

# THE BEAVER SIG

*Alpha Theta Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity*



CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

[HTTP://SIGMACHI.MIT.EDU](http://sigmachl.mit.edu)

JUNE 2011

## Report: House Corporation

Dear Brothers,

Another academic year has come successfully to a close at Alpha Theta. We congratulate and welcome the recently graduated Class of 2011 into the ranks of our alumni and look forward to seeing them blossom in their future careers.

Commencement is also a time to celebrate the past with Reunion, and Alpha Thetas from across the decades joined the celebration. At an open house at 532 Beacon Street, I had the pleasure of visiting with Sigs from '51, '61, '81, '86, and '01. Congratulations, in particular, to the class of '61, of which at least six Alpha Thetas returned for their 50th Reunion.

The Saturday following commencement, MIT concluded the festivities for the 150th anniversary in grand style with the Toast to Tech on Killian Court, fireworks over the Charles River, and "MIT 150" lit up on the Prudential Building. For nearly 130 of those 150 years, Alpha Theta has been a part of life at the Institute; it has also been a part of all of our own lives, wherever we are now. Like MIT, may our brotherhood continue to soar and light up the skyline.

I wish you and your families a joyous and pleasant summer.

*In hoc,*

Daniel R. Craig '03  
[drccraig@alum.mit.edu](mailto:drccraig@alum.mit.edu)

## Consul Reports on an Exciting Spring Semester

I am happy to report another successful semester for the chapter as we enter the 150th year of the 'Tute. There has been a concerted effort at MIT to celebrate the achievements and "inventional wisdom" of the Institute, and we've been fortunate enough to see many of our brothers involved and celebrated. For example, three of our junior brothers were invited to dine with Professor Hockfield and other notable faculty.

The house has continued its upward trajectory on the honor roll, earning the second-best GPA of all the fraternities, with a house average of 4.5. This is something we're extremely proud of and look forward to maintaining and building on in the coming semesters. The house has been kept in good repair by our house managers, Sean Burke '13 and Peter Britton '13, and we are trying to ensure that the website is updated more regularly in order to improve the flow of information to alumni.

Alumni relations have definitely played a major role throughout this past semester. The new David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research was dedicated this past March. Alpha Theta alumni and families funded a significant portion of the building; Judy Swanson, widow of Bob Swanson '69, was especially generous in her support. In order to recognise such generosity—as well as the contribution of Sigma Chis around campus—a reception was held at the house, and the bar was renamed "Bob's Bar." The new name has definitely caught on among the brothers, and

there are often requests to "go to Bob's" on the weekends. We would like to thank all who attended the reception and look forward to seeing them again—and, we hope, many other alumni brothers—at the chapter's 130th anniversary celebration next spring.

In other news, Derby Days went off successfully again. The competition was opened up to dorm teams, and we had five very competitive teams battle it out with the help of the brothers over the three days, raising over \$1,500 for the Huntsman Cancer Institute and the Children's Miracle Network. The house is eager to expand Derby Days. This past semester, we learned several lessons that we will carry forward to continue improving the process.

Now, at the end of another academic year, we look forward to the summer and a well-deserved (in our opinion) rest. Most of the brothers are interning throughout the country and around the world, while others are remaining on campus for UROPs or work. The freshmen, in particular, have punched above their weight and are working at major firms like Rolls Royce and Morgan Stanley. The seniors have been very successful in their respective job searches and graduate school applications; we wish them all the best in the coming years. It has been a privilege to serve as consul this past semester, and I look forward to seeing the chapter continue to prosper in the fall and beyond.

*In hoc,*

Ruaridh Macdonald '12



*Alumni from the class of '61 (Earl Van Horn, Eric Mudama, Al Brennecke, Dick Brown, Bill Kendall, Bruce Tarter, Ken Nill) wearing their red jackets.*

## Renovated Bar and Game Room Dedicated to Bob Swanson '69

On March 5, Alpha Theta came together to celebrate the opening of the Swanson Biotechnology Center, part of MIT's new David H. Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research. The center is named in memory of Bob Swanson '69, who cofounded Genentech in 1976 and pioneered the biotechnology revolution. For a celebration spearheaded by Rolf Brauchler '69 and Jim Black '69, the active chapter, alumni from Bob's era and beyond, and the Swanson family gathered at 532 Beacon Street to celebrate Bob's contributions to MIT and Alpha Theta and to share stories from his time as an undergraduate.

Alumni brothers remembered Robert Swanson, who studied Course 5 while an undergraduate, as a dynamic element of the house and dedicated social chair. "For every function that was planned, he'd tell us: 'You gotta bring a date!'" Jim Black '69 remembered with a smile. "And sure enough, if you didn't find someone, he'd find someone for you." Shortly after his graduation, Swanson founded the biotechnology firm Genentech. The company, now based in San Francisco, is one of the world's leading biotechnology firms and uses human genetic research to develop medicine to treat patients with serious medical conditions.

The reception offered active brothers the opportunity to mingle with more than 30 alumni and families from across the years, sharing stories of mischief and

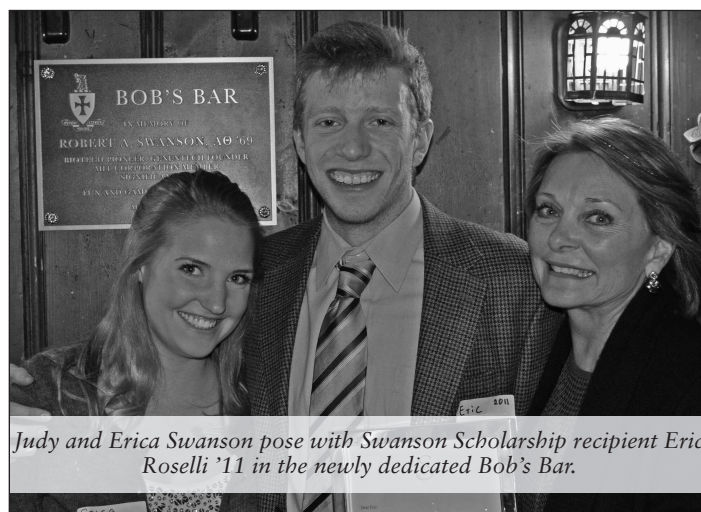
tradition. For the alumni, many of whom had not visited in a number of years, the house was a mix of old memories and new additions. Rooms were familiar, but modified, and some additions (such as the second-floor computer-room) were completely new. Judy and Erica Swanson presented the annual Swanson Memorial Scholarship to Eric Roselli '11 and used the occasion to remark on the impact that Alpha Theta had on Bob throughout his life. "He was always close with his pledge brothers," Judy said, "Even long after his graduation, Alpha Theta was important enough to his life that he named a room in our home the 'Sigma Chi room.' When he traveled abroad, he would bring back furniture and artifacts to add to this special room."

One of the most important portions of the evening was the dedication of the zero-floor bar and game room to the man of the evening. Our alumni corporation president, Daniel Craig '03, revealed the attractive bronze plaque emblazoned "Bob's Bar" to great

applause, and it was quickly mounted in the bar. The reception continued downstairs with music, drinks, and photographs of Bob and his family. Pictures from Swanson's many costume parties playing in the bar showed that, despite his hard work and success, Bob knew how to have a good time.

"It was a great event," said Tymor Hamamsay '13. "Seeing Bob's pledge brothers gathered was a reminder of the lifelong bonds of Sigma Chi. There really is something special about Alpha Theta, something deeper than four years living together at MIT."

Pall Kornmayer '11



Judy and Erica Swanson pose with Swanson Scholarship recipient Eric Roselli '11 in the newly dedicated Bob's Bar.

## Class of '14 Pledges Successfully Execute "Walkout"

When I chose to come to MIT, I never thought I would find myself toting a mass of PVC pipe and wire across the Harvard Bridge at three in the morning on a Saturday. It all began with our plan to uphold the "Walkout" tradition; my pledge class was to pull a prank on the house, leave in the middle of the night, and arrive at another Sigma Chi chapter by morning. The details were, for better or worse, left to our own design.

After much debate, the Alpha Theta class of 2014 finally agreed upon an idea that was both sinister and creative enough to merit our efforts: We would build electric fences and hide them in the house. After ordering an electric fence charger online (we passed on the fence designed for cattle, purchasing a safer "chicken zapper") and taking a quick trip to Home Depot, we were ready to begin our assembly. Our first task was to tackle the matter of "safety-testing" the charger. After a long night of tricking one another into electrocuting ourselves (points for creativity to Mike Klinker '14,

who managed to hide a lead to one contact in my shoe), we deemed the product safe for use, and we began to construct the fences.

After a second long night of stringing wire through the PVC frames we had built, we finally had our finished products: two small fences the width of the stairwell and one large fence that would cover the entrance to the library. The night of the act, we loaded up the minivan we had rented with tools, tape, and our fences, at which point we encountered our first problem. The large fence was too big to fit into the van; we would have to carry it across the Harvard Bridge!

So there I found myself, with Ken Seibert '14 and a 5' x 7' electric fence in tow. Around Smoot-mark 170, we saw a police cruiser heading in the opposite direction. Kenny and I could do nothing but sheepishly grin as the car slowed to a crawl and the officer inside gave us a severe look, which clearly expressed: "I know you're doing something wrong, but I'm not sure what." Finally, upon arriving

at the house, we set our plan into motion. We proceeded to rig the two smaller fences to the stairwells. Then we barricaded the larger one in the library entrance, finally hooking the entire system up to the fence charger. To top it all off, we placed the house speakers in the library, cranking them on full blast to Eddy Grant's classic, "Electric Avenue." With the house awoken and—thanks to the swift thinking of one Colby Dunn '14—every light bulb hidden, we abandoned 532 Beacon in a flurry, leaving the hapless brothers to fumble about in the dark until encountering one of our "shocking" devices.

A trip to the Beta Nu Chapter at Brown University completed the rest of our "Walkout" production. Visiting another chapter helped us understand the meaning of brotherhood, a bond that can grow between strangers united by a common experience. The memories we created that weekend will, without a doubt, stay with our pledge class for a lifetime.

David Christoff '14

## Alpha Thetas Continue to Uphold Our Legacy of Military Service

Alpha Thetas have been leaders in the military since the founding of the chapter in 1882. Brothers have served in the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and U.S. Air Force, and have participated in conflicts from the World Wars to today's War on Terror. Sigs seeking to serve earn their commission through Reserve Officer Training Corps at MIT. While in college, they are ranked as cadets and midshipmen; they are commissioned as second lieutenants and ensigns upon graduation. The word "reserve" is a bit misleading, as the majority of cadets and midshipmen enter active duty, rather than the reserves.

Before receiving their commissions, cadets and midshipmen are MIT students with an additional course load of military-science classes and leadership training. Each branch of the ROTC program is similar: Freshman year is an

introductory year; sophomore year includes more focused training and leads to a summer leadership evaluation and training program; junior and senior years are spent organizing and leading underclassmen. For those interested in a career in the military, ROTC is a great way to go, especially at MIT, where it helps pay for a great education with a cool job waiting after graduation.

In the last five years, Alpha Theta has had five brothers participate in all three of the ROTC programs: Max Ramundo '14, U.S. Air Force; Andrew Pierson '12, U.S. Air Force; Brandon Briscoe '11, U.S. Air Force; Chris Bukowski '09, U.S. Air Force; and Matt Williams '07, U.S. Navy. Andrew and Brandon are in the process of applying for their preferred career fields and plan to begin in May 2012. Chris is in pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base,

Texas, and will be going through training for about 18 months at various U.S. Air Force bases. Matt is a nuclear engineer for the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. Currently, he is designing equipment and procedures to support assembly and installation of the reactor core for the U.S. Navy's newest class of aircraft carriers, the Gerald R. Ford.

As past, present, and future leaders in the military, Alpha Theta Sigma Chis are committed to friendship and camaraderie, justice in the world, and learning in the classroom and on the job. As new world conflicts unfold and international dynamics change, the next generation of Alpha Thetas is excited to follow in the footsteps of past brothers, who were dedicated and patriotic leaders.

Andrew Pierson '12

## Sigma Chi Brotherhood Builds Bonds That Last a Lifetime

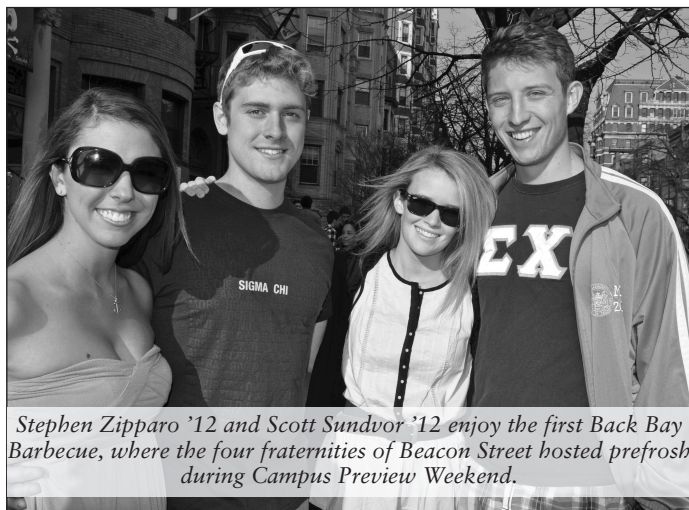
On Saturday, February 20, we had the honor of welcoming back our brother, Robin Demyttenaere '13, who was visiting Boston, MIT, and the chapter for a week during a break in his studies. Patrick Vatterott '13 and I eagerly drove to the airport to pick him up that evening; at 6' 8" tall, he was very easy to spot. After a round of warm embraces, we fell in sync. It felt as if no time had passed between us, a sentiment that was also felt and expressed by many of the other brothers within the chapter. Robin's departure came at the end of his freshman year, as he left MIT to study at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands. He is studying aerospace engineering. While it is a very different experience for him than his time here, he is very much enjoying his new surroundings.

That Saturday night, we had a small gathering to welcome Robin home. Many of the newly initiated '14s were excited to meet him, because of how revered and respected Robin is among us upperclassmen as a friend, brother, and teammate. In his time with Alpha Theta, he added to the house's volleyball culture as a member of the MIT varsity volleyball team. During his visit, he was able to watch and reconnect with many of the players both in and outside of the house.

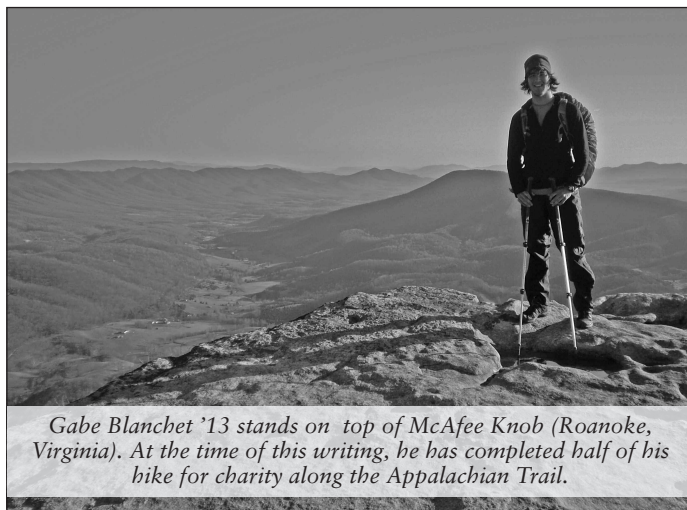
There was a bittersweet element to Robin being back because we knew that it could only last so long; we were also grudgingly losing brother Gabriel Blanchet '13 for the semester, as he embarked on a hike for charity through the Appalachian Trail. That Wednesday's tea (aptly called "The ThirTEAns"), marked the first time that we,

as the Alpha Theta Sigma Chi class of 2013, had made a complete ensemble in almost nine months, and from 13 men, we would soon drop down to 11. While they are both missed, I do not worry about our friendship, as Robin's trip allowed many of us to get a sense of and reflect on the lasting nature of brotherhood. Our connection to him clearly survived his time away, and I for one will endeavor to see him this summer in Belgium or the Netherlands. First exposed to Sigma Chi before his collegiate days through his older brother—a Sigma Chi alumnus—Michael Demyttenaere '10, Robin intends to touch base with us here in Boston every year, reminding us that the bonds we build in Sigma Chi are valuable, durable, and cherished.

Paul Uche '13



*Stephen Zipparo '12 and Scott Sundvor '12 enjoy the first Back Bay Barbecue, where the four fraternities of Beacon Street hosted prefrush during Campus Preview Weekend.*



*Gabe Blanchet '13 stands on top of McAfee Knob (Roanoke, Virginia). At the time of this writing, he has completed half of his hike for charity along the Appalachian Trail.*



# Alumni Send News From Far And Near



The widow of **Jackson A. Brannan '46** (d. January 2011), Marian, wrote to Alpha Theta: "[Jack] had a wonderful experience in your chapter. Then the U.S. Navy sent him to Harvard, where we were married. Our reception was held at your fraternity house. It was lovely."

Email **James G. Veras '49** at his new address: [jimgveras@gmail.com](mailto:jimgveras@gmail.com). Write to him at 3610 S. Ocean Blvd., #508, Palm Beach, FL 33480.

**Kenneth Nill '61** has a new email address. Write to him at [ken.nill@gmail.com](mailto:ken.nill@gmail.com).

"I'm sorry to say that Brother **Thomas A. Rowe '66** passed away in January," writes **John B. O'Brien '64**. "Tom had forged a successful career in the computer industry in Silicon Valley before 'Silicon' was in the name! He lived in Los Altos Hills. Unfortunately, he suffered for a good part of his life from chronic fatigue syndrome, which prevented him from enjoying life the way he should have. We have many good memories of Tom from our days at 532 Beacon. May he rest in peace. *In hoc*, John." Write to John at 32 Masland Cir., Dallas, TX 75230; or email [johnob1@earthlink.net](mailto:johnob1@earthlink.net).

"I'm working the supply chain as a

subcontract manager with Network Centric Systems," writes **John H. "Gunner" Fittz '67**. "I'm a church musician for a small Lutheran church in Stafford Springs, four miles from our house in Willington, and I am a UConn Huskies basketball fan because son Jonathan is a UConn graduate ('99). Wife Joan is a supervisor at Alstom Power in Windsor, Connecticut, and deacon in an Episcopal church. We have a son and a daughter (both married) and seven grandchildren (ages 12 to 15). We are oblate members of the Community of Jesus, an ecumenical, Benedictine, monastic community with married couples, brothers in the monastery, and sisters in the convent in Orleans, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod." (6 Lisa Ln., Willington, CT 06279; [joxnfittz@gmail.com](mailto:joxnfittz@gmail.com))

Catch up with **Edward "Ed" Seykota '69** at his new address: 1060 Sunflower Trail, Austin, TX 78745.

"Got engaged to Sarah L. Smith in January," writes **Samuel T. Towell '00**. "The wedding is scheduled for August 2012. I'm getting ready to take a hiatus from Williams Mullen to clerk for Judge Barbara Milan Keenan, of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. I was stoked to see my little, little brother,

**Nicholas H. Cohen '02**, on *Jeopardy!* in April." Write to "Sam" at 140 W. 22nd St., Apt. 7B, New York, NY 10011; email [nhcohen@gmail.com](mailto:nhcohen@gmail.com).

Stay in touch with **John M. Field '08** by writing to his new address: 1200 N. Herndon St., #714, Arlington, VA 22201; or email [jmfield@mit.edu](mailto:jmfield@mit.edu).

**Christopher Bukowski '09** has a new address! Get in touch with him at 8114B Mumbrue St., Laughlin AFB, TX 78840; [chris.bukowski@gmail.com](mailto:chris.bukowski@gmail.com).

## DECEASED

*We regret to announce the deaths of:*

**Jackson A. Brannan '46**  
January 16, 2011

**John D. Harris '51**  
August 1, 2010

**Roger L. Simmons '62**  
February 14, 2011

**Thomas A. Rowe '66**  
January 31, 2011

## 130th Anniversary Reunion of Alpha Theta at MIT

### Join us in Boston to celebrate the 130th Anniversary Reunion of Alpha Theta at MIT.

*Friday, April 27, through Sunday, April 29, 2012*

As MIT's oldest continuously operating fraternity, Alpha Theta has an unrivaled heritage and a tremendously strong and committed alumni base, nearly half of which attended the 125th Reunion in 2007. Next year's event promises to be bigger and better yet.

Detailed information on the venue and schedule will be distributed in an email message and upcoming editions of *The Beaver Sig*. The general outline will be similar to the past two reunions:

**Friday night:** Reception at the house and class or era gatherings around town

**Saturday (day):** Various events on campus and around town, including another "Alpha Theta Academy," where brothers may share interesting past accomplishments or current involvements

**Saturday (night):** Reunion ball

**Sunday:** Brunch and fellowship at the house

If you are interested in helping organize the event, hosting a class or era event on Friday, presenting at Alpha Theta Academy, have an idea for an event, or are simply excited to come and hope to encourage others, *please* don't hesitate to send an email to Dan Craig at [drccraig@alum.mit.edu](mailto:drccraig@alum.mit.edu).

## The Beaver Sig

is published regularly by the Alpha Theta Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its friends and members. News and photos should be sent to: Alumni Records Office, Alpha Theta Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity Inc., P.O. Box 390528, Cambridge, MA 02139-0006.

## How Can We Email You?

Please visit the alumni section of the Alpha Theta website to make sure we have your most recent email address: <http://sigmach.mit.edu/alumni>.