

# THE BEAVER SIG

Alpha Theta Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity



CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS | SIGMACHI.MIT.EDU | WINTER 2021–22

## Join Us As We Celebrate Alpha Theta's 140<sup>TH</sup> REUNION



**April 30 through May 1**

### *It's time to get together at the 140th Reunion*

A lot has changed in the world since we last celebrated together in 2017. While we are not out of the pandemic yet, we look forward to being able to be together again next spring for Alpha Theta's 140th year at MIT. If you've attended any of the recent reunions (over 300 brothers and guests attended the 135th!), then you know well the amount of fun and brotherhood that can be packed into one weekend.

Brothers, Sweethearts, and Friends of the House are all invited, as are spouses, children, and guests.

See [sigmachi.mit.edu/reunion](https://sigmachi.mit.edu/reunion) for registration information.

**Please come only if you are vaccinated against COVID-19.**

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## Historian's Report STORIES OF ALPHA THETA'S PAST

### Holden C. Richardson '07 *Naval Aviation Pioneer*

*Holden has long been included on the list of prominent Alpha Thetas as a designer and pilot of the flagship of three Navy flying boats that together attempted the first transatlantic flight in 1919. Richardson was the Navy's 13th naval aviator, was the Navy's first engineering test pilot, and was the first secretary of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. In 1925, Richardson led efforts to develop carrier aircraft and patrol planes. After retiring, he returned to active duty in the Bureau of Aeronautics in 1934. During World War II, he headed the Washington Navy Yard wind tunnel. After the war, he worked with the Smithsonian Institute and various Navy departments as a consultant. Richardson passed away in 1960 at the age of 81.*



by **Dan Craig '03**

Aboard the NC-3 flying boat, Richardson and his crew departed Naval Air Station Rockaway in New York on May 8, 1919, and arrived safely in Trepassey Harbor, Newfoundland via Halifax on May 15. From there, the boats prepared to take off for the Azores, some 1,320 miles to the southeast. This leg, the longest of the journey, would be followed by shorter legs to Lisbon, Portugal, and Plymouth, England. Destroyers were stationed every 50 miles along the course to aid in navigation and to render assistance. The weather forecast was favorable for the 19-hour flight. But for such a long flight every pound of weight came at a premium; spare tools, extra drinking water, an emergency radio, even an extra crew member were left behind to make the craft light enough to take off.

The first eight hours were uneventful, but the weather turned foul and thick clouds obscured their view of the line of

ships. A broken electrical wire prevented them from making radio contact, and so they flew through the night alone with cold rain pelting their faces.

Off-course and with fuel running low, Richardson's crew landed hard in rough seas. Their craft damaged and taking on water, with only oily radiator water to drink, they limped along for 53 hours, sailing the aircraft backward in heavy winds, with crew members taking turns climbing out to the starboard wing pontoon to weigh it down to keep the craft from capsizing. Through clever dead reckoning and an occasional starshot through breaks in the clouds, they finally made their way into Ponta Delgada harbor, their original destination in the Azores, to a hero's welcome.

The NC-3 did not continue. Only one of the three crafts to set out, the NC-4, completed the trip to Lisbon and on to

*(continued on page four)*



## Report from the Consul

by Haran Nadarajah

What a semester it's been! After over a year away from campus, the chapter could not contain its excitement about being back. We started off strong with a successful work week organized by **Bill T.** (alumni house manager), **Kael Kor-donowy** (house manager), **Aaron Fuchs** (vice president), and me (consul). This was an essential bonding experience for everyone in the house as the classes of 2023 and 2024 had never lived here.

We spent the entire day together working, relaxing, and setting the tone for an exceptional semester. From work week we moved straight into rush, organized by **Jake Jones** (co-rush chair) and me (co-rush chair). We organized various events including rush parties, beach trips, barbecues, and game nights. There



were late nights spent deliberating and tired faces every morning, but we ended up with a 14-person pledge class with diverse backgrounds and interests that we are delighted to have. The semester started off tough for everyone trying to transition back to in-person learning but we supported each other through it and people have really gotten into routines

which have been great to see.

Personally, this semester has been an unprecedented leadership challenge with all the new factors I have to consider when leading an organization through these rapidly changing times regarding social policy, COVID-19, and culture. Because of this, I have truly learned lessons I feel will carry me through life. From how to give and take feedback to guiding brothers through trying situations, living in the house as consul has spurred my personal development greatly. One of the most meaningful experiences I have had this semester is getting to spend time with my pledge class (2023).

We are pictured here at our Halloween party sharing laughs and good times.

## Introducing Our Newest Members

### Meet: Steven Henry

It has been my dream since the seventh grade to attend to MIT, so I was very excited to travel to Massachusetts with my family and start this new chapter in my life. However, after I checked into my dorm for the first time and my family said their goodbyes, it truly dawned upon me that it might be slightly difficult to adjust to this new environment. Coming from Jamaica, a relatively small island in the Caribbean, I was not used to many of the norms here and as a result, I was hit with a major culture shock: new weather, music, and even clothes. Therefore, I knew that I had to find a way to adjust to this new lifestyle in an enjoyable manner, and after meeting the brothers at Sigma Chi, it all became clear.

During rush week, I found it gratifying to relate and make friends at Sig-

ma Chi and I quickly began to visualize a home for myself at 532 Beacon Street. The brothers introduced me to new music, food, iconic spots around Boston, and overall made me feel welcomed. These interactions and memories helped me to feel more comfortable and allowed me to transition well into my first year at MIT.

### Meet: Jack Roberson

How do you truly join a community through only a virtual environment? That is a question that my pledge class and I faced throughout this year. After joining Sigma Chi through virtual rush last February, I was both excited and apprehensive. I had no clue how the pledge education process would occur, how traditions would be upheld, or if I could even form bonds with my new brothers over Zoom. To my relief, I received warm

welcomes from every Sig I encountered, among both my pledge class and upperclassmen. The Preparation for Brotherhood program pushed me to think deeper about who I am as a person and consider what my role would be within the fraternity. I enjoyed the program so much that I decided to run for Assistant Magister and was elected to the position for this fall. I didn't realize until this fall how much my class missed out on in the pledge education process. Through experiential activities, candle passes, and the pledge retreat, it has been great to see the '25 pledge class grow close to each other. Supervising the pledge education process reminded me how grateful I am to have such a tight-knit community. I have found lifelong friendships through Sigma Chi even with a virtual start and look forward to making many more.

## Classic Wainscoting Renewal

by Bill Tsacoyeanes '84

Our wood paneling has always been a hallmark of Alpha Theta Sigma Chi. This classic wainscoting envelopes the first-floor entrance as it leads directly to the music room, the dining room, and up the grand staircase on the way to the library.

Over a century ago, the wainscoting was installed for proper (read: highbrow) Bostonians. While we still have "tea" and other (arguably) sophisticated activities, we also have group wrestling matches on the way to a brother being showered. Many of the thin ( $\frac{1}{4}$  in), unsupported wooden panels had been split. While the 2014 refurbishment upgraded innumerable systems and most of the house, the wainscoting was left in an original state. Going into the pandemic several panels had been broken and numerous others had received well-intentioned but less-than-complete restorations.

An empty house due to the pandemic presented a unique opportunity to repair and increase the resiliency of the wainscoting. After consultations with several brothers and a trusted contractor (Terence Cormier, owner of Creative Living Designs), we developed a plan. The panels would be cut out and discarded, solid backing would be installed, and thicker (primarily  $\frac{3}{4}$  in) MDF panels would be installed. New, clean trim molding surrounding the panels finishes the look. Even if the actives figure out a way to break these panels, they can easily be replaced. The original, still solid rails and stiles were kept

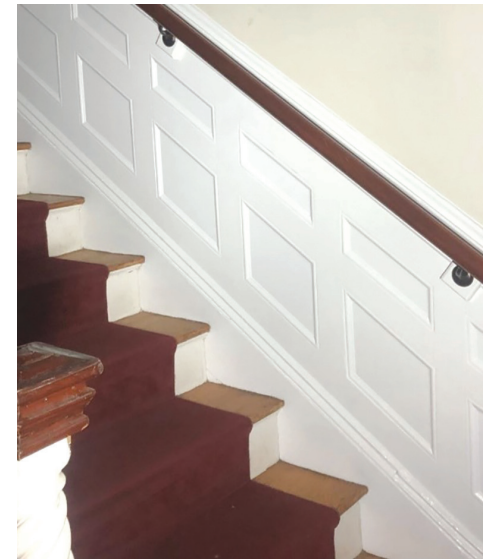


Terence Cormier and Tom Larue performed the restoration.

in place with minor patching as needed. A professional paint job completed the project and now the wainscoting looks terrific!

The original cost estimates were sobering, especially in light of all the uncertainties during the pandemic. But the cost estimate was scrubbed, and we identified a MIT IRDF grant which will reimburse up to 75% of the cost for this historical preservation. The corporation (all of us alums) could then afford this renovation.

This project is a great example of what can be done with alumni donations. Now the house will have beautiful wainscoting, along with all the classic character it imparts, for another 100 years!



Freshly painted and refurbished stairway wainscoting.



Typical broken panel.



Panels removed with backing installed.







# ALPHA THETA ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES



**W. Chamdler Stevens Jr. '55** reports: "Circling the wagons. Sold the farm three years ago. Sold the apartments and garage on PIB last year. This year, the house, after 42 years. Next to go is me. I had a 70th reunion this September from high school. Five of us came to Tech, and four are still alive. After my wife died 20 years ago, I remarried for over 18 years and got four more sons: nine now. One grandson is at Ohio State."

"Hello Sigma Chi brothers," writes **Christopher Davis '68**. "As the COVID threat gradually recedes thanks to vaccinations, I am delighted to learn that life at Sigma Chi is on its way to returning to normal. While I received my MIT degree in biophysics in 1968, I felt that life as a scientist would be for me too long a slog before I felt a sense of professional accomplishment. Frankly, I was too impatient. Accordingly, I decided to go to medical school. For me, this was the best decision of my life. After completing my residency in emergency medicine at Johns Hopkin, I worked for 35 years seeing patients in the ER. I cared for over 100,000 patients and made life-saving interventions thousands of times. The variety was amazing: pediatrics, internal medicine, orthopedics, toxicology, trauma, OB/GYN, cardiac arrests. My job was to be able to rescue each

patient from a medical disaster in virtually any area of medicine. Age caught up with me several years ago and I retired. My wife, Kathleen, (**Wellesley '68**) also went to medical school and graduated at the very top of her class and taught internal medicine in medical school for 25 years. Our daughter is married to a fine fellow and they have two children. Our son, after extended service in the Army Special Forces (the Army equivalents of the Navy Seals), will be graduating this year from the Washington State University medical school and plans to become an ER doc. Last year, I wrote a book about my life in the emergency department entitled "Compassion Amidst the Chaos." In just a few short months, it has sold over 1,500 copies nationwide. It is available through Amazon as a Kindle (costs almost nothing) or as a paperback available at [bookbaby.com](http://bookbaby.com). As my dad used to say, "The greatest gift a person can receive is the opportunity to perform meaningful work." I have always felt that being an ER physician meets that standard. Quite simply, I have always loved my job. Thank you. [chrisdavismd@gmail.com](mailto:chrisdavismd@gmail.com); 206-683-8206."

After eight years in the Army, **Brandon Briscoe '11** started a company called Linkup Point, a sports-focused social net-

work and service marketplace that helps connect sports partners, mentors, and guides (info at [linkup-point.com](http://linkup-point.com) and in the app coming soon). Brandon lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He was initially mountain sports-focused but now aims to play a role in all sports and recreational activities everywhere ('the Facebook and Airbnb experiences for sports'). "We are in the process of becoming a public-benefit corporation, and our mission is to increase participation and lower barriers to entry in sports and recreation and, consequently, to promote better health and quality of life for all people in all places. We also promote environmental stewardship and recreational access in order to maintain and enhance recreational places and the global environment and to ensure the enjoyment of those places. Our ask is for all brothers and friends to sign up, get involved, and let us know what you think. We are also opening our seed fundraising round for those interested in investing. We are also a small but growing team with many needs, so reach out if you are interested in getting involved in a professional or work context. My email is [brandonbriscoe@linkup-point.com](mailto:brandonbriscoe@linkup-point.com). In Hoc."

## DECEASED

We regret to announce the deaths  
of the following alumni:

**ROBERT M. BRIBER '52**

April 29, 2021

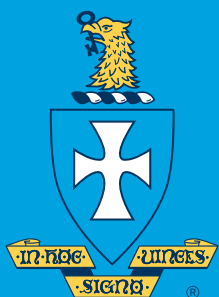
**JOHN N. LUYKX '23**

April 17, 2021

**RICHARD R. KURTH '64**

**ERIC L. MUDAMA '61**

June 23, 2021



## HAVE ALUMNI NEWS?

We want to hear from you! Send your personal updates, accomplishments, adventures, and photos to our Campaign Account Manager **Karie Allison** at [kallison@elevateims.com](mailto:kallison@elevateims.com), or simply fill out the back of the enclosed gift form and return it in the mail. We want to share it in the next issue of the **Beaver Sig**!

*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.

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