

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 show us the impact of the Brotherhood of Theta Chi around the world.

Somewhere, Just Outside of Muncie ...

By Thom Cook (Delta Kappa/Ball State '83)

I admit it. I get homesick for Indiana. At my age, you would think it wouldn't happen, but there are certain things one longs for even when living in such a paradise as sunny, southern California. I try and make it back to my home state at least twice a year. My Mom still resides in the same house in which I grew up, two blocks from the Indianapolis 500 race track. It's a quiet street and a big old home. I can decompress from the madness that is L.A. and unwind. My time at home is never long enough, for it seems I always leave wishing I had just one more day. I long for those balmy nights, sitting on our large front porch, watching the occasional car drive past and listening to the drone of the cicadas in the maple trees. I miss driving to Ritter's Custard and getting a scoop of that rich dessert. And, as odd as it may sound to those of you still residing in Indiana, I miss rain, thunderstorms, and lightning. Because as the song says, 'It don't rain in California' or, at least, it doesn't for 9 month stretches at a time. Most of all, I miss being involved with my chapter and my alma mater. I miss it especially at this time when the news I hear coming out of headquarters is exciting and long in coming.

So it was that, on my most recent trip home last summer, I had a special agenda in mind. I also had company. I was bringing with me the Beta Tau interest group vice-president from USC. Michael planned to meet up with the group's president who lives in Indianapolis. Both would travel together to the CLC in Dayton, Ohio.

About a year and a half ago, I was asked to be the Alumnus Advisor to a fledgling group of

students who were hell-bent on bringing back the name of Theta Chi to the University of Southern California. I accepted the challenge and personified the words I try to live by each day, "Theta Chi for Life." It has been a struggle for these young men to spark interest in a group that has no house, encountered growing pains and leadership issues, and has received little support from area alumni, all while they struggled to maintain their grades and dignity. Perseverance has paid off in the long run as they are poised to become a colony in mid-August. I am very proud of their accomplishments because they mirror what I went through as an undergraduate at Ball State. Trying to start something from almost nothing is a task Herculean that most men would shy from, but not this group.

LEC Kyle Weaver stressed to them the importance of some members attending the Chapter Leadership Conference over summer. I worked on Michael as I felt he would get a lot out of the conference and do a good job in relaying it back to the guys this coming fall. Money for his airline ticket was an obstacle, but we got that covered in time. So, we were set. Seats were booked, rides to LAX arranged, and anticipation grew.

This brings us to his return to Indianapolis Saturday night after CLC. Michael could not stop talking about his three days spent among undergraduate members, alumni, and Grand Chapter members. He had been invited to tour Theta Chi headquarters the day after CLC and I took him there, where we met up with Jereme Grinslade, Director of Alumni Resources & Housing, and Will Garvey, a summer intern, both Delta Kappa chapter members.

I have visited headquarters on numerous occasions. It never gets old and I see something different each time. But, on this occasion, I witnessed something I had never seen up to this visit. Brother Jereme took the role as official tour guide showing us around the front offices and library. As he was showing Michael around the Sherwood Blue room, I noticed that Michael had grown suddenly quiet and tears had welled up in his eyes. I was, at first, concerned and then quickly realized I was intruding on a private moment. Jereme had been speaking to Michael about the men of 1856 who had served gallantly in the Civil War. Pictures abounded around the room of young men in the prime of their lives, gathered

in banquet halls, stair steps and grassy fields in testament to their attendance at our National Conventions. Faded pictures of the Old South Barracks hung over the entrance to the room. Cadets, lined up rank and file, stared back at the photographer. Nameless, their identities lost to history, they were Men of Theta Chi. Then I saw it.

Encased in a Lucite box, sitting atop a block of walnut, was a brick from the Old South Barracks. It had made it all the way to Indianapolis. That brick, which supported the walls and roof of the structure within which our very organization was founded, now was inches from a man who would soon take the oath and go through the initiation that thousands of Theta Chi brothers have experienced. I like to think that what hit Michael in that room that afternoon was the overwhelming sense of history, honor, and loyalty he would soon experience. A realization that, in time, his name would be inscribed on a brick and laid in the Pathway of Brotherhood, that our unique badge would soon adorn his suit lapel and be worn with pride once again on USC's campus. I like to think he experienced a sense of belonging, something many brothers tell me is the reason they joined Theta Chi.

I glanced over at Jereme, who, too, had noticed Michael's tears and, like a true gentleman, pretended that he had not noticed. Will came back in the room at that moment bearing photocopies of *The Rattle* dating back to Beta Tau chapter's inception in 1942. The articles listed names, places, and events pertaining to Michael's chapter's early days. Will had brought the past to life for him. For those of you who may not be aware, the USC chapter had gone inactive in the latter part of the 1990s. The tour continued with each brother sharing anecdotes and tidbits of our Fraternity's history.

It was then time to head to Muncie, about 60 miles away, to see the newly acquired Delta Kappa chapter house on Riverside Avenue. The four of us piled in to Jereme's SUV and soon were driving onto Ball State's campus. For me, it was awe-inspiring because so much growth, construction, and development had occurred since I last visited. Memories came flooding back as we drove and walked through the grounds. I felt pride as I looked at the expansion and change, knowing this could have only come about because of Ball State's status as a premiere learning institution.

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Photography by P. Randal Tuttle, Gamma Lambda/ University of Denver '71



From left to right: Jim Murphy, Mason Tuttle, Davis Tuttle, Matt Townsend, Joey Moylan, Randy Tuttle (kneeling), Suki Schroeder, Bonnie Tuttle, Shana Kearney (Tuttle surrogate), Jess Tuttle, Jim Moylan, Todd Shortledge, Allen Shortledge, Tim Schroeder, and Hank Kroeger (Bonnie Tuttle father).

We climbed back in the SUV and headed to The Row. It had finally happened. Theta Chi was back on Riverside in a beautiful home. The house, formerly occupied by Delta Chi Fraternity, was vacant except for a small group of undergraduates who were painting their rooms in preparation for the start of fall semester. Each brother came out, paint-spattered and smiling, introduced himself and then headed out for dinner. We wandered through the house and visualized what it could become. I was happy and jealous at the same time. Oh, to have had this home when I was attending college! But I knew it was in good hands now. Homecomings will seem somehow more fun and exciting as word of our new home spreads. Pride in having a place to hang our letters and gather for camaraderie, fellowship, and laughter will build.

As I embrace the changing face of our organization, I am honored to be a Theta Chi and all that it stands for. I shared with Michael something of the struggles Delta Kappa chapter endured and reinforced to him the results of never giving up on a good thing. USC may one day get their old house back and he, too, will return to visit and feel what I was feeling then.

We posed for some pictures on the front steps. My special agenda being met, we headed back to Indianapolis. Somewhere, just outside of Muncie, I got my wish. It started to rain. I smiled at my reflection in the window.

Gamma Lambda Chapter Holds 4th Annual Ski Trip

By James J. Moylan (Gamma Lambda/University of Denver '69)

More than 250 inches of "Champagne Powder" greeted 27 Gamma Lambda Chapter Brothers, their families, and friends as they arrived in "Ski Town USA," Steamboat Springs, Colorado for the Fourth Annual Family Ski Trip

The skiers started arriving on Wednesday, January 18, 2006. We were able to hit the slopes on Thursday morning, which turned into another snowy day, but it did not dampen anyone's enthusiasm. After all, when more than 20 feet of snow falls just this far into the season, you have to expect it to be snowing a lot. After skiing and the obligatory dips in the hot tubs to soothe those aching muscles, it was off the LaMontana, a restaurant at the base of the

mountain specializing in gourmet southwestern cuisine. The pleasure of the evening was enhanced when the participants learned that LaMontana is owned by Tom and "Sunny" Garrett. Tom is a Theta Chi brother from Epsilon Tau Chapter at Steven F. Austin State University.

Fortified by the excellent dinner and the evening's camaraderie, we rolled into Friday. The snow from the preceding day was groomed overnight, leading to excellent skiing all day under fairly sunny skies. Friday night found us in the clubhouse at the Timber Run Condominiums, (our gracious hosts for the past four years) where Tim and Suki Schroeder prepared a chili dinner for the famished horde. After dinner we enjoyed watching the video of the 1989 and 1994 Gamma Lambda Chapter Reunions. Some of those kids in the video now have their own kids, making some of us grandparents! The age group in this year's ski trip ranged from 5¹/₂ months, (Sam Murphy, Jim and Joyce Murphy's grandson), to 80 years, (Hank Kroeger, Randy Tuttle's father-in-law, and father of Randy's wife, Bonnie.)

Saturday was our best ski day yet, and everyone hit it hard knowing it would be the last day

In the Life of Theta Chi

on the slopes. After a full day of skiing, we held a little après ski, "Slopeside." Then, it was into the hot tubs again, followed by dinner at Riggio's Restaurant in downtown Steamboat Springs. Owner/hosts Richard and Stacy Most gave us the upstairs banquet room and a family-style Italian dinner that was out of this world.

We capped the weekend off at Lucille's for Sunday morning brunch before everyone departed to their respective homes in New York, Vermont, Illinois, Missouri, Montana, and Colorado.

The Fifth Annual Gamma Lambda Chapter Family Ski Trip (and you do not have to be a member of Gamma Lambda Chapter to join us) will be held January 17-21, 2007 in Steamboat, Springs, Colorado. Please contact Jim Moylan for details.

Just What ARE The Chances???

By Herb Morgan (Theta Iota/UC-Santa Cruz '88)

There we were... Al Zale (Gamma Theta/San Diego State) and I, racing through Chicago's O'Hare airport last October, trying to get to our gate to make a connection on our way to Pittsburgh. Al's not showing his age during the sprint, despite my suspicion that he and Arthur Chase were pledge brothers. As Al and I make our way through the concourse, we hear our names being announced along with someone else's. We get to the gate within seconds of each other... all three of us. We get on board and we discover that, not only do we all smell alike, but we're sitting 1, 2, and 3 in a row. We smile politely at one another sharing the same sense of relief that "we made it. Give us something cold to quench our thirsts!"

Settling in, I open my copy of the Fall 2005 issue of *The Rattle*. Mr. Third Guy breaks out his iPod and some headphones. After a few minutes, Mr. Third Guy gestures to my magazine and introduces himself as a Theta Chi. We all go through the standard greetings and it turns out Mr. Third Guy is Jeff Dahlen, a 1994 graduate of the University of Illinois and Rho chapter. To our collective surprise, he lives five minutes from me in San Diego.

Our conversation gets a little more animated as we sort out how we do, or don't, keep up with college buddies over the years. Jeff shares that

he's only kept up with one guy from school and I get a few details about their friendship. All sounds familiar, as I too have a few great friends from my days at Santa Cruz. I ask if he gets *The Rattle*, and he replies that it's still being mailed to him via his parents' house so the delivery is not very timely, but that he gets it eventually when his Mom sends it along. I give him my copy, he starts to open it up and, WHAM, a "Theta Chi moment" the size of a house happens. He flips right to the center of the magazine, and there, on the left side page, is the guy with whom Jeff keeps in touch!

Jeff's chapter brother, Rick Gimbel, had written an article about how Theta Chi had prepared him to be a successful Emergency Room physician. Jeff stared at it, then at me, then back to the article. Neither of us could believe how small our individual worlds had just become or how, amazingly, they had suddenly overlapped in the midst of a sprint in the world's busiest airport. Then, we found ourselves sitting next to each other on an airplane and, WHAM, flipped open our Fraternity's magazine to see the name of a guy we had just mentioned as a friend of one of us from college. Amazing!

Needless to say, I also knew two other things in an instant. One: Al and I were going to invite Jeff to our next monthly alumni lunch in San Diego (assuming Al would recover from his imitation of O.J. Simpson sprinting through the airport, jumping over luggage and people to make his flight!). Two: I had the idea smack me between the eyes for my first submission to *The Rattle* as the perfect example of how things happen "in the life of Theta Chi." I love it and I hope you do too!

From the Gulf Coast of Texas Comes... The Coastal Bend Alumni Chapter of Theta Chi

By James B. "Tex" Boggs (Delta Epsilon, University of Miami '58)

In the Spring of 2003, El Ahlwardt and I began corresponding. About three months later, we met at the International Headquarters in Indianapolis. I was also attending the annual Convention of Kiwanis International and discovered that the Kiwanis International's headquar-



James (Tex) Boggs and wife Nita Boggs attend a ballgame.

ters was near the Fraternity's headquarters. No one could have ever guessed that this meeting would take place in such a short time after we began corresponding.

In October of 2003, the Corpus Christi/Coastal Bend Alumni Chapter took shape. El flew in to join with five area alumni for our first meeting ever over dinner. All of us were pleasantly surprised that the evening would be so eventful and that we'd discover such energy and interest within our ranks. Undergraduate stories were shared and the evening was considered a success, as well as a great start.

Now a true brotherhood has begun to develop through regular efforts to get together and enjoy our Fraternal bonds within our Gulf Coast city. In the Spring of '05, the City of Corpus Christi completed a new, state-of-the-art minor league baseball stadium with Hall of Fame player Nolan Ryan, the owner of the new team. One of our regulars, Don Zuris, is the curator of the Corpus Christi Museum. He has created a local baseball history display at his Museum and it became the logical place for a meeting of our group in April '05. More brothers attended from more undergraduate chapters. We enjoyed a complete tour of the back rooms of the museum, as well as the baseball exhibit in its rough form. This was a warm and enjoyable evening, made even more so with the attendance of some of our wives, children, and girl friends.

Continuing with the baseball theme we captured in the museum, we decided our next

event would be a late Summer baseball game. One of our group hosted the evening in his company's VIP Box, and we received a complete tour of the facility since his company built the stadium. Present in the group were Dan Rucker, Eta Upsilon/Texas A&M; Kenneth T. Hefte, Eta Upsilon/Texas A&M; Don Zuris, Beta Chi/Allegheny College; D. Ray Jones, Alpha Phi/University of Alabama; Wally Goodman, Epsilon Tau/Steven F. Austin State; James H. Davis, Eta Upsilon/Texas A&M and Jim (Tex) Boggs, Delta Epsilon/University of Miami.

These first years of forming an alumni chapter have been exciting and eventful. When we began our trek nobody knew where it would lead. When Brother Ahlwardt first showed his Fraternal friendliness to us all at our first meeting and gave us ideas about how and what we could do and become, we knew we had definitely lost many years of Brotherhood that needed to be recaptured. We are now working on extending the reach of our alumni chapter to those in our area whom we are yet to know, so that we can share the meaning of extended adult Brotherhood. Our hat is off to the Foundation Chapter and to Brother El for his dedication in assisting us establish our alumni chapter. We are indeed Theta Chi's For Life.

Painting a New Picture

By Meredith Morgan

For a 66-year-old investment banker to retire to Florida is hardly unusual. Bruce Bagge (Gamma Upsilon '62), however, is far from fulfilling the stereotype of the beachside retiree. After 43 years in investment banking, he and his wife Colleen relocated to Punta Gorda, Florida and, at that point, his life changed.

Bagge's relatives, including two great-uncles who worked as master art restorers for Marshall Field, have a strong history of artistic ability and interest. Despite this lineage, Bagge himself had never delved into the field. After graduating from Bradley University, he focused his career on investment and philanthropy, excelling in both. He shared his expertise with the public through books (*Ask the Conservative Investor*), radio ("Straight on Money," NBC), and television ("The Conservative Investor"). Bagge's philanthropic contributions have focused primarily on children's health; he has been Chairman of the Children's Care



Artist Bruce Bagge (Gamma Upsilon '62) with one of his sculptures.

Foundation for 12 years. His other involvements have included a time as Chairman of Wyler Children's Hospital at the University of Chicago, a membership on the Board of Trustees for the University of Chicago Hospitals and Clinics, and the founding and board membership of the Ronald McDonald House at the University of Chicago. Bagge's donations to Theta Chi have earned him a place in the Century Club.

This list of accomplishments certainly does not create the image of a Hawaiian-shirt-wearing, color-loving artist, but since his retirement,

Bruce Bagge has painted an entirely new picture of himself. In fact, he has painted quite a few new pictures and sculpted some new figures as well. His artistic endeavors began shortly after his move to Florida, when he walked out onto his back pier and was inspired to photograph the sunset. From photography, his media expanded to include acrylic paint, sand, beads, and shells from which he creates paintings and sculptures. Bagge's paintings are whirlwinds of color with thick layers of paint applied and manipulated by an artist's knife. His sculpture subjects are mainly birds and fish, made from shells and sand with intricate beadwork, and life-size people, formed from terra-cotta flowerpots.

Despite the fact that six years ago Bruce Bagge had absolutely no training in or experience with art, his work is becoming well-known and respected in his Florida community. Mark Weiser, a gallery owner who displays Bagge's work, commented on the style of the art. "It is so contrary to Bruce's background in finance. It is funky, it's eclectic—so opposite of what I knew of Bruce."

Even as he serves as President of Sculptors Unlimited and volunteers at the Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda, he is still receiving recognition for his achievements in his business career. In 2002, Bradley University named him a Centurion, a distinction given to outstanding alumni for career achievements. Theta Chi alumni from the Gamma Upsilon chapter have dominated the Centurion Society for the past 10 years, members including Howard D. McKibben '62, John Shalikashvili '58, and Keith Bane '61.

Bagge's success in a realm so far from his comfort zone of investment banking shows the true scope of his talents, which is paralleled by the many positive contributions he has made through his art and his philanthropy.

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Please make sure the images are clear and properly lit. Use a flash when indoors to balance and color correct indoor lighting.