



beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Spring 2016

New Career Network for Alumni & Actives

Hello Brothers,

As part of an effort to connect different generations of the Beta Chapter, we're starting a career network to connect actives with more experienced brothers in their field. It will give actives an opportunity to learn more about their field and alumni a chance to connect with the chapter. We want to match up actives with the right alumni mentor, so if you're willing to participate please submit your information at <http://bit.ly/1ZSAMkT>.

Thanks,
Krishna Esteva '13

Reunion Open House JUNE 3, 2016

This event has become a very enjoyable annual event, which brings together graduating seniors, their parents, Reunion-bound alumni, local Boston-area alumni, and a several actives living at 528 Beacon Street over the summer. All these folks are invited and encouraged to visit 528 Beacon on Friday, June 3 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. This occasion affords returning alumni a chance to relax and see the house and all the improvements over the last several years. We think you will be pleased with the house and especially with the strength and diversity of the actives, who had a very strong recruitment last fall. A number of brothers from the Alumni Corporation, as well as the undergraduate summer officers will be on hand to greet people. You can expect lots of conversation and memories from various era, as well as ample snacks and refreshments. We hope to see as many brothers and families as possible on Friday afternoon, June 3. If you are sure you are coming, RSVP to thetachi@mit.edu. You can expect a warm welcome.

ox.mit.edu

The First-Ever Green Building Hack

The Green Building (building 56 at MIT) was the tallest building in Cambridge when it was completed in 1964. Today, people can play Tetris on its grid or create intricate patterns with lights. This tradition has long roots. Shortly before the building was to open, a cadre of brothers emblazoned a 13-story OX in lights on the façade, much to the delight of the cheering brothers looking on across the Charles. The Tech issue of March 24, 1964, reported on this feat and carried the fuzzy picture shown here. Below is a firsthand account by the mastermind of this caper, Diogo Teixeira '67, who scouted the building and led a team of four brothers that fateful night.

As the Green Building went up in 1964, it became obvious that a possible hack would be a fabulous opportunity. At the time, I was living in fifth small rear with Tom Franzel '66, and we had a reasonably good view of the building. Putting our fraternity's signature in the sky just seemed like the right thing to do. The issue was: could we do it and, if so, how?

As I recall, it was the first appearance of lights in the windows that triggered everything. The building was almost complete. I made a reconnaissance trip into the building, perhaps with another brother. First, could we get into the building at all? Second, were

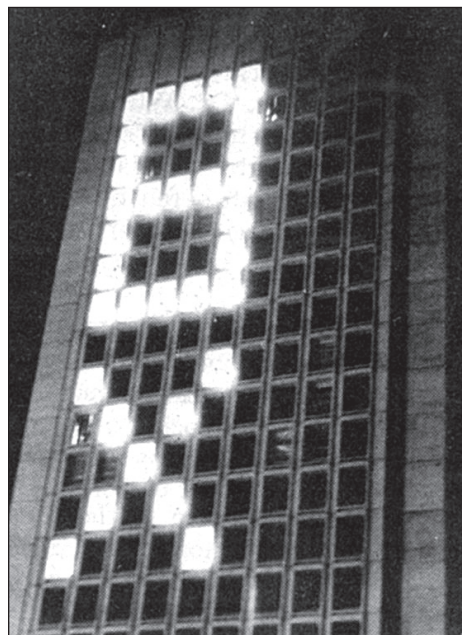
the lights installed in all the rooms and were the switches accessible, i.e. not programmed or somehow locked up? Were the rooms locked? Last, what was the light-window relationship? The pattern was easy enough to diagram, but we had to know if there might be conference rooms, for instance, that would have multiple windows and the pattern would have to adjust for this.

My memory is a bit dim on all this, but I think the reconnaissance went well. We could get in and at least one room's light was tested. We couldn't test all the lights, of course, but I do think we went floor by floor checking that the rooms were all open and trying to find the light switch. There may have been one or two rooms that were locked, for reasons unknown, or where we couldn't find a light switch, and we had to adjust the pattern accordingly. We didn't want to cause unneeded damage. But it looked like it would work.

We picked the next night and had a team of four and we split up the floors. One guy took the top three or four floors, another the next three or four, and so on. We worked out exactly which switches to turn on. Different patterns were possible, but we fixed on the one you see in the picture. It wasn't rocket science but there was some satisfaction in using just a little of the institute's logical reasoning skills. So, each brother had a memorized pattern for each of his assigned floors—light here, here, and here, but not here.

On the big night, we walked over, snuck in with flashlights since there weren't any lights on in the halls and walked up and waited a few minutes for each brother to get in place. We all started from the west end, then we all ran quickly along each floor, flipping switches, and then running down one floor and then running back in the other direction. We were concerned not to be apprehended in the process, thereby ruining the effect. When each brother finished his run, he quickly left and we gathered outside to see our handiwork.

Back at 528 our handiwork was being witnessed by a crowd of cheering brothers, who welcomed us back as conquering heroes. We clearly scored a coup for Theta Chi.



Diogo Teixeira '67
with a foreword by Ray Ferrara '67

State of the Chapter

Compared to where the house was when I came in as a freshman, today we are doing a lot better and we have really come a long way since then. Back in 2013 when I was a pledge, the house was smaller than usual and consisted of only 18 brothers. We were struggling to meet National HQ's requirements for minimum chapter size. Today, we have impressively grown back up to 34 active brothers (not including some additional brothers abroad), effectively doubling the size of the house over the last couple of years. When previously we were having concerns of not having enough brothers living in the house leading to higher housebills, among other things, today we have to deal with the not-so-bad problem of being able to actually fit everybody into the house. The massive strides we have made in the last couple years are reflected in the fact that our chapter has won the award for "Most Improved Chapter" from MIT's Interfraternity Council for two years in a row. Since my time here, the Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT has never been in a better place.

Our rush was very successful this year, continuing the success from the previous

two years. We have gained over a dozen new brothers in the last year, and these accomplishments can be largely attributed to changes that our excellent rush chairmen and marshals have made in recent years. Our rush chairs have gotten a better system down for rush that ensures that the entire house is not overworked, resulting in everyone working more effectively. The momentum from this rush continued onto the pledge program. Two years ago our pledge marshal decided to get some brothers together to evaluate the pledge program and make improvements to it. Since then, we have had 100% retention of pledges over the past two rushes.

Many of our less involved officer programs have also been revitalized by brothers who are driven to improve these positions. Our scholarship program is expanding beyond review sessions for finals and tutoring to career-oriented help for our younger brothers. The effect of our scholarship program has shown in the success of our brothers over the past four semesters, reaching a GPA as high as 4.56 (well above the MIT fraternity average). We have been more involved in philanthropy events that sororities put on, improving our interfraternal relations and campus image. The quality of our

brother-cooked meals has greatly improved since our steward took it upon himself to fix this. Our social program has been very successful, with many people regularly coming to our parties, without once getting any of our parties shut down. Many other officer positions have shown similar improvement, showing our brothers' dedication to improving our chapter even if there is nothing obvious to improve.

Theta Chi's Beta Chapter here at MIT has seen a lot of improvement recently, and we are currently working on getting even further. While in the past we would have settled if things seemed acceptable, now we strive to improve upon all facets of our chapter, making sure that we don't get to a stagnant state, or even worse, one where the quality of our house begins to decline. Our brothers are very driven to continue the good work, and I am very excited for what the future of this house will hold.

Gustavo Montalvo '17
Undergraduate President

Day of Service in Cambridge

Throughout the spring semester, MIT celebrated the 100th anniversary of its move to Cambridge. As part of the celebration of this centennial and the community organizations committed to the wellbeing of the Cambridge and Boston communities, the institute organized an event for the entire MIT community to come together. This event, CityDays: MIT2016, planned to mobilize 500 MIT community members to engage with the Cambridge and Greater Boston community by volunteering with neighborhood agencies. The event was on Tuesday, April 19th, and it was open to students, faculty, alumni, and staff.

The goal of this event was to strengthen bonds between living groups, athletic teams, lab partners, and other student groups through joint service. Individual volunteers were also encouraged to be a part of this and future one-day volunteer opportunities through CityDays. Community partners included organizations like Cradles to Crayons, the Greater Boston Food Bank, Community Servings, Inner-City Weightlifting, Cambridge Community Television, Cambridge Science Festival, 826 Boston, Fresh Pond Reservation, Revision Urban Farm, and more.

Plans for Graduating Seniors

The house's senior class, while being a smaller class than is typical, has made just as big of an impact as any other. They really did play an integral role in recovering from our bad rush three years ago, and consequently laid the foundation for the years to come. This class will be missed, and we look forward to hearing from them after graduation. Below are the plans of our four seniors:

Hussein Abdallah: Hussein will be staying at MIT for an MEng EE, where he will be studying control theory and synthetic biology. After that, he may take some time off and eventually apply to med school.

Deniz Aksel: Deniz Aksel plans on pursuing a PhD in biophysics or bioengineering. He is currently deciding between UC Berkeley and Harvard University, and

hopes to focus on creating new tools to study the physics of biological development and morphogenesis wherever he ends up. He's excited about doing some awesome science and eventually entering academia, and staying weird.

John Graham: John will be staying at MIT next year to finish out ROTC training and start working toward a master's degree. After MIT, he will attend US Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training.

Robbie Shaw: Robert Hong Jun Shaw plans to use his first year after graduating obtaining a Master of Engineering from the MIT Chemical Engineering Practice School. He intends to use the year to decide whether he wants to pursue a PhD or go into industry with the eventual goal to work on clean energy technologies or biofuels.

Featured Alumnus Interview: Ralph Hulseman '80

As part of a series to highlight Theta Chi alumni, we interviewed Ralph Hulseman '80. Ralph was a chemical engineering major who recently started a company called Hoowaki. He worked for 25 years at Michelin, and has some great stories about living in the house. The interview has been edited for space.



What did you study at MIT, and what have you done since then?

Chemical engineering. My year, Charlie Albright '80 and I were the chemical engineers in the pledge class. So we teamed up on everything. And then I went to chemical engineering practice school, and got a master's degree. Then I worked for MIT for a year at Oak Ridge National Lab as the assistant director of the practice school program.

After that, I was hired by Michelin and worked 25 years, all in R&D, most of it in the U.S. and four years in Clermont-Ferrand, France. In fall 2008, I left Michelin to found a company called Hoowaki, and we're still going. What we do is design micro- and nano-surfaces. What that's good for is we can take most materials and move friction up or down by about a factor of 10. So we can make things super grippy—surfaces that will grip to wet, melting ice, or grip inside your body to slippery bio-material. We have surfaces that will grip to fabric, and we can make any plastic be lower-friction than Teflon. This is a mechanical shape, smaller than you can see. We replace coatings, allow suppression of lubricants, and typically it's used in medical devices so you don't have as much stuff getting in the body.

We're still little, trying to make it big. We have seven employees in Greenville,

South Carolina. We spent a lot of time on technology development, and now our customers are bringing products to market. We do some surface tension control surfaces for various things, but the big market for us is friction.

Basically, everything you were taught about friction in freshman physics is wrong. Our business is built on that. In freshman physics, friction is a property of materials. It's much more strongly a property of the structure of the surface of the material than the micron range. Then secondary is how stiff it is, and third is the kind of energy absorption hysteresis characteristics, which is a unique spectrum for each material that we can dial it around. The definition of the friction coefficient is normal force over lateral force, and that it's a constant. Our whole business is moving that constant by orders of magnitude up and down.

What was your favorite part of living in the house?

Definitely the brothers, and the help from all the brothers. The academics, having all the bibles, and there were always the upperclassmen.

I grew up in a tiny town in western Nebraska. I had never met anyone from MIT before I came—never had an interview or traveled to campus. So when I arrived, I was as green as you can imagine. I had never used one of the big metal mailboxes before—Gary Smith '80 was laughing about having to show me how to open it to mail a letter. I ended up being on the varsity crew team for four years and did all kinds of intramural sports.

We used to do Wednesday night ice-cream parties. We had far bigger crowds for ice-cream night than we ever had for weekend parties. But you throw your ice-cream night and advertise your party on the weekend, and you got a lot bigger turnout. In the

IFC survey, we typically had the highest social budget per person among the fraternities, and at least once we had the highest GPA, too. That was a correlation we fought hard for.

What rooms did you live in at the house?

We lived in the ward freshman year, we rotated the room where you had your desk and studied. I was in a room with Brian Wellendorf '77 and Joe Healey '77, then with Bill Pritchard '78 and Steve Piet '78. Then, for three years, Gary Smith '80 and I shared 3LR. We had a refrigerator that we kept stocked with frozen cookie dough—that was another way to attract dates; invite them over to make cookies.

Who were your big and little brothers?

Steve Piet '78 was my big brother. I think Dave Hawes '82 was my little brother.

Did you hold any officer positions?

I was steward for at least a year and cooked a lot of meals.

What funny stories from the house can you share?

I remember one party where it was raining, and somebody got the idea of people jumping off the Harvard Bridge. So in the pouring rain, 20 people went. I didn't jump, but I was counting people going over and then counting them coming up and hoping it was going to add up the same.

Before the Head of the Charles, down on the railroad bridge by the BU Boat-house, there was a big ΘX painted on it that was renewed every year. It was Gary's and my turn that year, and we had the buckets of white and red paint, and we hiked down there around three in the morning, we repainted it, and while we were on there a train came across. It was going real slow but shook the bridge hard. We were hanging on the outside of the bridge, laughing as the train conductor went by and looked at us. I'm sure he called the police, because we finished up quickly and bolted and were walking back to the house, and here comes a patrol car driving down the Esplanade. He stopped us, asked us what we were doing, why we had the cans of paint late at night. So we gave some story about how we were painting our girlfriend's apartment, and we made it back just fine.

(continued on page four)



our alumni send their news

Bill Jessiman '63 retired from American Airlines in Dallas with his wife of 52 years, Betsy. They have two kids and five grandchildren in Boston, so they get up there fairly often. They saw the refurbished house last year and wrote, "looks fantastic and brings back lots of great memories." Bill and Betsy see **Lou Thompson '63**, **Bill Hoffman '64**, and **Chet Riley '62** once a year or so. In fact, every Christmas when they are in Boston they get together for dinner with Chet and Diane Riley in Manchester, New Hampshire (halfway). Bill writes, "They are wonderful people, we thoroughly enjoy our get together and we've closed the restaurant the last five or six years. Chet was a pilot for American when I worked there. A Chet Riley story: When I first got to Boston, a small town boy, Chet took me under his wing (great expression for a retired airline pilot). He took me on my first subway ride, first NBA game and first NHL game. I

thought I was in heaven. Another Chet Riley story: When I was a freshman, I was on MIT's freshman basketball team, and Chet was on the varsity. On road games, I always sat next to Chet on the bus, partly because I enjoyed his company and partly because the meal on the bus was a roast beef special sandwich from Elsie's in Harvard Square—roast beef piled high on a big bun with Russian dressing and onions! But Chet couldn't stand onions or the sandwich even after removing the onions. So I usually got two sandwiches! Two other great memories: Winning the MIT intramural hockey championship once in 1959-'60 (**Leo Gagan '60** in goal, **John Cadwallader '60** on D) and again maybe 1963 or 1964? (**Pete Staecker '64** and **Dave Sullivan '64**) I particularly remember a play with Pete Staecker in a game against NRSA—the championship game, I believe. The two of us broke in alone on the NRSA goalie and

passed back and forth between us several times till the bewildered goalie was down and out. Puck tapped into an open net. We looked like the Bruins!" Get in touch with Bill by writing to 4416 University Blvd., Dallas, TX 75205; or by sending email to bill.jessiman@yahoo.com.

"For the past decade, I've been an IT Project Manager for SempraEnergy, and I've been dating a wonderful woman," reports **Chuck Lane '85**. "This year, I was tapped to lead our new Enterprise Architecture Group and I enjoyed a great wine-country wedding. (In fact the wedding almost eclipsed the Kauai honeymoon) I guess that would qualify 2015 as a banner year for me, even as the rest of the world is increasingly troubled. I'm trying to do my part by working on renewable energy projects, buying from local farmers markets, etc. However, I'll need some good New Year's resolutions to up the ante." Catch up with Chuck at 4211 Calle mar de Ballenas, San Diego, CA 92130; clane@san.rr.com.



Alumni and actives following the annual softball game.

Great Company at Alumni Weekend

From April 29 to May 1, 528 Beacon Street hosted the annual Alumni Weekend event. A good crowd was in attendance, and it included plenty of good times.

Friday night started out with a round of poker and landmines as alumni filtered in from around the country. Saturday's softball game was a hard-fought battle, with the alumni emerging victorious with a 16-11 victory on a beautiful spring day. An excellent dinner was served on Saturday evening, complete with profiteroles for dessert. Alumni Treasurer Jason Ku '09 was announced as the winner of the Alumni of the Year award, given annually by the undergraduate chapter to honor outstanding contributions by alumni. In this case, Jason worked closely with the

chapter over the past year on managing summer roomers and helping advise the treasurer. Carousing followed, and we finished off the weekend with brunch at Crossroads on Sunday morning.

At the annual meeting of the alumni corporation, elections for president and secretary were held. David Baumgartner '08 and Ryan Andrews '10, respectively, were re-elected for two year-terms. The Chapter Advisory Board (CAB), headed by Mario Scott '12, also conducted its annual meeting and had a brainstorming session on how it can best help the chapter moving forward. As always, we welcome further involvement from our alumni on either the corporation or the CAB. If you are interested, contact davidsb@alum.mit.edu.

deceased

Kenneth M. Prytherch '49

March 27, 2016

Donald A. Sillers '49

November 17, 2015

William J. Maczko '61

October 5, 2014

Featured Alumnus Interview, cont'd.

I stayed there one summer, my sophomore year. I was Superman—I kept the house for the summer. It was Friday night at one in the morning, and one of us heard that Theta Chi at University of Maryland was having a party the next night. So we all piled into a car. There were six of us or more, and left then and drove down to College Park. We basically slept all day, went to their party, and left there similarly late at night and drove back to Boston.

Just like MIT folks today, we were highly motivated to have fun, help one another along and to work really hard.

If you know somebody who should be included in the featured alumni series, please contact David Baumgartner at davidsb@alum.mit.edu.