

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, August 22, 2008**  
**The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Matt Heldman  
Memorial Golf Outing**

**Sunday, August 24, 2008**  
**Cubs Rooftop Outing**

**Saturday, October 11, 2008**  
**Homecoming**  
Illinois vs. Minnesota. Stop by  
the house for a catered cocktail  
party and live entertainment.

## FIGHTING ILLINI

### 2008 Home Football Schedule

9/6	Eastern Illinois
9/13	Louisiana-Lafayette
10/11	Minnesota (Homecoming)
10/18	Indiana
11/1	Iowa (Dad's Day)
11/15	Ohio State

## ON THE WEB

### Haven't Yet Registered on our Web Site?

*It's easy!*

- Go to [www.atoillinois.com](http://www.atoillinois.com).
- Click on the "First-Time Login" link on the home page.
- Enter your last name.
- Select your record.
- When prompted, enter your Member ID (found above your name and address on the mailing panel of this newsletter).



# Gamma Zeta News

Gamma Zeta Chapter of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity  
University of Illinois  
[www.atoillinois.com](http://www.atoillinois.com)  
**August 2008**

## House Corporation Enables Positive Change

### Renewed Spirit Leads to Alumni Mentor Programs, Chapter House Improvement Projects and Positive Momentum

Since our last newsletter, there have been many developments at Gamma Zeta. We are hoping to continue this positive momentum following the close of a successful 2007-2008 academic year.

Last year I informed you of a number of challenges the House was confronted with. Years of lackluster leadership and ineffective officer transitioning led to poor house maintenance, unstructured pledge programming and risk management violations.

I am happy to report that house management has turned the corner. Elections are being contested and there is an "active" spirit of wanting to get involved. This stems from recruiting the right individuals and implementing a meaningful program with proper leadership.

House Corporation has also reassumed an active role in mentoring. A prime example of this occurred when Undergraduate Affairs House Corporation Rep **Dante Ciccone '02** realized it would be beneficial to host a Career Workshop for Undergraduate members. Dante recruited business-oriented alumni that would be willing to come in for a one-day forum to prepare members for the business world. Thank you to House Corporation representatives and GA alumni who participated. We encourage this continued proactive response.

This August the National Fraternity will announce its award recipients in Louisville. The House Corporation will also award scholarship grants to undergraduate applicants based on academic, extracurricular and philanthropic achievements.

In the meantime, we would like to extend our congratulations to each of the graduating seniors from the Class of 2008!

Given the scale of projects underway at the Chapter House, any financial support you can provide is more than appreciated. We have acquired a large debt to restore the house and we appreciate everyone doing his part for future generations.

The House Corporation is developing a multi-year, multi-million dollar campaign to establish an endowment that will provide capital resources for Gamma Zeta for years to come. If you are interested in joining the Campaign Committee, please contact me.

We encourage you to visit our web site at [www.atoillinois.com](http://www.atoillinois.com). Run by Affinity Connection and managed by our communications chair, **Jeff Williams '02.5** ([jbwmail@yahoo.com](mailto:jbwmail@yahoo.com)), this is a great tool to improve our communication. The website is essential for news and events, and you can also submit updated alumni records or make donations.

Remember the good times in Room #11? Or perhaps Room #4? Would you like to memorialize your legacy forever? Since the alumni dedicated room renovations program began, we have successfully remade two rooms in the House.

There are more than 40 remaining rooms that could use a facelift. In exchange for your generosity, we dedicate the room by mounting a plaque in your honor. If you are interested in donating to renovate specific bedrooms at the House, please contact me.

On behalf of the House Corporation Board, we sincerely appreciate your commitment and involvement in Gamma Zeta. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or other board members. We will continue to work with undergraduates and alumni to ensure a positive Gamma Zeta experience.

#### Jeff Piper '97

House Corp. Board of Trustees Chairman  
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## Undergrads Strive To Make Many Improvements and Their Efforts Pay Off

### *Improved GPA, Community Involvement and Ongoing House Improvements*

At the time of our last newsletter, the Chapter's new leadership had recently been elected and articulated the following goals for the academic year:

- 1) Achieve financial collections of 95% or better
- 2) Maintain a minimum of 75 live-in members
- 3) Achieve a top 10 academic ranking among fraternities
- 4) Launch the University's only marquee campus-wide philanthropy event

I am happy to report that membership has made substantial strides towards achieving each of these goals and building positive momentum within the Chapter.

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***"Undergraduates increased the overall house GPA from 3.14 up to 3.23"***

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Throughout the balance of the fall and spring semesters House Committee leaders worked to improve the fundamental living conditions and outlook of the brotherhood. The members are President **Jimmy Skuros**, Treasurers **Mike Guess** and **Garrett Pearl**, Vice President **Andrew Grosdidier**, and Head House Manager **Andy Selby**. This group has served the Fraternity well and we wish them the best as they transition out of their officer roles later this fall.

For the fifth consecutive semester, the chapter house has reached its capacity for members living in-house. Maintaining this will be essential to securing our financial flexibility in the coming years.

House Corporation has devoted many hours to restoring the chapter house so that it maintains its rich look and feel, and also ensuring that it meets the needs of each of our members. Financially, the Chapter operations are on solid footing thanks to the efforts of our undergraduate Treasurers and House Corporation Treasurer **Ryan Roth '95**. For the spring semester ending May 2008, the house achieved over a 90%

collection rate.

Among the undergraduate's top priorities this past spring semester was to improve the overall house GPA. Through a conscious effort of the brothers and with encouragement from House Corporation, the undergraduates increased the overall house GPA from 3.14 up to 3.23, setting a chapter-best semester mark.

This moves Gamma Zeta well ahead of the all men's average and the IFC average, ranking the chapter 9th out of more than 45 chapters on campus! This accomplishment will assist as a recruiting tool, and also demonstrate to parents, the university, and all Gamma Zeta alumni that our members are focused on succeeding in the classroom.

The philanthropy committee is in the planning stages for hosting its new campus-wide charitable event to take place this fall. These advances will prove integral in solidifying the next generation of leaders and ensuring the future success of the Chapter. In the meantime, the undergraduate members continue to proactively contribute to the community by raising money and volunteering service hours via a number of causes.

I would like to highlight the success of this year's Mother's Day Annual Charity Auction. Gamma Zeta raised a record \$13,000 on April 12<sup>th</sup> to benefit two unique and deserving charitable organizations. The first is Managers vs. Cancer, Gamma Zeta's own **Jason Aguiar's** Illini Managers charity he helped found. The second is The Medical Research Junior Board Foundation, in accordance with the Children's Memorial Foundation, to promote community awareness for Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

In other news, Gamma Zeta intends to carry on the tradition of its annual blood drive, and also encourage community involvement via the Champaign-Urbana Park. Here we act as coaches and tutors at Champaign middle schools. Pledges are now required to do a minimum of ten hours of community service.

### **Chapter House Improvements**

It is imperative that we remain competitive with alternative housing options on campus. We must also combat the inevitable aging of the Chapter House.

Gamma Zeta alumnus **David Krug '92**, has spearheaded our renovation efforts in Urbana. House Corporation has fully drawn on its \$300,000 financing line to complete much-needed aesthetic and safety enhancements. Last summer we completed the installation of a fire suppression sprinkler system, the refurbishment of exterior French doors, new carpeting and wrought iron work.

Over the years, new members had refinished the wood walls in the living rooms. While many of us have fond (or not so fond) memories of doing this work, we consulted an expert about 10 years ago. They told us the process was doing more harm than good and we needed professionals to restore the original look and finish.

House Corporation hired a crew that is spending eight weeks this summer bringing the walls and floors back to their original splendor. The contractor will apply a very light stain to bring out the natural beauty of the wood, as originally intended by the architects of 1101 W. Pennsylvania.

All of this work will qualify as 100% tax deductible by the Society for the Preservation of Greek Housing.

This summer we will also paint the ceilings in the living rooms, refurbish all bronze and brass plaques, install a new wood staircase from the main foyer to the dining room, install new wallpaper in the foyer and stairwell, gut/rehab the ladies bathroom, and provide about \$27,000 worth of new furniture to complete the look. The total price tag for all this work is estimated to be just over \$100,000.

### **Jeff Piper '97**

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### Dane K. Luhrsen '77 Alpha Tau Omega Leads to Lifelong Friends and Networks

#### Brothers Help and Support One Another in Life and Career Years after Graduation

For many, college is remembered as some of the best years of our lives, but those four years filled with parties, pranks, pledge dances, and intramural championships quickly come and go. However, when it comes to ATOs it's not only the memories that remain years after graduation. For many, the friendships of brotherhood also last a lifetime.



Dane Luhrsen '77 pledged Alpha Tau Omega after some guidance from his cousin Mike "Peaches" Perkins '74.

"He told me that they were a good group of guys, that there would always be someone to play sports with and that I could borrow his car whenever I wanted," recalls Dane.

#### A Quick Five Questions...

**What is the last book you read?**  
4<sup>th</sup> of July by James Patterson

**What is currently in your iPod?**  
Albert King's "Blues Power"

**Where are you vacationing this summer?**  
Louisville and Salt Lake City for volleyball tournaments with my kids

**What is the greatest reward you received from being an ATO?**  
Lifelong friends

**In one word, describe your time at the Gamma Zeta Chapter.**  
Exciting

Amidst playing sports and bribes of a car, Dane found his lifelong best friends with the brothers of ATO. Even after graduation, Dane played in various touch football leagues around Chicago with several of his former ATO teammates such as **Bill Barry '77**, **Bruce Barry '79**, **Mike Tolzien '75**, and **Mike Maher '77**.

Dane has been very active in helping bring ATO's together for the March of Dimes Sports Awards Dinner that Brother **Bill Barry '77** chairs. Dane also enjoyed helping **Craig Nadborne '78** and others organize a fundraiser to support Brother **Tom Tunney '77's** successful aldermanic campaign in the 44<sup>th</sup> Ward of Chicago.

In addition, Dane has helped organize the Cubs Rooftop outing, the class of '77 reunions and a Christmas event for ATO's in the Chicago area.

"I've been especially proud to help promote attendance at dinners sponsored by the University of Illinois Chicago Alumni Association where Brothers **Tom Tunney '77**, **Cary McMillan '80** and **Jack Klues '77** were all named 'Illini of the Year'," says Dane.

#### No one misses a beat in their friendships regardless of how long it's been and no one seems to ever tire of the old stories

"I really enjoy seeing guys get together. No one misses a beat in their friendships regardless of how long it's been and no one seems to ever tire of the old stories," says Dane.

Among those old stories, Dane counts the following among his top few - Riding around on Kit the Cat's car after winning the Intramural "All Points" trophy for the second year in a row, scoring his only A in college from Professor Jewitt's History of Engineering course and watching The Big streak in the Quad.

"Personally, we've stood up at each other's weddings, celebrated kids' births and graduations and supported each other at family funerals... basically lifelong friends," says Dane.

#### Dane found his lifelong best friends with the brothers of ATO.

Now, after years of helping one another, former ATO brothers are helping support the younger ATO's as well as each other's kids. Dane's son John is working this summer alongside **Steve Blair's '77** son Jack, as interns for **Bill Barry '77** with his company Draper and Kramer.

Dane himself has spent his thirty plus career in the Chicago area mostly in the information technology industry. He is currently a Senior Account Executive with Gartner where he is responsible for representing IT research and consulting services to clients in the Chicago area.

Earlier on, Dane was very active in bicycle racing. Some of his fellow racers even went on to race in the Tour de France.

Now, after retiring from racing and touch football, Dane is very active in his kids' sports. He and his wife Mary Beth travel to all of their kids' games. This year, Dane and Mary Beth will celebrate 25 years of marriage.

Years after graduation, Dane and his brothers have found ways to help one another in when it comes to career networking, celebrating personal achievements, and of course, simply enjoying the friendships that began so many years ago.

**Editor's Note:** The years mentioned next to each name refers to their graduation year; not their initiation year.

**Do you know of a Gamma Zeta alum who would make a good profile subject? If so, contact our editors at [content@affinityconnection.com](mailto:content@affinityconnection.com) (mention "The Gamma Zeta News" in the subject line).**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Register Now for ATO Weekend Activities and Be Part of What Everyone Will Be Talking About

*Time to get signed up for ATO Gamma Zeta Weekend 2008!*

#### Friday, August 22 9th Annual ATO Matt Heldman Memorial Golf Outing

- 1:00 p.m. shotgun start  
Highland Park Country Club  
(www.highlandparkcc.com)
- \$125 includes golf, lunch & dinner
- Benefits the **Matt Heldman** Memorial Scholarship Fund & Gamma Zeta Chapter House

Joe's beer garden (940 W Weed, Chicago) will once again host our post-party. \$25/person gets you all the beer, wine, well drinks (and soda) you like from 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. All non-golfers, significant others and friends are more than welcome to attend post-party at Joe's.

To register, email your foursome (or interest in playing if you don't yet have a group) to **Ryan Anthony '02** at ryananthony80@gmail.com

#### Sunday, August 24 Gamma Zeta Cubs Rooftop Outing

- 1:20 p.m. vs. Washington (Rooftop opens/closes 30 min. before/after game)
- 1048 W Waveland (Beyond the Ivy Rooftop) hosted by 44th Ward Alderman **Tom Tunney '77**
- \$200 suggested donation per attendee (more certainly appreciated!) includes all food as well as all alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Benefits the Gamma Zeta Preservation Fund



All Gamma Zeta brothers, their significant others and families are invited to attend.

Limited spots are still available on the rooftop; please contact **Dane Luhrsen '77** at dane.luhrsen@gartner.com ASAP to ensure your spot.



*Chapter GPA of 3.23 Ranks ATO 9th Among 45  
Fraternities at Illinois! Read Page 2 for More Details...*

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**ALPHA TAU OMEGA FRATERNITY  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**

