

THE

RED DOOR

The Official Newsletter of Sigma Phi
Epsilon's Indiana Zeta Chapter

BALANCED MEN

Fun, Fast-Moving February

Although it was a short and cold month, February was full of fun chapter activities. We are so thankful that campus life this semester has continued to grow and thrive as our community has done its very best to safely move on from COVID-19. This month saw activities such as an energetic performance by *Step Afrika!*, a handful of unexpected snow days, a Winter Olympics recruitment event, Sigma Lock-In, the Super Bowl, cheering at multiple Valpo basketball games, supper clubs, service events, philanthropy events, and Burning Heart. We are all looking forward to a much needed Spring Break in March!

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STUDY ABROAD REFLECTION

This past winter break, I had the opportunity to study abroad in central Italy. I went with seven other Valparaiso University students and nine students from Gordon College. We went for two weeks and tried to fully immerse ourselves in the picturesque, cliff-side town of Orvieto. We took three day-long excursions to Sienna, Florence and Rome, which were exciting cities to visit. However, most days were spent in the city I grew fondest of: Orvieto. We stayed in a refurbished monastery and had to adjust to this historic and religiously rich town. Most days consisted of a morning cappuccino and croissant, a three-hour block of class followed by an afternoon of gelato, homework, seeing sights or art, and then, of course, more gelato.



The course I took was titled “What Is The Good Life,” and it focused on answering this question through the lens of late-middle-age Italian authors, like Thomas Aquinas and Dante, and by looking at the seven virtues and vices. In reflecting on this trip, I have been trying to understand all that I have learned from the experience. Everything you learn while studying abroad is surely immeasurable, but there were several key takeaways for me. While I certainly learned a lot from the five books we read, our daily discussions/lectures, and the supplemental trips to view artwork in cathedrals, I think the experiences outside the classroom were most impactful.

One thing that stood out to me was how much the Italians value meal times. Our lunch (*pranzo*) was every day at 1 p.m. The meal often lasted nearly an hour because of the number of courses and the emphasis on conversation. Lunch frequently consisted of bread, soup, pasta, meat and veggies, and sometimes sweet fruit or cheese with jam for dessert. For Italians, meals are not times to quickly eat or multitask with homework or your phone. They are gathering times for family and friends and emphasize an appreciation of the food. This was the same for the morning trips to the *caffè*. Coffee is not what it is in America. The Starbucks model of a drive-thru cup of sparkling sugar milk is thoroughly rejected in Italy. Coffees are often served relatively plain and it is customary to sit in the cafe and enjoy the moment. Additionally, in smaller towns like Orvieto, you pay after you are done with your drink or gelato, not at the counter when you order. This demonstrates the community of trust and hospitality that I grew to admire in Orvieto.

Another thing I grew to enjoy was being less connected to my phone. While in Italy, I did not have access to service or WiFi other than for a three hour block in the evenings. And with some days having post-dinner plans and festivities, this meant I sometimes did not even access a cell connection for several days at a time. At first, I found myself habitually checking my phone throughout the day only to be disappointed, but after a little while I grew to appreciate not being so tethered to my phone and social media. There is something freeing about simply putting away your phone and knowing you cannot access any person, news or social media outlet. It forces you to take in the people and environment around you, and I found myself more productive as well. I journaled, doodled, read and spent time in my own, organic thoughts.

There are lots of reasons to study abroad. To Italy– you might go for the food, the wine, the art and the history. However, you cannot expect the experiences and impact that studying abroad will have on you. I would strongly recommend that everyone studies abroad at some point in their college career and I am thankful to have had this opportunity.

Joe Castleman (Class of '23)

Step Afrika! Dance Company

Daniel Asselstine

Black History month is well-celebrated at Valparaiso University, and the Fraternity-Sorority Life (FSL) community kicked off February with a special performance from Step Afrika. Based in Washington D.C., Step Afrika is a premiere dance and historical interpretation group that travels throughout the United States. They encourage education of the traditional stepping form associated with African American fraternities and sororities, and involve their crowds in a fun, energetic manner! The support for this event was phenomenal, with a large portion of Valpo FSL attending and filling the ballrooms of the Harre Union. Their performance was incredibly unique and utilized historic events such as slavery and segregation to fuel and build their stepping rhythms. Mud boots, traditional African American dress, and bandanas were used

to tell their story and drive the performance to a greater level. Crowd participation was encouraged, and many students were brought on stage to learn simple choreography alongside the dance crew. After the event, I had the opportunity to interact with the crew more closely and capture images for university and commercial purposes! We hope that Step Afrika continues to perform and promote their important message, and we look forward to catching another performance sometime in the near future.

Below Left. Step Afrika performs for a full audience in the ballrooms.

Below Right. Daniel Asselestine had an awesome photo shoot opportunity with the crew.

(Both photos taken by Daniel)

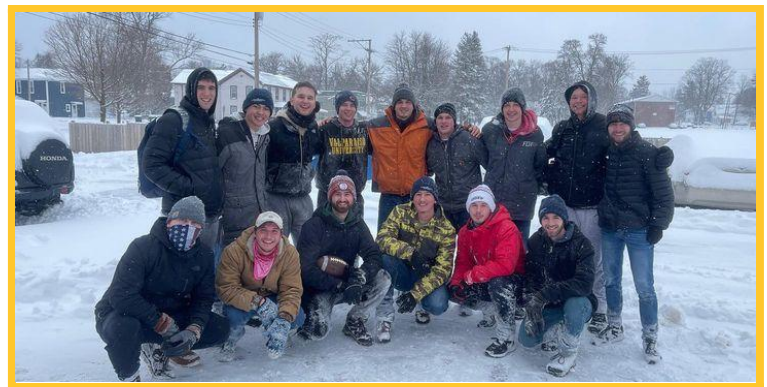


Snow Days!

“Doc” Janowiak

Last year, the fraternity was visited by the regrettable necessity of two, two-week long quarantines, and the brothers of the house more or less cramped into our small plot of land for the duration of those events. In defiance of the situation, and in a predictable display of the fraternity’s resilience, brotherhood was better than ever. Brothers organized events, visited one another’s rooms, engaged in conversation, and drew ever-tighter our already close-knit fellowship. This semester, we had the pleasure of experiencing what can only be described as the polar opposite reason to shelter-in-place; the joyous and childhood-nostalgia-ridden event of a snow day. The jubilation at the prospect shook the walls of our house from the moment it was announced. For two cold, snowy February days - a Wednesday and a Thursday, back to back - the brotherhood was a fancy-free fraucus of energy and excitement. Wednesday morning saw brothers abuzz with plans and discourse, stretching themselves out to occupy the breadth of their momentary freedom. At the mid-day, a strident cadre of sportsmen marched their many-layered, snugly-wrapped skeletons out the back of the SLC for a game of snow football, led by the commanding, if diminutive, brother Noah Godsell. Brother Bradley Davis took the brief

silence as the respite he needed to catch up on his neglected homework, but I soon put an end to his peace as I trotted out my turntable and modest collection of vinyl records. Dripping with chunks of wedged and half-melted snow, the footballers stomped victoriously back into the house 45 minutes later to the melodious chorus of John Denver’s *Rocky Mountain High*. That night, with hordes of brothers galloping through the halls, a resonant call sounded down the stairs that the next day, too, would see canceled classes. Naturally, this was met with uproarious cheering. Brother Dylan Grace suggested to me that we all post “TO THE HOUSE!” in the main slack channel, top make the night one of whole-fraternity interplay. Alas, it wasn’t to be; but over those two days, anybody could see it: this brotherhood is stronger than ever.



The snow football crew heads back inside after a fun and well-played game.

Burning Heart Ceremony

Aaron Spaletto

Burning Heart is one of the public rituals Sigma Phi Epsilon conducts. It is open to the whole community, family, and friends, and this year, a fair number of people outside of the chapter attended. Other freshmen who had joined different fraternities showed up as well in support of their friends in SigEp. As the freshmen were led around the semicircle of the 10 ft tall Sigma Phi Epsilon letters and the Heart, a speech was given about the significance of each letter. The letter was then engulfed in flames and continued to burn as the freshmen continued their journey to each letter and finally the heart. The Burning Heart is by far the brightest and most spectacular of the burned letters, with its heat stretching to even the furthest spectators. As the flames continued to consume the heart, the freshmen were instructed to turn around and meet their big brother. This brother is a member of the chapter

who has developed a close relationship with a freshman and will continue to be a mentor to the freshman throughout their time as an undergraduate member in SigEp. This was the first Burning Heart ceremony where I had the privilege of becoming a big brother. It was great to be able to see this ceremony from the perspective of a big brother as I guided my soon-to-be little through the ceremony. Burning Heart is definitely one of my favorite rituals I have seen since joining Sigma Phi Epsilon.

Bottom Left. Flames start to spread on the Burning Heart.

Bottom Right. From left to right: Jack Meyer, Aaron Spaletto, and Joey Gentile take a family picture. Jack is Aaron's big brother and Aaron is Joey's new big brother.



CHAPTER EVENTS: FEBRUARY

- 3 Step Afrika!**
- 8 Recruitment Event:**
Winter Olympics Watch Party
- 11 Sigma Lock-In**
- 13 Super Bowl Watch Party**
- 18 Recruitment Event:**
Floor Hockey
- 20 Q Week**
- 23 FSL Night:**
Men's Basketball Game
- 24 Supper Club**
w/Valpo Volleyball Coach
- 25 Burning Heart Ceremony**

A Tribute to Reed Hubbert

Allen Marvel

Reed Hubbert has been an excellent role model for the IN Zeta Chapter and I am so proud to have been able to learn as much as I did from him. Reed was the brother that was always there if you needed someone, was always ready to help with any activity, and was a leader in many ways during his time in the chapter. Reed taught me how to be a better leader on campus and in the chapter. He also taught me how to navigate and solve problems while serving on the executive board. Reed left an amazing impact on our chapter and we cannot wait to see what he does in the future in his career field. Thank you for being an amazing brother and role model, Reed!



"I joined SigEp because I wanted to be surrounded by men who care about growing as a leader and as a man just as much as I do."

- Reed Hubbert

HIGHLIGHTS



Top left. Brothers enjoyed a supper club with Valpo Women's Volleyball Coach Carin Avery who talked about her experiences playing and coaching volleyball.

Top right. Brothers in the student section supporting the men's basketball team against rival school Loyola.

Bottom Left. Brothers got into costume for a service event with Hilltop Neighborhood House.

Bottom right. Brother Matthew Yee (pictured with family) performed a trombone concerto with the University Symphony Orchestra as one of three winners of the music department's concerto competition.

SPRING BREAK

Make sure to catch next month's newsletter which will feature some of our brothers who participated in a number of Valpo's week-long service trips to different parts of the country over Spring Break!

Letter from the Editor

Matthew Yee, External Relations Chair

This past month was full of midterms and exams for many brothers. However, to balance the late nights in the library, the chapter worked on planning more events to relax and unwind with each other. Whether this was a Bob Ross Painting event, a disc golf putting tournament in the Union, watching basketball games at the new campus cafe, or hanging out on Friday night after Burning Heart, we are certainly making the most of our time together this semester. I am enjoying Spring Break back home with my family, but I look forward to returning to campus to be with friends and my brothers at 705 Mound. As always, thank you for reading!

SigEp

IN ZETA SLC

You can unsubscribe to some or all communications by the Sigma Phi Epsilon Indiana Zeta chapter. However, SigEp needs to communicate with you periodically about our chapter or events that may happen in your area, so we encourage you to allow general Fraternity communication through email. SigEp makes every effort to minimize the number of emails you receive. To update your contact and/or communication, preferences email us at sigep.externalrelations@valpo.edu.

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