



# beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Spring 2018

*save the date*

## Tech Reunion Open House

**Friday, June 8, 2018  
3:00–5:00 p.m.  
528 Beacon St.**

This event has become a very enjoyable annual event, which brings together graduating seniors, their parents, Reunion-bound alumni, local Boston-area alumni, and several undergraduates living at 528 Beacon St. over the summer. All these folks are invited and encouraged to visit 528 Beacon on Friday, June 8 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. This occasion affords returning alums a chance to relax and see the house and all the improvements over the last several years.

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[ox.mit.edu](http://ox.mit.edu)

## Theta Chi Brother Elected IFC President

The 26 MIT fraternities elected one of our own to be the Interfraternity Council's (IFC) leader for this year. Arjun Mithal '19 began his term as IFC president on January 1, 2018. This is a major honor and responsibility, more so than in earlier decades, because the IFC today plays a more central



*Arjun Mithal '19 now heads the IFC.*

role in organizing rush and other undergraduate initiatives. Arjun is well suited to the role, having served on the IFC judicial committee the year before.

Earlier this year at the Northeast Greek Leadership Association's annual conference in Pittsburgh, MIT's IFC was rec-

ognized for the top award in risk reduction, and Arjun was on hand to receive this prestigious award. In general, our chapter is well represented in IFC and student government circles. For example, another ΘΧ brother, Hal Anil '15, served as IFC president in 2014.

Arjun's name should be familiar to many of you; he served as the alumni relations chair for several years and, for the past three years, has been the key organizer for Alumni Weekend. Every April, this important event brings many alumni and guests back to 528 Beacon to meet the current brothers.

## Nicholas James '17 Named U.S. Air Force Cadet of the Year

*Graduate student in aeronautics and astronautics is cited for military, academic achievement and service.*

Nicholas "Nikko" James '17, a graduate student in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AeroAstro) and a cadet member of MIT's Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), has been named the 2017 US Air Force Cadet of the Year. Air Force Vice Chief of Staff General Stephen Wilson presented James with the award in a February 23 ceremony at the Pentagon.

The award is sponsored by the Royal Air Squadron, a private organization of prominent British aviation enthusiasts. The honor pays tribute to the Air Force for supporting the United Kingdom over the years and recognizes the most outstanding cadet in an Air Force commissioning program. Its criteria include military performance, academics, and physical fitness.

Submitted by his unit, Detachment 365, James's Cadet of the Year nomination refers to him as "cream of the crop" and notes  
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*In a Pentagon ceremony, MIT Air Force ROTC Cadet Nicholas James is presented the Cadet of the Year Award by Air Force Vice Chief of Staff General Stephen Wilson. Photo courtesy of US Air Force.*

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## Nicholas James '17 Named U.S. Air Force Cadet of the Year

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his leadership as wing commander directly led to the detachment's recognition as High Flight and Right of Line for 2017. He also earned the Society of Military Engineers award. It credits him with orchestrating an Air Force UH-1N Huey helicopter fly-in and display on MIT's Briggs Field to celebrate the Institute's 150th anniversary. James oversaw MIT's largest General Military Corps training in 10 years and organized Harvard University's first AFROTC training event since 1970.

James was also praised for his academic accomplishments. He graduated in the top one percent of his MIT class. He analyzed F-35 aircraft structural fatigue as a Northrup Grumman intern, identifying a structural defect and implementing a solution. He co-led an innovative experiment in AeroAstro's Space Systems Lab, exploring the feasibility of using magnetic fields to de-tumble and capture expended orbiting satellites and rockets, so-called "space junk."

MIT AFROTC Detachment commander Lt. Col. Sheryl Ott says the detachment "is extremely honored to have one of our cadets earn the Cadet of the Year award."

"It's a testament to the efforts and achievements, not just of Cadet James, but of all our dedicated and hard-working cadets who, for the second consecutive year, earned us the Air Force ROTC's Right



*Conducting an experiment they devised to facilitate capture and disposal of orbiting space junk, Nicholas James (right) and co-researcher James Figura position a cylinder, representing a rocket body, inside the MIT Space Systems Lab's Helmholtz cage. The cage will generate magnetic fields that will both rotate the cylinder and then force it to stop rotating, enabling capture. Photo by William Litant.*

of Line Award as best small detachment in the nation," Ott says.

Accepting the award, James says being named Cadet of the Year "is really a testament to the support I received from my cadre, the guidance from my mentors, and the patience of my peers."

"I've enjoyed the challenges and opportunities that have come my way, and I'm excited to give back to the Air Force that's already done so much for me," he says.

AeroAstro department head Jaime Peraire congratulated James on his achievement, saying: "Nikko is one of our great achievers, especially academically, and in service to the department, the institute, and the nation. To say AeroAstro is proud of him is an understatement."

James holds a private pilot's license and has earned an Air Force pilot training slot at Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training, the Air Force's most prestigious undergraduate flying training program. His goal is to be accepted for astronaut training.

James is the third MIT USAF Cadet and AeroAstro student to be named Cadet of the Year since the award's inception in 2000. The first was Ryan Castonia in 2009, followed by Martin York in 2016.

"We're proud that the combination of Air Force training in our program, paired with the academic excellence of our host institution, MIT, is producing future lieutenants of such a high caliber," Ott says. "It's truly heartening that outstanding individuals like Cadet James will shape and lead our Air Force into the future."

MIT's AFROTC detachment is nicknamed "Doolittle's Raiders," an homage to famous MIT alumnus General James "Jimmy" Doolittle. One of Doolittle's many accomplishments was receiving the Medal of Honor as commander of the Doolittle Raid, a bold long-range retaliatory air raid on the Japanese main islands following the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

Bill Litant

Dept. Aeronautics and Astronautics  
Reprinted from *MIT News*, March 22, 2018



*Theta Chi's alumni board and the seniors of 2018.*

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## Tech Reunion Open House

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Local alumni and parents of the graduating seniors also are invited, and they add a lot to this gathering. We think you will be pleased with the house and especially with the strength and diversity of the actives, who had another good rush 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 eras, as well as ample snacks and refreshments. We hope to see as many brothers and families as possible on Friday afternoon, June 8. If you are sure you are coming, just **RSVP to [thetachi@mit.edu](mailto:thetachi@mit.edu)**. You can expect a warm welcome.

## New Water Tanks

One of the important responsibilities of the alumni house corporation is overseeing maintenance of core house systems. Some of you alumni might remember the room where a massive coal furnace used to live. This area is now occupied by an efficient gas-powered heating system, which was fully upgraded in the renovations of 2009.

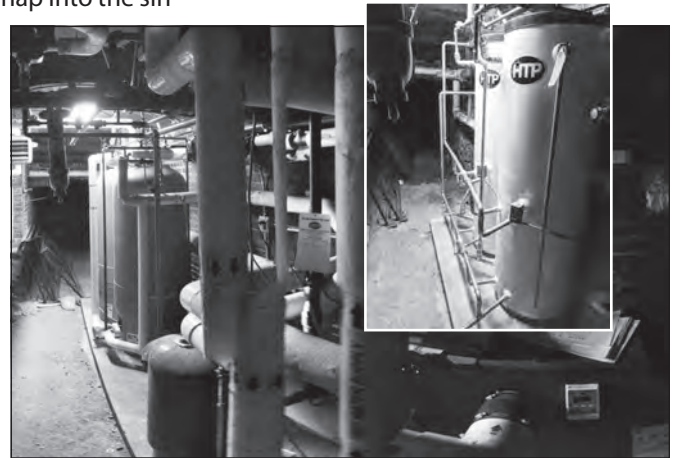
The boiler itself has still been (mostly) humming along. However, one of the two (redundant, indirect) hot water tanks had started leaking, so it was out-of-service, while the second tank was showing significant signs of its age.

In November, to ensure there would be no winter heating emergencies, the alum-

ni corporation facilitated the assessment and replacement of these tanks. This project could not have happened sooner; this winter's prolonged cold-snap into the single digits caused damage to over 20 of MIT's living groups through frozen pipes — at least one of which is still uninhabitable — while Theta Chi's house has remained well heated.

The undergraduates and the alumni corporation greatly appreciate the donations that have helped us perform

this and other vital work on the house; they maintain this unique gathering place for future generations of Theta Chis.



## 2017 Honor Roll of Donors

### Roof Deck (\$2,500 and up)

Allen Burgess '57

Timothy McHenry '87

James W. Poitras '64

### Ward (\$1,000–\$2,499)

Nathaniel R. Bogan '93

Dave Bold '58

Robert Frank '83

David Keselica '83

### Treasurer's Lounge (\$500–\$999)

Charles Albright '80

Keith Ashelin '83

David Baumgartner '08

David Emero '90

Robert Ferrara '67

Leonard F. Glaeser '53

Robert B. Hance '81

William A. Jessiman '63

Chet Riley '62

Francisco San Miguel '58

Earl R. Smiddy '58

Pierre Swick '64

Dean Allen Webber '60

### Library (\$100–\$499)

Gregory Agami '93

Frank J. Ansuini '63

Dustin Berkovitz '02

Richard Bryant '79

Terrance A. Chinn '65

Nicholas J. DeCristofaro '71

William R. Freeman Jr. '51

Frederick W. Gander '65

Carlos M. Greaves '13

Joseph Hardy '05

Willard Johnson '59

William F. Johnston '00

Evan A. Karlik '07

William R. Kincaid '49

David W. Kress '68

Mark Lehrer '80

Harold Linder '58

Jay A. Mackro '71

Waciuma Maina '10

William E. Meyer '70

Richard J. Nixon '64

Paul Palmer '84

Thomas A. Penn '68

Steven J. Piet '78

John L. Preston Jr. '68

Richard Price '50

Steven H. Rappaport '79

Alvin Richman '57

Otto Robinson '60

Mario Scott '11

Noel A. Spishak '75

Morris M. Tao '00

Eric D. Thompson '55

Gregory J. Wilson '79

Bruce C. Zotter '65

### Cavern (up to \$99)

Scott Barth '07

Benjamin G. Dann Jr. '48

John L. Deryck '59

James Fong '70

Kenneth E. Kreisler '76

Robert Lafleur '68

Eric L. Miller '90

Steve Ojeda '12

Robert Parente '58

## Alumni Spotlight: Steve Ojeda '12

You probably read or saw SpaceX's recent historic first flight of the *Falcon Heavy*. Years ago as undergrad roommates, Steve Ojeda (Beta Chapter alumnus 2012) and I discussed how much we looked forward to the *Falcon Heavy* launch *someday*. We were inspired for one of their first successful launches of *anything*—reusable extra-massive rockets were still a long way off.



Even as an undergrad, Smo always seemed to be getting things done. He served as house president and was awarded "best TA" for his department, all while "helping" to keep the cleanest room in the house. Smo has continued getting things done in the six years since graduating course 16 (aerospace engineering; aka "aero-astro").

Today, Steve (more commonly known as Smo) has been working for SpaceX as a design expert for the past four years.



First, he stuck around MIT for another couple of years, earning his master's doing cutting-edge computational fluid-dynamics research while spending even *more* time "in lab." During this time, he continued living in the house as the esteemed resident advisor.

Since earning his master's in 2014, Smo has been working at SpaceX, helping to build the next generation of spaceflight. He works as a development engineer for critical engine components on the *Dragon* capsule, their cargo and to-be passenger spacecraft.

Apparently being on the critical path to colonizing Mars means you spend *even more* time "in lab."

Ken Schumacher '12

*deceased*

**Donald A. Buell '45**  
November 15, 2017

**Richard C. Kohl '49**  
December 16, 2017

**Thomas K. Biggs '51**  
January 2, 2018

**Lawrence A. Schell '56**  
November 2, 2017

**Franklin L. Corcoran '63**  
September 30, 2017

THETA CHI  
FRATERNITY



## Alumni Get Together in Tahoe



In February, alumni brothers, significant others, and close friends from '09 through '16 gathered for a third annual trip to South Lake Tahoe. Most attendees were California natives, but many came from New York City for the three-day trip. Daily activities included cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and snowshoeing, while nights were spent sharing meals, enjoying the hot tub/sauna, and carousing/remiscing in classic Theta Chi fashion.

For information about attending a future ski trip, contact Ade Esho (ade.esho@alum.mit.edu). All brothers are welcome!



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Photos, news items, and address changes may be sent to Alumni Records Office, Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT, P.O. Box 397253, Cambridge, MA 02139.

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