We Welcome New Members And Thank Our Alumni

Brothers and Friends,

It has been my privilege to help transition the Delta Chapter of Theta Xi from 2003 into 2004; we certainly have many things to celebrate! First and foremost, please join me in congratulating and welcoming our newest brothers: Timothy Koch, Kurt Stiehl, John Gardner, Dustin Short-Santellanes, Jeffrey Borowitz, Andrew Harlan, and David Lin, Deltas 1053 through 1059 (seen in picture at right).

With the many changes to MIT policy and recruitment, I am proud to see an associate member program that includes all the events of my freshman experience, and then some. The experience still forges an ironclad pledge class. I see great potential in this class for leadership that will further strengthen their newly entered bonds.

We continue to be amazed by the results of Bert Forbes’s challenge. We actives of Delta Chapter have an opportunity—not only to improve upon our beloved 64-66 Bay State Road—but also to work with our corporation board to further our already healthy alumni relations. A particularly fond memory of mine came when many Boston-area alums and over 20 undergraduates met in early December near Lobby 10 to hold a phonathon. Over pizza and great stories, we packed every Alumni Association office and cubicle available, calling hundreds of Theta Xi alumni to inform them about Bert’s challenge. At times we had so many brothers willing to help that we took shifts just to spread the experience of “calling it in.” At around 11:00 p.m. the evening of hard work, impressive gains, and even more great stories concluded.

While discussing alumni involvement, I would like to highlight the activities of two alumni who are making a big difference. First is our new chapter advisor, Christopher Williams, Δ965. Chris has provided a wealth of knowledge and advice for our undergraduate chapter. Present at every house and officer meeting, and a driving force of our recent two-day retreat, Chris is always there to look over a motion, help settle different viewpoints, or just chat about when he lived at Theta Xi.

The second alumnus I would like to mention for his incredible contributions to our chapter is Bert Forbes, Δ612. His dedication to the undergraduate chapter could not come at a better time; the total donation from Theta Xi alumni and Brother Forbes will help bring our vision of our brownstones to fruition.

Finally, on a more personal note, I am (continued on page five)

Hold the Date for 6294

We’ll be celebrating at the house on May 1, 2004.
Plan to join us for an afternoon barbecue, our traditional softball game, and/or dinner.
Delta Chapter’s Winter Retreat Was A Blast

February 6-8, 2004, marked the first weekend of the spring semester. That weekend nearly all of Delta Chapter traveled two hours to the Alpine Village Resort in North Woodstock, New Hampshire, for our annual chapter retreat. After the difficult drive the sight of the outstanding three-story house we rented rewarded us all.

President Sebastian Cherng Δ1027, '04, organized the weekend to be both fun and productive. We spent Saturday afternoon rotating between four discussion sessions with about seven brothers participating in each. We discussed standards of brotherhood, parliamentary procedure, new member recruitment, and the National Fraternity’s constitution. Sebastian, Sid Puram, Seth Mastin, and Chris Williams, our chapter advisor, ran the sessions. Between meetings, brothers relaxed, playing the traditional snow football game on the field next to the house. Afterwards, we all went out for dinner at a locally popular restaurant with live music. We concluded the weekend by watching movies, socializing, and waking up early Sunday morning to head back to Boston.

Personally, the retreat was a great escape from MIT and I look forward to going back to New Hampshire with the chapter next year.

Matthew Herman Δ1047, '06

House Looks Great With Commons & Lodge Room Refurbished

The house had some excitement last December when there was a small fire in a fourth-floor room at 66 Bay State Road. A space heater overheated and caused enough smoke to set off the sprinkler. While there was no fire damage at all, there was water damage, as the sprinkler ran until the fire department came. Since then, the house has been repaired by outside contractors.

This past January, the 2007 pledge class participated in Help Week, the main focus of which was to improve the look of Commons. I feel it is crucial that Commons, a place where the fraternity comes together on many occasions, looks sharp and appealing. The dining room, the bar, and the poolroom were each given a facelift, with fresh coats of paint. As usual, the normal jobs of Work Week were done as well, including an exhaustive cleaning of the kitchen and many minor repairs. The care and effort the pledges put into their work was impressive and showed how much they already respect Theta Xi.

While the pledges were hard at work, members of the active chapter made significant improvements to the Lodge Room, hanging pictures, organizing, and cleaning the room. The chapter, with the help of the Corporation, was able to purchase pews for seating in the room. Two brothers, Camilo Aladro and Sid Puram, traveled to Chicago to drive the pews back to Boston.

The Lodge Room and the house look great, and I encourage alumni to visit the house to see all the improvements.

Michael Whitaker Δ1051, '06
The Great Pew Run of 2004

Lately, the most important room in the house had begun to resemble a storage room more than a Lodge Room. During January’s independent activities period, Vice President Sid Puram Δ1045, ’05, led an effort to fix up our Lodge Room and fill it with the rich history of the Delta Chapter. The old couches were moved out, the memorabilia was brought in, but something was still missing.

An internet search brought us to usedpews.org, where we found the ideal furniture to complete our refurbished Lodge Room. We purchased five pews for only $600, but it was going to be quite expensive to have them shipped. However, if two brothers were to fly out to Chicago and rent a truck to drive them back, the cost would still be reasonable. Sid brought me along for the journey, and we had one of the greatest adventures of our lives. Just 28 hours after we left, we arrived back at 64-66 Bay State Road with a fine set of pews, courtesy of Temple Beth Shalom. Now the brothers have a beautiful Lodge Room in which we can carry out our meetings. I invite all alums to visit us, this 6294, on Saturday, May 1, 2004.

After returning from our road trip, we compiled the:

**Top Five Moments from The Great Pew Run of 2004:**

#1. Sid jumps out of the truck to pour washer fluid on the windshield in the middle of the blizzard. Camilo turns on the wipers, splashing Sid in the face. Sid then jumps into the snow rubbing snow in his face screaming, “Tastes like BURNING!”

#2. Wildly inaccurate weather reports coming in from Theta Xi give us false hope about the blizzard we are driving though. (Note to Martin: There is no such thing as “light snow” in Buffalo.)

#3. Camilo and Sid take turns jumping out of the truck to pour washer fluid on the windshield because the last idea didn’t work.

#4. The truck cannot squirt washer fluid. Sid turns on the defroster to melt the snow on the windshield, hoping the water will wash it. The cabin gets so hot Sid and Camilo strip down to their underwear. Many New York Thruway toll-takers received a free show that night.

#5. Getting the special “S” on our boarding passes saying that we needed to be searched. The TSA officers are shocked to find nothing but snacks in our backpacks. One officer pulls a Costco-sized bag of baby carrots out of Camilo’s bag and asks him, “Do you juice?”

Theta Xi Teams Impress Judges At ISN Design Competition

Last October, MIT’s Institute for Soldier Nanotechnologies (ISN) began a student design contest, challenging teams to come up with solutions to various problems. Ben Smith Δ1040, ’05, and I decided to tackle the problem of creating a reliable canopy release mechanism for parachutes. The mechanism that the military currently uses is not reliable and often causes cargo to be dragged or tipped after it lands in airborne operations. After a little thought, we decided to create a device that used an accelerometer to detect impending impact with the ground and trigger the release of the parachute.

Shortly after, we learned that David Lin Δ1059, ’06, had also formed a team with some of his friends. They were developing a silent, non-line-of-sight communication system for soldiers. After giving initial presentations, both of our teams made it to the next round, and the ISN gave each team $850 for materials to construct a prototype.

After many hours of machining, programming, and (I admit it) burning Ben’s hand with the soldering iron, Ben and I were able to come up with a working prototype. We even got to go out to the Army’s research lab in Natick to test our prototype. At the same time, Dave and his team were busy with their prototype.

Final presentations by nine teams were made on February 17, 2004, in front of numerous professors and Army officers. Both Theta Xi teams produced excellent working prototypes and gave solid presentations. Ben and I placed third, and Dave’s team placed second, the teams earning $2000 and $3000 novelty checks, respectively.

Matthew Carvey Δ1036, ’05
Meet Bryan Adams, Theta Xi’s Resident Advisor

While most Theta Xi alums probably never lived with a “resident advisor” during their undergraduate careers, my role with the house over the last four years has been incredibly rewarding for me and beneficial for the undergraduate chapter.

As an undergraduate, I lived just down the street at Phi Sigma Kappa, graduating from Course VI in 1999. After a year in a Somerville apartment, just as I was starting my graduate studies in computer science, I moved into Theta Xi in the fall of 2000 and was elected President of the PSK Alumni Corporation. This dual role, both RA and House Corporation President (albeit for different houses), has given me a new appreciation for how much work it takes to keep a fraternity running smoothly.

It has never been more important, or more difficult, to keep chapters in good shape. Several factors have combined to make the last few years among the most trying for MIT’s independent living groups. With all freshmen now living on campus, almost every chapter at MIT is feeling a squeeze for both members and finances. Last year’s fatal nightclub fire in Rhode Island has created a great deal more scrutiny on fire protection. And behavioral problems continue to plague the system, as DKE was suspended for a year following an alcohol-related incident in the fall of 2004.

On the flip side, several important developments are strengthening the independent residence system. With financial and logistical support from MIT, more than 15 houses have come together to form the Fraternities, Sororities, and Independent Living Groups Cooperative. You can see our website at www.fsilg.coop. This organization, staffed full-time by an MIT FSILG graduate, leverages buying power to create better pricing and more convenience for its members (including Theta Xi). A collection of alumni house corporations also sponsored a short course, “FSILG Treasurer 101,” during January 2004, to help undergraduates take better financial care of their chapters. Theta Xi sent three members. Finally, President Vest appointed an FSILG Task Force (see their website at fsilg-task-force.mit.edu) to take a closer look at the FSILG system and to make recommendations about how it might be better supported in the future. I have served on this task force and I hope that the report provides a more solid foundation for the entire system over the next 25 years.

Closer to home, I view my job as RA to be similar to Robert Duvall’s role as the family consiglieri Tom Hagen in the Godfather movies. I provide counsel, advice, and support to the undergraduates in whatever way they deem most helpful. (I will leave the verification of my status as a “wartime consigliere” to the active chapter.) Having lived in a fraternity for almost eight years now, I can provide a historical perspective on fraternal life, and as an “MIT lifer” I can provide a great deal of advice about how to navigate the Institute. Because I can also look at the chapter through the lens of an alumni housing corporation officer, I believe I am able to facilitate communication between actives and alums as well.

One of my most important rules, though, is to let the students make their own choices. As long as basic health and safety guidelines are being met, I always give the officers the final say. I do not vote in house meetings, and I do not attend any ritual events. While I do have good working relationships with many members of the MIT administration, I do not report to them. I valued independent living when I was at Phi Sig, and I am committed to making sure that the brothers at Theta Xi have the same quality experience.

Looking to the future, I can say, without hesitation, that Theta Xi is in great shape. The undergraduates have made great strides in adapting to the new rushing system, building leadership training for future officers, and creating an atmosphere that encourages growth among the brothers and is inviting to potential new members. When combined with an active, efficient housing corporation, I can say without question that Theta Xi will be here for the next 50 years.

Bryan Adams ΦΣΚ, ’99
The Forbes Campaign – A Very Successful 100 Days

Bert Forbes, Δ612, ’66, first e-mailed Corporation President Steve Baker Δ814, ’84, with “a proposal” on October 2, 2003. On January 10, 2004, we closed the books on the resulting Forbes Campaign. In just 100 days we raised $86,476.95 for Delta Chapter of Theta Xi!

Of course, Bert contributed the lion’s share, $43,300 to be exact. He matched each gift of $100 or more, along with a few creative exceptions. The rest, however, came from our dedicated alumni base: 264 individual donors, or 44 percent of our living alums (and a much greater percentage of those we know we can reach by mail). Guidance from fundraising professionals at the start of our campaign suggested that “excellent” results would be 20 percent participation and $25,000. We showed them!

Why did we do so well? There are a few reasons. First, Bert laid down some solid ground rules. Take the simple message straight to the brothers, and ask them to respond quickly. Don’t beat around the bush. Second, we had great success with our first foray into on-line donations via the house’s website. After investigating a number of options we went with a simple PayPal tool. Not quite half of our gifts came this way, sometimes just moments after e-mail reminders. Third, a few especially motivated brothers really got behind the effort. They placed a lot of calls and sent a lot of e-mails to convince people to give. Finally, and foremost, we succeeded because of the strength of our brotherhood. These 264 men—some over half a century removed from their days in the house—valued their experiences at Delta Chapter of Theta Xi enough to help create the same experiences for the next generation of Deltas.

So, what will this money be used for? Key members of the active chapter and corporation board are still working out the details. But the general theme will be improvements to the house that make it easier to rush new members. We have already spent more than $6,000 renovating a few bathrooms.

I found it tremendously gratifying to work on this campaign. It was such a pleasant surprise to watch the immediate response to Bert’s challenge. I’d like to offer special thanks to a few individuals who contributed mightily to our success: Steve Baker Δ814, ’84; Andy Berkheimer Δ994, ’01; Colin Page Δ936, ’95; Michael Thilmont Δ1041, ’05; Chris Williams Δ965, ’98; and David Ziegler Δ1032, ’04.

And of course, thanks again to Bert, and to all the brothers who donated to this special fundraising campaign.

Tom Davis Δ807, ’84

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(continued from page one)

thankful for the refreshed unity in our house. While I spent last year teaching English in China, I often received updates about the house, good and bad. With so many changes to our chapter and at MIT, the transition was at times rough. I am blessed to have come home to a house that is truly a brotherhood—the most cohesive that I have experienced in my four years as a Theta Xi—and I find it an honored responsibility to lead the house into an even brighter future.

Please keep an eye out for notices of upcoming events, most notably our 6294 celebration to be held on the weekend of May 1, 2004. I look forward to meeting you all.

Yours In the Bonds,
Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng Δ1027, ’04
Seabass@mit.edu
for the past 2 1/2 years I have been selling business of selling computer software, “After some uncertain years in the
rausch@bobrausch.com. GA 30097. Send Robert e-mail at
I have moved to 7920 San Felipe Blvd.,
both Davis at the MIT Leadership Conference.” Stay in
It’s a different world for Greeks these
days. I also had lunch with brother Baker
Many of their problems mirror Delta’s.
Sigma, at the University of Michigan.
in September and met brother Davis at the
VARELA ’57, and their ladies. In September,
I was appointed Chapter Advisor for
with DA VE CLUNIES ’57, and JOHN
50th in Pennsylvania, I had dinner in DC
in political economics. I expect to finish
was my best man, and MOST AF A
in Long Island. Deltas in attendance included
15, 2004, I married Cynthia Wong at an
18th century plantation in Falmouth,
Davids in attendance included brothers ROB CROCKETT ’93, SHAYNE
OLIVER SOSTRE ’93, MATT WARREN ’93, MARK DUGGAN
and PETE JACOBS ’92. Cynthia and
I recently bought a house on the North
Shore of Long Island. She is finishing her Ph.D. at Columbia and I am working at Renaissance Technologies, a hedge fund.” You can send David e-mail at lippe@alum.mit.edu.

THOMAS G. RAUSCH ’68 has moved to
8850 Innisbrook Run, Duluth, GA 30097. Send Robert e-mail at
rausch@bobrausch.com.

ROBERT E. ROACH ’68 writes, “After some uncertain years in the
business of selling computer software, for the past 2 1/2 years I have been selling programming materials for college
degree programs, including home-study. I have also recently started teaching “Introduction to Programming C++” at
a local college. I have two sons in college. Andrew is a junior at Penn State, majoring in business and finance with a
minor in math, and plays in the marching band. Mac is a freshman at Kenyon College near Columbus Ohio, and may
major in math. Our daughter, Sally, is a senior in high school and wants to be a pastry chef.” Write to Bob at 39 Bailey
Dr., Washington Crossing, PA 18977. You can send Robert e-mail at
roach1121@hotmail.com.

D. ANDREW HIMMELBLAU ’72
lives at 5 Avon Rd., Bedford, MA 01730. Keep in touch with Andy by e-mail at
ahimmelblau@geo-centers.com.

DANIEL R. CHRISTMAN ’76, D721,
lives at 3807 Jarrettsville Pike, Jarrettsville, MD 21084. He now works for SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation, the nation’s largest
employee-owned research and engineering company).

MICHAEL F. KENNEY ’79 has a new
address: 80 Leonard Dr., Tiverton, RI 02878. Keep in touch with Mike by e-mail at
muse-kenney@cox.net.

J. MARC POSTMAN D792, ’81,
writes, “I had the pleasure of attending the
wedding of JULIUS CHANG ’81 and
Laura Salerano this past December. I had
almost given up hope of seeing Julius
married but now realize he was just holding
out for the woman of his dreams. We also
got to spend time with BRAD
NAGER ’83 and Diane, who are doing
well and are proud of their two boys. Barbara
and I have entered the “Twilight
Zone” of being parents of a teenager. So
far, however, Alyssa, now age 14, has
been a great kid. It’s our younger daughter
Claire, now 10, who may give us a real
run for the money. I continue my position
at the Space Telescope Science Institute as
a member of the senior scientific staff. My
research with the Hubble Space Telescope
continues to be extremely rewarding.”
Write to Marc at 3303 Lighthouse Dr., Balti-
more, MD 21208. Send him e-mail at
postman@stsci.edu.

SAMUEL O. SOSTRE ’93 has moved to
27 Davenport Rd., West Hartford, CT
06110. You can send him e-mail at
sosostre@alum.mit.edu.

DAVID A. LIPPE ’93 has moved to
16 Four Winds Rd., East Setauket,
18th century plantation in Falmouth,
Jamaica. Deltas in attendance included
brothers ROB CROCKETT ’93, SHAYNE
OLIVER GARY ’93, OLIVER SOSTRE ’93,
MATT WARREN ’93, MARK DUGGAN
’92, and PETE JACOBS ’92. Cynthia and
I recently bought a house on the North
Shore of Long Island. She is finishing her Ph.D. at Columbia and I am working at Renaissance Technologies, a hedge fund.” You can send David e-mail at lippe@alum.mit.edu.

JONATHAN WOON D985, ’00, writes, “I have been very happily married to Julia Laurin (Wellesley College ’00) for over a year now! Our wedding took place on September 21, 2002, at our church in Burlingame, California. It was a great day and a great party, and it was wonderful to share it with several of my brothers.
WILLIAM DOLAN ’99, D978, was my best man, and MOSTAFA
SABET ’00, D988, was also a groomsman. RICHARD LUONG ’00 also flew the way from Boston to attend. In 2002, I passed my qualifying exams and I am currently working on my dissertation in political economics. I expect to finish by June 2005. Also in January 2002, my
daughter Kathryn came to live with us, and she has been doing great here.” Write to Jon at his new address: 1546 Lago St.,
San Mateo, CA 94403.

DAVID S. BAILEY ’02 has a new
address: 4250 WLK Samm Pkwy. N.E.,
#2042, Redmond, WA 98052. Send him e-mail at dsb@alum.mit.edu.