

THE BEAVER SIG

Alpha Theta Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity



CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

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

SEPTEMBER 2012

Alpha Theta Celebrates 130 Years of Excellence at MIT

In April, Alpha Theta celebrated 130 years at MIT. On the weekend of April 27–29, nearly 200 Alpha Thetas and their families returned to Boston for a weekend of friendship and fellowship.

Brothers began arriving at 532 Beacon Street on Friday, and were greeted by the current undergraduate members. Following the reception at the house, brothers split off to join their peers at any of more than a dozen era and pledge class dinners, spanning from the class of 1960 to the recently graduated class of 2011. Some enjoyed dinner at a fine Boston restaurant, others traveled to homes around Boston for more intimate gatherings. After dinner, many returned to the house for an evening of merriment and cheer.

The following morning, the undergraduate chapter conducted an enactment of the Sigma Chi ritual in 32-123, a lecture hall in MIT's Stata Center. The undergraduates performed the ceremony with dignity and respect and rekindled the bonds of brotherhood for alumni who might have gone for years or decades since last participating.

Visit sigmach.mit.edu/reunion/130 for additional photos and videos of our 130th celebration!

The weather cooperated magnificently during the entire weekend, allowing everyone to enjoy a sunny picnic lunch on the McDermott Dot outside Walker Memorial Hall. Guests enjoyed sandwiches and lemonade, while children played football and soccer on the fresh spring grass of the Dot. After lunch, four brothers spoke at the Alpha Theta Academy on their fascinating careers and adventures.

The centerpiece of the weekend was the Banquet and Ball on Saturday night, held at the Westin Copley Place hotel in Boston. More than 300 guests attended, celebrating 130 years of Alpha Theta, the life of the late Brian D. Robertson, and the exciting future of the chapter house at 532 Beacon Street. Following dinner, brothers serenaded sweethearts and danced the night away.

The reunion concluded Sunday at the chapter house with brunch prepared by the

undergraduates. On a clear spring day, brothers slowly trickled away, some driving home, others catching flights half way around the world. However far they traveled, Alpha Thetas left the weekend reinvigorated with the spirit of brotherhood that drew us all here in the first place, and keeps us coming back for years to come.

View photos, videos, and additional coverage of the reunion at sigmach.mit.edu/reunion/130. The MIT Alumni Association also covered the reunion at alum.mit.edu/pages/sliceofmit/2012/07/10/reunions-sigma-chi.

Thank you to everyone who attended. A special thanks to Reunion Coordinators Jeff Mekler '10 and Ruairidh MacDonald '12, as well as Corporate Treasurer Josh Littlefield '81 and past Corporate Board President Karl Buttner '87 for their countless hours of planning and preparation. Join us at Alpha Theta's 135th Reunion, coming in April 2017!

Dan Craig '03

(see photos on pages two and three)

Alpha Theta Has Launched Its Beacon to the Future Campaign

In the weeks before the reunion, Alpha Theta publicly launched the long-awaited Beacon to the Future capital campaign for the renovation of 532 Beacon Street. The goal of the campaign is \$4 million, which—along with another \$1 million in debt financing—will provide for a wholesale revitalization and restoration of the chapter house. Campaign Committee Chairman Doug Bailey '72 and past Corporate Board President Karl Buttner '87 have led the campaign ably and generously, and were proud to announce that, as of the reunion, \$2.94 million in pledges had already been committed. More than 170 alumni have already pledged, and

their names appeared on the campaign honor roll that was on display at the reunion banquet.

To commit to beginning construction in spring 2013 will require having firm pledges approaching \$4 million by September 2012. Accomplishing such an ambitious goal will require the participation of every Alpha Theta at all levels. Several dozen alumni have graciously volunteered their time to

invite their pledge classes and eras to join the campaign. If you have not already heard from your class agent, expect to receive a phone call some time soon. Visit sigmach.mit.edu/renovation to find out who your class agent is, learn more about how you

can contribute, or download a pledge form.

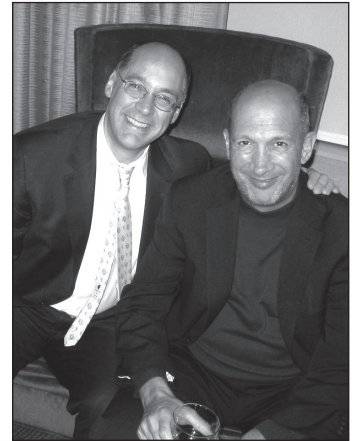
Four brothers from different eras who have contributed generously to the campaign spoke at the reunion banquet. Ron Norelli '67, Dock Williams '79, Tom Faust '80, and Nick Cohen '02 shared their own personal experiences of Alpha Theta, as undergraduates and alumni, and reiterated their deep commitment to the chapter. Their words and gifts should remind us all of the impact Alpha Theta had on our lives and of the duty we each have to help provide that same experience for our brothers-yet-to-come.

Graduating seniors Charlie Bernstein '12 and Scott Sundvor '12 concluded with a lighthearted telling of the physical

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ALPHA THETA'S 130TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION



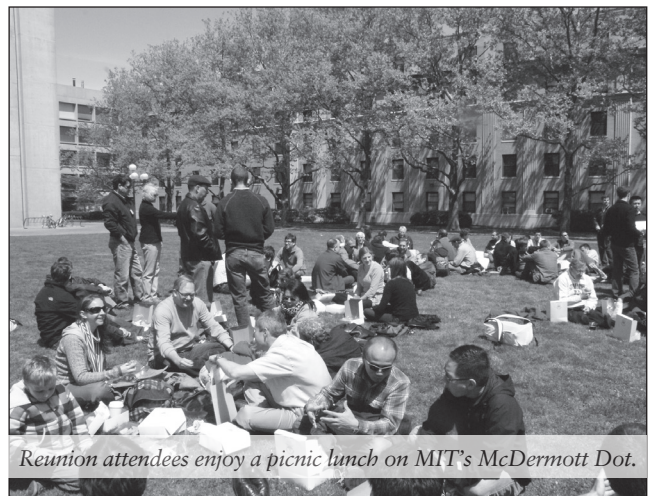
Brothers from the 1980s era come together during the 130th. Left to Right: Basil Safos, Joe Sevely, Ludek Dadok, John Kappus, Arne Lund (barely visible), Tom Faust, Gerry Tourgee, George Pastrana, Ricky Ewasko, Paul Gault, Rick Marboe, Steve Morris, Mike Whelan, Kirk Scattergood, Dave Gailus, Tom Gow, Dock Williams, and Peter Bernhardt.



Raudel Rodriguez '03 and Tony Kim '03 enjoy a drink together at the Reunion Ball.



Class of 2003



Reunion attendees enjoy a picnic lunch on MIT's McDermott Dot.

..... ALPHA THETA'S 130TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION



The actives gather with this year's sweetheart, Rachel Fraunhoffer, MIT Alpha Phi '13, at the conclusion of the 130th ball.



The brothers of BDR's (Brian Robertson's) era pose together at the 130th Reunion.



Brothers serenade their sweethearts at the banquet.



Alpha Theta brothers from across the years discover their connection as members of the Squirrel Line, including Jack Field '08, Liam Fedus '10, and Charlie Benstein '12.

BDR Honored at Reunion Banquet

Alpha Theta has had many great and influential alumni whose memory inspires us all. Brian D. Robertson '96 was one of those greats, but fate took him far too early. Yet in only 38 years, Brian accomplished more things and touched more people than many do in a lifetime. At the reunion banquet, Alpha Thetas celebrated the life and legacy of Brian D. Robertson, known to all simply as "BDR."

The chapter was honored by the presence of much of the Robertson family at the reunion, including Brian's parents, David and Donna Robertson; his sister, Julie; wife, Eileen; and three kids. Julie, David, and Eileen all spoke of the brother, son, and husband they knew and loved, and what Alpha Theta meant to him. Sean Beckett '97 reflected on what Brian meant to Alpha Theta, how deeply Brian cared for his brothers, and how he exemplified the virtues of a Sigma Chi. May we all follow in his footsteps and emulate his success.

In honor of Brian's life and commitment to Sigma Chi, Walter VonKoch '97 and Consul Sean Burk '13 presented Eileen a Grand Consul's Citation.

Videos of all the speeches in memory of BDR can be viewed at sigmachi.mit.edu/reunion/130/banquet.

Dan Craig '03

Alpha Theta Has Launched Its Beacon to the Future Campaign

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plant needs of the chapter. Videos of all the talks are available at sigmachi.mit.edu/reunion/130/banquet.

Alpha Theta began renting 532 Beacon Street in 1919, three years after MIT moved from the Back Bay to its present Cambridge campus. Five years later, the chapter purchased the building from the heirs of Francis W. Kitteridge for \$40,000 (or around \$500,000 in 2012 dollars). Since then, the chapter and alumni have been maintaining and improving the building that has been the home to more than 1,000 Alpha Thetas. When the house corporation began polling alumni about how best to support future undergraduates, the overwhelming response was to invest in 532 Beacon Street so that it will be a first-class living and learning laboratory for decades to come.

Dan Craig '03

Brothers Share Life Experiences at the Alpha Theta Academy

Many Alpha Thetas go on to do interesting things in their lives and careers, four of whom shared such experiences with an audience of around 100 guests in 6-120 as part of the reunion's Alpha Theta Academy.

John Piotti '83 shared his more than 15 years of experience as a leader of Maine's sustainable agriculture renaissance.

Al Dahya '05, of Alpha Theta-founded SunEdison, discussed rapidly advancing technology and business of solar power.

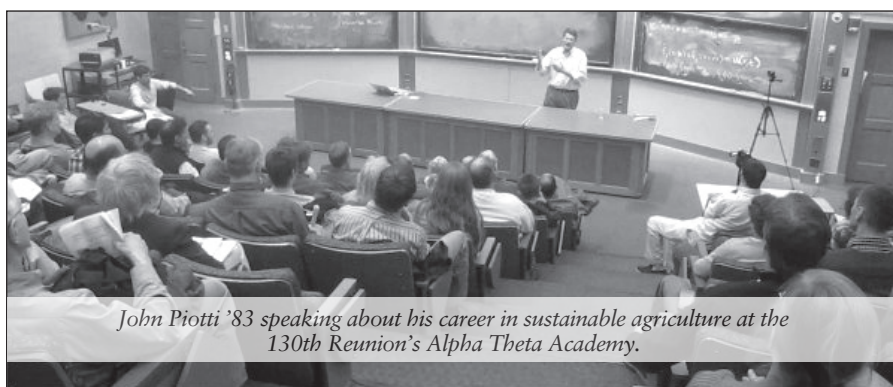
Michael Kirtley '72 shared some of his many extraordinary stories from his life as

a photojournalist in Europe and Africa, and most recently as a co-producer of the film *OKA!*, shot among the Bayaka pygmies of the equatorial rain forest in central Africa.

Gabe Blanchet '13, fresh from an MIT lacrosse victory, told the story of his journey thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail during his sophomore spring semester.

Videos of all four Alpha Theta Academy talks are available at sigmachi.mit.edu/reunion/130/academy.

Dan Craig '03



John Piotti '83 speaking about his career in sustainable agriculture at the 130th Reunion's Alpha Theta Academy.

Consul Highlights the Spring 2012 Semester

Brothers,

It is my pleasure to report on another great semester for spring 2012. Continuing with our recent academic success, we have remained on the honor roll for another semester. We were also able to initiate 13 incredible new brothers, whose dedication to Sigma Chi during pledging only grew in their transition to brotherhood.

The chapter has continued to show its leadership on campus. Brothers captained the volleyball, sailing, swimming, and lacrosse teams to successful seasons. Following in their footsteps, several brothers have been named captains of their respective teams for the upcoming seasons. Outside of athletics, Scott Sundvor '12 served as the Gordon Engineering Leadership Program student leader, with Paul Uche '13 taking on the prestigious position for the coming year. Obinna Okwodu '12 served as president of EASE (Expediting Access to Standard Education) and helped found the Exposure Robotics League, a program for talented Nigerian youths to learn robotics and be exposed to engineering. We are also proud to send several actives to BLTW,

with Michael Gibson '13 as our International Balfour Award nominee.

The highlight of the semester was Alpha Theta's 130th Reunion, coordinated by Jeff Mekler '10 and Ruairidh MacDonald '12. With 199 brothers attending from all over the world, it was extremely successful. This event truly demonstrated the lifelong bonds of brotherhood that are only developed at Sigma Chi. The reunion also kicked off the major capital campaign, Beacon to the Future, headed by Doug Bailey '72 and Karl Büttner '87 to raise money for the upcoming renovation of 532 Beacon Street. After the reunion, brothers dedicated themselves to Derby Days and successfully raised money for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation and other charities.

I am very proud to have served as consul this past semester with the current state of the house, as well as the direction we are headed. With the fall semester just around the corner, we look forward to a successful work week in preparation for another great rush.

In Hoc,
Sean Burke '13

Finding Brotherhood Through a Broken Nose

Rarely does a day pass in which the call of “Brotherhood!” fails to ring through the halls of 532 Beacon Street, marking the occurrence of one brother helping another (we like to announce our good deeds). Having spent nearly a year with the brothers of Alpha Theta, it has become apparent that all members of this chapter value brotherhood above all other aspects of fraternity life. I found this emphasis on brotherhood to be one of the strongest draws of this chapter during rush. Although I was impressed by all the talk of brotherhood during my introduction to the house, it wasn’t until much later in the year that I actually had an experience that allowed me to really grasp what brotherhood means. Indeed, to really “get” brotherhood, I had to break my nose.

Naturally, I broke it during an

intramural softball game with the brothers. During a night game, my pledge brother, Miles, picked up a quick one-hopper at short-stop and lasered the ball to me at first. I lost the ball in the bright lights of the field; the next thing I knew, I was crouched on the ground, blood pouring from both nostrils.

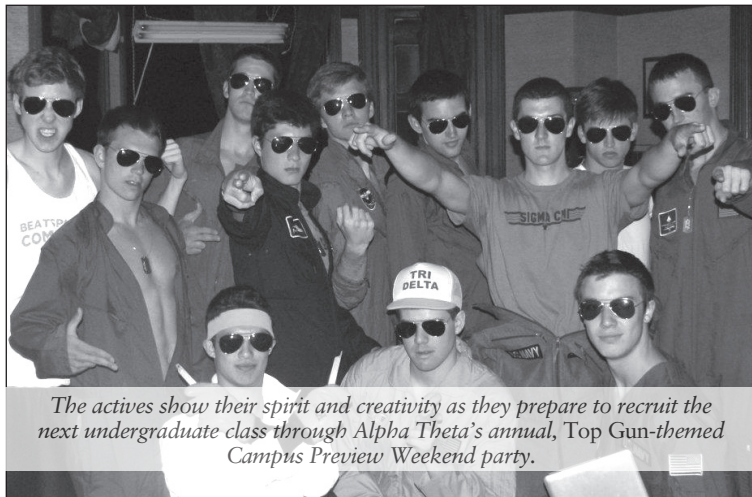
A couple hours later, I was sitting in the Mt.

Auburn emergency room, still trying to sort out exactly how I’d missed that catch, when the nurse from the registration desk walked into my room. She looked a bit bemused and said, “There are about a dozen young men out in the waiting room, and they all claim to be family ... is that the case?” I looked her dead in the eyes and responded, “Absolutely.” So into my room marched my pledge brothers, all of whom stayed with me over

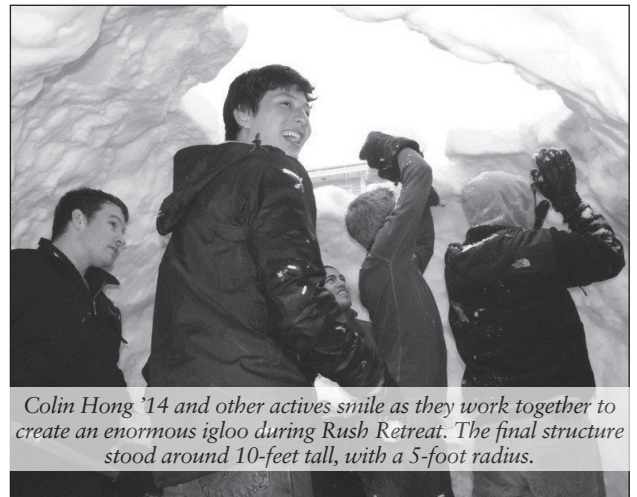
the next few hours as I was glued up and sort of put back together.

The brotherly support was not to end in the Mt. Auburn emergency room. Since the break was so severe, I needed plastic surgery to fully repair it. While I was being prepped for surgery on the operating table at Boston Children’s Hospital, my anesthesiologist began the usual pre-op ritual of asking what had happened, how I felt, and so on. He was particularly amused to hear that I had broken my nose during a fraternity softball game. As he administered the IV that would soon knock me out, he asked, “Which fraternity?” When I told him that I was a Sig, he quickly responded, “*In hoc*, brother” and gave me the grip. I passed out promptly after that, but my mother tells me that he never once left the operating room during the procedure, and that he even stayed in recovery with me until

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The actives show their spirit and creativity as they prepare to recruit the next undergraduate class through Alpha Theta’s annual, Top Gun-themed Campus Preview Weekend party.



Colin Hong ’14 and other actives smile as they work together to create an enormous igloo during Rush Retreat. The final structure stood around 10-feet tall, with a 5-foot radius.

More Alpha Thetas Are Developing Interest in Entrepreneurship

Alpha Theta chatter frequently centers on MIT, upcoming and past social events, world news, and personal affairs. However, over the past three years, I’ve noticed an emerging topic—entrepreneurship—and it’s got me quite excited. Karl Büttner ’87 acts as chief mentorship officer at MassChallenge, the largest startup incubator in Boston, and frequently provides advice to brothers looking to get into the thrilling Boston startup scene. Whether brothers seek Karl’s wisdom or venture into the scene themselves, many brothers have become deeply involved in the startup culture catalyzing Boston.

Michael Gibson ’13 developed battery technologies for startup 24M Technologies

in Cambridge last summer and was attracted to work in Israel (focus of the bestseller *Startup Nation*) this summer. John Walton ’12 graduated and immediately began working at OsComp, a natural gas compressor startup in Boston. Gabe Blanchet ’13 is spending his summer with Cambridge-based startup GrabCAD while Joao Batalha ’13 is working at Path, a clever and well-backed startup in San Francisco. David Thomas ’12 learns and grows at Shopify this summer up in Ottawa. David and Joao bring first-hand entrepreneurship experience with them after co-creating Minglet this past academic year. Tymor Hamamsy ’13, Max Ramundo ’14, and Colby Dunn ’14 spent their IAPs developing a political voting site. That’s a good

chunk of the actives, all bound together by one email list: sigsentreprenuer@mit.edu.

Our legacy as a chapter is filled with stories of great leaders and entrepreneurs, and I suspect the current generations will be no different. Boston’s startup culture is growing quickly, gaining support from well-heeled VCs, innovative and helpful incubators, and unbounded university support (like MIT’s E-center). With the lucrative options of Wall Street and other financial and consulting firms looming for all rising seniors, we will see if this entrepreneurial kick ends here, or if we’ve got the next Zuckerberg among us. Only time will tell.

Gabe Blanchet ’13

Alumni Send News From Far And Near



Jim McGaughy '64 has a new email address! Get in touch with him at jimmcgaughy@bellsouth.net.

"I continue to be involved with national professional societies," reports **Herbert W. "Herb" Mower '65**. "My current hobbies include theater organ, playing the organ, and volunteer work for Camp Nokomis (aka 'Herbie's'). I enjoy spending time with our three grandchildren—Rachel (7), Benjamin (6), and Anja (15 months). Also, I'm currently serving MIT as an educational counselor, interviewing prospective students. I'm active in the MIT CARMA (Chapter Alumni Risk Manager Adviser) program. I hope to retire mid-2013!" Reconnect with Herb by writing to 25 Buckboard Dr., Westford, MA 01886; or send email to mower@alum.mit.edu.

Robert "Tyler" Pope '99 has a new address! Write to him at 11 Garden View Ct., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688.

Dan Craig '03 and Sally Honda announce the birth of their son Huxley Kotaro Craig on August 31, 2012. Send congratulations to them at dracraig@gmail.com.

DECEASED

We regret to announce the deaths of:

Ralph W. Garrett Jr. '42
March 10, 2012

Thomas I. Monroe Jr. '47
March 5, 2012

William B. Horner '52
June 22, 2009

James P. Saunders Jr. '52

Renald A. Rivero '54
May 16, 2011

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://sigmachi.mit.edu/alumni>.

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

Line Triple: Lifelong Friendship of Polar Opposites

I'll never forget the first time I met my big brother ... or the second time ... or the third! I actually forgot Eamon Glackin's name on about five different occasions during rush, but I didn't request to my magister that he be my big as a form of apology, at least not entirely. Eamon always had a way of carrying himself that made me feel at ease, and his well-constructed life produced consistent excellence in his endeavors, be they his academics, athletics, or relationships. His other little brother, Jamie Byron, a junior one year my senior, was, as far as I could tell, the complete opposite of all these things. A disorganized, sporadic journeyman, Jamie was even more spontaneous than Eamon was consistent. For this, I admired him as much as I did the other, for his ability to wholly satisfy his every caprice was a skill that—while most take a lifetime to master—he had captured at the age of 20.

Of course, I had very little sense of these things when I proposed that we live together in 4 Large Fish (aka 4 Large Front) for the spring semester. This complete failure to recognize the ridiculous polarization of personalities of the proposed "line triple," however, proved to be a fortuitous lack of insight. Nary a day went by when I didn't walk into that room and immediately feel at home between Eamon's neat desk and the pile of books, clothes, wrenches, and God-knows-what that comprised Jamie's workspace. I cannot begin to recount how

many times I discussed the nuances of the NFL with Eamon or chatted with Jamie on the fire escape in the dead of winter. Moreover, indescribable were the times when we would each be sitting lost in our work, Eamon and I at our desks, Jamie on the couch to get away from his desk—three starkly different individuals drawn together by the mere fact that for some reason we didn't wholly understand at the time, we chose one another.

I don't think it's possible to fully understand the nature of family, but if I have ever come close, it was in that room. There are some ties so impenetrable that even those they bind cannot breach their core, but there—up and away from the heart of the house in our own glorious nook—we cut to the bone. It wasn't the deep conversations, the endearment of our interactions, or even the ways we expressed our love of one another when the occasion merited. It was the look in the eye, shake of the hand, and sheer warmth of that first step across the threshold that bound us together in a way that was impossible to quantify. As we sent Eamon off at the conclusion of his senior year, Jamie and I knew that the three of us had reforged a relationship that had been there since the pledge pin was first put on my chest, a lifelong link that we'll surely recapture for years to come.

David Christoff '14

Finding Brotherhood Through a Broken Nose

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he was positive I would be okay. Later, the attending nurse mentioned she had never before seen an anesthesiologist stick around for so long.

The level of support—both personal and professional—that I received from Sigs during this trauma was simply unbelievable. Not a day went by during my recovery that a brother didn't go out of his way to make me more comfortable, check in on me, or just say "hey." I would never have healed so quickly if brothers hadn't consistently inconvenienced themselves for my benefit. Whether it was Steve driving to Walgreen's for Vicodin or Brad, Colin, and Nick running to LaVerde's to grab me soft foods, I felt as if the entire

chapter was pulling for me to get better.

Having experienced all of this, I think that now, I get it: Brotherhood isn't about partying or having a great wingman; it's not about doing things that are easy and fun with your brothers. The hallmark of true brotherhood is selflessness, a willingness to put the needs of your fellow brother ahead of your own. Until I required that kind of support, I never would have recognized the significance of its presence. But now, I do get it, and I have a well-thrown softball to thank for such a profound revelation. I'll never say I was glad to break my nose, but I couldn't be happier with how I have grown as a member of this house as a consequence.

Austin Gromatzky '15