



# BETA THETA DATA

Spring 2016 Volume 64 Number 2

## Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign - 2015 Report

The Alpha Theta Corporation created the Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign (ATCIC), an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit, in 2015. The purpose of the nonprofit is to support charitable and educational activities of the Alpha Theta Corporation and the Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha at Cornell University. The fund can be used for future capital campaigns to refurbish the Pike house and for philanthropic initiatives pursued by the active chapter of the fraternity. The Alpha Theta Corporation appointed three directors to manage the ATCIC: Elliot Dee, Tom Sporney and Bill Page.

Alumni and actives who wish to use the ATCIC for a charitable or educational activity are asked to submit a formal proposal in writing to the Directors. The proposal needs to include five sections: 1) purpose of activity; 2) participants; 3) expected outcomes; 4) timetable; and 5) budget. The proposal should be submitted to Elliot Dee [[elliotdeellc@gmail.com](mailto:elliotdeellc@gmail.com)]. Proposals need to be submitted and approved before the activity is started.

Alumni and actives are encouraged to make donations to the ATCIC. Please send checks payable to Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign to: Bill Page, Treasurer, 1201 Meadow Sweet Lane, Victor NY 14564. If you make a contribution at the same time that you pay your Alpha Theta dues, please send a separate check made payable to ATCIC. Your contribution to the ATCIC is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

In 2015, the ATCIC received donations of \$7,800. Three projects were approved: 1) new carpets in the living room; 2) new flooring in the dining room; and 3) a documentary film about the life of alumnus Fred Crow. Please contact Elliot Dee with any questions about the Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign.

## 5 Questions with...

Martin D. Merry, MD, CM '65

Marty [[www.linkedin.com/in/martinmerrymdcm](http://www.linkedin.com/in/martinmerrymdcm)] served Beta Theta as IMC, and the most important position, social chairman. *Little Bernie and the Cavaliers* was a house favorite band during his era.

- *Marty, a Cornell ILR degree seems to be an unorthodox way to start a medical career. How did it come about that you chose to make a change to healthcare?*

[MM] In 1961 I had an appointment to the US Naval Academy, my 'high school dream', but failed the physical (color blind). Cornell was my backup and the ILR school offered a potential career path itself (I did three summers at Corning Glass, and could have gone to work there after graduation), had a lot of electives built into the curriculum, and for us NY Staters way less costly than the standard Cornell tuition of the time. Since I wasn't destined to drive an aircraft carrier, medicine was in the back of my mind, so I used my ILR electives to take the minimal pre-med courses. While most of my ILR classmates went into industry or off for law or MBA degrees, lo and behold, I became the first, and as far as I know only ILR grad ever to go directly to med school (McGill Faculty of Medicine, Montreal, home then of my contemporary PiKA brother and still good friend, Frank May. Frank was the one who suggested that I apply to McGill.)

- *Then in 1980, after practicing general internal medicine for eight years, you redirected your career to consulting and education in healthcare quality, staff leadership and organization. What was the impetus behind that transition?*

[MM] It turned out that my ILR education came back to influence this career change. Once I got into medical practice in Elmira, NY, I learned that most docs, who had been biology or chemistry or whatever majors before med school absolutely hated anything to do with their organizational or management responsibilities in hospitals. With my ILR background I actually liked this stuff and became a hero among my colleagues for taking a lot of this stuff on, reorganizing my hospital medical staff, and began getting requests from hospitals nearby to consult with them on various medical management issues, such as compliance with regulatory requirements. Then, in 1980, I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical from my group practice to try medical management consulting with a national focus. All of a sudden I found myself on airplanes about every week traveling all over the US. It was really exciting, much more so than medical practice. I became sort of a 'national expert' in this field, based on the theory that "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king". I never returned from this sabbatical, never went back to actual medical practice; this consultancy became my primary professional career.

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## Board of Directors, 2015-2016

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<u>term</u>		
2016	Ed Catto	201-314-4558
2017	Tim Cole, President	508-982-5266
2018	Steve Amador, Treasurer	703-269-7096
2019	Jeff Reinders, Alumni Relations	630-639-8999
2020	Andrew Salamida, Vice President	607-245-6428

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## Calendar

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June 9-12, 2016	Reunion Weekend
Sept 23-24, 2016	Homecoming
November 1, 2016	Fall 2016 BΘData deadline
Nov 11-13, 2016	Pike University, Philadelphia
March 26, 2017	Centennial of BΘ chapter founding
May 1, 2017	Spring 2017 BΘData deadline
March 1, 2018	PiKA 150 <sup>th</sup> anniversary

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## Advisor's Corner

Hello Brothers. Just a quick update from the chapter advisor. A lot of positive growth in the chapter as it is increasing leadership and accountability. The actives made a number of repairs to the house in preparation for the rush season and they did a great job. This led to a strong class of new brothers making the fraternity even stronger for the future. There are over 80 active brothers now and the future is bright.

Andy Glasner '86 [arg42@cornell.edu](mailto:arg42@cornell.edu)

## Beta Theta Newsletter, spring 2016

<http://tinyurl.com/BTspring16>

## Reunion 2016

Reunion Weekend 2016 is Thursday through Sunday, June 9-12. The Pike Alumni Barbeque will be held Saturday the 11th at 4 o'clock in the front of 17 South Ave, and will go until 6.

We will be making chicken (marinated in Sally's chicken marinade), hot dogs, and veggie burgers. Chips and bottles of water will also be provided.

The house will be open for the Alumni to see. Please RSVP to Thomas Galvin [tgalvinpike@gmail.com] if you plan to attend.

## Homecoming 2016

Homecoming this year is September 23rd and 24<sup>th</sup>, and the schedule of events is as follows:

### Friday

- We will begin the weekend with our traditional Wine and Cheese reception at the house starting at about 7:00 pm. This will be a casual event, allowing for actives and alumni to come and go as they please. After the reception there will surely be groups heading to the bars. As a reminder, the three bars left in CollegeTown are Level B, Loco, and Ruloffs.

### Saturday

- The annual Alpha Theta meeting will be held at the house at 10:00 am. A cold breakfast will be provided at the house for those in attendance.
- Following the meeting we will be tailgating the homecoming rugby game to support the many actives who play on the team. We will be grilling and refreshments near the pitch prior to the 1:00 pm game. If anyone also wants to go watch the homecoming football game against Yale, that game will begin at 3:00 pm.
- We will reconvene at the house at 6:30 pm for a party with a full bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres. This will not be as formal as in the past, thus allowing actives and alumni to come, enjoy themselves, and then leave for the concert later that night. The bar will continue to stay open for alumni and actives who want to continue the festivities.

The cost for the weekend is \$50 a person or \$75 a couple. Please RSVP to Sam Markiewitz [smarkiewitzpike@gmail.com], alumni relations chair.

## 5 Questions with...

### Martin D. Merry, MD, CM '65

*{continued from page 1}*

- *Given your founding role in Second Curve Systems, how far along do you feel that the health care industry has progressed in the transformation from first curve organizations to second curve? What effect has the recent Affordable Care Act had upon adopting second curve management?*

[MM] During the 1990s I read a book about systems transitioning from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> curve, which is all about shifting paradigms, which is basically a shift in assumptions that drive the design of often radically different systems. Many industries, like banking and telecom, have already gone through such shifts, but health care has lagged far behind. Visionary that I had become by the 1990s (?), I began using this terminology in my consulting work and on the speaking circuit, which really became active for me around 2000. A health care example is the 1<sup>st</sup> curve (now obsolete) assumption that health systems should be built around doctors and hospitals, the 2<sup>nd</sup> curve (current) assumption that systems should be built around patient and community health needs. To illustrate the importance of accomplishing this shift just today (5/3/16) the British Medical Journal reports that the US health care system kills 250,000 people a year through medical errors, making this the 3rd leading cause of the death in the US today. Grotesquely inadequate 1st curve information and other structural basis are largely responsible for this unbelievable situation. To say the least we have a long way to go in achieving 2<sup>nd</sup> curve health care. Given this background, while the ACA is not aimed specifically at this particular problem, its requirements are indirectly forcing 1<sup>st</sup> curve health care institutions to accelerate toward 2<sup>nd</sup> curve. With all its defects (which will be corrected), the ACA is probably the most progressive health care legislation in the US since Medicare. Sometimes I marvel that it somehow got through Congress.

- *What Pikes have you managed to stay in touch with personally? Who have you lost touch with and would be interested in seeing?*

[MM] I've stayed in touch especially with Frank May, and my old roommate, Bob Ball. More recently have reconnected with the notorious Logan Cheek, my fellow Horseheads High alum, Tom Atwood, and my little brother, Alan Zucchini, who now lives just south of me in Andover, MA, where with his firm he has become 'Mr. Radon Systems'. (I'm sure that he would acknowledge that he never could have done it without my fantastic mentoring.) I also saw fellow ILRer Tom Helfrich in Rochester a year ago. I've sort of kept up with George Wiener, and would enjoy seeing more of him again.

Regarding lost touch among those I would like to see again, the Chapter Eternal has grabbed Joe Mark, Charley Ilvento, and my big brother Pete Crevi. Will Anderson, of beer-can collection fame, wrote some interesting coffee table books on beer and old New England diners, perhaps others. Last I knew he was in Maine, but may also have been grabbed by the chapter in the sky. I still miss Tom McBride's good cheer and great smile (when he wasn't smashed at one of our parties) and his famous Chevy 409. Also admired Denny McCrohan, and did some skiing with him many years ago. Tom Jeffers was a lot of fun also, and I still have a tape recording of him chanting obscenities at a houseparty; he's in perfect musical synch with the band playing *Johnny Be Good*. What a talent! 'Dapper Dan' Galizewski was our legitimate artsy, non-ILR pre-med; I don't believe that he was actually accepted to med school (He should have done ILR!), and wonder what became of him and his long-term date Bobby Peterman, who as I recall was a Wells classmate of my pin-mate and one-year Dream Girl, Suzie Combs.

- *What's your fondest memory of 17 South Avenue?*

[MM] In retrospect I appreciate even more the specialness of our small, relatively close-knit brotherhood of my 1961-1965 experience. We were diverse, many schools, with three classes of brothers living in, and an occasional grad student, like Logan and the perennial George Wiener, hanging around. As a small town kid, the house was like an extended family within the humongous size of The Big Red. For two years Bob and I had the third floor NW corner room (excellent for water-bombing the PiKA Big Front Lawn.) I still remember dependable 'wake up alarm', Gibber who I'm sure is a special, fond memory for hundreds of brothers over many years, even those of us who didn't play poker with him.

If you'd like to participate in Five Questions, or have a suggestion for someone you like to hear from, finger him to Tom Sporney [[tsporney@betathetadate.net](mailto:tsporney@betathetadate.net)].

## Dik's Ravings

Whenever our self-absorbed baby boomer generation hits certain milestones, we make a big deal about it. Everybody knew when we turned 50, then 60. You'd think we invented air, or something, when really we're a bunch of dumpy schlubs trying to keep it together and figure out why we're here. The ultimate milestone is, of course, death.

Actuarially, we're dying off at the proper rate, but individuals aren't statistics and the recent passing of Brother Ralph Olivier was a tough one. He was only 62. His wife, Carol, contributed greatly to him making it that far, as his dodgy ticker sent its first warning when he was in his late thirties. Carol tamed some of his less healthy instincts. Ralph lived his life true to the spirit of our brotherhood, and he did it consciously with forethought. It wasn't just that he was a nice guy, and that his character happened to comport with the bonds of phi phi kappa alpha, he actually worked his program with conviction, no matter the cost.

Ralph lived an upright life; remember, that's why we wear our fraternity pins upright. He wore his proudly, not just as a reminder of the friendships and good times, but as a reminder of his pledge to his brothers, which he upheld until, to paraphrase Mozart, he carried his loyalty and probity to the coolness of his grave. But he would frown upon this maudlin diversion, so we move on.

Ralph got a grand send-off. Hundreds attended his funeral, including many brothers from the active and alumni chapters of both Cornell and the University of Delaware. Tom Sporney's eulogy included messages from many brothers who couldn't attend. On the lighter side, I talked to Joe Fiteni for the first time in decades, and reminisced about how he got me my first grown-up job, in the galley of a merchant marine ship plying the North Atlantic in unusually rough seas.

The day after finals freshman year I was packing in my dorm room to head home to Hollywood, Florida, when I got a call from my dad: "Do you have a summer job? You're not going to lay around on the beach drinking beer all day." Amazingly, this was my exact plan, plus occasional forays to the horse track. Dejected, I wandered over to the fraternity house for a beer and advice from Gibber. As I walked in, Joe Fiteni was posting something on the bulletin board. "Do you need a summer job?" he asked hopefully. His sister was short a man for a galley crew she was staffing, and which was shipping out the next day. We called her, she hired me, I snagged a ride to New York, and had the adventure of my life. The job was for a hotelier, and at the time I was an art history major, but there are great paintings of food, so – close enough.

I'm on a few fratboy reminiscence email chains. You know the kind I mean – somebody sends around a scan of a picture from a beer party in 1978, and for a few days guys write about the crazy stuff that went down. We've been doing this for years, this trading of stories of depravity, reckless endangerment, and wanton irresponsibility. Guys use their work email accounts to do this. For eons, email servers in government offices, corporate headquarters, and, for all I know, churches, have hosted Pike stories involving all kinds of mayhem, accompanied by pictures. Here's what brought it shuddering to a halt: a female nipple. One fine breast. We regrouped after everybody signed up for anonymous gmail accounts, but dang, it was revealing, in more ways than one.



## Alumni Notes

**Jonathan Flaks '86** [] separated amicably from his wife of 24 years. Ellen and their son, Ray, 16, remain in Dobbs Ferry. Nate, 19, is at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Jonathan moved to Cos Cob in Greenwich CT.

## Chapter Eternal

The brothers of Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha extend their sympathy to the families and friends of the following brothers:

### Ralph Olivier

Nov 25, 2015

[[www.griecocares.com/obituaries/2015/11/28/338/](http://www.griecocares.com/obituaries/2015/11/28/338/)]