



## In This Issue:

- Vision into Reality ..... 1
- Renovation Campaign..... 1
- Chapter News..... 2
- Public Relations ..... 2
- Chapter Awards ..... 2
- Repairs ..... 3
- AlphaBet Soup ..... 3
- 21st Century ..... 5
- Rush ..... 5
- Chapter Eternal ..... 6
- Giving Back ..... 6
- Calendar ..... 6



## Turning a Vision into Reality – A 1985 Retrospect

It started in 1985 with a visit to RPI and a tour of campus and the chapter house during a 25 year class reunion. **Lee Wilcox A944**, who was RPI's Vice President for Student Affairs at the time, invited several of his Class of '60 brothers on the tour. **Vern Purdy A945** was looking forward to the visit since it had been several years since he was last in Troy. Vern was amazed at what he saw and disappointed at the condition of the house. That night, Vern came up with a plan. It was just a vision, but it was an idea he and his brothers would bring to fruition and help our chapter survive and thrive for the next two plus decades.

Vern thought, 'What if we could bring the physical house up to a good standard of maintenance. Then the house wouldn't cast a negative image of the chapter, and ultimately could help restore the good reputation of Theta Xi on campus.' He had no idea what the repairs would cost, but told his brothers that he would match the donations of all brothers to help with house repairs. That was the genesis of the plan to renovate the Alpha Chapter House.

You may wonder why Vern and his brothers would take so much time and spend so much money to help restore a house that they didn't live in anymore and had not even visited in many years. For Vern, he reflected upon how he valued his time as a brother and how his fraternity experience helped him succeed at RPI and after graduation. Becoming



*Photo of the Theta Xi Crest rug on the first floor of the House taken just after work week in late August 1989.*

a part of a new family at college was critical to his success; Alpha was his new family away from home. It introduced him to brothers from around the country and other parts of the world. He and his brothers learned about tolerance, acceptance, compromise, conflict resolution and how to enrich your life by learning about other brothers' backgrounds, values and opinions. His experience provided Vern with the confidence and social graces he needed to succeed in the real world. He does not know how he would have learned those skills if he wasn't a Theta Xi.

So, with Vern's challenge grant, the project got

*Reality, continued on page 4*

## 150th Anniversary Renovation Campaign Set to Kick Off

*by Chris Baldauf A1487, Alpha Chapter Advisor, chris.baldauf@gmail.com*

Your Alumni Board initially examined the feasibility of a major fund raising campaign aimed at chapter house renovation 7 years ago. Then Alumni Association President **Ben Rosenthal A1427** approached a professional fundraising firm to determine if we were prepared to launch a successful campaign. After extensive research including many alumni interviews, the group told us that we were not prepared to successfully run a major fundraiser and that we had a lot of work to do if we wanted to be able to credibly approach our alumni and ask for such a strong level of support.

Since then, we've taken efforts to:

- Rebuild a strong undergraduate chapter, excelling in all facets of operation including academics, leadership and recruitment. The chapter has been recognized by both RPI and Theta Xi National

as being top rated by earning the highest possible scores in each of their accreditation programs (5 of 5 stars for RPI, one of only 2 chapters nationally to win 9 of 9 points each of the past few years for Theta Xi).

- Reconnect with our alumni base, many of whom were lost or disengaged (what did you hear about the chapter in the 90's and early 2000's?), through consistent and high quality communications and the extraordinary efforts of **Matt Giaccum A1324** to locate the contact information of over 350 "lost" alumni (for which Matt was awarded a Distinguished Service Award by Theta Xi National).
- Build a model working relationship with RPI.
- Create a strong working relationship with Theta Xi National Headquarters (**David Fowkes A1275** is currently on the Grand Lodge, **Mike Baron A1555** is currently Northeast Regional

*150, continued on page 6*

# CHAPTER NEWS

## Chapter President's Report

by *Dan Harris A1608*

**W**e are beginning to reap the benefits of having a full house, including having a sizeable financial surplus for the first time in several years. Other items of note from this semester:

- Six of the seven Executive Board positions have been elected and consist of a broad spectrum of brothers including three juniors who have previously held E-Board positions and three newly initiated members from Spring '10 Associate Member class who show promise for future leadership.
- Alpha remains active in campus Greek leadership as two brothers are finishing up their term on RPI's IFC E-Board (**Jeff Kopera A1594** as DOSO Greek Advisor and **Graham Cabrey A1617** as VP Public Relations).
- Five brothers (**Jeff Kopera A1594**, **Dan Harris A1608**, **Graham Cabrey A1617**, **Barry Fortuna A1628** and **Jared Corso A1633**) attended the Greeklife Commons Planning Meeting on November 6th in order to help lay the beginning framework for the up and coming Greeklife Commons Agreement.
- Two brothers, **Dan Harris A1608** and **Graham Cabrey A1617**, were accepted into Order of Omega, the Greek Honor society.

## Alpha Chapter Active on Campus

by *Marco Balducci A1613*

**A** large active membership has allowed Alpha Chapter to participate in a wide variety of social activities this semester:

**Alumni Activities:** Many alumni visited our chapter house during Homecoming weekend. The chapter hosted a wine and cheese reception on Friday evening and a BBQ on Saturday where **Ben McCarty A1596** represented his Texan roots and cooked 21 racks of ribs with the help of **Bill Simmons A1598**.

**Sports:** Our chapter is active in sports this semester with 28 brothers and 5 associate members participating. Notably, we have an A-league hockey team, our C-league indoor soccer team took home the league championship and our softball and volleyball teams are currently in the playoffs. We also fielded an outdoor soccer team and two 3x3 league basketball teams.

**Service Projects:** Community service this semester included helping to stage Circle K's Haunted House at West Hall and Fall clean-up at Oakwood Cemetery where Theta Xi founder **Nathaniel Henry Starbuck A8** is buried.

**Social:** Our annual Cider party held on November 5th was again a hit on campus. Two bands played in the formal room while a DJ spun tunes in the basement of our packed chapter house. Our fall mixer with Alpha Phi sorority was well attended and included pumpkin carving.

## Chapter Awards

**A**lpha Chapter again performed very well in the annual Theta Xi National Awards. The chapter once again won a Benchmark Chapter Award (top 20% of all chapter operations nationally, one of only 2 chapters to earn 9 of 9 points Accreditation score each of the past 2 years). Our newsletter, the *AlphaBet*, was named best newsletter among all chapters. The Actives' successful 2009-10 rush year was recognized for outstanding recruitment. Finally, **Chris (Norm) Baldauf A1487** (RPI '03) was awarded the Dr. W. Turrentine Jackson Award recognizing the Fraternity's Outstanding Chapter Advisor for 2009-2010.

## Homecoming 2010



*Alumni and spouses at the Homecoming/Reunion House BBQ in October.*

## Public Relations

Brothers continued the tradition of going to Oakwood Cemetery every fall to help rake leaves for several hours on October 30th.



Ten brothers volunteered to help out with RPI's West Hall Haunted House, which included helping set up/decorating as well as donning costumes to help scare the people who attended.

**Dagmawi Yifru A1630** and **Dilpreet Saran A1637** won the IFC poker tournament which won \$75 for Habitat for Humanity.

# ALPHA *bet* SOUP

**Send Us an Update - News Wanted for the AlphaBet's Alumni News Section** - *Have news about you, your family, or work that you want to share with your fellow Alpha Brothers? You can send text and pictures to [alumni-update@alpha6294.com](mailto:alumni-update@alpha6294.com). Updates will be included in the next AlphaBet's Alumni News Section and will be posted at [www.alpha6294.com](http://www.alpha6294.com) where Brothers signing in to the Alumni website can see what you have been up to.*

## **Robert Beck A830**

Thank you for a wonderful reunion BBQ at Homecoming. We are impressed with your progress. Keep up the good work.

## **Dennis Dutton A920**

"Thanks for your hospitality at the last reunion [2009]".

## **Duncan Sparrell A1160**

**Mark Alianello A1151** and his wife Deb visited with **Duncan Sparrell A1160** and his wife Patty when "Al" was passing through Virginia. Mark and Duncan had a great time catching up on which brothers they had been in contact with, and on their families - Mark has 2 daughters and 2 sons; Duncan has 3 daughters. Duncan is fully recovered from his surgery, is feeling great, and is back at work at AT&T. Mark runs MDA Engineers (<http://mdaengineers.com/>), an engineering firm in Ellicottville, NY. Brothers who are civil engineers and looking for an internship should contact Mark.



## **Victor Galante A1243**

The work weekend looks like it paid off in spades! The house looks even better that when I lived there in 1987. Good luck to all of the brothers and have a great 2010 school year.

## **Michael Rivera A1261**

Living in TX since Jan 2008. Eventually plan to get back to the east coast. Son Gabriel, just turned two and is keeping this old fart busy.

## **Seth Johnson A1355**

Introducing Amelie Paige Johnson -- 21" long, 8 lbs, 14 oz - born 9/2/2010 at 3:03 pm. Mom, dad, and daughter are doing great!



## **Adam Berman A1392**

We relocated about 6 months ago from Minneapolis to Austin, TX. Shoot me a message if you're ever in the Austin area [AdamLBerman@gmail.com](mailto:AdamLBerman@gmail.com).

## **Kenyon Thayer A1405**

Hi Everyone,

Just wanted everyone to know that there is another Zoo offspring. The Thayer's welcomed Whitney Alice to the world at 4am on Friday, 20-Aug. We almost pulled a "Romano", barely making it to the hospital before delivery. From



parking the car to having a baby was about 20 minutes. Yikes. Angie, Donovan, Horses, dog, cat and myself (the men are always last, right) are fine.

We've moved (my updated address is available on the alumni website at [www.alpha6294.com](http://www.alpha6294.com))

**Chris "Norm" Baldauf A1487** Norm is engaged to Tracy Vesely.

## **Mitchell Weiser A1513**

Just recently got engaged to my girlfriend, Emily. Looking forward to a post wedding celebration at 6294 next year.

## **Gregory Wester A1530**

Working at [Salesforce.com](http://Salesforce.com) in San Francisco. Getting interviews for lots of brothers who want a shot at Silicon Valley.

*Find 'Zoo Alumni' on Facebook (219 members)*

*Find 'Alpha Chapter of Theta Xi' on LinkedIn (73 members)*

## **Repairs and Maintenance Continue at 1490 Sage Avenue**

**T**his has been a good semester for the House. We actives are now independently addressing many house maintenance problems as they arise. This semester's surprises included refrigerator and boiler trouble. We've re-instituted a programmatic annual boiler and radiator maintenance program and have developed a reliable maintenance contact for refrigerator warranty repairs.

The annual RPI safety inspection went well and resulted in a relatively small list of required repairs. We have addressed most by covering exposed wires and building a railing for the basement stairs from the kitchen. The

largest remaining problem is the torn carpet on the stairs between the 1st and 2nd floor. We know it is unsightly. It has now been identified as a safety hazard by the insurance inspector.

All major systems of the house have been inspected (and passed), including the kitchen hood, alarm system (2 smoke detectors were replaced), and fire extinguishers.

We plan to continue to identify and make improvements to our chapter house on a programmatic basis. This Spring we will focus on shelving and/or storage in a few areas including the bathrooms, the kitchen, and underneath the basement stairs coming from the kitchen. (The Associate Member Fall '10

class project for will include the construction of a wall in front of the JEU room to improve house supplies and tools storage). We may also consider giving the bar area a facelift and making the sink functional again. Other items on our list are repairing the power to the shed and addressing locks for basement and potentially ground floor windows. Future projects may include exploring options for converting the room in the basement behind the bar into a house study and study materials storage room to help foster scholastic progress in the house.

**Adam Daniels A1626**, House Manager

# Renovation Drive Plans Take Shape

by: **David Fowkes A1275**, david@fowkes.com

**T**here is a very detailed description of our goals and plans including project and timing details and Frequently Asked Questions on our website and available via mail or email at your request. But in summary:

## *What is the plan?*

- Raise \$1 million over 4 years from alumni donations to prepare the house for our 150th Anniversary Celebration in 2014
- Perform the renovations in stages over the four years to minimize chapter operation disruptions

## *When do we start?*

- Your brothers have already begun making commitments and funding donations
- The first renovation project (3rd floor shower replacement) will be completed during this winter break before classes resume in late January 2011

## *Reality, continued from page 1*

---

underway. The fundraising was coordinated by Lee and the late **Roger Lunden A974**, then the Chapter Advisor. Lee took the classes up to 1960 and Roger the later classes. They and other volunteers were able to raise \$75,000 which was then combined with Vern's \$75,000 match (1985 dollars). On the physical side, it was clear the house needed a major facelift including walls, windows and even furnishings on the first floor. **Pat Mahoney A1008** owned an engineering firm in Albany so he volunteered to help scope the project, create a budget, and serve as the general contractor and over see the project. Roger volunteered to help contact the brothers and collect funds.

Renovating the house was a critical component of the renaissance of our chapter. There were many trials along the way. The results, however, were as gratifying as they were effective. For those living in the house, the renovations provided the possibility of a resurgence at Alpha. **Mike Anderson A1265**, who lived in the house, remembers that 1985 was a critical year for him, the Chapter and for the House. He remembers his first 6294 in April, meeting alums **Lee Wilcox A944**, **John Redfern A451** and members of classes from the late 70's and noticed the pride of brothers from the 1960's, including **Roger Lunden A974**, mixed with obvious concerns about the state of the membership and the condition of the house. As 1986 arrived, there were only eight remaining active brothers tasked with the assignment of rebuilding the chapter.

Mike also remembers the affect of the renovation on rush. "And we had an amazing rush, initiating 20 new brothers including awesome guys like **David Fowkes A1275** (currently on the Grand Lodge, chairman of the 150th Anniversary Convention committee and active in the new renovation fund raising campaign) in a huge Associate Member class that greatly outnumbered the actives. And we even grabbed another 4 guys in the formal spring rush. All of that came with the promise of being able to reshape the fraternity in a way that few members of any fraternity ever would have been able to imagine! But at the same time there was no way the existing house was in any shape to sustain being full of people - the plumbing was beyond repair in many areas, the floors were in terrible shape, the walls needed help, the furniture ... well, it hadn't enjoyed being outside on those spring days so many times, and so on. The physical plant could barely sustain eight people, let alone the projections of more than 25 live-ins for fall of 1986!"

## *When we are successful, what will we have?*

- A fully renovated house including new bathrooms, significant safety and environmental upgrades and remediation, remodeled kitchen and chapter room, Theta Xi museum recognizing and presenting our rich history and upgraded public areas and landscaping
- A \$250,000 Endowment fund to provide security for our association's future operations

## *How can you help?*

- Join your brothers and make your 4 year commitment to our campaign today
- Make your first installment donation to allow us to fund and plan next summer's projects
- Call your brothers and ask them to join you in supporting this critical effort

**Michael Rivera A1261** was also living in the house before and after the renovation. He noticed several changes to Alpha. "The pride in the house was so pervasive it felt thick in the air." Michael also noticed a change in the Associate Members after the renovation. "Many of the guys joined the house because they were attracted to the sincerity of the brothers and how down to earth everyone was. When the first new pledge class came in after the renovation, it was like a tornado of energy, enthusiasm, and personality. We ALL worked very hard to keep the house in great shape and make sure that the RPI and Sage communities looked at the house and said 'WOW' when they walked by or came to a social function".

For the first time since Michael had joined Alpha, they had a very powerful tool to market and sell Theta Xi- The Alpha Chapter house. The house was close to campus and had an overwhelming stage presence. When prospects were brought to the house for BBQs, volleyball, or just to hang around the house, the brothers were also looking at the prospects not only as brothers, but also for those to live in the house. "I recall the first time I opened the foyer door, I had been away from school for one semester after the renovation. I looked at the floor, still uncarpeted, and thought the varnish hadn't dried yet. It was like walking through a home you had just built for the first time. The house changed in ways unimaginable to those that has not lived in it prior. I was determined to make sure that the house was maintained and cleaned religiously and be a great source of pride for all the brothers."

As we approach our 150th Anniversary, we are again asking you, our brother, to help us and invest in our chapter. We will be hosting the 150th Anniversary Convention in Troy in just four short years. With the recent resurgence in our chapter operations, and a once in a lifetime opportunity to rise to embrace and celebrate a momentous anniversary celebration, it is imperative that we again rally together to reinvigorate our legacy. Vern, Lee, Roger, Pat and many donors helped our chapter change trajectory in 1985 by giving back to Alpha and helped usher in a strong chapter in our rich history. Vern hopes that his brothers will reflect upon their experience in the fraternity, be grateful for their time as active brothers at Alpha and choose to again step up and join us in this worthy effort. After all, we are the Brothers of the ALPHA Chapter of Theta Xi.

# Alumni Communications Enters the 21st Century

by *Chris Blanc A1404*, Alpha Alumni Association Vice President, [cblanc@gmail.com](mailto:cblanc@gmail.com)

Over the past decade, Alpha Chapter graduated from bi-annual (maybe) photo copied *AlphaBet* newsletters to a professional, programmatic communication program including our award winning (2 years running best Theta Xi chapter newsletter) bi-annual *AlphaBet* and *AlphaBet Soup*, bi-annual electronic newsletter and content laden website with online member contact information ([www.alpha6294.com](http://www.alpha6294.com)). We are happy with the progress we've made improving our communications but are not content to sit idly by while the ever changing communication medium continues to evolve.

The Alumni Association is taking steps to better utilize current trends in social media & online collaboration. Reaching our vast alumni network has now become more than just using a mailing list and a website. A growing majority of our Brothers have been able to reconnect with their Alpha Brothers thanks to the extraordinary ease and reach of Facebook. Recently, we made adjustments to our Alpha Alumni, Boston Alumni & NYC Alumni Facebook group pages to

allow for better discussions & communication. Please be sure to search for us: "Zoo Alumni", "Theta Xi Club of New York" & "Theta Xi Club of Boston". The DC clubs also maintains a page listed as "Theta Xi - Washington, DC Alumni Club".

Our Alumni Board conference calls and ongoing projects are enjoying real-time collaboration thanks to "Google Wave", a free, online document center. We've been creating "live blog" minutes which reduces communication errors while logging our notes & immediately displays any outstanding calls to action.

Another Google tool, Google Docs, has been helping us with the 150th Anniversary fundraising campaign. With a spreadsheet accessible from any computer, we are able to create a shared record of our phone calling efforts and logging any pledged donations. The Fundraising Committee now has immediate access to our progress as we try to raise \$1 million by 2014!

## Another Strong Rush at Alpha Chapter

by *Graham Cabrey A1617*

### Fall '10

Our biggest priority this Fall Semester recruitment period was to train our 19 new brothers initiated last spring in rush techniques. Alumni [Chris Riismandel A1356](#) and [Chris Blanc A1404](#) returned to the chapter house during our pre-semester work week to facilitate a rush skills and sales tools seminar. It was great to be able to work with them again and see the newer brothers learn some of the fundamentals that we often take for granted. We started rush off with a bang by having our annual Car Bash and Pig Roast with a new addition: professional DJ Direkt from NJ. The house and parking lot were packed with people trying to get a swing at the 1996 Ford Explorer we bashed to a pulp. We worked a list of prospective members by splitting our chapter into teams and training new guys one on one. We considered over 200 prospective members and whittled down the list each week until we chose 20 targets for our invite only events. We invited these prospects to a series of more intimate events including Adirondack Extreme Challenge and Zero Gravity Lasertag. We gave out 12 bids and had our bid dinner at the Italian Banquet Hall Moscatiello's in East Greenbush NY. We are pleased to announce that all 12 bids were signed. The previous two semesters we had a 100% success rate in our bids given and bids signed (35 bids given; 35 bids signed).

### Spring '11

At Alpha Chapter, Spring Rush begins in the fall the minute that bids are accepted. We are planning our events, building our list of target rushees and inviting potential members to house events. We have targeted friends of brothers and new associate members and people on our hockey team as potential rushees. One associate member was seen giving a rushee a tour of the house. It's good to see the proactive spirit in our newest members.

For the next rush, I'm considering holding an event at an Albany Devils game (Albany's AHL team), a study jam (if we have freshman as members, it may be easier to get numbers there), and possibly a karaoke night. I think karaoke is a good way to get people out of their comfort zones, but at the same time maybe it is a little too much. We are targeting 10-14 associate members for the Spring Semester.



# A Chance to Say Thanks by Giving Back

by **Matt Glaccum A1324**, Alumni Historian, [mglaccum@geosphereinc.com](mailto:mglaccum@geosphereinc.com)

Sometimes you don't know just how good you had it until long after the fact. This can be said to be true of many things we experience in a lifetime. More specifically, guys of my time (late 80's - early 90's) were very fortunate to enjoy living in a newly renovated chapter house: a place fixed up through the combined effort, time and money of alumni who cared about the "House on the Hill" which they called home for but a time. Even with all the social events and the day-in day-out wear and tear that a fraternity house is subjected to, there was a certain amount of pride in keeping Alpha looking good.

Perhaps this was most apparent in the care taken with one location in particular: the Formal Room. Food and drink were not allowed in the Formal Room which helped keep the custom-made rugs and red leather couches in pristine shape. I also can't help but think that, among other things, the Formal Room made it easier to want to hang out at the House whether it was to take an afternoon nap or to enjoy Saturday night wrestling matches between Brothers before heading downtown.

Please consider your own time at the House and the good times (and sad) you experienced with your Brothers. It just might have been a little better experience because alumni in the past cared to put the time and money in to making the House a better place. Say thanks by giving back. Let's make the House a great place for new Brothers to live, learn and experience.

Read more at [alpha6294.com](http://alpha6294.com).



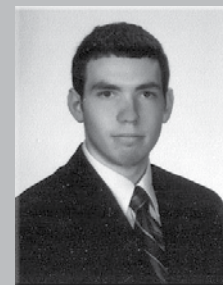
*Photos of the first floor of the House taken just after work week in late August 1989. House looking great thanks to the leadership of then House Manager **Chris Maier A1300**.*

## Chapter Eternal

**Joshua Stimson A1583**

3/27/1988 – 10/24/2010

It is sad to experience the loss of a Brother to Chapter Eternal but it is more than doubly so when a Brother's passing happens "prematurely". Josh lost his life when he was struck by a Green Line trolley in



Boston, Massachusetts on October 24th. A memorial fund has been set up in his honor; memorial contributions can be forwarded to the newly established Joshua M. Stimson Mathematics Fund, for the benefit of students in the Haverhill Co-op School District. The donations may be sent in care of Rodney & Gina Giudici-Oakes, 57 Rivervale, Piermont, NH 03779.

His obituary, along with words of remembrance, may be found online at <http://www.rickerfh.com/>. A memorial page has been set up on the alumni website at [alpha6294.com](http://alpha6294.com).

## Calendar

January 14-17, 2011, St Louis, MO

**President's Academy and Rising Stars Academy**

February 19, 2011, Gamma Chapter, Hoboken, NJ

**District Leadership Academy**

April 29-May 1, 2011, Troy NY

**6294 Celebration**

August 4-7, 2011, St. Louis, MO

**147th Anniversary Convention**

April 26, 2014

**150th Anniversary 6294 dinner**

April 29, 2014

**150th Anniversary**

July-August 2014 Troy, NY

**150th Anniversary Convention**

150, continued from page 1

Director, **Nick Constantine A1451** is currently the All True Men Advisor to Omega Chapter).

- Get our feet wet by fundraising more than \$170,000 over the past 7 years (with donations from over 300 individual alumni) that was invested in repairs and renovations to stabilize our chapter house and fund 7 years of alumni communications.
- Find and engage a quality minded and trustworthy general contractor who is able to execute projects of our scale and used that contractor on a series of smaller projects to test his ability and build our relationship.

It has been 25 years since our last major fund raising campaign and house renovation. Many, many thanks to those who contributed to that effort. The chapter experienced a rebirth after the last renovation that led to many years of strong operations. As you may suspect, after 25 years of fraternity wear and tear our house really needs some serious attention.

Four years remain before the 150th Anniversary Convention that we host in Troy, NY in the Summer of 2014. Now is the time to invest in your chapter, to rebuild our physical house and to position our chapter to be in great shape to celebrate our 150 years of brotherhood and continue strong into the future.

We have laid the groundwork and the plans to get Alpha chapter fully prepared for our celebration. It includes a 4 year fundraising and renovation program that will simultaneously renovate our house and provide the resources to keep the Alpha Chapter house and alumni association finances strong for years to come. How can you help? Join with your brothers and make a 4 year pledge at [www.alpha6294.com/donate/](http://www.alpha6294.com/donate/). Call your brothers and ask them to join you in this effort. We've been a strong force on Rensselaer's campus for almost 150 years. We've initiated over 1,600 brothers. It's your legacy and it deserves to continue strong for the next 150 years and on. It will with your help.

You can find contact information for Brothers on our password protected website ([www.alpha6294.com](http://www.alpha6294.com)) or email **Matt Glaccum A1324** at [mglaccum@geosphereinc.com](mailto:mglaccum@geosphereinc.com) for help locating alumni.