

Send a recruitment referral to

Beran Evran '26 at (262) 225-1010
or **Erik Messmer '26** at (216) 317-2290.

Please include the student's full name, contact information, hometown, and any legacy connections.

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!



Beta Theta Pi - University of Wisconsin



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A Year of Fraternal Progress

Alpha Pi's Recent Accomplishments

As another successful school year has passed by, brothers are already focused on the future. Thanks to the support of BBA, we are looking forward to our new dining room and kitchen. The remodel will allow us to have meals cooked within the house, a luxury recent graduates did not have the chance to enjoy. We are excited about these upgrades, which will allow the entire chapter to come together more often.

Academic Success

Our chapter's GPA was boosted with the help of Academic Chairman **Michael Kelley '26**. Michael took great pride and really went the extra mile to reserve study rooms and support those who needed assistance. A goal for this fall is to quickly integrate new members and help them join the chapter's recent academic success.

Philanthropy Efforts

Our final goal is to continue our success within Wisconsin's Humorology. This past year alongside sororities Delta Gamma and Gamma Phi Beta, we placed second.

As a group, we came together to prepare a phenomenal show while heavily contributing to the fundraising efforts. We were glad to do our part in collectively raising close to \$450,000 for Logan's Hearts and Smiles, a charitable foundation that works to improve home accessibility for families with disabled children. We are all extremely proud of this year's progress, and we are committed to continuing these philanthropic efforts as Humorology event starts up again.

Yours in *_kai_*,

Jared Shimelman, #2402, UW 2026



A group of rising juniors make the trek out west to Mammoth Mountain to enjoy spring break on the slopes.



The guys gather for one last photo at the house before moving out to make space for the next wave of undergraduates living in.