



# beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Spring 2020

**MARCH 10: DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK, MIT DECIDED TO CLOSE ALL CLASSES ONE WEEK BEFORE SPRING BREAK AND SHUT DOWN CAMPUS HOUSING, INCLUDING FRATERNITIES, AND SEND ALL STUDENTS HOME UNTIL THE FALL TERM. COURSES WILL BE TAUGHT REMOTELY AFTER SPRING BREAK UNTIL THE END OF THE SEMESTER.**

## Chapter President's Message

Greetings! To those alumni I have not yet met, my name is Alex Evenchik, and I am proud to represent the actives of Theta Chi as president for this coming year. I joined Theta Chi my freshman fall because within it I saw brothers who I looked up to for their kindness, intellect, articulateness, and ability to have fun together. Although some have graduated, I continue to find brothers, both older and younger, who push and inspire me to be my best self, and I feel that I owe a great deal to this group for allowing me to grow and become a fuller version of myself.

One thing I want to capitalize on as my term begins is the excitement and drive that the current members hold toward their positions and the house as a whole. As you read in the articles written by Arman Dave and Mario Peraza, two of our three rush chairs, although this past fall's rush left things to be desired, we are looking ahead, and focusing on what we can improve upon for this spring and the following year. We are conducting an informal spring rush, something which hasn't been done during my time here, as well as striving to increase our presence both online and on campus. I'm truly inspired by the energy brought by these and other members to propel the house forward.

Building off of the idea of on-campus visibility, something I really want to push during my time in office, is a culture that supports brothers in everything they do outside of the house. Every member of Theta Chi has something they are actively involved in outside of the fraternity, from track to a *capella* to ROTC, and I, along with our brotherhood chairs, really want to build up a culture of supporting each other in these activities. From a calendar for tracking events to brotherhood activities before or after they occur, we are dedicated to building a community of support for each other.

While the above are two examples of how the house is pushing externally to grow and support its members, internally, I've loved the activity in our common spaces, from the newly redone T-Lounge to the library. MIT is a busy place where schoolwork tends to dominate, but despite this, the fact I can find people around, working or taking a break, warms the house and really makes it feel like a home.

All in all, I'm incredibly excited to be able to represent this house for the coming year and help it grow and prosper. Energy abounds from the actives, and I can't wait to see where we end up.

Love and Respect,  
Alex Evenchik '21

## 2019 Was A Good Year For Renovation Fundraising!

Dear Brothers of Beta Chapter of Theta Chi:

Thanks to the generosity of so many of you, the "Raise the Roof" campaign did very well in its second year of fundraising. With a flurry of year end activity, our 2019 matching donor—a generous brother of the class of '83—had all he could do to cover your gifts! And with the match, there are now sufficient reserves to tackle the ambitious set of 2020 renovation projects. The costliest item is the repointing of the entire exterior 528 Beacon façade—front and back. The project will be accomplished by John William Masonry Company, and it starts in the early spring by seeking approval of the Back Bay Historical Commission approval. We expect to receive an okay, but please understand that anything that affects the exterior of any Back Bay building must go through this august body. A second big project is the complete refurbishment of the third floor bathroom; "third head" has sprung a few leaks over the years and needs all new fittings.

We also investigating whether our boiler needs to be replaced or simply rehabilitated. It has left our undergrads without heat on several occasions. Finally, we will also plan to join a system-wide effort to repair all the interior doors of the house. Most MIT fraternities and sororities will be participating in this project, which is being run by the alumni-led Association of Independent Living Groups (AILG). The AILG is in the process of hiring a project manager and MIT's Independent

Residence Development Fund (IRDF) will be reimbursing up to 75% of the project cost. If you like giving to MIT directly, please think of donating to the IRDF at <http://web.mit.edu/irdf/> (fund #3766600). All these gifts flow back to the living groups. The IRDF has been a mainstay of support and now has recently expanded the scope of reimbursable grant items to include historic preservation. So, we have submitted a grant for the repointing effort, but, if granted, it will not be reimbursed until next year.

In the future, Theta Chi may also participate in the two other systemwide actions—fire alarm and sprinkler system upgrades—that were identified in a major professional assessment in 2018 across all the MIT fraternities and sororities. This assessment was funded jointly by MIT and the FSILG alumni corporations, like ours. We are using the assessment results as our basic "to do" list and adding other items the undergrads have noted. The goal is to have the entire list completed by 2023.

One of 2019's most generous year-end donations came from Chip Hance '81, who has agreed to be our matching donor for 2020. Chip is doing this in honor of John Helfferich '79. Chip notes that John helped the careers of many Theta Chis of his era, including Chip, and John was also a much beloved and effective Theta Chi Alumni Corporation vice president before he passed away

*(continued on page 4)*

## Springing into Rush

By Mario Peraza '22

Spring semester 2020 is in full swing and the brothers of Beta Chapter at MIT will be looking to increase their membership during spring rush. Typically, MIT does not have a large spring rush, there is no dedicated week for spring rush and there are few mentions of it around campus. We believe that a more personal spring rush is the best option for our chapter. We will try and talk to potential new members and invite them to events, which we will be holding at our house during the

start of this semester. After returning from the national conference, Amplify Theta Chi, I've realized that recruitment should be happening all year.

The other recruitment chairs and I will be trying to plan more events throughout the semester to help publicize our fraternity on campus. We will also be encouraging all of our brothers to be on the lookout for potential new members all year long. This, along with the eventual revamping of our website and social media pages, will help us gain new members for spring and future rush weeks.

# Brothers Complete Extensive Work Week Projects

By Roberto Sarabia '22

This year, the actives made many functional and fun improvements to the house. No stone was left unturned during the cleaning process, closets were switched, and a new lounge area was installed. Brothers also worked to address some of the issues presented by the alumni corporation.

The newest installation to the house, completed by the brothers this winter, was the remodeling of the fourth floor T-Lounge, now dubbed Puzzles. Placed in the space where the old H-man locker used to be, a speakeasy-esque feel is instilled. Future ideas with this area include adding running water to it to eliminate the current bucket cleanup system. With this installation, the T-lounge received a facelift. With new lights, chairs, and curtains, the area feels more cozy for

a social setting.

Of course, the H-man locker still exists but is now in place of the old Athletics Locker and the Athletics Locker was moved to the Wood Locker. So, where is the Wood Locker, one may ask? Well, the actives decided that its services were no longer needed so the wood was gutted and properly disposed of. Although this shuffling may be thought unnecessary, the actives can assure you that doing such has eliminated the avalanche aspect that was associated with the old system. What this allows for is constant access to

any individual thing in every locker without moving piles of things cluttered on the floor.

The actives always seek to make improvements to the house and will keep an eye out to solve any unnecessary issues that are met either currently or in the future.



## Welcome Our New Brothers

**Mario Peraza:** I am currently a sophomore studying mechanical engineering with a concentration in product design at MIT. I am originally from Las Vegas, however, half of my family lives around Boston, so I've been around the Boston area my whole life. I like to plan events and I am involved in my living community government and C3.

**Albert Garcia:** I am currently a sophomore studying computer science. I am originally from Fort Worth, Texas. Most of my family is from Texas and Mexico, but my older brother is an MIT alum and still lives in the Boston area. I mainly

enjoy rock climbing/miscellaneous workouts during my free time, and I am involved in my living community government.

**Cameron Hilman:** I am a freshman pledge of Theta Chi at MIT. I'm 21, born and raised in Portland, Oregon. Before coming to MIT, I worked as a Korean cryptologic linguist in the Oregon Army National Guard, and now I am looking to study Course 16. On campus, I'm involved in the *a cappella* group Resonance, B-Entry of Macgregor, as well as Chinese and Japanese classes. Looking forward to another four years at Theta Chi!



L-R: Albert, Cameron, Mario.

## Fall Rush Update

By Arman Dave '22

Fall rush took place from the Friday before classes started and continued through the first week of the semester. The brothers devoted a lot of energy and time throughout this process, and I am proud of the hard work they put in.

Our most successful events included skydiving, which was booked full, and ninja warrior training, an event suggested to us by a former brother. Although our recruitment class was small, we emphasize quality over numbers, and our new brothers have shown a commitment to the house beyond all expectations.

As for next year, we are looking for more brothers to spread the word around campus earlier in the summer. Additionally, we have noticed that events scheduled later in the day reap higher attendance, and we will make an adjustment in that department. The events themselves will feature a significant revamp, with ideas of mini-golf on the roof and other exciting ideas being floated. I'm looking forward to a great fall rush next year!

## Our Graduating Seniors' Plans

**Henry Hanlon**

After commissioning as an active duty officer, I will attend the Engineer Basic Officer Leadership Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I hope to be selected for combat engineer and be stationed outside the continental United States.



Jason Necaise, Juan Ortiz, Bobby Upton, Henry Hanlon, Nathan Assefa, and Colt Hermes.

**Colt Hermes**

I will be graduating with a degree in nuclear science and engineering and then commissioning into the Navy. I will be headed to Charleston, South Carolina, to begin nuclear power school before going on to be a submarine officer.

**Nathan Assefa**

I'll begin a Ph.D. program in applied math, focusing on numerics for physical applied math.

**Bobby Upton**

Next year, I will graduate and get a job. What job we will not know but I'll probably get a job.

**Jason Necaise**

I am co-founding a quantum computing software startup in New Hampshire immediately after graduation. I plan to return to grad school to complete a Ph.D. in physics, focusing on quantum information.

The actives are in the process of constructing a diagram containing all the big/little lines as far back as possible. As alumni, we need your help to make this a reality. If possible, please email [komo@mit.edu](mailto:komo@mit.edu) with the following:

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, please email those to the above address as well, any bit of information helps!



# Liam Ackerman, All-American

By Bobby Upton, '20

If you looked at Liam Ackerman, you would think it was another day. He had a goofy smile, an easy demeanor, and a ridiculous symbol written on his thigh. He stood tall and walked with confidence. For the contestants of the NCAA Track and Field Championships, it was not another day. It was the culmination of a year of training; an opportunity to show the best of the best how good they really are. Most crack under the pressure and underperform, but not Liam. On this day, he'd become an All-American.

Liam is a junior vaulter at MIT. He studies computer science and was also the vice president of MIT Beta Chapter. On this day, Liam beat out all but two in the national crowd to achieve a third place finish at the NCAA Track and Field Championships in pole vault.

The pole vault is an interesting event—it requires an ability to do a wide array of physical challenges. A good vaulter must have the speed of a sprinter and the strength of a gymnast, but most importantly, they need to be a little (but actually a lot) crazy. Any slight deviation in timing can lead to a very dangerous and uncontrollable plummet from more than 16 feet in the air, and as a vaulter gets better, the sport gets more dangerous. This is where Liam shone. He was able to control the fear and keep the confidence to propel himself to an awesome finish.

As a junior, Liam is now recovering from a knee injury, but luckily his mentality will still be there when he returns, and he will be ready to return and show the nation just how good he is.



THE BETA CHAPTER OF THETA CHI AT MIT

## HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

THANKS TO BROTHERS & FRIENDS WHO DONATED IN CALENDAR 2019

Greg Agami '93  
Charles Albright '80  
Frank Ansuini '63  
Keith Ashelin '83  
David Baumgartner '08  
Dustin Berkovitz '02  
Arthur Blanchard '65  
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Allen Burgess '57  
David Campanella '76  
Terrance Chinn '65  
Owen Clements '84  
Scott Cook '92  
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Benjamin Dann Jr. '48  
Nicholas Decristofaro '73  
Michael Dellinger '88  
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Robert Frank '83  
Frederick Gander Jr. '65  
Rene Haas '74

James Hamblet '56  
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Chester Riley '62  
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Otto Robinson '60  
Peter Rutherford '84  
Francisco San Miguel '58  
Ken Schrock '06  
Kenneth Schumacher '12  
Mario Scott '11  
Noel Spishak '75  
Ilkka Suvanto '68  
Pierre Swick '64  
Morris Tao '00  
Eric Thompson '55  
Marcelo Torres '91  
Peter Wainman '92  
Kevin Wang '09  
Dean Webber '60  
Andrew Weiss '85  
Allen Williams '75  
Gregory Wilson '79  
Bruce Zotter '65

### THANKS TO BROTHERS GIVING THROUGH MIT'S IRDF FUND IN CALENDAR 2019:

David Baumgartner '08  
Patrick Cazeau '92, SM '94  
David Emero '90  
Robert Ferrara '67  
Craig Gander NON '70  
Frederick Gander '65  
Erik Hankwitz '94

William Jessiman '63, SM '65  
Bandita Joarder '94  
Jay Mackro '71, SM '72  
Dennis Nash '82  
Adrian Orozco '14  
John Preston '68  
Carey Rappaport '80, EE '82,  
SM '82, PhD '87

Frank Ruiz '76  
Mario Scott '11  
Charles Wilson '80  
Gregory Wilson '79, SM '80

## Fall Community Service Update

By Alex Evenchik '21

On a sunny Saturday this past fall, six members of the chapter, including the three new members, drove out to Revere Beach to help the Department of Conservation and Recreation with a new project initiative. The new project, begun by one of the DCR rangers, revolved around trying to reduce litter on the beaches. Through surveys and beachgoer interviews, the ranger had discovered that one of the main reasons for people leaving trash on the beach was the inability to find a nearby trashcan. To try and increase trashcan visibility, the actives decided to construct objects that could be put onto tall poles and mounted next to the trashcans. One group focused on making a sign to indicate a trashcan was underneath, while the other, to go along with the beach theme, made a wire

and duct-tape jellyfish to attract the attention of passersby. The hope is that by putting interesting or informative objects/signs next to trash bins, beachgoers will be able to easily locate and use them. Those who attended really enjoyed the chance to build something to address a real-world problem, and we are looking forward to returning this spring to iterate on our prototype.



# our alumni send their news

**Ray Ferrara '67** writes, "After 50-plus years in the computer industry, I am working on what is the most interesting and revolutionary project I have ever encountered. It is a new type of 'self describing' database that can describe all other types of computer databases. Once data from external databases are input to their new database, it is possible to Google for data and they system can return true data sets, not web pages, without human intervention." (1330 West Ave., #1414, Miami Beach, FL 33139 or rayferrara@alum.mit.edu)

**Bob Brady '62** writes, "I retired from Moog Inc. in 2014 after 47 years. Im now a semi-professional golfer—with limited ability. I live on a golf course in Palm Desert in the winter, a golf course in Jackson Hole in the spring and fall and near a golf course in Fort Erie, Canada (Buffalo) in the summer. I you'd like to play, email bobbbrady1@icloud.com." (740 W. Palomino Dr., Jackson, NY 83001)

## deceased

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

**Wesley W. Allen '61**  
May 9, 2019

**Richard P. Price '50**  
September 3, 2019

**Richard E. Rush '55**  
July 2, 2019

## Bob Sherrill '75 reflects on MIT and Beta Chapter

Forty five years later, I still have mixed feelings about going to M.I.T., but I am really glad that I joined Theta Chi. Living with a small, self-sufficient group of guys that shared a lot of my interests undoubtedly helped me get through four years at The Root.

After graduation, Al Lewis and I worked together at Rocketdyne on the Space Shuttle for a couple of years and we are still best friends. I took leave of my senses in 1978 and went into flight training in the Navy. The film "An Officer and a Gentleman" is based on the Aviation Officer Candidate School in Pensacola that I graduated from in June 1978. My Triumph Bonneville had a blue and gold gas tank as opposed to Richard Gere's black and red tank, but otherwise our bikes were identical. I used to autocross my Opel Manta and fly jets. I think of this as the "macho-nerd" period of my life. I got my wings in 1980 at Naval Air Station Kingsville, Texas.

My dream of flying the Shuttle ended in 1981 when I got grounded after failing night carrier landing qualifications in the A-7 Corsair. I served out my time in the Navy in the Civil Engineer Corps,

including a deployment with the Seabees to Guam in 1982, where I learned to scuba dive.

I got married after the Navy and have two children. Both are scientists who started at Kalamazoo College, a small liberal arts college in Michigan that is listed in "Colleges That Change Lives" by Loren Pope. In many respects I wish that I had followed a similar academic path. But for a working class kid from Northern California, M.I.T. was hard to turn down as an 18-year-old.

Professionally speaking, I have been working in the quality management field for the past 30 years. I was working as an engineer at a small aerospace supplier in Northern California when they made me an offer I could not refuse to manage their quality control department. Quality management is kind of a funny field, but if you do it right, you can have a positive effect on a lot of people's professional lives, and that's what I try to do.

When my son was young, we built and flew model aircraft (including remote control models) and he eventually got his private pilot's license and instrument rating. Flying with him was a lot of fun.

My daughter and I used to compete in open water swims while she was in high school and college. I have also been cycling a fair amount for the last 25 years (riding centuries).

My main avocation nowadays is music. I've come a long way from playing my guitar while Jimmy Alward '75 banged on our desk in Fourth Small Front—I have been organizing jam sessions at work for several years and put together a six member jam band for a gig last August. I lean more toward the blues and classic rock and roll. I give guitar lessons at work and also regularly play and sing at open mics in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Over the years, I've managed to stay in touch with Al Lewis '75, Ken ('76) and Debbie Kreischer, Steve Dawson '74, and David Campanella '76. As I said in the opening paragraph, I still have mixed feelings about going to M.I.T.—I would have preferred a broader education that included the liberal arts, but I am glad that I joined Theta Chi.

Fraternally yours,  
Bob Sherrill '75

## Save The Dates!

### ALUMNI WEEKEND

April 25-27, 2020

**CANCELLED**

### TECH REUNION OPEN HOUSE

May 29, 2020

2:30-5:00 p.m.

Are you coming to the MIT Tech Reunion at the end of May? Open house on Friday afternoon with food, refreshments, and friends. Alumni, graduating seniors, and their families are all welcome.

**PENDING**

## 2019 Was a Good Year

(continued from page one)

unexpectedly in the spring of 2018. Within days of John's passing, MIT President Rafael Reif sent a letter to the entire MIT community. Here is how President Reif closed that thoughtful letter "...John's story is quintessentially MIT: He loved to teach and he loved to learn. A lucid thinker and an engineer's engineer, he devoted his career to the mind-and-hand advancement of industrial food production, and in his retirement, he joyfully took up a new kind of hands-on learning: with a friend, he opened a brewery. On his second excursion at MIT, John also invested himself in the life of the campus, serving as vice president of the alumni corporation of his old fraternity, Theta Chi, and becoming a champion of and donor to MIT's new maker program, Project

Manus".

Please know that you don't have to wait until year end to help again. You can donate in any one of three ways of giving, listed at <http://ox.mit.edu/alumni/#giving>. Questions? Ask us at [thetachi@mit.edu](mailto:thetachi@mit.edu)

Fraternally,

David Baumgartner '08, *Alumni Corp. President*  
Axel Martinez '15, *Alumni Corp. VP and Alumni House Manager*

Ken Schumacher '12, *Alumni Corp. Secretary*

David Campanella '76, *Alumni Corp. Communications Chair*

Jason Ku '09, *Alumni Corp. Treasurer*

Bob Ferrara '67, *Alumni Corp. Director*

Jim Poitras '63, *Alumni Corp. Director*

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