

FALL 2019

THE NORTH STAR

The Official Newsletter of the Epsilon Alpha Chapter
of Phi Gamma Delta

Persistence Pays Off

SIMON YACKULIC
NORTH STAR PUBLISHER

Geoff Stewart, who pledged EA in '88 and graduated in '93, is the Owner, President and Distiller of Rig Hand Distillery, the largest craft distillery in the province, making 49 different kinds of spirits. Walking through the distillery you are confronted with the sweet smells of Rye Whisky and “Brum” – a spirit derived of Alberta-grown sugar beets that tastes similar to traditional rum, but sweeter. Rig Hand spirits are sold in a distinctive bottle that pays homage to Leduc No. 1, the rig that would lead to the major crude oil discovery in 1947, resulting in the oil boom that transformed Alberta.

Craft distilling became legal in Alberta four years ago, and Rig Hand was the second distillery to apply for a licence. Rig Hand now ships across Canada, and around the world – to the UK, to Greece, to Russia, and to the US. But it's taken lots of work to get to where it is today. (see pg 2,)

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(Continued from cover) "The US approval took almost two and a half years to get FDA approval, so you have to be persistent for sure. But persistence always pays off. And when you're passionate about it, working seven days a week, and 15 hours a day, it doesn't really even feel like work," notes Brother Stewart. "A lot of the brothers would say that they are not surprised that I went into the liquor business," he says, laughing. "Back in those days the fraternity was a little bit more rambunctious than the system is now, and we did have some pretty epic parties." Stewart's journey from undergrad to distilling liquor didn't necessarily proceed in a straight line – appropriate, perhaps, for someone distilling intoxicating spirits.

"I have an artist's soul and an entrepreneur's mind," Stewart elaborates. "When I went to university, I got a degree in dental hygiene, and I was bored of that after about a year. I was really interested in tattoos at that time, which was before they were really popular, so I took some time off and learned how to do tattoos, then went back to the U of A and took some art courses with the Faculty of Extension. For 23 years I cleaned teeth in the morning, and did tattoos in the afternoon."

"I ended up owning half a dozen studios, and it helped me develop some business sense and human resources. I was at the front of the [tattooing] wave, and I rode it, and when it crested it was time to sell those off. Now we're at the front of the wave with distilling."

He went to school in Seattle to learn more about distilling, did an apprenticeship at a bourbon distillery in Ohio, and when the law changed in Alberta he was prepared to go to market. Stewart describes the thrill of the industry as a constant learning opportunity.

"We've grown so fast with this business that every time we turn a corner there's 18 new challenges, so you're learning every day."

Rig Hand hosting a number of FIJI brothers

FIJIs at LAW

SIMON YACKULIC

I sat down with Brother Dave Hancock at New Tan Tan to enjoy a lunch of his choosing including Shrimp Dumplings and delicious Curry Squid. Hancock, now a Provincial Court judge after serving as an MLA from 1997 until 2014 and as the 15th Premier of Alberta in 2014, had just finished a morning at Family Court, and was happy to talk to me about his career path from the FIJI house, to the legislature, to the bench.

“It’s interesting because the area I’m in, I actually had a lot to do with when I was in government. I had Human Services, I had Justice, I had Education. I said, at my swearing in, that its ironic that I’m now at an area where I’ve been a major part of writing the laws that I’m dealing with, including the Youth Justice Act. ”

“Now when I’m thinking ‘what idiot thought this was a good idea’ I know who to blame,” Hancock joked, smiling.

Hancock noted that a law school background has served him well for various parts of his career, something he had chosen with careful consideration during his undergrad days.

“Going into law, I always was interested into going into either politics or business, which law provides a great background for,” Hancock said, noting that his education gave him a set of skills that lead him on the road to governance.

“Its about logic and advocacy. Everything you learn in law is about boiling things down to decision points and using logic to get there, and then to how to build advocacy around it. And really, that’s government’s process as well. ”

Hancock had advice for undergrads considering a legal career to keep their options open to what interests them as they progress through their education.

“Lots of time people going into law have a serious idea of what they want to go going into it, and that changes by time you get out because you find what you like. And I really encourage people to keep an open mind.”

The intergenerational inspiration grads like Hancock provide to the EA chapter cannot be overstated.

Dylan Hanwell, a current FIJI law student, noted that young FIJIs have a wealth of successful examples to draw on when considering their own future career prospects.

Brother Hanwell explained that it goes from FIJIs just ahead of him in school, who he could seek out information on the LSAT and courses to take, to having a familiar face at law school, to more storied examples.

“With Dave Hancock, you realize this guy is a very prominent lawyer and now a judge, while being someone I have a connection to and that I’ve met before and spoke with in a more informal setting.”

I connected with Hanwell to discuss the future of legal prospects in FIJland. Hanwell was enjoying a relaxing summer out at Pigeon Lake before heading back to school for the fall for his final year of law school before he starts articling at an Edmonton law firm. He had just finished a successful semester winning legal competitions – in Canada and abroad.

“A moot competition involves two teams who go head to head to argue a case,” Hanwell explained, noting that his legal adventures started with a victory at a Toronto moot, qualifying him and his team to compete in the Commonwealth moot, held once every two years.

“This year the moot was in Zambia. So the faculty sponsored our team to go, and we competed against other commonwealth countries and won that as well,” Hanwell said. “The Commonwealth Moot champions!” EA FIJI’s legal future continues to be bright.



President's Address

SUNGWOO BYUN

The Epsilon Alpha chapter of Phi Gamma Delta has had another successful and productive year. I am pleased to update you all on behalf of the whole chapter, including five newly initiated members from our winter pledge class. We began the fall semester with an extremely successful recruitment season, pledging 23 new members and initiating 12 new brothers. We also planned and participated in many social events with other Greek organizations on campus, including exchanges and philanthropic events. Over this past school year, brothers have shown exceptional commitment to their studies and extracurricular activities. We have achieved an increase in overall chapter GPA, with a 3.10 GPA for the year, and continued campus involvement through participating in intramurals and other student groups. In addition, our members currently hold positions on the Interfraternal Council, and numerous brothers have joined the Order of Omega Honours Society. Many brothers also volunteered with Week of Welcome and other campus leadership opportunities. We have continued membership education and development through recruitment, resume, time management, event training, sexual assault and suicide prevention workshops. These opportunities have helped align our chapter closer to our mission statement. Epsilon Alpha looks forward to continuing our success and growth in the upcoming school year. P!

Out in the community: Taste of Edmonton and Run to Red Deer

This year through July 18th - July 28th Phi Gamma Delta was back at it again volunteering for Taste of Edmonton. This is a yearly endeavour that works to build brotherhood as we sell Tasties (Taste of Edmonton Tickets). This is an all hands on deck experience as we fill over 300 volunteer shifts for the festival and are the second largest service group that helps events Edmonton contributing thousands of hours in just 11 tasty days. This ticketing takeover allows for us to give back to the Edmonton community that we adore.

In August, we ran in our annual Run to Red Deer with and against our Calgary Chapter, who started the run from the south. It is a friendly competition with one goal in mind: to raise as much money as we can for the Canadian Mental Health Association. We realize that mental health has such a large impact on our population and we want to do what we can to give back. This is where the run comes in, with rigorous training and preparation of course.

"Run to Red Deer is my favourite part about being in this fraternity. It is fantastic since it allows us to showcase what Phi Gamma Delta stands for and this year I am overwhelmingly proud of all of the brothers that contributed their time and effort to this philanthropic endeavor."

-Armeen Ahmadian



Graduate Chapter receives award!

YATIN SOOD

The Brightman Awards go to the most outstanding graduate chapters, determined primarily by their success in bringing graduates out to participate in the activities and events they host. Two awards are given each year: one for graduate chapters with more than 75 members and one for graduate chapters with less than 75 members. This year, the Epsilon Alpha Fiji Society placed second for the Brightman Award for graduate chapters with less than 75 members (a happy bump-up from last year when we placed third). Examples of events hosted by EAFS include Pig Dinner, Founder's Day Brunch and Grad-Undergrad. All of our events saw great numbers this year, with Pig Dinner 2018 in particular having our highest turnout in years with 107 graduate brothers attending. Awards like these are only possible because of you. We would like to thank all of our graduate brothers for their continued support and involvement! Not for college days alone.

Giving Day a Success

TRISTAN PATTERSON

PURPLE LEGIONNAIRE, EDUCATION FOUNDATION
BOARD MEMBER

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone who made the second annual Giving Day a success. The structure of the event shifted this year from one-week to only 36 hours, which may have meant some brothers missed the donation window. Still, 1209 donations raised \$168,344 USD across FIJIland. Epsilon Alpha raised the seventh-most with a total of 26 donors giving \$4835.52 total. In terms of disbursements, the bottleneck appears to be qualified undergraduate applicants and not available funds. I continue to be amazed at the calibre of applicants, but I know there are still deserving undergraduate brothers who have not applied. As we move into the fall, we can also look forward to awarding the Jonathan Doody Memorial Scholarship again to an incoming first year student in support of our undergraduate recruitment efforts. The Foundation also supports education initiatives through IHQ. Some of these we likely saw when we were undergraduates like alcohol awareness type training. Other initiatives include the relatively new Leadership Institute, which held two sessions in Kentucky this summer. Recording Secretary Jack Gooding ('18) attended – without cost thanks to generous graduate support – and learned important lessons to bring back to the chapter. Thank you again for your generous support of the Foundation and its important work supporting the values of the Fraternity.

Join EAFS!

We're looking for new recruits to lend a helping hand to the Epsilon Alpha FIJI Society.

Join EA's award-winning graduate chapter in hosting Pig Dinner, Founder's Day Brunch, the Grad-Undergrad hockey game, and other events.

If you're interested in getting involved, contact Yatin @ yatsood@gmail.com

For more EA graduate information, check out: <https://www.eafiji.ca/grad>

2020 Pig Dinner

TIM IRA

A group of brothers has met twice to have serious, and not-so-serious, deliberations around the 2020 Pig Dinner. First in February at Tiramisu Bistro in Edmonton, and second in July at Nisku's Rig Hand Distillery where a group of undergraduate and graduate brothers were hosted by owner, brother Geoff Stewart. This landmark Pig Dinner will take place on Saturday October 24th 2020, exactly 50 years after our chartering. The working group has decided to move forward with an engaging program of events for 2020, providing many opportunities for brothers to reconnect and also allowing for flexibility so that brothers can meet in smaller, more intimate groups in between events. So far, the prospective program includes a mixer for brothers and partners on Friday evening, followed by a formal chapter meeting and Pig Dinner on Saturday. The weekend wraps up with a brunch on Sunday. We are exploring optional Family programming for the Saturday for any partners or children who may be in attendance. Keep checking your FIJI email for update on planning. If you would like to get involved, please contact Tim Ira at tim.dc.ira@gmail.com. Connect with your brothers and keep the 2020 Pig front of mind. Perge.

EAFS Update

YATIN SOOD

It's been another great year for the Epsilon Alpha Fiji Society. 107 graduate brothers attended Pig Dinner 2018, up from 92 attendees in 2017. We continued to experiment with new venues for Exile's Dinner and Founder's Day Brunch, and had strong showings of graduate and undergraduate brothers at both events.

Once more, the graduate chapter held on to the EA cup in the annual Grad/Undergrad hockey game, squeaking out a win in the 10-9 showdown. Come summer, EAFS hosted our first slo pitch game, which was received with much enthusiasm.

We look forward to seeing you at this year's Pig Dinner on October 19th, and encourage you to connect with and reach out to brothers as we prepare for our 50th anniversary in 2020!

Update from the Section Chief

SIMON YACKULIC

I caught up with Section Chief Eric Hermanns during a round of golf at Edmonton's Victoria Golf Course. Brother Hermanns claims his best score at Victoria was an 89 – he wasn't on track to match his record score that day.

What is your role as Section Chief?

"I oversee Alberta's two chapters, the U of A and U of C, making sure that the undergraduate chapters and the graduate boards that support them are operating effectively... by ensuring they are properly staffed and that the undergrads have access to proper IHQ resources. On the flip side, I can be the conduit between IHQ and the chapters if IHQ needs something."

How are the Alberta chapters doing?

"Both are doing quite well – the U of A guys are coming up on one of the largest Taste of Edmonton efforts in a long time. The U of C guys are also doing quite well, they've had the largest chapter now that they've had in many years."

What is your goal as Section Chief?

"Honestly it's to see both chapters move forward on all fronts – we're at an exciting crossroads for both chapters, both are considering new houses that are in various stages of development. I want to help them with housing development as much as needed and connect them with the right resources to succeed. I think the goal, and the definition of success for me is to see both undergrad chapters succeed – financially, academically, in philanthropic, and to ensure that they have the support resources around them to get it done."

...on providing undergrads with a good start after university:

"The fraternity should be in a place where we can provide young men with the tools to go into life and be successful, whether that means elected office, in business, in the non-profit sector, or in government."





RUSH - Fall 2019

September 3: BBQ + Street Hockey + Video Games

September 4: Wings + Pool Night @ BP's

September 5: BBQ + Home Run Derby

September 6: BBQ + Social/Golden Bears Game

September 9: Monday Night Dinner

September 11: Rec Room

September 13: Pizza + Video/Board games/Poker

September 16: Monday Night Dinner

September 18: Alumni networking night

September 20: Go-karting

September 23: Monday Night Dinner

September 25: Study Night/Pizza

September 30: Monday Night Dinner

October 7: Monday Night Dinner