

The

RED

DOOR

**The Official Newsletter of
Sigma Phi Epsilon – Indiana Zeta**



BALANCED MEN

Summer Edition!

Summer has come to an end and school is back in-session. Once again, 705 Mound St. is bustling with life, full of brothers prepared for another year. And though summer may be over, she has left us with many memories and experiences. This edition of the Red Door hopes to share a few of these stories and share how we've stayed busy during the academic break. Special congrats to those brothers who completed internships this summer and are not highlighted in this edition, we're proud of you! Without further ado, I present you Indiana Zeta's Summer Edition.

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Brotherly Adventures

Kevin Koenig

This summer, brother, Oliver Vinovskis and I went on a rafting adventure in the Lehigh gorge. It all started with a phone call. I had forgotten my calculator in the Sig Ep house and needed it for a summer class I was taking online. The semester had already ended and I was back at home before I realized I didn't have it. This proved to be a real challenge as I live three states away in New Jersey; I reached out to Oliver, knowing he lived in Pennsylvania. Fortunately, Oliver was still at Valpo for senior week. Oliver agreed to bring the calculator back, but instead of just meeting up and having him deliver me the calculator, I proposed we do something truly adventurous: raft 9 miles of Class III whitewater down the Lehigh River. While I was no stranger to the Lehigh, this particular section I had never explored before. I also had no idea whether Oliver would be a competent enough paddler to navigate through the rapids, which turned out to be a real concern. On top of this, the day we were going was a dam release day meaning the flow was going to be unlike anything I've experienced.

We met early in the morning, left Oliver's car downstream, and headed to the put-in location to set up my raft. The raft is sleek and resembles a canoe; it sits two people comfortably. We set off with excitement, but not even a tenth of a mile went by before disaster struck. The water began to pick up, and we could see rapids up ahead. We got through the first few rapids pretty easily, but one snuck up on us and caught the front of the boat. The back of the boat then swung violently, and we became perpendicular to the river. Water started to pool on our right side. We were quickly flipped over and cast into the icy water. This was the first time I had ever flipped my raft, and it was a surprise given my experience with more intense rapids in the past. My first instinct was to flip the raft back over, but it was hard to communicate over the roaring water. Oliver and I kept fighting each other. We ended up walking the boat to the bank of the river. During this whole ordeal people were shouting, "Pick your feet up! Pick your feet up! You're going to get yourself killed!" Looking back, their advice was pretty sound even if I am dubious of the real danger we were in that particular section. Two kayakers took the liberty to paddle over to the bank and after inspecting our vessel told us they weren't sure we were going to make it. Despite their skepticism and our shaky start, we decided to press on—and I'm glad we did.

All things considered, me and Oliver's trip down the Lehigh River was one of the most memorable moments of the summer. While theme parks offer similar thrills, can you really call the experience your own? Thousands pay \$70 to wait in line and experience the elation of a roller coaster, but the pleasure of a theme park is a manufactured commodity. The beauty of rafting is that you engage in an actual adventure where there are real risks and you don't know what's going to happen. There's a sort of freedom in that. Every trip down the river is unique: you always meet new people and the scenery and river conditions change depending on the time of the season. I can't imagine waiting hours to go on a roller coaster again and again, but I will happily take people down the same section of the Lehigh year after year. There's something to be said about being able to create your own adventures as opposed to letting corporations dictate your experience of joy.

We came across a few more rapids and handled them with ease. That was until we came across "No Way", a section of river so infamous they named it such. When you come across a set of rapids, as you go through, you always want to put yourself in a good position for the rapids to come. However, sometimes the rapids come by so quickly or catch you off guard and you end up devoting all your attention to the immediate "problem" rapid. You might get through that first rapid, but oftentimes you find yourself approaching a dead end in a maze that does not allow you to backtrack as the river pushes you to your demise. Such was the case for Oliver and I. Into the river we returned. This time we made a more conscious effort to pick our feet up amidst our floundering. Our entire focus was devoted to getting back into our boat, not paying attention to anything else around us. The boat kept twirling around making reboarding difficult. When we finally got in the boat again we were heading backwards down another rapid and were immediately ejected. The boat almost ran away from us this time. Luckily another paddler was able to get a hold of it, but in doing so dropped her paddle. I grabbed onto the boat with one arm and her paddle with the other, and all three of us went down the river like a tangled ball of yarn.



Pictured: Kevin and Oliver

Ruck Leadership Institute Mason Tulacz and Jack Colwell

This summer, I got the opportunity to attend the Ruck Leadership Institute, and it was incredible. Getting to meet brothers from all over the country and come together with the common goal of bettering ourselves was an experience I'll never forget. Fellow IN Zeta member Jack Colwell and I were fortunate enough to spend almost a whole week down at the University of Richmond where we both grew as individuals and leaders. The atmosphere in Richmond was palpable. 150 brothers from across the country gathered together to learn from experienced facilitators, tested leadership practices, and each other. Most of the programming took place in small group sessions led by facilitators and consisting of about 20 brothers from various chapters. Perhaps the craziest part of that week was that I went into those sessions not knowing anyone and left feeling almost as close with that group of men as those of my own chapter. It didn't take long for us to start talking and getting close, a team-based ropes course on the first full day also helps. That was a great way to kick things off as it required us to get close, communicate, and trust each other in a stressful environment. Overall between all the fun activities, leadership development programming, and good times spent with brothers I had an absolute blast. I feel as though I learned so much that I could bring back to my chapter, but also a lot about myself and how I operate as a leader. I am unsure if there has ever been a group of guys more motivated to go back and implement positive change in their chapter than after that week.



Pictured: Brothers taking on the ropes course



Pictured: Jack and Mason at closing dinner

Valpo OAs

Noah Houseworth and Zach Nielsen

This summer, brothers Noah Houseworth and Zach Nielsen had the privilege to work as Orientation Assistants (OAs) during FOCUS. Before every fall semester, new student orientation occurs where incoming students get acquainted with campus and resources available to them. The overall goal of FOCUS is to instill a sense of belonging in the students and validate their choice of selecting Valparaiso University for school. Our job as OAs was to lead groups of 10-15 students around campus to different sessions where they would learn about housing, dining, and other resources. Most importantly, we got to share their first meal in Founders with them!

Each FOCUS session had over 100 students attend along with their parents. Not only did we have the responsibility to leave a good impression on the students, but we also had to professionally represent the university and SigEp. My favorite part of the FOCUS day was the social hour where we were able to toss a football and hangout with the new students. This experience was extremely fulfilling, and it was amazing getting to welcome the new class of Beacons to Valpo.



Pictured:
OA Team



Pictured: Zach Nielsen
and Noah Houseworth

Scouting Summer

Jack Unger

As far as I am concerned, I have never worked a summer job. It's hard to call something a job if you feel like you are on vacation with your best friends. For the past four years, I've spent my summers on Lake Roberts in the woods of central Illinois teaching youth how to canoe, kayak, sail, row, swim, and more as an Ingersoll Scout Reservation staff member. This past summer I was the Lakefront Manager, which meant that I oversaw all the Lakefront merit badges on a 17-acre lake and helped train my staff to teach these merit badges. As part of a 35-person staff, we set up camp and went through numerous trainings for two weeks to prepare for the four weeks of Boy Scout summer camp and two weekends of Cub Scout camp for a total of eight intense weeks of boating, goofing off with Scouts, skits and songs, making fires, playing classic rock as loud as the speakers will go, trying not to lose your voice, and pulling pranks on other staff members. This has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Being able to make a difference in the lives of youth and give back to the program that has shaped me into the person I am today is why I keep coming back and I'll always be grateful for all the memories and friends I have made through my time at ISR.



Pictured: Jack at camp



Ping Pong Appreciation

Roman Van Meter

This Fall, the Indiana Zeta House has received a new amenity, one which has led to long nights and an active first floor. The amenity we speak of is, of course, a new ping pong table which we have received from the supportive grandparents of Joshua Cronin. While seemingly a minor addition to the Indiana Zeta House, it has truly created more moments of Brotherhood. What was once a quiet first floor past 8pm, is now a loud and competitive zone till midnight.

So, I speak for all of us when I say, we are grateful for the donation to the house. I expect a Ping Pong League to be in the works in addition to our Pool League. Here's to many late nights of Brotherhood!



Pictured:
Indiana Zeta



UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

Aug 31st-Sep 1st	Chapter Retreat
Sep 1st	Valpo Vibes
Sep 7th	Sigep Splash
Sep 13th	Fall Bid Night
Oct 4-6th	Homecoming
Oct 10-11th	Fall Break



LOOKING FORWARD

Get ready for the Fall newsletter covering Sigep Splash 2024, Valpo Vibes, and more!

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for reading this edition of The Red Door. The start of a new year is always full of transitions, and this one has been no exception. We are happy to share we have much planned for this year and continually seek to make campus better with our presence. As it bear repeating, all of our successes are thanks to the support of alumni, parents, and volunteers, like you. Thank you for making this fraternity different. Please feel free to reach out with any comments or questions you may have!

Roman Van Meter-
External Relations Chair

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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