

ALPHA SPEAKS



**Troy
Kanaszka '17**

Chapter President



**Cory
Wiedmann '17**

*Vice President of
Programming*



**Finley
Simonds '17**

*Vice President of
Finance*



**Joshua
Bloom '17**

*Vice President of
Member
Development*



**William
Harris '19**

*Vice President of
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**Zachary
Binger '18**

Chaplain



**Zachary
Caldarola '18**

*Vice President of
Communications*



Sigma Phi Epsilon NJA RLC is quickly approaching its ten year anniversary since the rechartering in 2007. More importantly for this upcoming conclave in Orlando, NJA will be applying for its fifth consecutive Buc Cup, hopefully marking ten years of excellence. The accolades and accomplishments that NJA has been honored with over this last decade are indicative of the hard work of all the men who gave their time and talents to ensure the future of this chapter for generations to come.

After receiving recognition for the NIC's chapter of distinction award in May, New Jersey Alpha had the honor of meeting both SigEp CEO Brian Warren and NIC CEO Jud Horras at an awards ceremony held on Stevens Campus in October. Gaining their wisdom and listening to their feedback on our chapter's operations was a reminder that NJA is not only continuously pushing the standards of what SigEp chapters are doing but rather what all fraternities are doing.

With their GPA continuously rising, 1200+ community service hours for the semester, and brotherly love at an all-time high it's difficult to speculate as to what is the next step for this chapter. Where can we go from here? What will the next ten years bring? To continue to push the envelope on what was never thought possible, it's important for every undergrad, alumni, and volunteer alike to ask themselves these questions.

Much of the brotherhood was in attendance at the NIC award ceremony and as both Brian Warren and Jud Horras spoke, the room was silent as everyone listened intently. From the new members to the oldest brothers in the room, everyone took to what these two men said. One piece stuck out to all present. A fraternity chapter who had won the same NIC Chapter of Distinction Award years ago was mentioned. They were at the top of the top and had broken through every ceiling they were faced with. Nothing was stopping this chapter from overcoming every challenge they were faced with to be the best they possibly could. A few years after receiving their NIC award, they lost their charter.

Jud Horras spoke of this not to be negative, but rather to put everything into perspective that continual success becomes much harder at the top. It was humbling to hear and grounded everyone to ensure that this was not the final ceiling. It sparked thoughts in every brother and alumni to ask those hard questions. Instead of maintaining or losing progress moving forward, thoughts on how to improve weren't the only things on everyone's mind.

As New Jersey Alpha moves into 2017, we should all be asking ourselves what we can individually bring to the table in order to continue this success and momentum that has been gained. As we are all eager to see what the next year will bring, it is my honor to introduce the new executive committee: President: Dan Fenton, VP Programming: Chris Reed, VP Finance: Joe Farino, VP Member Development: Kyle Runko, VP Recruitment: Conor Manning, Chaplain: Harrison Kaye, VP Communications: Joe Puciloski. The brotherhood backs each and every one of these men and is confident they will elevate NJA to the next level; whatever that may be.

Hope everyone enjoyed the holiday season and Happy New Year.

VDBL,
Troy Kanaszka

DEFINITION OF BROTHERHOOD

Joining a fraternity was one of the last things I was thinking about doing when I first started at Stevens. As a freshman, I thought going to college was mainly to earn my degree and graduate with a high GPA. I was mostly focused on my academic growth to the point where I tried to avoid anything I saw as harmful. At the time I naively thought Greek life would be one of those things. My idea of a fraternity back then was not a very positive one. My exposure to fraternities up until that point had only been what I saw in the news and media where the majority of the time they were not portrayed in a positive light. Fraternities, or "frats" as they were frequently labeled, were always depicted as a mess of binge drinking and hazing. This image was the antithesis of what I wanted out of college and initially turned me off to the idea of joining a fraternity completely. Thankfully, it is an image I know now to be the complete opposite of my experience here and an image I watch my brothers work to defy every day. It is thanks to those brothers that I was able to throw away all my apprehensions and learn what fraternity truly means.

It did not take long for these men to shatter my misconceptions about fraternities, in fact, they had already started before I even stepped foot at an event. My first time going to the house was for an incredibly helpful review for a test. There are many brothers who exude the principles without always letting people know they are brothers. Whether it was the TA who took time out of his week to make extra notes for my class, my neighbor who helped teach me to program, or my RA whose door was always open, if I needed someone to talk to, many of the people who made my first year at college so much better turned out to be brothers. Still, even when I thought SigEp might be the place for me I was hesitant. It wasn't until a few weeks after I failed to receive a bid for my sophomore fall semester that my views truly began to change. At this point, I was feeling very confused and unsure of wanting to continue to try to join. This was also when several brothers reached out to me to

encourage me to continue, some of whom I had barely spoken to before that moment. It is with that encouragement I continued to come to events and ultimately joined. Since joining a year ago I am proud to say I still feel that encouragement from these men to push myself every day.

However, the overwhelming encouragement I receive from my brothers is only a fraction of the reason my opinions have so drastically changed about fraternities. The support my brothers have for each other, the amount of time they spend giving back to the community, the goals they set to attain, and the standards to which they hold themselves is nothing short of inspiring. During one of my first brother interviews as a Sigma, I was told it is hard not to want to better yourself after seeing some of the brothers in this fraternity and it is something I wholeheartedly believe. In my time in SigEp I have watched brothers organize a 5K for charity, take part in global service trips to build schools in impoverished areas, rush to the aid of the community in the wake of a terrible train accident, push themselves to their physical limits to train for a race they want to complete, and many more incredible feats. They did not join this fraternity for the stereotypical reasons but to better themselves and others. I once thought that fraternity would be detrimental to my growth, but I have grown significantly during my time here. Fraternity is about the bond and drive between a group of men to push and better themselves constantly. It is not an excuse to party all the time but a reason to grow.



Alexander Buhse '18

Welcome the Newest SigEp NJA Brothers!



From left to right: (Top Row) Austin Lowey '19, Doug Wrede '20, Blake Kawalski '19, Liam McAlister '19
(Middle Row) Evan Bedser '19, Paul Moyer '19, Sean Jones '20, T.J. Magno '19, Brandon Wang '20, Abraham Edens '19
(Bottom Row) Nick Weisz '20, Samuel Young '20

WHAT ISN'T PUT ON AN AWARD APP

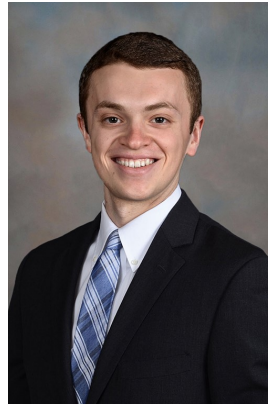
It can't go without being said, the New Jersey Alpha RLC is one of the most impressive SigEp chapters in the country. If you need to be convinced, just take a walk through the red door at 528 Hudson Street, and you will find yourself gazing at a multitude of trophies that cover the shelves all along the room's back wall. Among these awards are four Buchanan Cups from the last four Conclaves, as well as our most recent honor, the North American Interfraternity Conference's Chapter of Distinction Award. Of course, I am incredibly proud of my fellow brothers for working so hard to achieve these incredible accomplishments; it is a testament to the dedication that these young gentlemen have to their studies, their university, and their community. This is the dedication you see when looking at an award application for SigEp.

There is one thing I am even more proud of my brothers for and it is something you cannot see on an award application or receive outside recognition for. Amidst all the work they do in school, for their campus, and for their community, so many of my brothers have displayed an unwavering commitment to brotherly love. Ask me to prove this, and I will point to the many examples my brothers provided me while I served as our chapter's Brotherhood Events Chair. No matter what type of event I ran, there was always a group of brothers ready to experience something new together.

Take our trip to the 9/11 Museum and Memorial as a first example. The ten or so brothers who went on this trip spent about four hours at the museum observing artifacts, artwork, and much more related to the tragic events of 9/11. While this experience was heavy with emotions, each brother who went on the trip emphasized how incredible an experience it was and how glad they were they went with their brothers.

One last example was our 2016 Golf Outing at Berkshire Valley Golf Course. On a beautiful Sunday in May after final exams ended, about thirty brothers came out for a great round of golf. Although several of the brothers attending had never played golf before, they came just so they could have a great time with their fellow brothers. In the end, the event was such a success we even decided to have a Fall Golf Outing at the Skyway Golf Course in Jersey City.

At first, when I began organizing events for our chapter, I was often nervous that things would not go according to plan. My brothers reminded me, the original plan did not matter. The most important outcome of any event was that it was an experience that helped brothers strengthen their friendships with fellow brothers. At the end of the day, that is what the cardinal principle of brotherly love entails, creating friendships so pure they will never be broken. Noticing my brothers' commitment to these friendships is what makes me proud to be a SigEp. While you cannot put friendships like these on an award application, it should be what every SigEp brother is most proud of.



Jimmy Flaherty '18

EVENTS REFERENCED ABOVE



Dan Fenton in front of the last steel beam removed from Ground Zero



Brothers participating in the summer golf outing

CRISTIAN COLLADO AT RUCK



Cristian Collado '19

Ruck, the slight mention of the word is still so surreal. I remember as if it was just yesterday when I submitted my application to this highly coveted leadership event as a young, curious brother looking to learn and give back. Taking place at the heart of Sigma Phi Epsilon in Richmond, Virginia, this intense five-day leadership institute tested brothers across the nation in challenges and lessons of physical and mental strength. Throughout the week, I met individuals who were very passionate about growing as leaders within their chapters and sharing all they had learned with the brothers back home. Attending was a great privilege I made sure to take advantage of and really take to heart.

During our time at Ruck, we were split into smaller groups of about twenty men. I had the opportunity to be a part of the Yellow Team led by Adam Seiber and Brad Nahrstadt, two SigEp alumni who were incredibly dedicated to the fraternity and the advancement of its posterity. Nonetheless, this group of men became so much more by the end of the journey, we shared an experience that bonded us as a family. As a group we did everything as one, we lived in the same quarters, ate all of our meals together and challenged each other to reach our fullest potential.

As expected, the program provided brothers with many self-reflection opportunities and insight into a values-driven SigEp man. We took a deeper

look at rituals and its practices and learned how to implement cardinal principles in our daily lives. We were challenged about our motivations and questioned how our personal values paralleled within the fraternity. All of this consistently reminded me of the promise SigEp made to each of us and how we as representatives of this fraternity could convey that message effectively. I personally valued discussions with other SigEp brothers after the seminars concluded. Being around men who were there for the best interest of each of their chapters and leaders amongst their brothers allowed me to bounce ideas and acquire valuable information I could take back to NJA. One of the most memorable Sound Mind memories I had was the walk through SigEp's history. This was essentially a walking tour through Richmond University's campus, where we stopped at important landmarks important to SigEp and were enriched with the story in the founding of the fraternity. This particular experience really hit home and instilled a great sense of pride in me for SigEp's evolution through changing times and its consistent adaptability to be the first of the first.

Along with so many Sound Mind opportunities, Sound Body was also heavily implemented throughout the program. We participated in activities that required teamwork, trust and above all perseverance. Many of the challenges we faced pushed us outside of our comfort zones and allowed us to find out what we were made of. Throughout Ruck, we exercised competitive spirit in a Frisbee tournament, faced our fears in a high ropes course and were pushed to our limits in a Frank Butterfield workout. The high ropes course, strategically placed at the beginning of the week, was one of my favorites as it forced us to put our trust and lives in the hands of brothers who were complete strangers. This was one of the defining moments for the teams as it made us all work as a unit to achieve the goal of making it to the end without falling from a 60-foot high obstacle course. Nonetheless, it brings back some of the fondest memories I've had in SigEp because it created the foundation of the bond I would share with the outstanding group of men on the yellow team.

Within this small group, I became vulnerable and shared ideas with brothers that implemented leadership in different manners. I learned from their first-hand experiences within their chapters and kept note of discussions that were relevant to our chapter at Stevens. Through Ruck, I was able to develop as a leader rather than just simply learning the how. Through the implementation of Barry Posner's *The Leadership Challenge* in our Ruck curriculum, we were presented and taught the five practices of exemplary leadership: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encouraging the heart. By engaging in interactive activities, confronting serious topics and most importantly setting goals centered on these teachings we learned our weaknesses and strengths as individuals. With this knowledge, we would return to our chapters and motivate positive change.

All in all, Ruck was a remarkable experience I feel so lucky to have been afforded. The infrastructure Sigma Phi Epsilon has in place for its members is so incredibly inspiring. Through this journey, I grew as a person, leader and most importantly a brother. It is because of the outstanding quality and values of SigEp I am still in touch with many of the brothers I met in Richmond. In the end, I can only hope to live up to the standards of what it is to become a balanced man and thank Ruck for allowing to me be one step closer.



PUBLICATION STAFF

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Caldarola '18

Vice President of
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Kevin
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Alpha Speaks
Chair



Letter from the Editor

Dear readers,

It has been an honor putting together this edition of *Alpha Speaks*. This publication is one of the many ways for brothers from all years to be able to connect with one of the things we all have in common, SigEp.

If you would like to help lower our production costs of *Alpha Speaks* by receiving the electronic version instead of the paper copy, please email:
vpcommunication@sigepnja.com.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email above.

It has been an amazing year as NJA's Vice President of Communications. I have loved seeing this chapter grow and thrive. It has been a pleasure over this past year, but I am certain our next VP Communications will do an great job.

VDBL,
Zachary Caldarola
Vice President of Communications

ALUMNUS UPDATE

Hello everyone! It's a pleasure having the opportunity to write a piece for our Alpha Speaks. For those of you whom I have not met, I am a recent graduate from the Class of 2015 (I can still say recent, right?), joined NJA with the 2014 Spring Bid Class. After graduation, I joined Protiviti, an internal audit and consulting firm, where I currently work out of our Fort Lauderdale office.

As if college wasn't fast-paced enough, I've had quite the eventful two years since moving to South Florida. Among the highlights, I met someone (liked that someone) and bought a house, where we live with our dog. (Oh, stereotypes.)

Since buying the house, I've received a handful of emails and messages regarding the process. Our generation (#millennials) is less likely to buy a house, particularly in our earlier years, partly due to the fear of the process itself. There are quite a few variables and unknowns that would confuse (or outright deter) even the most financially-savvy people out there

So, for those of you that are still renting, even if you do not think you'll buy a house (or condo) anytime soon, read up!

- Every year, save all significant financial documents, such as W-2s, tax returns, IRS transcripts... trust me, these documents can add two weeks or more to the process. Expect to be asked for 2-3 years worth of taxes/income statements. You will also need to show bank statements, but only a few months back.
- Sign up for Credit Karma. It's free and has the best tools for you to learn about your credit score and how to improve over time. Your credit score and history are everything when it comes to buying a house.
- Save some money. Emphasis on some -- it doesn't quite make sense to have a large savings account if it means you owe hundreds of dollars in credit card interest a month. We were ready to buy after just 1 year of saving (it's easier when there's two of you!).
- ...oh, and pay your cards off while you can. During the house buying process, your credit utilization (which is the sum of your credit card balances divided by the sum of your credit limits) should be somewhere between 0 - 10%.
- Student loans are not going to be as big of a deal as you might think. Yes, it doesn't hurt to pay them off before you buy a house, but don't let student loans be the reason you don't buy a house until you're in your mid-thirties.

There's also plenty of reasons to continue renting, of course, (and plenty of articles online about it). Buying a property is largely an opportunistic endeavor -- for us, the timing was just right. But be ready, because once you find the place you want, the process goes quite fast. And as always, feel free to reach out to your fellow alumni with questions about the process. (We know, it can be as confusing as a Jones chem lecture.)

That's it for now, looking forward to seeing you all at Conclave!



Jorge Rivera '15

STANDARDS BOARD MEMBER REFLECTION

I ran for the Standards Board in the fall of 2015. This was after I was inspired at Conclave to begin giving back to the brotherhood and start finding my niche in SigEp. I ran as a Phi, so the brotherhood realized by voting for me they would be taking the risk of me not being able to assist in the Epsilon ritual. However, I spoke about how my unique experience as a younger brother would add a new perspective to the Standards Board and I won a position. After that semester, I ran again for another term that I am wrapping up now. During my time on the Standards Board, I've learned the true meaning of brotherly love.

One and a half years is a long time in the life of a Standards Board member. When I ran, I was told that I would see the worst of the chapter, and to try my best not to let that discourage me. This may be true, but more than anything I've seen change. I've seen brothers with low GPAs fight hard to do better in class and remain in this chapter. I've seen ritual attendance increase. I've seen brothers grow, mature, and make better decisions. We as a Standards Board have grown as well. Our decisions and discussions have moved more from looking to see what we can do to punish a brother to working with that brother to prevent any mistakes moving forward. We've strived to help

each brother who was less active try to find their place within this house, reminding them that Sig Ep is great because every brother here is different and has different strengths and abilities they can offer this brotherhood. It has been amazing to be on the Standards Board through two different Executive Committees.

Like all positions of responsibility in Sig Ep, being a member of the Standards Board has allowed me special and unique opportunities to learn and grow. I've learned brotherly love is tough love. Brothers foster bonds at programming events, chapter meetings, or working on different SigEp tasks and projects together. Although this is crucial to creating a strong brotherhood, that is simply the more tangible aspect of brotherly love. As a Standards Board, every week we meet to make tough decisions. We talk about the punishments we give and the various outcomes of our prior decisions. It's hard walking into a room and sitting down with four other brothers knowing that whatever we decide this week could end up upsetting or frustrating a brother. But at the end of the day, the decisions we make are out of love. The Oath you take before this chapter is something we expect you to uphold. We strive to push every brother to be better than they were yesterday,

and sometimes that's through the outcome of a trial or membership review. When we reprimand a brother, the end goal is always to treat our decision as a learning experience. The chapter we are today is without a doubt the result of high expectations, but these are sometimes met with resistance and it our the job to make sure these ideals and expectations are upheld.

As a member of Standards Board, I feel personally invested in the success and happiness of every brother in this house, and I know the feeling is mutual. I know I have 79 brothers I am eager to help in any way I can, and I know they are all constantly helping me to be a better SigEp and a better person. To me, that's brotherly love.



Daniel Fenton '19



It's almost that time again. Sigma Phi Epsilon's 55th Grand Chapter Conclave will take place between August 2 - 6, 2017 in Orlando, Florida. We hope to send upwards of 40 men to Conclave this year, as the chapter is extremely excited to share what proves to be a special Conclave for NJA. Please contribute any amount you can that will help us offset the costs, or if possible sponsor one undergraduate's registration(\$490) to ensure as many brothers can go to Conclave as possible.

Please donate today via one of these methods:

- 1) Donate through NJ Alpha's direct fund - <http://sigep.org/foundation/> Select Giving opportunities -> Chapter Scholarships -> NJ Alpha Direct Fund (Donations to the foundation are also tax deductible)
- 2) Donate via Paypal - <http://www.alumni.sigepnja.com/> Select Contribute to NJ Alpha -> Donate
- 3) Donate via Mail - Send Check made out to Sigma Phi Epsilon NJ Alpha to 530 Hudson Street, Hoboken NJ 07030

"Thank You!" in advance for your help, and we really hope to see you in Orlando where NJ Alpha RLC should be in line to take home it's 5th consecutive Buchanan Cup (and first golden cup representing 10 years of excellence)! For more information about attending or donating toward our Conclave fund, please reach out to 887@sigepnja.com or ec@sigepnja.com.

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SigEp | Building Balanced Men

Alpha SPEaks

New Jersey Alpha RLC Chapter Newsletter: Winter 2017 Issue - Volume XI, Number 1

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Not your mail? Tell us and we'll change the address! - sigep@stevens.edu