

We Want to Hear from You!

Be sure to send in the enclosed form with your alumni news, along with a photo, so we can publish it in the next edition of *Alphabet*! You're brothers will be eager to see what you've been up to!

March 2005

www.alphaofthetaxi-alumni.com

Alphabet



Alpha Chapter • Theta Xi Fraternity • Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute • Troy, NY

Reunion

Report

Come to the 6294 Celebration

By Benjamin Rosenthal A1427

This year's 6294 celebration is on April 29-30 in Troy, N.Y. The momentum toward rebuilding the alumni network is incredible. We had 40 alumni show up for 6294 last year, and over 60 have already signed up this year. If you haven't signed up yet, please do so. If you have signed up, then bug a brother whom you want to see there until he signs up too.

We have an aggressive target of 100 brothers and are well on our way there. We challenged the younger alumni to deliver 75 brothers from 1993-2004 and the older alumni to deliver 25 brothers from 1987-92. The "old folks" have already surpassed their goal with almost 30 positive responses and alumni coming in from as far away as Tennessee, Michigan, Florida and Colorado. Many of these alumni haven't been back in over 10 years. I'm confident the "young guys" will respond to this challenge and reach their goal as well.

Aside from the poker, golf and general buffoonery, there will be an alumni association meeting on Saturday afternoon, during which we will be holding elections for the board. If you are interested in any positions, including chapter adviser, please contact me.

Donations for the event can be contributed either by credit card or check beforehand, or by check at the dinner on Saturday night. Suggested donations of \$100 per person or \$150 per couple have been set to cover the cost for the evening. Those who give \$200 will also get either an embroidered golf shirt or a house portrait; for \$300, you get both while they are available.

To see the schedule for the weekend and to sign up, go to www.AlphaOfThetaXi-Alumni.com and click the link for the E-vite.

I hope to see a lot of you at 6294 and am looking forward to talking to you there. ■

Please join us at this year's 6294 celebration! RSVP at www.evite.com/blanc@alum.rpi.edu/6294-2005.

Alumni President's

Report

By Benjamin Rosenthal A1427

Fixing Up the House The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

I have some good news and bad news to report. The bad news is that the house is still on suspension and will be until January 1, 2006. This has focused some of our attention elsewhere. We are not, however, discouraged, nor do we intend to delay repairing the house.

The alumnus who volunteered to head the planning of these renovations has been unavailable and will need to be replaced, although we feel he will still hold an active role in the planning process. Because of this hiatus, we have not had the plans of the house drawn up in AutoCAD as we had hoped would be completed already, and we do not yet have the draft outline prepared for the full repair/renovation project. I have stepped up to help bridge the immediate need for someone in this position.

We are, however, still looking for someone to take the role of project manager. It must be someone who has the time and ambition to head up this project. We will try to get the position filled by 6294 but may not hit the goal. It is more important to get the right person for the job than to get a person right now.

The good news is that the house is full, and the brotherhood is strong. The undergraduates are running an excellent surplus, and the house will be near capacity again the next school year. We raised over \$15,000 last year from the first annual alumni fund drive, with donations from 75 brothers. Together with money from the undergraduates' building fund, we spent \$16,000 to rebuild the front steps and repair the plaster/concrete facade.

We are planning to spend \$20,000 this summer for repairs, again in conjunction with the undergraduates. Our main focus will be the areas of the roof that desperately need repairing, but we will also be looking at the gutters, basement walls, furnace, leaking radiators and other miscellaneous matters. Work is in progress to get quotes on the above items, and a complete list of repairs for summer 2005 will be available at 6294.

Our general timing and plans have not changed. We will do everything we can this summer with the funds available. If we receive enough in alumni donations, we will increase the summer repair budget to \$30,000 to address other needed preservation and safety repairs. We are concentrating on repairs that are not likely to be wasted when we do a major renovation to the house. We will continue to raise money with the annual fund and will address more emergency repairs for summer 2006 as it approaches. It would be great if we could raise another \$15,000 this year and \$15,000 next year, and be able to put \$20,000 or more into house repairs next year.

Our first real deadline is October 2006, the 75th anniversary of the house. We need a complete renovation plan with the budget and staging/timing by then, and full plans of the house and property. We will then launch our major fundraising campaign. Estimates are around \$1,000,000 for the complete renovation of the house depending upon how ambitious our plan is.

Our second deadline is April 29, 2014, when we want the renovations complete so we can hold the 150-year Theta Xi National Convention at Alpha Chapter. This is a very ambitious goal that will only be reached if the chapter, local alumni, national and RPI work together over the next nine years to make it happen. ■

2004-2005 Executive Board

Alpha Chapter of Theta Xi

1490 Sage Ave.
Troy, NY 12180
518-271-8558

President

Eric Maiorino A1543
maiore@rpi.edu

Vice President

Danny Philayvanh A1546
philad@rpi.edu

Treasurer

Justin Hanlon A1565
hanlop@rpi.edu

House Manager

Jake Woudenberg A1562
woudej@rpi.edu

Steward

Mark Black A1563
blackm@rpi.edu

Secretary

Timothy Kelly A1556
kellyt@rpi.edu

Scholarship

Brandon Reisen A1532
reiseb@rpi.edu

Alumni Association

Theta Xi Association of
Troy, N.Y.
P.O. Box 1466
Troy, NY 12181

President

**Benjamin "Beaker"
Rosenthal A1427**
rosenb3@alum.rpi.edu

Vice President

Matthew Goss A1482
gossmt@cdm.com

Treasurer

**Chris "Norm" Baldauf
A1487**
baldac@alum.rpi.edu

Interim Chapter Adviser

Paul Dalton A1512
dalton@alum.rpi.edu ■

Alumni

Profile

Dani Bolognesi A988

A Pioneer in HIV Research

"What I thought I wanted to do when I finished my B.S. was play ball," remembers **Dani Bolognesi A988**. "But I met Sally Sampson from Russell Sage [College] before I graduated, and I began to think differently about that. I figured I was going to need a more steady income to support a wife and family." So when Bolognesi graduated with a B.S. in biology, he decided to stay and get his M.S. (and Mrs.), too.

It wasn't always easy being a serious student in the Theta Xi house. "My roommate, **Frank Fischer [A986]**, made sure I never had time to study. There was always something else more exciting to do," said Bolognesi. "I had joined because of the sports interest at Theta Xi. Several of the guys I was with on the football and baseball teams were also brothers, and we had a great spirit of camaraderie."

When asked about the football team — he played quarterback — he said, laughing, "We didn't let the school down. We continued what I think must have been the longest losing streak in the nation at the time." But, he was quick to add, "I was also pitcher for our baseball team, and we had a much better record!"

What he is most grateful to have learned at Theta Xi is how to appreciate the talents of others and get along with 30 people in close quarters. "It was a big challenge, a true team perspective. You had to exercise a reasonable tolerance for people who didn't necessarily agree with you on everything. That and learning how to think, to solve problems, were two of the most important things I learned as an undergraduate that I am still grateful for today," he said.

By the time he left Rensselaer for Duke, to begin work on his Ph.D, he was beginning to focus on virology research. Later, postdoctoral work led him and Sally to Germany for three years. When they returned, he took a position at Duke, where over the next 25 years he would serve as the James B. Duke Professor of Surgery, professor of microbiology/immunology, vice chairman for research and development in the Department of Surgery and director for the Duke University Center for AIDS Research.

Dr. Bolognesi and his research team were pioneers in the development of the first anti-HIV drug, AZT. "Viruses are smaller and less complex than the cells they attack, but we can take them apart, study their genetic composition and figure out how they work. When we know that, we have a tool for developing new prevention and treatment

methods," said Bolognesi.

It was in the early 1990s during HIV vaccine trials that he and a fellow researcher, Dr. Tom Matthews, realized the possibilities opened by their discovery of a specific peptide, or string of amino acids, that could prevent the HIV virus from entering living cells. In 1993, they founded Trimeris, a biopharmaceutical company for the development and production of new treatments for viral diseases, located in Durham, N.C. By October 2004, FUZEON®, the first drug of its kind for the treatment of AIDS, received full FDA and European Union approval.

This past December, his alma mater honored Bolognesi with the Rensselaer Alumni Association Fellows Award from the Department of Biology.

"FUZEON® is now primarily being used to treat patients who have exhausted other options," said Bolognesi. "This type of drug is a powerful new weapon in fighting a disease that affects increasing millions around the world today. Results have been remarkable in many cases."

Bolognesi admits that he is approaching a time in life when he will want to focus more attention close to home. "My wife and I are very fortunate to have our two boys' families in the area. We really enjoy our three grandchildren and are looking forward to a fourth soon. They are just all fun. I think I'm their biggest toy!" he said. "I also look forward to more time for fishing on my bass boat, and my sons and I have taken up golf in the last few years."

About the fraternity, he said, "I'd love to see the guys again. We had such great times. Wouldn't it be wonderful to recapture some of those moments — the excitement of those days?"

Brothers may contact Dani and Sally Bolognesi by phone at 919-489-2584 or by e-mail at dbolognesi@trimeris.com. ■



Dani and Sally Bolognesi and their family.

Undergrad President

By Eric Maiorino A1543, President

Trying Times Bringing Us Together As an Even Stronger Brotherhood

In light of our suspension by the dean of students for events that occurred at the house last spring, this semester has been a trying one, to say the least, for the brotherhood. Since we currently remain on suspension, we are not allowed to hold any functions as a house or participate in any interfraternity sports or social events.



Busy undergrads stop to pose for a picture.

This does not, however, mean the Alpha Chapter of Theta Xi no longer exists. In fact, we have come together as a brotherhood stronger than I can remember and

are now realizing what being members of this house means to us as individuals and an organization as a whole.

Brothers are continuing service to the community by participating in various events, both on Community Service Day through Rensselaer and other philanthropic efforts scheduled throughout the semester. Several brothers selflessly volunteered their time this past Christmas season to help at a local homeless shelter.

Efforts to increase the involvement of our academic adviser and neighbor, Dr. Charles Boylen, have been made by welcoming him to several of our house meetings so that he may begin to play a more active role in the operations of the fraternity and assist us in the difficult times we will be facing in the semesters to come.

While the chapter cannot sponsor its own social functions at the house, we remain socially active by taking road trips to other chapters, regional conventions, sporting events and other activities away from Rensselaer. We have a trip planned to visit the Gamma Xi Chapter later this semester, since they frequently visit us. We also have several bowling and movie nights planned throughout the semester.

We as a brotherhood have looked within ourselves for ways to better maintain and preserve the chapter house. We have made several repairs to the lighting fixtures in the formal room and basement, installed a fire suppression system and a fire-rated door by the boiler room, and handled several other regular maintenance projects that often go overlooked. Work parties have also been restructured to ensure that all areas of the house are properly and frequently maintained.

We hope the new vision of brotherhood we are now working so hard to achieve continues as a tradition in the fraternity and, by strengthening our bonds of friendship and brotherly love, we will show everyone what it means to be a member of Theta Xi! ■

House Report

By Jacob Woudenberg A1562, House Manager

The House Is Getting Older

It has always been the ambition of the brotherhood to keep the chapter house in the best condition possible. However, with the house approaching 75 years old, problems seem to arise on a regular basis.

One major problem that came to our attention this semester is the condition of the basement wall on the Sage Avenue side of the house. The wall is slowly deteriorating, causing pieces of the plaster to fall off. Plans are underway to have a professional engineer look at it to see how serious it really is. Due to the belief that this problem is being caused by the root system of a nearby tree, we are also making plans to have the tree removed.

This tree also seems to be the culprit for a recent squirrel problem we have had, especially over the summer months. At the end of last spring semester and into the summer break, we were constantly catching and disposing of squirrels that decided to take shelter in our house. More than just the nuisance of having to deal with these unwanted guests, the squirrels in the house

posed a potential health hazard to the brothers living here.

Another major situation we will be dealing with this year is repairing the slate roof on the house. There are several areas in desperate need of repair including a hole approximately three feet in diameter above the third-floor bathroom. It is our plan to eventually have the entire roof repaired or replaced. This will cost more money than we can afford at the present time so we are just getting the critical areas repaired. We're planning to have the work done this summer. A combination of money from the building fund and donations from the alumni association's annual fund drive will make this happen.

The house also has had many wiring problems repaired. We have just finished making repairs where possible, and replaced much of the lighting on the first floor and in the basement. Additionally, we have found that several radiators are leaking, and the furnace constantly has to be



A group of Actives at the house.

refilled with water. We will get someone in this summer to look at this problem and fix the leaky radiators.

Overall, the house is holding up very well, considering its age and the wear of 30 fraternity men living in it year after year. With the help of an increased building fund and generous donations from alumni, I think 1490 Sage Avenue will be around for a long time to come. ■

Steward's Report

By Mark Black A1563, Steward

Changes to Our Dining Plan

This semester we had to make some significant changes to our meal plan and dining. The Old Daily Inn, which for the past year has been the staple caterer for our meals, increased their prices. Unfortunately, we have had to cut back on using their services. We are now more dependent on brothers cooking meals in order to stay within our budget.

This has been generally accepted among the brotherhood. With brothers cooking meals, a greater variety of food is being prepared and, in many cases, the meals are actually better than the caterer's.

Currently we order from the Old Daily Inn twice a week, have brothers cook twice a week and get takeout from one of several local restaurants once a week.

One of my goals this semester has been to try to provide more balance in our meal plan by offering more variety and healthier selections. I have done this by having salad at almost every meal, in addition to continually creating new and healthy meal ideas for lunches and dinners. Hopefully this will become a trend with the stewards who follow me and with the brotherhood as a whole. ■

Our Graduating Seniors

The alumni association would like to congratulate the graduating seniors and wish you well in your future careers. Please remember that even though you may be moving across the country or even around the world, you are a brother of Theta Xi, and that lasts forever. You will always be welcome at the Alpha Chapter.

Mitchell Weiser A1513
Sam Lerner A1528
Greg Wester A1530
Brandon Reisen A1532
John S. Jison A1535
Justin Scaduto A1537
Michael Christoff A1538
Michael Whelihan A1539
Billy Peraza A1540
Patrick Bailey A1541
Josh Weisbrot A1554 ■

Treasurer's Report

By Justin Hanlon A1565, Treasurer

House's Finances Are Good, Getting the Taxes All Filed

The financial standing of the house has gradually improved over the last few semesters. Given our current suspension and being that we are unable to partake in rush or hold social functions, the money normally set aside for these activities will not be spent this year. Instead, some of the funds are going toward activities such as road trips and activity nights, and the remainder of the funds will be split between the building fund and savings.

These extra savings will help maintain the house's operating budget over the next year as the suspension takes its toll on membership, reducing the influx of money. The money that will be transferred to the building fund will help offset the

costs of the many necessary house repairs.

Sometime over the past several years, our taxes stopped being filed with the IRS. Without old forms to work from, and having great difficulty in finding someone to help us figure out what needed to be done, we are in the final steps of getting our taxes filed for 2004. I am just waiting for last semester's numbers to be finalized before submitting them. As part of the process, I composed a guide so this does not happen again.

As the semester goes on, I will be working on getting the years that we missed filed with the IRS, so that there will be no problems in the future. ■

975-5 SN

Address Service Requested

Alumni Relations Office
P.O. Box 1119
Troy, NY 12181-1119

Theta Xi Fraternity
Rensseler Polytechnic Institute



*Please join us for this year's
6294 Celebration in April! See inside!*

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
State College, Pa.
Permit No. 2