



beta button

Beta Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity at MIT • Spring 2021



Hello Brothers Near and Far

I hope this note finds you well. This last year has brought change to some of our Theta Chi traditions. Last year's June Open Home during graduation weekend was canceled as MIT closed the campus back in March.

Later in the summer, we had an all brothers Zoom meeting where many brothers joined from around the country and overseas. Currently, MIT has closed off-campus housing for the limited number of students attending the classrooms and labs and the house is empty, so there will not be a Spring 2021 reunion. We are planning another all-brothers Zoom call in early December 2021, and we hope to see you all then. See Open House Returns on page 2.

Today there are many social methods to communicate. MIT Alumni Association set up a number of Theta Chi email groups years ago and we have recently decided to take a more active role in monitoring several of these.

SPRING RUSH

By **Arman Dave**, *Rush Co-Chairman*

Rush in spring 2021 was three times longer than normal, spanning from February 6 to February 24. Due to COVID-19, all events were handled virtually over Zoom. Despite these challenges, the brothers persevered and found creative ways to keep PNM (potential new member) engaged. Events included online poker, Among Us, and GeoGuessr (given a street view on Google Earth, guess your location) to name a few.

As a rush chair, I am personally so thankful for the energy the brothers put forth this year. The challenges presented by a virtual rush could not have been overcome without their dedication. Brother turnout to events was at its peak for the last few years, resulting in a pledge class of 11. Our new pledges come from various backgrounds and pursue various interests, but they were all excited to join our brotherhood and will contribute to our house cultures for years to come.

CLASS OF 2021



Members of the Class of 2021 working on our deck. Quilee (maroon shirt), Alex (red shirt), Liam (near vacuum pump) and Luis (hidden behind Alex).

Alex Evenchik

I will be attending graduate school next year, pursuing a Ph.D. in materials science and engineering. Looking back on my MIT experience, I really value the time I have had in this community with the great people that make MIT Theta Chi what it is.



Kyle Higgins

I joined Theta Chi last year during the spring of 2020. In a tumultuous time on campus, it was a great time getting to know everyone in Theta Chi better and seeing how even though I was relatively new, everyone was there for me. I am graduating from MIT with an aerospace degree. I've played on the men's lacrosse team for four years now. Going forward, I am looking to stay in Boston and pursue careers involving the design of aerospace systems. Additionally, I hope I have time to also help out with the lacrosse team if I'm still in the area.

Ian Miller

Thank you for extending that helping hand. Theta Chi has meant a lot to me over the past four years. I have met some of my best friends and had some of the best times of my life living at 528 Beacon. My only regret is that I didn't move in sooner, and didn't get to finish my college career living in that house. The brothers that I was lucky enough to be close with have grown even closer through COVID-19 times. We have come to see our fraternity as a family, and our effort to stay connected in a virtual environment is evidence of that fact. I have never been prouder to be a



Theta Chi as I am today. I hope all of you stay in touch. You always have a place to stay with me.

I'll be graduating this June and commissioning into the Army Reserves as an engineer officer. Two brothers from the 2020 class are also engineer officers and had a not-insignificant influence on my decision to join that Army branch. The ROTC tradition has always been strong in the house and I'm glad that we will continue that tradition with the incoming pledge class. I'll be spending a few months at Fort Bragg, NC before starting my civilian job at a military-tech startup called Anduril in Newport Beach, CA this fall. I'll be working as a software engineer there. Hopefully, I'll learn how to surf, too.

I'm excited to graduate and finally emerge from the academic struggle that is MIT. But even now, I realize that I was too hard on myself and my school while I was here. There were some low points, definitely, but I've met some of my best friends here and made some of the best memories of my life here. Many of those friends and memories were at the house, or with brothers. I will cherish the relationships that I formed here forever. I want you all to remember that and don't hesitate to reach out. I want to hear from you all. I want to know the incredible things that you all are accomplishing. And of course, I want to be able to snag a couch in the library when I'm back visiting in Boston.

Ian Miller (321) 274-7075

imiller7255@gmail.com / immiller@mit.edu

Quilee Simeon

My time at MIT has seemed like a whirlwind. I came to the U.S. four years ago as an impressionable and ambitious international student from Saint Lucia. MIT definitely humbled me but also inspired and pushed me in unexpected ways.

In some ways, my mission for coming to MIT was a success. For example, in one of my application essays, I spoke of wanting to be at the bleeding edge of a

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CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Mario Peraza '22

VICE PRESIDENT

Julian Hamelberg '22

TREASURER

Arman Dave '22

VICE PRESIDENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Conrad Oakes '22

SECRETARY

Erik Thompson '22

MARSHALL

Cameron Hilman '23

RUSH CHAIRS

Arman Dave '22

Andrew Komo '22

Roberto Sarabia '22

BROTHERHOOD

Alex Evenchik '21

Albert Garcia '22

H-MAN

Roberto Sarabia '22

SCHOLARSHIP

Vijay Dey '22

ALUMNI

Cameron Hilman '23

CHAPLAIN

Andrew Komo '22

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Ian Miller '21

TECH CHAIR

Julian Hamelberg '22

STANDARDS

Senior: Alex Evenchik '21

Junior: Albert Evenchik '22

Alternate: Liam Ackerman '21

SPRING TERM AT THE HOUSE

This spring, MIT is implementing an optional hybrid course curriculum, with the majority of classes being completely virtual. All undergraduates, except seniors, were invited back to live on campus in dormitories to gain access to MIT facilities for a limited number of days per week. Fraternity houses remain closed for this semester. As a result, some brothers decided to live on campus, while a majority of others are living in apartments off campus.

While the majority of activities our brotherhood participates in are virtual, there have been socially-distanced meet-ups with brothers who

are located near each other. As for brothers who are not located in the Boston area, our brotherhood chair has been planning virtual events where we can hang out with everyone.

Even though we have members scattered throughout the country, our sense of community has never been stronger as can be seen by our event attendance and successful spring rush. While this was not the spring anyone was expecting, we are excited and hopeful for the rest of this semester and the semesters to come.

- Mario Peraza, *House President*

NEW BOILER

The house's boiler had a history of being unreliable and requiring frequent repairs and restarts. To address this, we hired a firm to perform an in-depth assessment in late 2019. Based on their report, we concluded that replacing the boiler and related plumbing was the best way to ensure the long-term reliability of the system.

This upgrade was completed in mid-2020, before the peak of heating season. The house is now

running on a more efficient boiler, backed by a more optimized plumbing system and in-line filtering to trap rust. This has kept the house safe from the freezing weather while it has sat unoccupied (along with some remote monitoring). We hope that it will serve the actives well for many years to come!

- Ken Schumacher
House Corp. President

COMMENCEMENT AFTERNOON OPEN HOUSE RETURNS

Virtual Reunion & Social

June 4, 2021 | 3:00 to 4:30pm

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to hold our traditional Reunion Open House at 528 Beacon last year. Unfortunately, the house is still closed, so we are going virtual.

The reunion open house was a wonderful event to bring together many of us, including current graduating seniors, their parents, reunion-bound alums, local Boston-area alums, and actives who were planning to stay in Boston over the summer. Since the event is going virtual, everyone can attend.

We will not be able to provide snacks and refreshments per usual, but we hope you will gather up your favorite hors-d'oeuvre and libations and join us to celebrate our graduates

and our common Theta Chi – MIT experiences. We especially want to extend invitations to our brothers who graduated in 1971 and 1970 and missed out on their 50th-year reunions.

If you are planning to join us, RSVP to thetachi@mit.edu to help us set up the breakout rooms. <https://mit.zoom.us/j/94138515140?pwd=eTJQL0lLTk3b05rOGFwTXk4UThuUT09> Or by voice only, (646) 558-8656 Meeting ID: 941 3851 5140 Password: 727692

International Numbers: <https://mit.zoom.us/j/afgKd9Ltw>. Be on the lookout for our reminder and email with the Zoom link in May. We look forward to seeing everyone at the house next year.

ALUMNI NEWS

James Flatt '81

Started new company Brightseed in 2017 which can be found at brightseedbio.com/news/ and was named by World Economic Forum to the Technology Pioneer 2020 list. With COVID-19, our team is working from home, so back in Colorado since March.



Our daughter, Rachel, and fiancé Eric (both class of 2015 Stanford) drove from Chapel Hill, NC to Colorado this summer for some R&R (Rachel is in her 3rd year of her clinical psych PhD program at the medical school at UNC Chapel Hill. We also held a lovely family wedding in our garden at our home in Colorado with Eric's immediate family. Hopefully a big-ger celebration in 2021.

Jody and I continue to enjoy all that Colorado has to offer, hiking with our Old English Sheepdogs and skiing.

Roy Lydon Jr. '73

I finally retired from Raytheon in 2018 and now spend most of my time as a "gradfather". Mary Paula and I have 11 grandchildren (7 boys, 4 girls) and all four of our kids are married with children, gainfully employed, and live within 20 miles of us in Massachusetts.

I keep in touch with '73 brothers Dennis Intravia, Wes Grandmont, and Bill Billing – usually by text or email. Dennis lives on Long Island, Bill in Connecticut, and Wes just moved to Maine. All are retired, or at least mostly retired, and we're all turning to this coming year!

Earl Smiddy '58

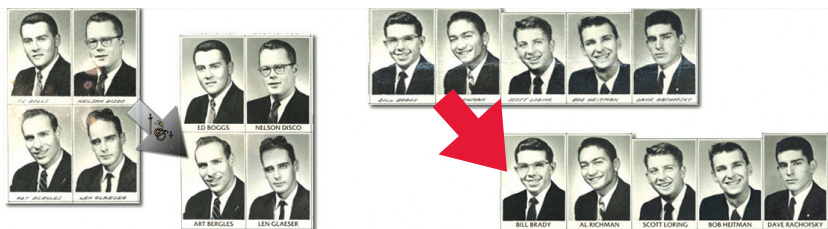
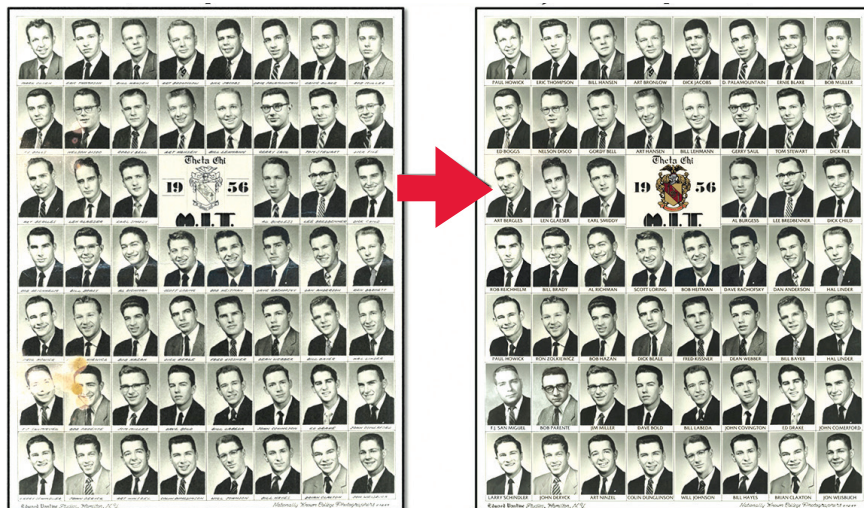
Special thanks to Jim Poitras '63 and Chip Hance '81 for their matching gifts!

COMPOSITE

The 1956 composite, which was faded and had water damage, has been restored, including the hand-painted Theta Chi crest. The artwork was dropped off for restoration

before MIT's campus closed last year and then it sat waiting for the shop to reopen. Thanks to Ross Reunion '04 persistent oversight this project is finally complete.

Composite Restoration Project Snapshot



Original Hand-Drawn Composite Crest Art Compilation

Class of 2021

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neuroscience education, intersecting engineering principles with the study of human brain. And that's exactly what I did. On the other hand, I took some diverging paths along the way to that goal which included – among other things – traveling to different countries to teach STEAM, battling through anxiety and imposter syndrome, changing my major in my junior year, and becoming a member of a diverse brotherhood.

My plans for the future are still under development. I will definitely be enrolling in a neurosciences graduate program next fall. The question I am considering now is: "Which one?". I have to pick from two top choice graduate programs and that's a decision that I'm putting a lot of thought into.

STEAM Education is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking.

<https://artsintegration.com/what-is-steam-education-in-k-12-schools/>

Bios for the following brothers will be in our next issue:



Liam Ackerman



Luis Gallegos

deceased

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

George Downie '51

October 9, 2020

Edson C. Hendricks '67

August 29, 2020

Luisa Zauli '89

May 29, 2020

Nicholas R. Hurst '60

April 19, 2020

NEWS FLASH FROM THE CLASS OF 1968

What happens when Theta Chi brothers get together when they have not seen each other for over 50 years? Let your imagination roll.

Win Gardner, class of 1968, was turning 75 on January 28. Given all that was happening with COVID-19, Win's wife, Rebecca, came up with an idea to host a virtual surprise birthday party with his Theta Chi brothers to mark this milestone like none other. How did she pull this off? With a little help from Jim Pugh '68 and Peter Klaphaack '69. They knew the whereabouts of several more brothers from that era and pointed her to others who lent a hand getting in touch with about 20 more. Soon enough, they had enough RSVPs to make this a real party.

On January 28th, Rebecca told Win that his grandchildren were planning a special Zoom surprise. She had Win set up the webcam, microphone and large screen TV for the call and sent him to his office to await the start of the Zoom call. When he was beckoned upstairs for the big reveal, he saw on screen his two children, Myles (Theta Chi, Duke University '04) and Alexandra; three grandchildren; and about 16 Theta Chi friends, most of whom he hadn't seen in over 50 years. Yes, the expression was, "Holy" What a surprise it was.

After the initial shock wore off, the fun began. Everyone took time to share an update on what they had been doing the last 50 years. As one can imagine,

the career accomplishments were inspiring and ranged across many sectors from research to medical fields. Not to mention, we realized how many of us live just a few hours apart!

Of course, the highlights of the evening were the stories of living at 528 Beacon Street. There are a few that really stand out: how Win had his stolen VW spare tire replaced several times over, remembering where you were when the draft numbers were announced and who got a 1, Jim Pugh reciting his "name," and many more.

Jim Pugh '68 and Tom Moebus '69 shared their "musical talents" with songs that probably should not be shared more broadly and, truth be told, should not have been shared at all.

The emails continue to bounce around with recipes, photos, and great memories of wonderful friends who had such an impact on shaping our lives. It was

the first of what we hope to be a quarterly event. Win told his wife that it was the best birthday gift he had ever received

Attending were Bob and Ray Ferrara '67, Dan Anderson '69, Jim Pugh '68, Larry Preston '68, Bruce Glabe '69, John Byrnes '69, Peter Klaphaack '69, Tom Penn '68, Tim Gilmore '70, Jim Gallagher '69, Val Livada '70, Tom Moebus '69 and Bill Meyer '70, most of whom are in this screenshot. Sam Stroud '70 and Tom Cox '69 couldn't attend.



RELIC FROM 3RD HEAD

By David Baumgartner '08

In January 1999, the big workweek project was a renovation of 3rd Head, the bathroom on the third floor. Before that point, the shower area was one large space with three shower heads, and the goal of the project was to turn it into two separate shower stalls.

Warren Chow '00 was the workweek manager, and to round up support for the project, a poster was made showing a picture of two urinals next to each with a slogan reading, "Does the thought of no dividers terrify you?"

During the renovation process, brothers found a wine bottle behind the walls of 3rd Head with the names and signatures of several alums from the class of 1991-1993. Since Phil Juang '00 had his 21st birthday that week, several brothers went to the "annex" at 3 AM after a night out and decided to give it a try. "I don't recall for certain, but I believe it was absolutely delicious, and all the brothers gazed upon us with reverence in their eyes and, dare I say, a smidge of envy. And then nothing eventful happened after that," said Phil.

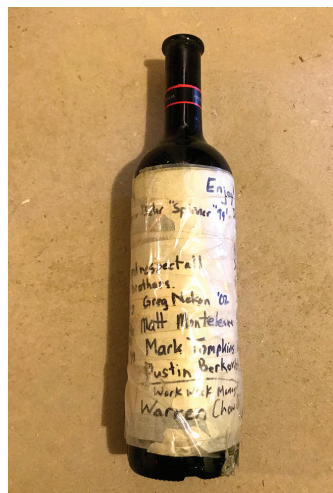
The tradition continued: "After this whole thing, we decided to put a bottle of something nice for the next group of brothers to actually enjoy in the wall," said Rome Portlock '01.

As a result of the pandemic, the alumni corporation took advantage of the empty house to do a gut

renovation of 3rd Head, this time by professional contractors. This is when the bottle was discovered (pictured below). It includes the signatures of many brothers of the classes of '99 through '02, along with the inscriptions "Enjoy! From: January Work Week '99" and "Love and respect all of your brothers."

From the perspective of managing the contractors for the ongoing renovation, I will note that code violations and hacked-together parts were key parts of this and other workweek 3rd head renovations led by brothers in the past. Anyone who contributed to those renovations in the past is encouraged to visit <http://ox.mit.edu/alumni/#giving>.

Thanks to the empty house, a new bottle signed by current undergraduates isn't feasible, and nobody has volunteered to give this one a try. So it will be returned to the wall for the next generation to try



Wine Bottle Signed by:

Jason T. Timpe '99, Phil Juang '00, Humberto Valdes '00, Steve Lim '01, Brian Peck '01, Doug Kriner '01, David Skordal '02, Keith Battocchi '02, David Houseman '00, Jordan Miller '02, Harry "Rome" Portlock '00, David LoBosco '02, Fraggle, Greg Nelson '02, Matt Monteleon '02, Mark Tompkins '02, Dustin Berkovitz '02, Warren Chow '00, Spenser Behr '99

after some additional fine aging.

Many thanks to Morris Tao '00, Dustin Berkovitz '02, Phil Juang '00, David LoBosco '02, and Rome Portlock '01 for contributions to this story.

Find Us Online at: OX.mit.edu/alumni/

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