

# In the Life of Theta Chi

EDITOR'S NOTE: Reading about some of the unexpected, personal, and positive ways that Theta Chi Fraternity touches lives can be enjoyable, interesting, affirming, and an unexpected source of inspiration. This regular feature, reflecting selected correspondence and emails received by the editor of *The Rattle*, or by the Staff of the Fraternity's International Headquarters, continues to help us enjoy the impact of the Brotherhood of Theta Chi around the world.

## Godsey Identified As Happiest Man in America



**Godsey holds the March 9, 2003 issue of USA Weekend that identified him as the Happiest Man in America as its cover image, and story.**

On March 3, 2003, J.P. "Gus" Godsey (Delta Gamma/West Virginian Wesleyan '79), was introduced on ABC's "Good Morning America" news show as America's Happiest Man. Six days later, via a feature story that identified Godsey after a photo of his back, along with yellow 'happy face' balloons, graced its cover, *USA Weekend* magazine introduced Godsey to its 48.7 million readers, via its placement in almost 600 newspapers around the country. In rapid succession, media in Godsey's hometown of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and other regional and national media picked up on this unique designation. Today, Godsey, in a description provided by a Norfolk-area writer, "is turning his newfound fame into a cottage industry."

A visit to Godsey's website, [www.mrhappy-susa.com](http://www.mrhappy-susa.com), provides extensive information about Godsey and all that he has done to capitalize upon the designation provided by *USA Weekend*. Public speaking engagement opportunities have been frequent, as have the ties between Godsey and Virginia Beach.

Godsey earned the distinctive title as America's Happiest Man after *USA Weekend*, with the help of a national ratings service, first identified Virginia Beach as the "best place to live in America" after a study of numerous pertinent factors. Next, informal nominations from local leaders, extensive and comprehensive



tests to measure happiness, and interviews led to Godsey's selection.

Godsey notes, "without question, a great deal of the happiness that I have enjoyed in life is because of my relationship to Theta Chi. I am still in monthly contact with over 100 brothers from Delta Gamma and the greatest college in America, West Virginia Wesleyan. Many of my friends here in Virginia Beach are awestruck. They can barely remember 3 or 4 guys they went to school with. I simply tell them the relationship that we share as Fraternity brothers is magical. It is beyond words and I am humbled to be part of it."

As an alumnus, Godsey has served Theta Chi on both local and National levels. He has joined with his fellow Delta Gamma alumni as a member of the chapter's house corporation. Godsey was also a member of the Board of the Foundation Chapter for 13 years, since 1990. Shares Godsey, "...to my hundreds of Theta Chi buddies, especially from West Virginia Wesleyan College, I love ya' man. You guys are the best."

## A Legacy Remembers

My grandfather, Robert Thompson, entered The Chapter Eternal on August 5, 2003, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on August 26, 2003. He was a brother from the Phi chapter at North Dakota State, and graduated in 1932. He was born on August 12, 1913, thus he was one week shy of his 90th birthday when he passed away. I am one of his 3 grandchildren. His brother, my uncle, was also a member of Theta Chi, however I am not sure of his chapter or his correct name.

We shared a great bond as grandfather and grandson, and it was made even stronger when I pledged Theta Chi at Birmingham Southern College in 1983. He spoke to me about the Fraternity before I went to school, however I had no interest in the fraternity system, and could not even recall the name of Theta Chi when I went through rush. Thus, he was very



**Members of Eta Chi chapter/George Mason University, and their chapter advisor, Dr. Don M. Boileau (Alpha Epsilon/Stanford '64), center, enjoy the 2003 Founders Day Barbecue. Boileau is currently the Chair of George Mason's Communication Department, as well as Chair of the Faculty Senate.**

surprised and pleased when I called him and told him I had pledged Theta Chi.

Nik Makarenko

Beta Xi '86

## ASJA's "Gehring Institute" Held



**Donald G. Gehring**

The prominent leadership role on college and university campuses played by National Marshal Donald D. Gehring (Alpha Nu/Georgia Tech '60), was recently revisited. Gehring was honored throughout the national collegiate world nine years ago, when the

Association of Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA) named their annual Judicial Affairs Training Institute in his honor. The "2003 Donald D. Gehring Campus Judicial Affairs Training Institute," was held this past June at the University of Utah, located in Salt Lake City, Utah.

In promotion materials for this summer's 11th annual Institute, Gehring, a regular faculty member, was identified as "a premier student affairs professional, legal issues expert, out-



**Members of Grand Chapter join Howard Alter in the Chapman-Alter Library at the Fraternity's International Headquarters in Indianapolis during the Founders Day celebration.**

standing faculty member, and mentor" to many members of the Association of Student Judicial Affairs. Gehring is the founder of the ASJA and served as the ASJA's first president.

## "Spine Chill Time," Theta Chi Style

Just returned from UIFI [*the NIC's Undergraduate InterFraternal Institute, Ed.*]. Another incredible experience. This was my 5th.

There were three undergraduate brothers in attendance: Matt Chapman, Iota Gamma/Grand Valley State '05; Chris Hammond, Epsilon Zeta/University of Tampa '05, and Michael Plekkenpol, Zeta Sigma/Wisconsin-River Falls '04.

One of the high points was when faculty asked for volunteers to recite their Creed in front of the group. The brothers asked me to join them. Spine chill time.

Also, for the graduation ceremony, one person is selected from each of the six sub-groups



**Howard Alter, left, front, hosts former LECs Jon Smith (Epsilon Kappa/Idaho '94, right front), and (back row, left to right) Dwayne Jones, Ty Humpert (Theta Tau/Western Michigan '97), and Brian Pozen (Rho/Illinois '96). Humpert was a LEC during the '97-'98 academic year, while Smith, Jones, and Pozen were LECs during the '96-'97 academic year.**

## Rendezvous in Kensington

Executive Director Emeritus Howard R. Alter, Jr. (Omega/Pennsylvania State '41) recently hosted four former Leadership and Education Consultants at his home. Dwayne Jones (Eta Omicron/Northwestern State '96) provided photographs of this visit and noted that "we had a blast, and it was the first time that we had all been together in 5 years! Howard, of course, was a GREAT host and even flew the Theta Chi flag out front while we were there."

## In the Life of Theta Chi



**Theta chapter (University of Massachusetts) recently honored one of its chapter's most distinguished alumni. Frank Homeyer ('28), left, is shown receiving his Diamond Brigade certificate, honoring his 75 years as a Brother in Theta Chi, from Paul O'Connell ('91), Theta's Alumni Corporation President. Homeyer is 97 years young, and "still going strong!"**

by their facilitator. Each of our brothers was selected to read a portion of the ritual closing.

They are all fine representatives of the Fraternity.

Bryan Holcomb (Zeta Xi/UC-Davis '78)

### Heartfelt Thanks Offered for The Helping Hand

*[Editor's Note: The following letter about the men of Gamma Phi chapter/Nebraska Wesleyan was received after the publication of the Spring 2003 issue of The Rattle.]*

I am writing with regard to the Theta Chi Fraternity at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. My name is Judy Ahlschwede. I am the Board President for a Methodist based group called FOSA (Fairfield Orphanage Sponsorship Association). I had the opportunity to speak to Theta Chi, over a year ago about a project called *Homes for Hope*. This project involves two areas. The first area is to build eight family style homes and the supporting buildings for orphans in Zimbabwe. The second area is getting sponsorship for these children. The funds raised from the sponsors will be used to maintain the buildings, as well as being used for food, clothing, school and medical fees, and to pay wages to the children's caregivers. Please visit our web page at [www.fosakids.org](http://www.fosakids.org) for more detailed information on the project.

When I spoke to these young men I must admit that in the back of my mind my thinking was, "they would politely listen but, being young men, I didn't feel I would get too far when it came to receiving much support from them."

I want to tell you how wrong I was! These young men have been behind this project in every way possible. As a group they made the decision to sponsor four of the little boys from the orphanage. There are two more young men from Theta Chi that are each sponsoring their own children. In 2002, Theta Chi held an event at their house they called *Tatars-for-tots*. They

had t-shirts made with the children's names and then wore the t-shirts during the baked potato feed. This was supported by virtually all the young men in the fraternity. They solicited donations and received \$1,500 from this event. They did not stop there. They also held an event they are called *Jump-for-Hope* in March of 2003. This event was a 24 hour *Jump-a-Thon* that raised over \$1000 to go towards an emergency fund. This fund was set up to help children in the most dire situations.

I do not know what your national organization does to recognize your young men that are



### Alumni Meet in Iraq

I am a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps, currently stationed [May, 2003, Ed.] to central Iraq. Not long ago, Major Tim Cassidy (Zeta Beta '88) came to work in my section. Though we did not know it at the time, we later discovered we were both Theta Chi's. We have been deployed for 7 and 4 months respectively with the 1 Marine Expeditionary Force, including the last month and a half as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This is a photo of Brother Cassidy (left) and me in Central Iraq at one of the regime palaces. Just goes to show you never know when, where, or under what circumstances you will meet another Brother.

Semper Fi,  
Keep in Touch,  
LtCol Anthony Ardovino, USMC  
Alpha Phi/Alabama '82

exceptionally outstanding, but I feel this group of young men deserve some recognition beyond the heartfelt thanks from us. I feel that they have not only done amazing things to support these children, but have put a very positive light on Theta Chi. I have been very moved by the commitment from Theta Chi and overwhelmed by the leap of faith these young men have taken to support and love these precious little children they have never met in a country far away.

It is my hope and request that you take the steps necessary to recognize these young men prior to graduation on May 17, 2003 (many of the most involved are now seniors) that have represented Theta Chi in such an honorable manner.

Very Sincerely,  
 Judy Ahlschwede  
 FOSA USA Board President



**Alumni in San Diego and undergraduate members of Gamma Theta chapter/San Diego State University. During the evening, the Dean Strasser and Family Scholarship Fund scholarships for 2003 (\$1,000 each) were awarded to Kevin Gupta ('03) and Tim Migual ('05), the Theta Chi for Life award was presented to Dean Strasser, and the Theta Chi Citation of Honor was presented to former Gamma Theta chapter president and San Diego State University IFC President, Kevin Gupta.**

## An Open Letter to the Brothers of Theta Chi

I am currently serving in Baghdad, Iraq. I have seen the best and worst of humanity in my time here. I was here when the United Nations was attacked and have personally seen, worked, and supported the recovery process there. Although the soldiers here, not only American, but also soldiers from the Multi-National Divisions, did not go through the initiation Ritual of Theta Chi, they truly understand and show what the Helping Hand is all about.

They have come from all over the world to stand beside the people of Iraq to become free

from tyranny and to help rebuild a strong and proud nation. The soldiers here give selflessly of their time, effort, talents, and sometimes their lives to aid in the rebuilding of Baghdad, Falluja, An Najaf, Karbala, Tikrit, and Mosul. Each of the 130,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines in country embodies the Spirit of Theta Chi and most do not even know it.

I had no idea when I joined Theta Chi in 1994 that I would be where I am now in 2003, but the Fraternity laid the groundwork for me to get here. I would like to thank each and

every undergraduate and alumni member that I have met, for being influential in my life. Each of you embodies what Theta Chi is. Most of all I'd like to thank the two Brothers from which I learned the most. They are my roommate of four years, Joe Csikos ('99), and my dad, Jack Sporinsky ('74). You have taught me more than you will ever know. Thanks.

Nick Sporinsky  
 Delta Kappa/Ball State ('98)  
 CPT, OD, US Army

## Wedding Bells for Theta Tau Alumni



**Brothers of Theta Tau assembled to enjoy the wedding of their chapter brother Luke Adas ('98), ninth from left, to Beth McCullough.**



**Theta Tau alumnus Doug Bacon ('98), center front, is surrounded by his chapter brothers at his wedding to Becky Griffith.**