



beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Fall 2014

Reunion Open House at 528 June 5, 2015

All brothers returning to MIT for their Reunions in 2015 are invited and encouraged to visit 528 Beacon for the Reunion Open House on Friday, June 5, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. This occasion affords returning alumni a chance to relax and see the renovated house firsthand. This event is getting better with each passing year, bringing together graduating seniors, their parents, Reunion-bound alumni, local Boston-area alumni, and the actives living at 528 over the summer. A number of brothers from the Alumni Corporation and other local alumni, as well as the summer active officers will be on hand to greet people. We hope to see as many brothers and families as possible on Friday afternoon, June 5. All the composites from the last several decades are now displayed, so please come and find your years at 528. If you—and family/spouse/significant other—are sure you are coming, just RSVP to thetachi@mit.edu. You can expect a warm welcome.

Alumni Weekend April 24-26, 2015

This year's Alumni Weekend will be April 24-26, 2015, so mark your calendars!

Whether you haven't been back to the house in a long time, or you are a regular attendee, we would love to see you there! Expect a fun weekend of camaraderie, food, poker, softball, reminiscing, and even more food. A full schedule will be posted at <http://ox.mit.edu/alumni/weekend> closer to the event date.

ox.mit.edu

What Was It Like? Beta Chapter Recollections Across the Years

This is an extract from the much larger Theta Chi history compiled by Rick Gander '65, which was published for the Beta Chapter 100th Anniversary celebration. In this one, Dave "Zippy" Keselica '83 recounts the years from 1979 to 1983. Special thanks to Dave, Pete Rutherford '84, Art Neergaard '83, Brian Haney '86, Jay Keith '83, Cliff Denker '84, and Eric Weaver '83 for their contributions. This article has been shortened from its original version in order to fit in this issue of the *Button*.

I am: Dave Keselica (aka "Zippy") '83

Most Vivid Memories

HOUSE PRESIDENT ARRESTED IN BREAK-IN: When I was a sophomore, I had discovered the steam tunnels that ran underground from below the Infinite Corridor out to the edge of campus. Late one night (after a miserable 6.071 midterm), Theta Chi President Phil Kauffman '81, his girlfriend Liddy Tebbins, and I decided to travel the tunnels as far as we could. We entered through the Building 10 sub-basement and crouch-walked through the dark and steamy tunnels, stopping to marvel at the Tombs of the Unknown Tool along the way. We pushed our way through a loose gate and came to a small doorway at the end of the tunnel. Through the door we could see lots of pipes and valves—obviously something very interesting ahead—the source of all the pipes! As we were trying to force our way through, an alarm began to ring on the far side of the door, and we glimpsed someone

in a uniform running toward us. We turned tail and waddled as fast as we could back to the entrance. We crawled out to find a large group of campus police officers waiting for us. We were hauled into the station and all got warning levels put into our student files for trying to break into the Campus Power Plant. From that point on we were banned from all basements and rooftops on threat of expulsion.

HINDENBERG ON STORROW: During the summer, times were slow, and we sometimes had to dig deep for diversions. One summer we occupied ourselves building a 10-foot hot air balloon from crepe paper. We brought a metal trash can full of combustibles onto the roof as the original source of hot air. We hung a Sterno can beneath the balloon to continuously add more heat.

We lit it all off and released the balloon. It lifted high off the roof and began to drift toward the river, but then dropped toward the rush-hour traffic. It touched down on Storrow Drive and immediately was lit afire by the flaming Sterno can, causing panic among drivers and onlookers. I think the failure was more exciting than the success ever would have been.

THETA CHI TAGS KRESGE: In 1980, MIT re-roofed Kresge auditorium. As a first step, they re-tarred the roof. That smooth, black surface proved to be too tempting to the Theta Chi pledges from the class of '83 (Keselica, Neergaard, Lazcano, Frank), who climbed up onto

(continued on page two)

Annual Fund Update

Our Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Fund is off to a good start. Since June 23, brothers have already contributed \$5,950 toward our annual goal of \$25,000. The funds raised will be used to pay down the mortgages the Alumni Corporation has taken out to fund the renovations of the house and to fund maintenance needed to keep up the gains we made during the renovations.

The actives have contributed as well, as rent has been raised from \$50,000 per year to \$70,000 to cover the costs of maintaining the house. The annual rent will be

raised to the final level of \$75,000 in the next academic year. We alumni should match this contribution by the same amount. Please consider donating \$500 to the annual fund this year. If 50 of us donate \$500, we will meet our goal.

The attached fundraising letter explains how to contribute. Thanks to your contributions and the rent from the actives, we will ensure the house will be in great shape for years to come.

John Helferich '79

What Was it Like? (cont'd)

Kresge late one night and painted a giant white "ΘX" on top with water soluble paint. Our president was once again called back to the dean's office for a reaming.

GAME HACKING (from Cliff Denker '84): Before we had a pool table, we usually had a video game in the front hall. We would convince a local video-game broker to leave a game at our house. For the first week or so, we would load the machine with quarters, but then somebody would inevitably break into the machine and screw around with it—put it on free play, switch the language, etc. The revenue would drop off after a few weeks and they would bring us a different game. We went through *Asteroids*, *Defender*, *Missile Command*. The machines took a real beating, and I remember as they were removing the last machine from the house (I think it was *Missile Command* set on "free play" and in German—"Bonus Stadt!"), the back of the machine fell right off as they were carrying it down the front steps. We were blacklisted shortly thereafter.

The House

All freshmen slept in the Ward (where they were always vulnerable to late-night Ward Raids after parties). Each freshman had a desk in a brother's room. Freshmen rotated rooms quarterly. We also had one (or two depending on the year) apartments on Marlboro Street for overflow—always referred to as "The Den of Sin" even in the phonebook (listed as "Of Sin, Den")

We handled repairs on our own. House manager set up weekend tasks for whippers (pledges) and also the work schedule for Help Week. Brothers signed up for waiter duty, and brothers were paid to cook all our own meals. Some were better cooks than others, and dinners were the most dangerous. It wasn't unusual for the cook to get tied up at class, and then try to cook a two-hour meal in 45 minutes. One time, Phil Kauffman '81 learned the hard way that you can't cook

Cornish hens in half the time if you double the temperature.

Activities

I was involved in IFC Judicial Committee, Jim Murray '82 was IFC chairman as a senior and was heavily involved in student government activities (affectionately referred to as "grease" back then). I think Chip Hance '81 was also an IFC officer. The late Phil Kauffman '81, also known as Phil-'Harmonic', was a LogaRhythm.

Recreational activities brothers engaged in together away from the house included an annual retreat (including sledding on cafeteria trays), an annual ski weekend, trips to Walden Pond, George's Island, and Rock Point.

In the summer, rafting on the Charles River became a popular activity. We had a few four-man rafts. Somebody would drive a group up to drop us in the river near Harvard boathouse and you could drift down the river over the course of a few hours. Sometimes we would drift all the way down the Esplanade and then take the T home (the big raft generated a lot of stares). Mike Jassowski '86 also had a gas-powered surfboard that he would occasionally take out on the Charles.

Sports

The main varsity concentration was crew. Intramural strengths were in basketball, football, and Frisbee.

Social

We had a lot of dates from Simmons, Fisher, and Wellesley. Around once per month, we would have an open party. We would put up party posters at local women's colleges and usually drew a good crowd. The social chairmen took great pride in creating party posters. One of the more memorable poster themes was "come to our party or we will shoot this dog." We kept a bouncer at the door to keep the "randoms" out. Guys could only attend if they knew a brother.

Yes, we would sign up for bartender duty. It was the best way to meet women!

Once per year (I think) we would do a semiformal dinner and party. A nice meal with wine and cheese before. Popular restaurants were Fathers' Five (Dad's Dive) on the corner of Marlboro and Mass Ave. Dad's featured a delightful mix of MIT students and bikers. There were a couple of shootings during my time at Theta Chi. Trips down to the waterfront to NoName, our favorite seafood restaurant, and Scorpion Bowls at Aku Aku.

During the summer, we would have frozen daiquiri parties. We burned up blenders on a routine basis, and the touching ritual of throwing dead blenders from the roof was an important part of every daiquiri party.

The World

We weren't a very politically active bunch. The John Anderson candidacy for president was a big deal, and the election of Reagan polarized the house to some extent.

When Reagan was president, George Bush Sr. rode in a motorcade down Mass. Ave. to give some speech at Harvard and was pelted with rotten fruit in front of MIT. Seems some of our fellow students didn't appreciate the administration's involvement in Nicaragua.

The big social trend was the growth of punk and new wave. The house very quickly evolved away from disco and toward punk in 1983, and we developed a reputation as a punk house with the local women's colleges (which made all the interesting women's come to our parties).

Another milestone occurred in 1982—Mike Jassowski '86 was, to my recollection, the first brother to have a PC in his room. At the time, this seemed very strange—why would he need a PC when everybody else had a programmable calculator that worked just fine? I think within three years every brother probably had a computer on his desk.

Work Week Projects Help to Attract New Members

We went into this Work Week with the idea of making our house look as presentable and appealing as possible to freshmen during Rush. Aside from the usual maintenance that gets done during Work Week, our two major undertakings this year were a new electrical system in the library and a new design of our front lawn. In the library, we did some electrical work that allowed us to more safely secure our wiring, as well as upgrade to a new set of speakers, which

are self-powered and therefore more resistant to being over-driven.

Additionally, we redesigned the front lawn of the house entirely. We removed the wood-chips that were there and placed red rocks with "ΘX" spelled in white letters. We think it turned out great and have received lots of compliments on the new design!

Hussein Abdallah '16
Work Week Manager



Deniz Aksel '16, Gustavo Montalvo '17,
Charlie Andrews '17, Hussein Abdallah '16,
and Jack Spira '17.

Improving Rush Year After Year

We have passed yet another recruitment period, and it's my pleasure to announce that it has been a success! We now have 10 new members, each is a great addition to our community. This year's freshmen represent a wide variety of backgrounds, as well as interests and personalities, adding to the diversity that has been one of the strengths of our house for at least the past few years.

We kicked off Rush this year on a humorous note by hosting a pool party at the front of the house. We had an inflatable pool with a volleyball net over it so friends and freshmen could take a dip and play. Meanwhile Brother Jose Burgos '15 and our new Graduate Resident Adviser Michael McClellan made yak burgers for all of the attendees. The turnout was phenomenal: We had around 100 freshmen come through the house, get tours of the house, and talk to our brothers and Rush woman while enjoying refreshments. Following this event we maintained the momentum by playing the popular video game *Fruit Ninja* while using our real-life fruit ninja skills to make smoothies! We finished the day by hosting a very successful party, in which we got the opportunity to dance on the platforms we built during Work Week.

The days following we reprised our most popular events from last year, which included a trip to Cape Cod for parasailing and jet skiing, a day out at the rock climbing gym (thanks to the generosity of

alumnus and gym owner Joe Hardy '05) and an afternoon playing Whirlyball—this is a combination of lacrosse, basketball, hockey, and bumper carts. This is not a joke; look it up! In the evenings we reprised some of our favorite Rush dinner locations, including southern barbecue restaurant Redbones and Sacco's candlepin bowling gym. We finished the week by renting an RV and driving up to the beautiful Hampton beach in New Hampshire, where we went boogie boarding and enjoyed Chipotle food. As Rush Chair, I had the great honor of being dunked into the ocean. We even had the opportunity to enjoy some fireworks, since some of the other people on the beach had brought them along. It was a very memorable evening—many of the pledges remarked that it was the best Rush event that they had attended.

The following day we had our now traditional pledge day, in which the new members are granted the right to dare any brother to complete a task in exchange for pledging. This year we had some particularly funny pledge tasks. By far, the house favorite was the task requested by new member Luis Mora. He asked that a group of us buy onesies from Target and that we have a pillow fight in downtown Boston. We ended up having our pillow fight in front of historic Faneuil Hall, which drew the attention of

everyone in the area and amused everyone who had an opportunity to witness it. We even had some of the spectators join us, and a street performer was kind enough to perform some drumming during the fight to make our showdown even more epic.

Rush was very successful and fun, and as a house we find ourselves very satisfied with the results. Although we have grown over the past two years, we have no plans to become complacent with the status quo. We are hoping to continue growing over the next couple of years so that our house might have 40 undergraduate members every year. In the recent past we have enjoyed much success in areas ranging from student government representation to campus presence growth and community service, and we believe that larger numbers are consistent with our desire to continue to improve our performance in all of these areas. Besides rushing next year in the fall, we plan to continue rushing through the fall and spring, as new members usually have friends who prove to be fitting additions to our house. I welcome you all to celebrate this year's success with us, and I hope that you will have the opportunity to meet our new members during next year's Alumni Weekend!

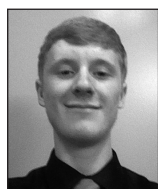
Daniel Bulhosa-Solorzano '15

Introducing the Pledge Class of 2018!

The pledge program this year has retained many of our house's traditional activities, while bringing back older ones that had disappeared in recent years and also introducing new ones. This year's pledges are participating in sorority serenades, SK's Late Night and APhi's King of Hearts philanthropy events, a Subway Jack in New York City, and a pledge project, which will involve improving lighting on the second floor. I've also introduced Beta Chats, consisting of short conversations between every pledge and brother to allow for better Big Brother pairings. On top of that, we're trying out a Big Sister program for the first time this year, to provide pledges with a perspective on life at MIT that they wouldn't find in a fraternity male. Finally, an alumni mentorship program is in the works, which would introduce pledges to Beta Chapter alumni with professional experience in fields of interest to each pledge.

Daniel Mirry
Brookline, Massachusetts
Major: 5/21M

I come from the far town of Brookline, Massachusetts, bringing with me an interest in chemistry, a passion for theater, and a love of the arts. I enjoy photography, skiing, scuba diving, and sitting by the fireplace with a New Yorker and a nice cup of ginger tea on a snowy January evening.



Jesse Gibson
Manassas, Virginia
Major: Probably Course 2 with a Course 3 minor or 2A

Outside of school, I really enjoy building things. I particularly like building robots—I was on my high school robotics team and am currently on the MIT robotics team

participating in the NASA Centennial Challenge. Aside from building things, I like trying to teach myself about electronics and programming, and pretending I know what's going on. I'm fascinated by languages—I studied Spanish for six years and, my eventual goal is to learn Russian, Arabic, and Chinese. I've also done martial arts for more than 14 years; *tae kwon do* since age four and *hap ki do* since age nine. Other things I enjoy doing include reading, biking, hiking, cooking, and finding free food.

Daniel Rigobon
Weston, Massachusetts
Major: Course 16

I love playing guitar and singing, salsa dancing, spending time with friends, and talking with people. I also like going to the beach, listening to music in my free time, and playing



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Introducing the Pledge Class of 2018, cont'd

soccer every once in a while with friends. I'm excited to be a part of Theta Chi and spend the next four years of my life at MIT.



Quinlan Johns
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Major: Course 20

I am considering studying chemistry, bioengineering, and materials science at MIT, and I enjoy reading (anything and everything), running, rowing, and relaxing—all preferably in the sun.

Stephen Townsend
Hingham, Massachusetts
Major: Course 2

I row at MIT on the heavy-weight men's team. I am a huge Boston sports fan, and especially love the Pats and Bruins. My hobbies include exploring the city, hanging out with friends, dodgeball, basketball, skiing, and hitting up the beach.



Justin Reid
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Major: 8/14
My academic interests are physics and economics. My hobbies are gymnastics, tennis, and music.

Nahom Marie
San Diego, California
Major: 6-2

I'm a prospective EECS major who likes working on making apps and small tech projects. When I'm not cramming for tests, I like watching movies and chilling with friends. I'm an avid soccer fan, and I'm allergic to bad food.



Luis Mora
Los Angeles, California
Major: 2
I come from Los Angeles, California, the City of Angels. I came to MIT to become a

mechanical engineer, but while I'm at the best university in the world, I will have fun. I like to listen to music, jam with other musicians on my violin, work on cars, and build things.

William Reid
London, United Kingdom
Major: Course 1

I'm an exchange student from Cambridge University. Outside of class, I stick to England's strengths with the sitting-down sports: sailing and rowing.



Dominiquo Santistevan
Pueblo, Colorado
Major: Course 18C
Chicken and Sriracha. Chipotle. "How much you wanna bet I can throw a football over them mountains?" -Uncle Rico. Jokes on you, I am Uncle Rico ... Ni-quo. Oh, and chilling.

Recent Graduates Reunite in Europe

To celebrate our graduation, many of the seniors and our friends from around MIT went on a trip to Europe this summer spanning over a month. Our widely varied itineraries led to constantly changing groups in constantly changing cities including Berlin, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Prague, Budapest, London, and more. While some stayed in Europe for a week or two, others like myself stayed for up to six weeks trying to enjoy as much vacation time as possible before returning to the states to start our careers.

In Berlin, we wound up with a large group including me, Jared Katz '14, Vlad Kontsevoi '14, and several of our friends from around Boston. We toured the city during the day looking at the old historical buildings and the famous street art in areas by the Berlin Wall. At night, we experienced the underground nightclubs featuring deep tech house music we'd come to know through parties at Theta Chi with Hal-dun Anil '15 as the disc jockey. We weren't the only ones who had left for Europe post-graduation, as we ran into several of our graduating classmates in various places in Berlin.

A week later, in

Amsterdam, we met up with Steven Ojeda '12, Jonny Casey '15 (Cambridge-MIT Exchange), and Robbie Shaw '16, who was interning at Shell for the summer. There we enjoyed wandering through the streets and parks, and boating on the canals, as well as visiting some of the famous museums like the Van Gogh Museum and Anne Frank Museum.

Next, we joined Naim Lujan '14 and some of Jonny's English friends for the Balaton Sound music festival in a remote part of Hungary a couple hours from Budapest. There we enjoyed swimming in the sound,

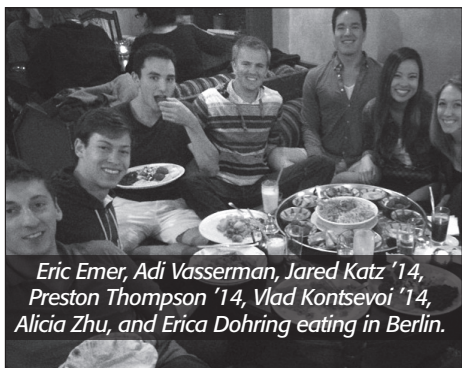


Jared Katz '14, Preston Thompson '14, and Jonny Casey '15 wandering the streets of Amsterdam.

meeting people from all over the world, and dancing to various types of electronic music late into the night. One night, heavy rain forced lots of the festival goers, including ourselves, to one of the stages inside a large tent. Due to the Christmas lights we were all wearing and hopefully also due to our amazing

dancing skills, we attracted a large crowd to our section of the tent and danced for hours until we could see the sun rising outside the tent and deemed it time to call it a night.

Preston Thompson '14



Eric Emer, Adi Vasserman, Jared Katz '14, Preston Thompson '14, Vlad Kontsevoi '14, Alicia Zhu, and Erica Dohring eating in Berlin.



Steven Ojeda '12, Erica Dohring, Jonny Casey '15, Sebastian Shields, Preston Thompson '14, Jared Katz '14, and Stuary Gray eating in Budapest.

Featured Alumni Interview: Ben Glass '07 Takes Wind Power to the Skies

As part of a series to highlight notable Theta Chi alumni, we interviewed Beta Chapter alumnus and entrepreneur Ben Glass '07, SM '10. Ben co-founded Altaeros Energies in 2010. Altaeros has developed a Buoyant Airborne Turbine (BAT)—a portable, inflatable wind turbine that is airborne 1,000 feet above the ground, but tethered to a ground station. At that altitude, it can harness power from winds typically five to eight times more powerful than on the ground. This technology has the potential to provide electricity in remote areas, including Alaska, where Altaeros was awarded a grant to support testing the equipment over 18 months. Other applications could include disaster relief, the mining sector, and the entertainment sector. Find out more on their website at www.altaerosenergies.com.

What got you interested in windpower?

I had been interested in clean energy for quite a while, and I was Course 16 (Aero/Astro) at MIT. I was interested in wind energy, and it fit well with my studies, so I did a senior 16.62X project where my partner and I designed, built, and tested an array of seven small wind turbines in the Wright

Brothers Wind Tunnel.

Do you have any advice to give a brother who is trying to start a company?

Do it! It's much more fulfilling than working for a big company (I assume ... I've never worked for a big company), and this is the time in your life when you have relatively little to risk. If it doesn't work out, it will still be a great experience, and you can go get a real job in a year or two if you have to.

Do any other Theta Chi brothers work at Altaeros?

Steve Howland '11 interned with us for a summer, and we sponsored a UROP with Ade Esho '12. While they haven't actually worked with Altaeros, Ken Schrock '06 and Adam Vacarro '07 have been "informal advisers" since the beginning of the project.

What was your favorite part of living in the house?

Having a built-in sense of community was great, always having people around to hang out with.

What's the funniest story you have about your time at OX?

Story 1: Back when the house had rats (I assume it no longer does), I was having breakfast in the dining room. A rat ran across the floor, and another brother's girlfriend turned and yelped. I thought she was scared until she exclaimed "Oh ... a squirrel! It's so cute." Story 2: The house had gotten a bunch of stink bombs delivered because of a promotion from the *Jackass* movie right around the time of Jason Witzberger's ('07) birthday. Jason had locked himself in his room (3SF) to avoid getting showered, so a bunch of us slid the stink bombs under his door in an attempt to gas him out of



Ben Glass speaking about Altaeros in Moscow in October 2014.

his room. Jason responded by shoving a towel into the crack to prevent any more stink bombs. Phil Rogoz '10 crawled through the window in 3LF, onto the fire escape, and made his way in through Jason's window. After about five minutes of yelling, wrestling, and book cases getting knocked over, Phil managed to open Jason's locked door, allowing the rest of us in to make sure the time-honored tradition of birthday showers was upheld.

What rooms did you live in at OX?

I lived in the Cavern, 3LR, and the Ward/Alley.

What officer position did you hold?

Emsup

Any good stories about cooking for the house?

I didn't routinely cook any of the daily meals, but I did some of the special event meals. I can't remember what dinner it was, but carrying a 50-pound bag of chicken legs back from Mayflower Poultry in Cambridge was a fun experience.

Who are your big/little brothers?

Ken Schrock was my big brother.

If you know somebody who should be featured in the Featured Alumni series, please contact David Baumgartner at davidsb@alum.mit.edu or Mark Tompkins at markt02@alum.mit.edu.



Ben working in Maine getting the most recent BAT prototype ready, while representing OX with his T-shirt.

our alumni send their news

Bill Rapoport '46 is a volunteer in two New Jersey counties as a handyman. He mostly installs grab bars in shower areas. Bill keeps in sporadic contact with **Dick Ballan** and **Dan Kelley**, both high school classmates, 1946 MIT graduates, and Beta brothers. Catch up with Bill by sending postal mail to 252 Longwood Ln., Somerset, NJ 08873; or by sending email to w.j.rapoport@gmail.com.

Gary Rose '65 retired from his encore career as a fundraiser for United Way of King County, and he's moved to Arizona. Reconnect with him by writing to 12397 W. Bajada

Rd., Peoria, AZ 85383; or by sending email to gbrose@msn.com.

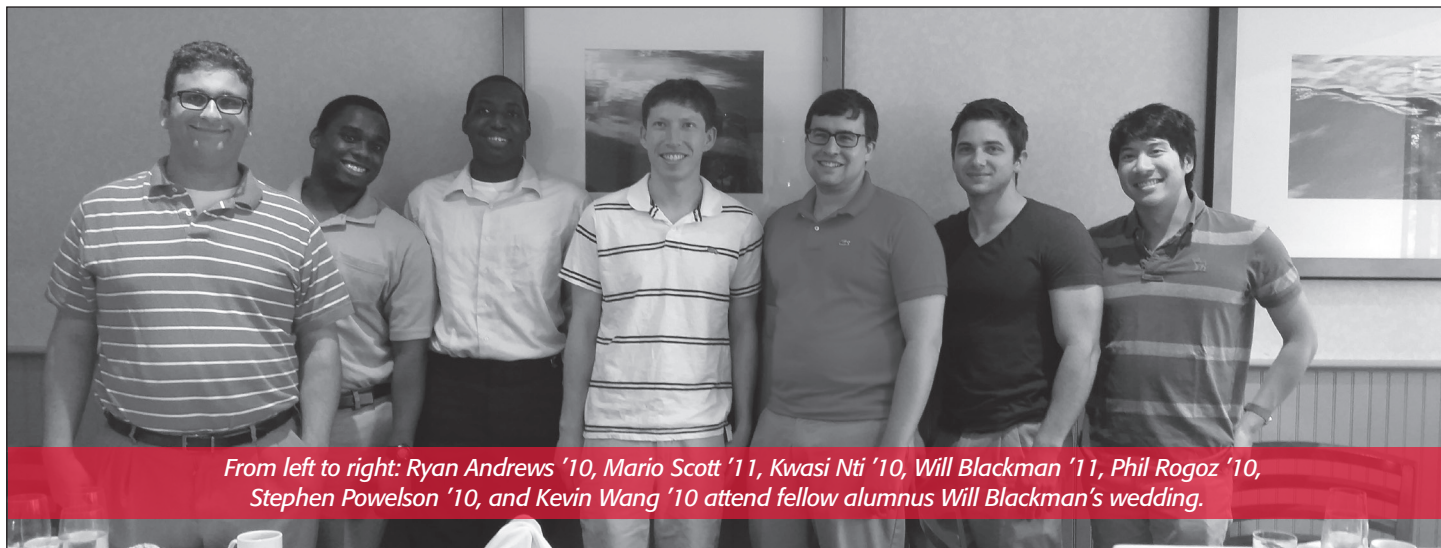
"My oldest son, Tony, is in the U.S. Army stationed in Germany," reports **Frank Ruiz '76**. "He was deployed to Gaziantep, Turkey, from December 2013 through July, guarding a patriot missile battery. I'm glad he was pulled out when he was as Isis was overrunning Syria just south of him. My youngest son, Benny, just graduated from high school and is working at the local Radio Shack. He is looking to head to Texas Tech in the spring. My wife, Rauny, and I are doing well. We spend a lot of

time together fishing and playing with our two German Shepherds, Jayda and Jewel." Write to Frank at 2108 Beachview Dr., Flower Mound, TX 75022; or send email to frankruiz@att.net.

deceased

Fred W. Aldrich Jr. '51
June 29, 2014

Christopher S. Ishii '68
November 14, 2013



From left to right: Ryan Andrews '10, Mario Scott '11, Kwasi Nti '10, Will Blackman '11, Phil Rogoz '10, Stephen Powelson '10, and Kevin Wang '10 attend fellow alumnus Will Blackman's wedding.



Brothers Participate in Charity Ultimate Frisbee

On September 14, actives John Graham, Alessandro Lira, Robbie Shaw, and Nikko James joined pledge Jessie Gibson and the new Resident Adviser Michael McClellan to drive out to Bedford High School for a charity Ultimate Frisbee tournament.

The tournament, run by a long-time family friend of John's who moved to Bedford last year, benefited the Wounded Warrior Project and served as a community service event to bolster his application to the United States Naval Academy. The brothers enjoyed the exercise and camaraderie. They finished in third place.