

# Road Trip Redux—2006

By Il Hoon Kang, Gamma Theta/San Diego State '07

Everyone at Gamma Theta chapter, almost as soon as they become new members, hears the story of how four brothers drove from San Diego, CA to Northfield, VT for the 100th anniversary convention and won the Man Mile Award. Just the sheer thought and thrill of such a long and incredible journey to what must have been a memorable event instantly inspired talks of similar road trips to the 150th, not only to emulate the experience, but to leave our little mark in Gamma Theta's history.

"Think of how awesome a story that would be!" and, "Dude, could you imagine it fifty years from now?" rang through our ears and lit our imaginations. The chance to establish a unique tradition at a chapter already filled with so much history was too good to pass up. After months of talk and wishful thinking, it was settled; we were doing that road trip, no matter what.

The road trip was announced in conjunction with the reminders for convention at our chapter meetings. We stressed it almost every weekend to encourage brothers to attend the historic event. All the nagging paid off in the end with nine undergraduates having been convinced to go, four agreeing to "The Road Trip."

Talks of the road trip delighted David DeVol, an original road tripper and a member of our Alumni Corporation, and a proposal for the Alumni Corporation to pay for all the gas passed unanimously. With support from the Alumni Corporation as well as thorough approval and encouragement from our parents, it seemed we were on our way. Brother DeVol came in one night to talk about his experience, show us a film of his trip, and jot down the general route they took on a large map. To follow in his footsteps, we decided to follow the same route as closely as possible.

On the 1st of June at 10:20 a.m., Daniel Kelber, Justin Staggs, Mark Unger, and I were in a car and on our way! The first day of the trip took us out of our haven and into the flat open deserts. I was accustomed to seeing a mountain in the distance no matter where I drove in California, so the sight of flat ground caught me



Gamma Theta Chapter members pose for a photo before embarking on their Road Trip to Norwich.

by surprise. Openness, as far as the eye could see, was not broken by a single tree. It was both amazing and bothersome as the realization of being on the road, in the same car, with the same people, for two weeks hit me. A part of me thought, "What was I thinking?" while the other part was enthused over the adventure we had just started.

Jokes were abundant and detours filled our first day as signs for meteor craters and museums of the not so typical variety lined our drive through Arizona. The meteor crater charged an exorbitant price, so we turned back to the interstate. Fifteen dollars for a large hole in the ground just wasn't worth it. As we headed back for the Interstate, one of the funniest things of the whole trip occurred. Dan was speeding down the road when an unlucky rabbit chose the wrong day to cross. To sum it up, there were legs flying everywhere.

I thought a sensible destination for the first day would be Albuquerque, New Mexico. Boy, was I surprised when I woke up in the middle of the night, in the most awkward of positions, to find we were in Amarillo, Texas! We had driven a little over one thousand miles in one day! We got a motel room, slept for a couple of hours, woke up, showered, and prepared ourselves for Day Two.

The second day took us en route to Indianapolis. Along the way, we stopped at the Iota Beta chapter at Missouri State in

Springfield. They greeted us warmly and we all got to chat with them for a little while. They are great brothers. If you ever happen to drive through Missouri, try to get ahold of them. We took a group picture in front of their chapter house, which is amazing, and once again, we were on our way.

We finally reached Indianapolis in the middle of the night. We had contacted Philip Thornton (Gamma Theta, '05) who was finishing up his year as an LEC and we stayed at the apartment he shared with Ben Hill (Eta Kappa, '02), another consultant. On the third day, we rested and ate at Cracker Barrel for dinner. We ravaged the food there like pirates ravage booty. They should have a Cracker Barrel in every state!

Day Four took us to Washington D.C. The scenery was much more pleasant now, with abundant trees and rolling hills. The weather, however, took a turn for the worse as rain poured down on us from every direction through Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Virginia. It wouldn't have been so scary if the tires hadn't been so worn. Gliding, then regaining traction when the wheels were already out of alignment was enough to unnerve the strongest of people.

We finally reached D.C., where we got lost for three hours trying to find our way to the Eta Chi chapter at George Mason. The university does not endorse fraternity housing, so the chapter brothers rent houses together. We found throughout the trip that brothers were very courteous and welcomed us at every turn. After sightseeing in Washington the next day, we headed towards Epsilon Psi chapter at New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Their house was simply amazing. It used to be a fire station, and the first question out of our mouths was whether they had a pole. Sadly, they didn't, but the house was still awesome. In my opinion, it was the best looking chapter house we visited on our trip. The next day, the brothers there guided us to New York City, where we parted ways for the day. We did many of the touristy things like going to the top of the Empire State Building and checking out Times Square. The view from the top of the skyscraper

was awe-inspiring to say the least. Everyone below us looked like ants and we felt like we were on top of the world. Afterwards, we walked to the Colbert Report and waited in line for an hour hoping to get in since online reservations were unavailable. Unfortunately, they weren't letting stand-bys in at all! We were crushed and that's an understatement.

The next day lead to Boston where we stayed at Beta Chapter at M.I.T. By now, getting lost had become a habit, ever since entering the confusing roads of the East Coast. We drove for hours looking for the Beta house. Once again, the brothers greeted us kindly and, after a long night of wandering around the gigantic house, we slept. That morning, we picked up an extra passenger, Moose (Zeta Epsilon '05), packed the car as much as we could, and headed towards convention. We were running a little late so we didn't get to do anything in Boston, which was a shame since Dan and I really wanted some chowder (please use the accent). After a frantic couple of hours, we finally made it to Convention, fifteen minutes too late for the opening session. We checked in, unpacked and rested for the events that were ahead of us.

The rest of this issue covers the convention so I don't want to repeat anything. Needless to say, it was a great experience and we were glad we were able to attend. What really topped off the weekend was winning that Man Mile Award, since apparently we barely edged out Alpha Phi chapter (at least according to Phil). Dave DeVol and another brother from the old school road trip also attended and the six of us took a picture (see page 15).

The drive back was a rushed event. We had to be back in San Diego that Thursday. To keep things short, we made it to Denver in 31 hours. We visited Gamma Lambda chapter at the University of Denver while we were there and took time to chat with some of the brothers.

The last leg of our trip took us through the gorgeous Rocky Mountains, across Utah (which must be the road kill capitol of the U.S.) and into Las Vegas, and I'll just say, Vegas was a good time. Seeing that California sign the next day was like a breath of fresh air. The rest of the country is nice to visit but there's nothing like coming home.

I can't express in words how invaluable this experience was. Although I can't say that it was fun and games the whole trip, I can say that I gained a great deal of insight in understanding my brothers and learned a little more about myself. The brothers we met across the nation showed what it was to be true gentlemen, demonstrating our motto of the helping hand. I know this is something that we will keep with us for the rest of our lives and, I hope, fifty years from now, another group of brothers will do the same. ■



Bill Schuetze, Psi/University of Wisconsin-Madison '69 and speaker Judge Robert Arnold, Zeta Rho/University of Kentucky '69.

The planning committee had several tours for family members to enjoy while brothers attended Convention sessions. Right: wives enjoy a tour of the historic Trapp Family Lodge. Below: an inside look at the famous Rock of Ages Quarry in Barre, Vermont.



Brothers listen intently to Howard Alter as he addresses the group during the monument ceremony at the town of Norwich.

# Theta Chi Fraternity 150th



Bill Russo coordinated the event.



Undergrads and alumni rekindle friendships, meet new brothers.



Foundation scholars were congratulated by Foundation Board members.

# Anniversary Convention



Dale Taylor, Jim McEachern and Wes Wicker help to shape the past, present and future of the Fraternity.



Custom created banners display the symbols of Theta Chi.