



beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Fall 2020



Big Brother Tree Update

By Andrew Komo '22 |
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Dear Brothers,

I wanted to give everyone an update on the family tree project I have been emailing about for the last few months. First off, thank you to over 100 people who have written in with information! The tree—which is too long to be printed in the *Beta Button*—will be on our website at ox.mit.edu/alumni/#corporation.

The earliest big brother listed is Paul Howick '58, with descendants to John Sawyer '71. The longest branches are Tejus Kohari '06 and Pedro Arrechés '04, spanning 17 years with 38 and 23 descendants, respectively.

Help fill in the blanks—send your information to komo@mit.edu with:

1. Your name
2. Your graduation year
3. Your big brother's name and his graduation year
4. Any little brothers' names and their graduation years

If you happen to recall any other big/little pairings or see a mistake in the current version, please email me as well!

MIT Responds to the Pandemic

Below is a brief summary outlining MIT's response to SARS-CoV-2, as well as the implications this has had on the undergraduate and FSILG communities.

Spring 2020

On March 5, 2020, MIT released initial, precautionary guidelines to help reduce the risk of coronavirus spread on campus. These included a ban on MIT-sponsored travel and limiting the size of gatherings (alas, it was at this point that parties were suspended until further notice). Then, on Tuesday, March 10, President Rafael Reif emailed campus announcing that MIT was increasing its response to COVID, cancelling classes the following week and shifting all classes post spring break (the week of March 22-29) to a virtual format. Students were initially asked to move out by March 17, although that date was subsequently moved up to March 15, with classes that Thursday and Friday being canceled.

Undergraduates were advised to pack as though they would not be returning for the duration of the spring semester, seniors being asked to pack as if they were not returning at all. Despite the chaos of these few days, the brothers of Theta Chi were able to come together that Friday evening for a final house meeting and senior goodbye dinner. Although this event didn't make up for the months lost with each other, it was a lovely chance for seniors to comment on their time in the house, and served to both help ease the loss and sustain a sense of our community. While most undergraduates returned home by that Sunday, three actives who were pursuing graduate work remained in the house, while another brother lived in emergency on-campus housing due to his inability to return home. The rest of the semester proceeded online, with brotherhood events and communication between members remaining strong.

Summer 2020

The end of the semester brought with it the

announcement that FSILGs would be closed for the summer, meaning one of the house's primary income sources, rent from summer roomers, was taken away. Fortunately, financial support from MIT and the AILG helped sustain us—as well as the other fraternities—through the summer. During the summer, one graduate student remained in the house to work on his thesis and helped to look after everything. Throughout the summer, MIT continually gathered data regarding what students wanted come the fall, but in the end, due to health concerns, they decided to entirely close FSILGs for the fall semester.

Fall 2020

For this upcoming fall semester, only rising seniors have been invited back to campus, with most instruction being performed virtually. In order to access on-campus facilities and in-person class components, MIT seniors must live in a dorm. Those students who signed leases within the Boston area but do not live in an MIT dorm are unable to access campus. The current plan for the spring is to have freshman, sophomores, and juniors return, with seniors going fully virtual, although this is subject to change depending upon how the epidemic evolves.

Within the current actives, this fall, one graduate member will be living in the house at 528 Beacon, four will be sharing an apartment in Cambridge, two an apartment in Boston, and three seniors will be living on campus. Others are planning on remaining home or taking a semester off. While the brotherhood is scattered, the collection of brothers in Boston, as well as the ability to connect through virtual house dinners and brotherhood events, will be sure to keep members connected as we maneuver through this uncertain time.

A Senior's Reflection

By Jason Necaie '20

Senior spring wasn't exactly what I thought it would be. It wasn't until around late February that it really sank in that my time at the institute was coming to a close, and I wanted to savor the last few months I had left with my brothers. I wanted to run the OX senior send-off ceremony, which hadn't happened in a few years,

to celebrate with the class of 2020 and recognize what we had done together. But, classes and projects didn't stop, and for another month the good times came and went at house dinners and game nights, whether you savored them or not. In mid-March, we all suddenly realized we had less than a week, not a couple months, until we

(continued on page 4)

CURRENT OFFICERS

(Due to coronavirus, some officer positions are unfilled for this semester)

PRESIDENT

Alex Evenchik '21

VICE PRESIDENT

Julian Hamelberg '22

TREASURER

Mateo Hendricks-Hernandez '22

VICE PRESIDENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Conrad Oakes '22

SECRETARY

Erik Thompson '22

MARSHALL

Andrew Komo '22

RUSH CHAIRS

Arman Dave '22

Albert Garcia '22

Mario Peraza '22

BROTHERHOOD

Quilee Simeon '21

Ian Miller '21

H-MAN

Roberto Sarabia '22

SCHOLARSHIP

Andrew Komo '22

ALUMNI

Ian Miller '21

Corporate Board Meeting and Alumni Weekend Held Online

By David Campanella '76 | Vice President of Alumni Communication | Beta Theta Chi Corporation

While Corporation Board members miss meeting at the house, for years we have had those who couldn't join us in person check in via MIT's WebEx. So, when MIT announced the campus would be closing in a couple of days, it was easy to transition to all video meetings. We have also shifted our meeting time to help

brothers in Europe and Asia continue to contribute and be active board members. At the current time, MIT is planning to open the campus back up for the spring term, but with the recent COVID surge that is uncertain.

Alumni Weekend and board elections went on as scheduled thanks to Zoom. We will probably continue meeting remotely for some time, and this is an excellent opportunity for interested brothers from around the country and the world to join us.



Zooming for Alumni Weekend.

Virtual Fall Rush Plans in Place

By Arman Dave '22, Albert Garcia '22, and Mario Peraza '22 | Rush Chairs

To prepare for the upcoming virtual fall rush, we have organized three task forces: website, event, and content. Each rush chair is in charge of a different task force and we have brothers helping out with subtasks. I (Albert) am in charge of the website task force, and we went ahead and set up a website displaying the Theta Chi rush events. We also setup a rush

mailing list, where we will send out reminders about upcoming events and general announcements. The mailing list will be integrated into the website, this way any potential new member (PNM) who visits our website can sign up for our mailing list if they wish.

Event task force, which is headed by Arman, is in charge of coming up with and determining which events will be most beneficial in terms of peaking the interest of PNMs. They are also in charge of determining how many brothers should attend each event. This way we have efficient brother participation in a way where PNMs are able to get to know the brothers and we avoid overcrowding events with brothers.

Content task force, which is headed by Mario, is in charge of designing rush shirts, our virtual background that will be displayed during rush events, presentations for rush circles, and virtual flyers for advertising events.

Lastly, in terms of getting Theta Chi known, over the summer we revamped our social media pages and are also finalizing some updates on the Theta Chi website.



Zoom house meeting attendees.

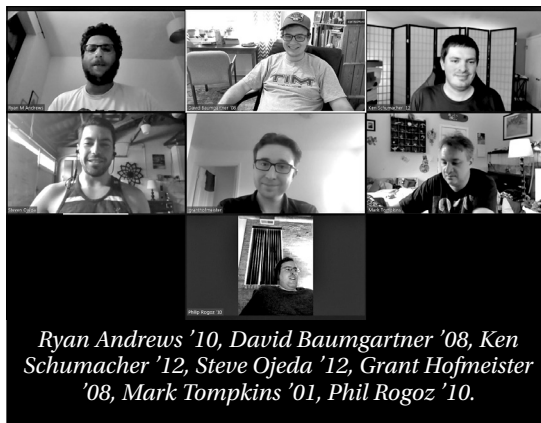
Alumni Meet-Ups Keep Brothers in Touch

By Ryan Andrews '10

On July 26, approximately 30 Theta Chis spanning the classes of 1953 to 2024 gathered virtually via Zoom for a transcontinental alumni meet-up. The class of 1987 had the impressive distinction of having almost all of their pledge class in attendance! The next largest alumni group was the combined classes of 2000 to 2010, with eight members (Ade Esho '13 not shown) on board.

The Zoom call even had a special guest appearance from infamous and beloved "friend of the house" Ricky Ramirez, who joined us from his pool-side lounge. Topics of discussion ranged from current events to the ideal marketing for milk stouts. Overall, a good time was had by all.

Future Zoom meet-ups are currently being scheduled, so please look out for announcements from mit_tc@alumlist.mit.edu. (Note:



Ryan Andrews '10, David Baumgartner '08, Ken Schumacher '12, Steve Ojeda '12, Grant Hofmeister '08, Mark Tompkins '01, Phil Rogoz '10.

some have reported that their spam filters filter these emails, so please make sure to add mit_tc@alumlist.mit.edu to your trusted sender list to ensure receipt.)

A Virtual 50th Reunion for the Class of '70

By Bill Meyer '70

This year would have been the 50th reunion for the class of 1970, but COVID-19 blew up the party. In response, Bill Meyer '70 dug out addresses and numbers for the 13 class members, and Val Livada '70 and John Stempeck '70 organized and ran a Zoom call for the group. There was a very good turnout. Sam Stroud is happily retired in North Carolina, actively giving back to those in need through food programs. Mike Safonov retired from USC as a professor of EE, having published 300-plus papers about control theory and lives in Beverly Hills. Tim Gilmore, living in Oregon, is a medical doctor, well-traveled, and barely changed in stature or spirit.

Craig Gander got a degree in geology, worked alternating between being a petroleum geologist and an environmental clean-up

consultant. Creatively, he plays the saxophone, and works part time making specialized components for technical products. Bob Hander lives in eastern Washington and is retired from private practice as an ophthalmologist. He is a pilot and spends time extending his scientific literacy and boating. Butch Tsiatis is a professor of statistics at the University of North Carolina. He and his wife are competitive ballroom dancers. He was recently invited to be a member of the COVID-19 vaccine oversight committee working under the renowned Dr. Fauci.

Val Livada lives locally in Winchester, Massachusetts, and continues his social life as a technology consultant and kayaker, connecting friends and businesses in profitable ventures while he scans the horizon for our future. Val is also a research affiliate at MIT in the Materials

Research Laboratory. John Stempeck went from being an electrical engineer for Polaroid to a management consultant at Braxton Associates, focused on competitive strategy, and then to his own consulting firm, similar to Val. John Burns is happily retired in Florida. He had a career marketing technical equipment to the process industry, including the vital equipment needed for the production of beer.

Frank Ching also lives locally in Natick, but was unavailable. Frank received two



A month after the class of '70 virtual reunion, they organized a Zoom call to include brothers from adjacent years. Here is one of the images from that event.

Living in the House Alone

By Riley Steindl, Masters in Mechanical Engineering '21

When the COVID hysteria hit MIT and most all of the undergraduates were sent home, I was left in a unique situation. For about two months I was one of just three brothers still in the house, and after those two months, I was all alone when the other two graduate brothers left Boston to start their new jobs.

At first, I was worried that the house would be lonely or eerie being here all by myself, but much to my surprise, that wasn't the case at all. Sure, the occasional bang or crash late at night in the street or in the back lot made me a little more worried than usual, but all in all it has been extremely comforting getting to live in such a familiar place during this very uncertain time.

Whenever I walk through the house to make a meal, take a shower, or head outside for a run in the torturous Boston heat, the empty rooms don't make me feel alone. They remind me of the fun times and fond memories I have with the brothers who lived in them. Being in the house alone has helped me appreciate how special of a place 528 Beacon Street really is, and it has made me excited for my next chance to see my brothers in Boston this fall and have the opportunity to make new memories before we all part ways after graduation.

civil engineering degrees from MIT, and now works for the City of Waltham. Ed Scheer lives locally in Falmouth, but also was unavailable. Ed had a career at Woods Hole, authoring a number of papers, and, to the best of my knowledge, kept up his music, playing regular gigs locally. Bob Collesidis, another EE, went into computing and came out as a broker. He lives in New Jersey and has several children. I earned my BS in math, bummed around as a programmer, then went to law school. Next, I worked at Braxton Associates, passed the patent bar, and finally finished my career at Sylvania Lighting working on automotive lighting. I gained 366 issued U.S. patents for my inventions, and numerous corresponding patents around the world. I still ride a bike, kayak, play with math topics, and deeply fear a fatal climate disaster.

In summary, the old guys, despite being roughed by the tumbles of life, had their same old spirit. Tech training was core to their successes. It was a heart-warming experience for all to see old friends. They stopped making old friends, so you treasure those there are.

our alumni send their news

Jonathan B. "Jon" Weisbuch '59 wrote in April: "We continue to shelter in place trying to avoid COVID-19. With luck we will survive. I appreciate receiving the *Beta Button*, but I missed you reporting on the deaths of **Art Nintzel** and **Ed Drake**, both 1959 classmates of mine. Ed passed in 2016, and Art in July 2018. Like **Bob Brady '62**, who was a pledge in 1958, and a brother of **William Brady '56**, who was the pledge minstrel in 1955 when my class of '59 joined as freshman, Art also worked in Buffalo at MOOG, retiring a few years ago. Ed had worked for NASA in the space program for many years, and lived in Phoenix since the mid-'60s, where I moved in 1997 to become the Maricopa County Director of Public Health, retiring in early 2005 after nearly 50 years in public health administrative positions around the country: Massachusetts, North Dakota, Wyoming, Los Angeles and Phoenix, dealing with many issues like the coronavirus pandemic we are now living with.

Another member of the class of 1959 with whom I played varsity hockey, **Robert Stein**, also passed away last spring (2019) having retired from Ratheon as a VP in 2005. Bob, Art, and Ed are missed by the several 1959 graduates still in the Boston area. Every good wish to the T-Chi brothers." (2210 Encanto Dr. NW, Phoenix, AZ 85007; jbweisbuch@mac.com)

Cheolsu "Charlie" Shin '73 writes, "I am now retired as of July 1, 2020, after working as a neurologist at Mayo Clinic Rochester (Minnesota) for 28 years. Before that, I spent 15 years at Duke in North Carolina. I escaped from the long winter months, but ended up in long hot summer months in Hilton Head, South Carolina. I am trying to improve my golf game, but miss the days of ice hockey! I still have a pair of skates! Stay safe and healthy, everyone!" (119 Hampton Lake Crossing, Bluffton, SC 29910; shin.cheolsu@mayo.edu)

deceased

We regret to inform you of the deaths of the following brothers:

Robert C. Clement '47
July 22, 2020

William H. Brauer '48
March 29, 2020

Richard C. Aquadro '52
December 30, 2019

Alan H. Priot '55
July 13, 2020

Nicholas R. Hurst '60
April 19, 2020

Otto P. Robinson Jr. '60
September 25, 2019

THETA CHIS ON THE SLOPES AT TAHOE!

Dave Keselica '83 sent in this great photo of his brothers and their families at their "annual" Theta Chi Ski Weekend—this year in early March at beautiful Lake Tahoe. This entire crew stayed in a lakeside mansion formerly owned by Farrah Fawcett (remember her?).



Photo above: Front row (L to R): Evy Weaver (Eric's daughter), Evie Swan (Dave K's wife), Katie Wohl (friend of Jill), Jill Weiss (daughter of Andy), **Joe Stampleman '89/'92**, Kelly Keselica (wife of Erik), Doreen Nicoli (wife of Tony); back row (L to R): Georgia and **Scott Drane '85**, **Dave Keselica '83**, **Eric Weaver '83**, **Andy Weiss '84**, **Mike Cronin '86**, **Owen Clements '84**, **Dave Stampleman '86**, **Tony Nicoli '84**, and **Erik Keselica (son of Dave and Evie)**.

A Senior's Perspective

(continued from page one)

had to leave and say goodbye to the house and to all the events and time we hoped to share.

We threw together a completely unrehearsed send-off ceremony, tripping over lines and laughing in the middle of it all, on a random afternoon. We held one last house dinner, giving senior critics and reflecting for as much time as possible. Just like that, the house and our brotherhood continued on Zoom, Slack, Messenger, and phone calls. I still asked for help on psets, and there was still a power hour or two. But the visceral feelings of being present and in the house were gone, and graduation took place in our own living rooms, apart from it all.

There are things I wish I had said and done, and there is time I wish I had spent differently. But, in the end, I know I would be missing the same things no matter what—the time I spent with my brothers when I wasn't trying to make it count. I think of Maine and Cape Cod, of nights psetting and playing games, of random memes in the group chats, and all the jokes and conversations I don't even remember. That's the brotherhood I remember and will cherish, with or without end of the year shenanigans.

The Class of '76 Comes Together on Zoom



Mark Keough,
London.

By Mark Keough '76

Until COVID-19 came around, I had not used video call technology for about 10 years—and only then for work reasons. In those days they required special (expensive) equipment, there were compatibility issues, and you always had to ask the IT people to come set it up and get it to work. Not worth the hassle.

When COVID hit, we were forced to use it from home for work reasons. So, I became somewhat familiar with Webex, MS Teams, Zoom,

Google video chat, etc. Didn't think of using it outside of work until my HBS classmates organized a "section" reunion on Zoom. (The class is divided into nine sections of about 80 students and you spend the entire first year with them, attending all classes, so you get to know them well.) That experience really was amazing—really good quality video and sound with about 40 people on the call. We needed some call discipline: two- to three-minutes for each person to bring us up to date. It was a long call, but I was blown away—saw people I had not seen in nearly 40 years.

So, gee, why not apply this to my Theta Chi brothers? I signed up for the free Zoom basic

package and did some test calls with Paul Levine '77 and Bob Holzwasser '76. Holz and I decided to get on a three-way call with Frank Ruiz '76, and then a four-way call with David Campanella '76. The actives organized an alumni call with breakout rooms by decade and that worked pretty well. So, I am a big fan. Much easier to connect with people with a warm and fuzzy feeling afterwards because of the quality of the interactive experience.

beta button is published by the Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT for its members and friends.

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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