

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 29, 2006, Troy, NY 142nd Founders Day Celebration

Last year more than 80 alumni returned, this year we're shooting for 100, with 60 signed up so far. Sign up at Sign up at <http://www.evite.com/app/publicUrl/tx6294@gmail.com/6294-2005> or email Chris Blanc A1404 at tx6294@gmail.com.

3 PM Alumni Corporation
Annual Meeting

- Chapter update
- Officer reports
- Review of operations
- Officer elections

Contact Matt Goss for details at matthew.goss@gmail.com.

June 10, 2006, Time TBD, Troy, NY

Alumni Update Presentation
(given at regularly scheduled
RPI reunion event)

- Chapter update presentation
- Discussion of initiatives
- Q&A

Contact David Fowkes
for details at
dfowkes@comcast.net.

Calling all Capital District Alumni!

If you live or work near Troy,
NY consider a visit to the
chapter for one of our update
meetings (April 29 or June 10).
Contact Matt Goss for details at
matthew.goss@gmail.com.

Calling all NYC Alumni!
Join our NYC Alumni Club
for a beer. We meet bi-monthly
in Midtown. Contact Rohun
Gholkar for details at
rohun@rpi.edu.

March 2006

www.alphaofthetaxi-alumni.com

Alphabet



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

Support from Alumni Donors and Volunteers Making Big Impact on Annual Fund and Communications Program

One-to-one outreach by alumni volunteers reconnecting Brothers from all eras—help needed for 1970s! Brothers' generosity helps us exceed '04-'05 annual fund goal!

By David Fowkes, A1275, dfowkes@comcast.net

Our alumni communications effort remains focused on re-connecting with as many alumni as possible. We'll keep reaching out through regular AlphaBet publication and on-campus update opportunities. Our presentation during last June's RPI reunion provided a wonderful opportunity to give an update on our efforts, field questions and receive suggestions from alumni from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. **We will offer another update presentation at this year's RPI reunion, tentatively scheduled for June 10, 2006.**

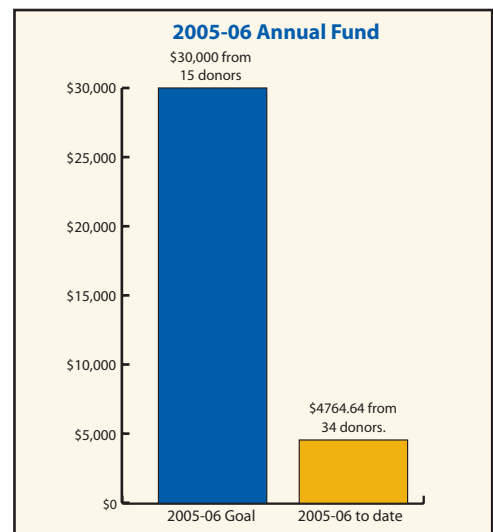
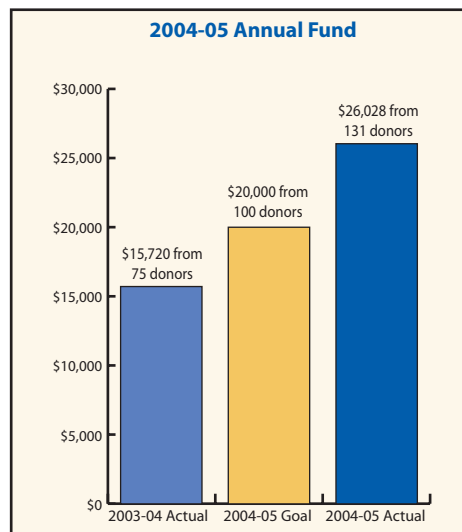
Our strategy of reconnecting alumni through one-to-one outreach has proven worthwhile. Last year's RPI reunion meeting led to one alumni volunteering to help organize an effort to reach out to alumni from the 1960s. **Rick Gordon, A1024, has been systematically contacting 1960s alumni to reconnect and help rebuild our alumni network.** Several alumni from the early 1980s

are working on their era: **Andy Clark A1222, Dane LaBlanc A1192, Vic Gallante A1243 and Mike Rivera A1261 have divided up the task of contacting a group of alumni.** Thank you to these brothers for volunteering their time and energy!

We need help reaching out to 1970s era alumni. Form a small team of alumni for a targeted outreach. It's easy and rewarding. Email me to volunteer. The 1950s is in great shape thanks to a close group of 20-25 alumni from the mid-1950s. But we could expand communication with more outreach. Can you help?

Our fund raising strategy is focused on appealing to alumni for gifts to our annual fund. **Thanks to our alumni who came through with 131 donations totaling \$26,028.92 to beat our aggressive 2004-05 goal of \$20,000 and 100 donations.** The top chart on the left shows our 2004-05 results

Continued on page 2



Annual Fund - *Continued from page 1*

compared to our goal and compared to last year's results. The bottom chart shows our progress so far this year against our 2005-06 goal of \$30,000 and 150 total donations. An honor roll of '04-'05 donors and '05-'06 donors so far is on page 3.

We're not asking for alumni to give beyond their means, just to give what they can and give it every year. Our success depends on your support.

Visit our web site for a detailed review of our annual fund results, for copies of recent AlphaBet issues or to make a credit card donation directly to the alumni association (<http://www.alphaofthetaxi-alumni.com/alumni.html>).

If you can help us reconnect with alumni or if you have any suggestions to improve our efforts, email me. Thanks again to the donors and volunteers who've helped us come this far!

Strongest Chapters Incorporate Alumni Mentoring Programs that Pass On Experience and Provide New Opportunities to Undergraduates

Your participation can make a big impact on success of the chapter

By Jim Vredenburg, Beta Omega 11, Theta Xi National Executive Director, jim@thetaxi.org

We all remember the lessons we learned as actives and how it helped us develop into the well rounded, successful adults we now are. In order for our fraternity to continue to thrive it is critical that we pass along our experience and provide support to the brotherhood to help our active members develop into the leaders we need.

The most successful fraternity chapters are those with strong alumni support and participation. Providing guidance to our active members is one way that you can help Alpha Chapter and Theta Xi remain strong. Please consider volunteering to be a mentor for an active chapter leader. There are opportunities to help with both the Alpha

chapter and at Theta Xi chapters throughout the U.S. The time commitment required is not substantial. The impact you can have on both the brother and the chapter can be. Please contact me if you would like to discuss this opportunity.

Strong Semester in Recruitment, Member Education and Community Service Proves that Alpha is Back

Changing campus environment requires fraternities to adapt to new standards to remain competitive—Alpha is up to the challenge **By Bob Barton A1544**

In our first semester back from suspension, we have worked to completely restructure the way our house works in order to survive and thrive in the challenging environment facing fraternities at RPI. With more than half the IFC houses currently serving disciplinary sanctions or under emergency suspension, it's time for the house to evolve so that it remains a top fraternity.

After a successful rush, we've enlisted five solid men to be considered for the newest ranks of our Alpha brethren. Though five is not a high number, we are focused on the quality of our newest members. I know our alumni understand the importance of recruiting the best men into Theta Xi. In addition, we are working to create a year long recruitment program that will identify prospective

members and way to reach out to them on a personal basis.

The process of membership education is also being revolutionized. Pledge meetings have now taken on a classroom-like setting, with brothers taking the time to teach our prospective members about our values and our history. The membership education process is centered on team-building and trust, without the ugliness that still plagues many houses. We have a close eye on our prospective members' academic performance and also provide support, including tutoring and scheduling study sessions during crucial times during the semester.

We are working hard to improve relations between the house and RPI. We invited the Associate Dean of Students over to dinner to help us with Rush

seminars. Our relationship with Dr. Boylen, our neighbor and faculty advisor, is a beneficial way to work on issues relating to RPI and the neighborhood in general.

We are planning to spend a day working with Habitat for Humanity to assist in building low-income housing near Albany, as well as a project in conjunction with the Health Center at RPI to improve campus awareness about alcohol abuse.

All in all, our house has made quite a strong comeback. We are adapting to face the new future of fraternity life at RPI with the strength and ingenuity expected of the men of Theta Xi. We look with confidence and hope to the fruitful years to come – as our 10x10 Rush Banner outside the house proudly proclaims: Alpha is Back!

A Piece of Our History

By Matt Glaccum, A1324, mglaccum@geosphereinc.com

Preface

For over 141 years, the Alpha Chapter of Theta Xi has been a presence at RPI, welcoming more than 1500 men into the Bonds of Theta Xi. We can take heart and be cognizant of the fact that many in the Brotherhood have made tremendous contributions not only to Alpha Chapter, Theta Xi Fraternity and RPI but also to Industry and Society here in America and across the world. As we approach and begin preparation for our 150th Anniversary, it is well past time to research and document the successes of our members and their impact on others. Ours is a proud history replete with individual accounts which should not be lost or forgotten. We owe it to all current and future members to make these treasures of our past and present known.

Palmer C. Ricketts, A84: 'The Builder of Rensselaer'

When we think of the name Ricketts in association with RPI, most may foremost remember taking classes in the building on campus next to the '87 Gym. For some, a bit of trivia about the Ricketts building would be that its name helps to commemorate a former president of the Institute. Delving further as a Brother, you may discover that President Palmer C. Ricketts corresponds to Palmer Chamberlaine Ricketts, A84, an alumni initiate of the Alpha Chapter of Theta Xi. What seems to be largely forgotten is that Palmer C. Ricketts firmly made the Institute what it is today so much so that towards the end of his tenure as president, Ricketts was hailed as 'the Builder of Rensselaer'. Not bad for a guy who as an undergrad was almost tossed out of school.

Born in Elkton, Maryland on January 17, 1856, Ricketts' interest in science and engineering grew while attending a private school and tutored in Princeton, New Jersey. At the age of 15, he was admitted to RPI to pursue a degree in civil engineering. By all accounts, his academic life as an undergraduate was a spotless success except for one incident. As a junior serving on the *Transit's* editorial board, he

almost found himself expelled for helping to produce a yearbook which poked irreverent fun at the school and student life. The faculty was not amused at the level, or the lack thereof, of respect. Fortunately for Ricketts, this disciplinary action was not pursued.

Examined records do not reveal exactly when Ricketts first became associated with the Brothers of Theta Xi, but it is clear that he graduated in 1875 with a degree in civil engineering. This led to his immediate appointment at the school as an assistant in teaching mathematics and astronomy. It is in this



Ricketts with some members of the faculty in 1912.

timeframe that Ricketts found himself initiated into the Bonds of Theta Xi on February 25, 1876. From present knowledge, not much is known about his involvement with the fraternity until much later in his career, though it seems he was popular as an instructor with the students. After attaining the rank of assistant professor in 1882, Ricketts was named the William H. Hart professor of rational and tensor mechanics two years later, a position which he held for more than twenty years.

In 1892, Palmer C. Ricketts achieved the post of Director, or academic head, of the Institute. This was followed nine years later by his becoming the first faculty member to be named president by the trustees of RPI. In a feat not matched before or since, Ricketts served in this dual capacity for over thirty years. In this time, the heart of the campus as we know it today came to life.

Thanks to tireless efforts by Ricketts and the support of alumni as well as other notable benefactors of the period, RPI survived the devastating fires that essentially destroyed the downtown classrooms and labs of the Institute in 1904. This led to the purchase of estate land on the hillside above Troy and the construction of the 'green roof' campus. Starting with the Carnegie Building in 1906 and until his death in 1934, Ricketts oversaw the building and completion of the campus including Walker Chemical Laboratory, Russell Sage Laboratory, the Pittsburgh Building, the '86 Field, the '87 Gymnasium, the Quadrangle Dormitories, Russell Sage Dining Hall, the Troy Building, Amos Eaton Hall, the Greene Building, and the Union Clubhouse. Sadly, Ricketts did not live to see the completion of the last of the 'green roof' buildings. Finished the year after his death, this last building was dedicated in his memory and named accordingly the Ricketts Building.

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Aerial view of RPI campus circa 1933. Notice the chapter house in the background.

History - *Continued from page 3*

During his tenure, the school not only gained a new campus. Foreseeing the need to expand beyond the civil engineering degree and the general science degree that the Institute offered at the time, Ricketts fought and won to develop new courses and offer degrees in other engineering and science disciplines, architecture and business administration as well as to establish a graduate school. With all of this expansion, enrollment swelled from approximately 200 to over 1700 in 1930, the number of faculty grew from 15 to over 120 and the school's assets jumped from roughly \$500,000 to over \$11,000,000 during the Ricketts era.

Given all this, perhaps it should be no real surprise then that Alpha Chapter gained a new permanent residence to call home while Ricketts was in office. Passing mention in a chapter newsletter is made of using the same building contractor as Ricketts employed in constructing his own house though the low cost of the bid most likely reflected the depressed economy of the time. Other documents from this time show that he was "very active in all house functions" and would come to dances with his wife, Vjera. Fittingly, the honor of laying the cornerstone of the new chapter

house was given to Ricketts before the house opened its doors in the fall of 1931.

Palmer C. Ricketts' dedication to the school lives on even to this day. Aside from the Institute becoming a true polytechnic school

on his watch that his predecessors fell short in their dreams of achieving and aside from the beautiful campus that he created, Ricketts also funded three prizes for seniors. After his death on December 10th, 1934, his widow established three more. Following her death in 1937, and with no children to look after, the Ricketts estate worth over \$300,000 was left to the school in their memory. The six prizes are still awarded to this day.



President Palmer C. Ricketts, A84

HONOR ROLL

Robert D. High	1935	J. R. Gordon	1965	Hitoshi Sano	1991	David P. Halsey	1999
Fred C. Billingsley	1942	Henry F. Malafronte Jr.	1965	Renzo C. DeMeo	1992	Dennis S. Lincoln	1999
Roland M. Cavalier	1942	Roger W. Sundin Jr.	1967	Matthew B. Glaccum	1992	Jesse Madsen	1999
Joseph S. Klockner	1944	Walter J. Cervoni	1971	Joseph M. Politoski II	1992	Robert W. Strack	1999
Benjamin T. Marshall	1947	Jose T. Alvarez	1973	R. G. Talbert	1993	Thomas P. Doherty	2000
Allen K. Woodcock	1948	Kevin A. Ellis	1974	Thomas J. Pilon	1994	Patrick J. Kiendzior	2000
Fred J. Grob	1949	David J. Barnette Jr.	1976	Nanda K. Ramaswamy	1994	Joseph Scaramuzzo	2000
Howard C. Bursch	1950	Damon D. Fisher	1976	John A. Reinhardt Jr.	1994	Jamie H. Smith	2000
Frank K. Little	1950	Duncan K. Sparrell	1977	Carlos B. Soledade	1994	Matthew T. Goss	2001
Paul O. Cline Jr.	1951	Kurt M. Doehla	1978	Patrick S. Marshall	1995	Steve T. Ly	2001
John D. Bloodgood	1952	Dane P. LeBlanc	1980	Philip A. Palmroth	1995	Chris J. Baldauf	2002
John L. Feininger	1952	David F. Carlson	1981	Michael D. Petronino	1995	Brendan P. Bagley	
Joseph F. Manfield	1952	Lance M. Lifka	1981	Eric J. Purdy	1995	Kevin Berkowitz	
Kenneth S. Reed	1952	John B. Wilson	1981	Christopher Riismandel	1995	Francis K. Bodine	
E. B. Grier Jr.	1953	Richard A. DeVenezia	1985	Peter J. Torelli	1995	Philip B. Cutrone	
James E. Merkel	1953	Michael J. Campanella	1987	Jesus Acevedo	1996	Paul W. Dalton	
Donald P. Simek	1954	Victor A. Galante	1988	Mark P. Martel	1996	Oliver F. Daniel	
Robert P. Bozzone	1955	Peter E. Kebbekus	1988	Demetrius Mossaidis	1996	Jason A. Garabedian	
Peter G. Bostock	1956	Jeffrey D. Anderlik	1989	Jason D. Romano	1996	Rohun V. Gholkar	
George E. Callas Jr.	1956	Ralph R. Buoniconti	1989	Kenyon W. Thayer	1996	Adam C. Goss	
Joseph Freitag Jr.	1956	David W. Fowkes	1989	Nino J. Bonura	1997	Robert J. King	
John H. Gilmore	1956	Sean E. Hulsebosch	1989	Jude M. Cancellieri	1997	Waldon G. McElroy	
Julian R. Smetana	1956	Jeffrey D. Lamoree	1989	Anthony J. Fiory	1997	Ray Mendenilla	
Glen A. Ryan	1957	Jeffrey P. Thompson	1989	Fredrick C. Lai	1997	David L. Schuettner Jr.	
Henry G. Tarbox	1957	Dale A. Winkler	1989	Benjamin D. Rosenthal	1997	John A. Simone	
John C. Schulz	1958	Michael A. Rivera	1990	Joseph C. Russo	1997	Brad W. Spencer	
John L. Matthews	1960	Ronald F. Vogel	1990	Lee T. Morrisseau	1998	Jason T. Virgil	
Norman D. Poisson	1960	John A. Arruda	1991	James R. Ciccio	1999		
Kenneth L. Wilson	1963	Allan Herman	1991	Nicholas P. Constantine	1999		
Frank M. Fischer	1964	Christopher W. Maier	1991	Kevin M. Delaney	1999		

Brother Frank Fischer '64—a.k.a. “Archie”—Finds Fulfillment in Innovating Medical Device Solutions and Holds Fond Memories of his Alpha Days

As the CEO of NeuroPace, Frank Fischer '64, has to utilize his management and leadership abilities everyday. These skills have been accumulated over the course of a lifetime. After receiving his BS in engineering and MS in management, Brother Fischer joined the navy. He served in the Civil Engineer Corp. during the Vietnam War. Fresh out of college, Fischer was sent to Newport Naval Base where he was given a great amount of responsibility because of the manpower shortage created by the war. He credits this experience for building his confidence and gaining management skills.

After his three years in the Navy, Brother Fischer worked at General Electric building locomotives. After five years he was approached by a headhunter for Cordis Corporation, a Florida medical device company. Reluctant at first to uproot his family from Pennsylvania and to make such a dramatic change in industries, Fischer declined an interview a number of times. But the recruiter was persistent.

In a phone conversation Fischer mentioned that he was taking his wife and infant son on vacation to Florida. In order to arrange an in-person interview, the recruiter offered to pick up the travel expenses of the trip if Fischer would spend one day at the company. That led to an eventual decision to join the company and begin an entirely new avenue for his life.

“There are a number of psychic benefits to working for a medical device company,” said Fischer. “It’s very gratifying when a person’s work directly benefits the lives and health of others.” For the last 25 years Brother Fischer has been improving the lives of others through the field of medical devices.

As the CEO of NeuroPace, he presides over a company of 70 employees and is in the process of garnering approval for a new medical device, an implantable system designed to treat epilepsy. Implanted in the brain near the epileptogenic focus, the system senses abnormal activity and electrically stimulates that area of the brain with the objective of preventing clinical seizures. Currently in clinical trials, NeuroPace has received FDA approval to begin their pivotal study. Fischer expects the device to be available to the public in 2009.

Despite his hectic schedule, Fischer has found time to keep in touch with a number of his brothers at Theta Xi. He fondly remembers “all of the great times with the super guys there.” During a class reunion in 2004, Brother Fischer met up with Alpha Brothers and skipped most of the scheduled Rensselaer events to catch up and reminisce about old times. Some of those in attendance were Gary Peterson (Icabod), Bob Nilsson (Doberman), Bill Gutheim (Goofus), Ray Rettberg, John Van Gelder, Mike Gass and Henry Malafrente.



Brother Fischer remembers “great times with super guys.”

Their nickname for Brother Fischer was Archie. Last fall, a number of this group, got together in Florida to play golf.

Fischer also contributes to the university that provided him with his education. In the past he has contributed to the Patroon scholars and more recently he and his wife, Jeanne, have established their own scholarship. This full freight scholarship will be used at the school’s discretion to provide financial aid. Higher education is important to Brother Fischer—his son is in the process of earning his MBA at Babson College.

Understanding the benefits of exercise, Brother Fischer works out regularly and participates in slow pitch softball. He is also supports the Epilepsy Foundation and the American Heart Association. Fischer also expressed interest in knowing how his other brothers were doing and would welcome the opportunity to get together with his Theta Xi brothers in the future. He can be reached at ffischer@neuropace.com.

Regional Theta Xi Clubs Creating Alumni Networks in Boston, NYC and DC—Capital District Needs Similar Network to Connect Alumni and Support Active Chapter

Get involved in a regional network or start your own, especially if you live in the Troy area

By Rohun Gholkar, A1515

Last year at 6294 we recognized an opportunity to take advantage of alumni networking in a small number of cities in the northeast US. We already had a group of alumni in the Boston area meeting frequently to play poker. We had concentrations of alumni around New York City, Boston, Washington and Troy. We discussed organizing more frequent social gatherings and I decided to try to kick off the NYC based effort.

Over the past year, we’ve organized bi-monthly meetings in a mid-town NYC tavern. It’s been an enjoyable forum to

reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. We’ve attracted up to a dozen Alpha alumni and recently connected with a group of local Beta-Omega alumni (Virginia Tech) to form the beginnings of a NYC based Theta Xi alumni club. We have reached out to other NYC based alumni (Gamma chapter in NJ and others) and hope to begin to build the network further. Please email me if you would be interested in joining our next meeting on 6/6/06 at 6 pm at Heartland Brewery on 43rd St. in Manhattan. We’d love to have you.

We plan to explore the viability of

similar organizations in Boston, Washington and Troy. We’ve had the beginnings of an organization for years in Boston and have a volunteer to coordinate the activities. We have similar interest in DC.

The Troy, NY area is where an alumni network could have the most positive impact on our undergraduate operations. Are you a Capital District alum who would be willing to participate and to help organize our local alumni activities? If so, or if you’re interested in networks other areas, please contact me or Matt Goss.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Alejandro Ross writes from Mexico:

(Gaspar De Zuniga #120, Mexico DF 11000; aleross01@gmail.com) First let me update my email address. old: aross@infosel.net.mx New aleross01@gmail.com full name: Alejandro Ross Director of strategy & marketing for Siemens Communications group in Mexico I have 2 daughters, Natalia (4) and Nicole (2) and married to Angelica (Angie)

We need your news and photos

Your news, stories and photos make the AlphaBet! Submit current news, memories, old and new photos, and any other memorabilia so we can share it with other alumni! Use the enclosed form to send in anything you'd like to see in an upcoming issue.

DONORS TO DATE

Thank You Donors so far this giving year (since 9/1/2005)!
Your gifts will help us exceed our goal for the second year in a row!

Allen K. Woodcock	1948	Richard M. Kelton	1965
Roger W. Campbell	1949	Horacio E. Navarrete	1967
Robert W. McNeally	1949	Roger W. Sundin Jr.	1967
Victor Brinkman	1950	Peter McEachern	1969
Bruce A. Goodale	1950	Jose T. Alvarez	1973
Dean H. Armstrong	1951	David H. Benton Jr.	1985
Richard M. Sweitzer	1951	David Fowkes	1989
Joseph F. Manfield	1952	Michael K. Brown	1992
John Okrepkie	1954	Philip A. Palmroth	1995
Donald P. Simek	1954	Peter J. Torelli	1995
John H. Gilmore	1956	Benjamin D. Rosenthal	1997
Glen A. Ryan	1957	Gary L. Barker	1998
Henry G. Tarbox	1957	Kevin M. Delaney	1999
John C. Schulz	1958	William D. Sipperly	1999
James F. Angus	1959	Chris J. Baldauf	2002
John L. Matthews	1960	Francis K. Bodine	
Frank M. Fischer	1964	Greg David Wester	



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Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Theta Xi Fraternity



*Alumni Make Huge Impact on Annual Fund and
Brother-to-Brother Connections! Active Chapter
Rising to Challenge to Claim its Place on Campus!*

