

162nd Theta Chi Anniversary Convention Report

The members of the Theta Chi Chapter Brothers Stephen “Mark” Beacom, Charles “Andrew” Borcharding, Brody McKenna, Sky Pederson, Mason Pritchard left early for the 162nd Theta Chi Convention and flew to San Diego where they spent time with relatives of President Sky and apparently spent too much time on the beach! They then took the 3-hour trip to Las Vegas and arrived at the Flamingo Hilton on July 27 where they met up with Chapter Counselor Brother Krepinevich.

Brothers Stephen “Mark” Beacom, Charles “Andrew” Borcharding, Brody McKenna, and Mason Pritchard applied for and were awarded convention scholarships. The way the scholarships worked was they had to pay the \$495 fee up front. They then were each given a sign-up sheet and were required to obtain a signature from a presenter from every session during the convention. If they attended every session and obtained the required signatures, the \$495 registration fee would be refunded. Each met the requirement with no issues. There were 45 scholarships available. Zeta Alpha received 4 and there were only 12 applications submitted total! Members of the chapter plan to bring a larger contingent in 2020 and submit a larger group of applications. All 6 attendees chipped in to cover the cost of an additional hotel room for the 4 additional brothers who attended.

We asked each attendee to provide a brief comment of their experience and they are shared here:

Brother Sky Pederson - The Theta Chi Convention was an amazing experience. Throughout the convention, we learned about numerous topics including; recruitment tactics, financials, and sacred purpose. The convention also gave us the opportunity to connect with other brothers from around the country. Learning about how other chapters run their organizations was the most beneficial part. We were able to share different ideas and solutions to problems we might occur. Being a new chapter, everyone was excited to help us. Had I not joined Theta Chi, I never would have had this experience. I cannot wait to take what I learned back to my chapter.

Brother Stephen “Mark” Beacom - Theta Chi’s 162nd Anniversary Convention was an amazing experience. I learned about many important topics at the convention to improve both my chapter and me as an individual.

Of course, we listened to speakers and learned about subjects such as leadership, philanthropy, and recruiting. However, I received the best information and advice from speaking to other brothers (both collegian and alumni) about their own chapters. With over 600 brothers in attendance from all over the country there was a huge pool of knowledge and experience to share. Many brothers were excited to offer their thoughts and advice for our new chapter. I look forward to bringing back new ideas to our chapter for G.I. Theta Chi, recruitment, and more.

Beyond the convention itself the week was an awesome experience to build brotherhood and experience the city of Las Vegas. We visited Caesar’s Palace, the fountains at the Bellagio, stayed at the historic Flamingo Hotel, and much more. The highlight of the trip was all of the attendees being bused to historic downtown Las Vegas and taking over Fremont street. We also met brothers from the nearby Youngstown State Chapter throughout the week and look forward to seeing them in the future.

Brother Charles “Andrew” Borcharding - Going into the convention with having very little knowledge of what to expect, I was curious and excited to figure out what it would be like. Being surrounded by so many brothers from all over the country was surreal. They were all extremely welcoming to us and the staff seemed eager to meet us as well. Throughout the convention, we were provided with helpful tips on how to become a better brother, fraternity, and man overall. The guest speakers we had were phenomenal and opened my eyes to so much more than I had realized before on brotherhood, professionalism, and life itself. My first convention was very informative and full of many laughs, memories, and new friendships, and I would encourage anyone with the opportunity to attend one.

Brother Brody McKenna - My experience at the International Convention in Las Vegas was nothing less than fantastic. The convention provided me the opportunity to see Las Vegas and network with brothers from around the world. The speakers that they brought in and the breakout sessions provided covered topics that need to be talked about, such as, hazing prevention, alcohol abuse/safety, how to budget your finances, where all our dues money goes, accountability, the future of sorority/fraternity life, and many more.

Joining Theta Chi Fraternity has provided me with opportunities that I would never have had and, to me, that makes the whole fraternity experience completely worth it.

Brother Mason Pritchard - The 2018 Theta Chi National convention was an experience of a lifetime. It was above and beyond anything I could've expected before attending. One of my favorite things about the convention were the breakout sessions because that helped myself gain more knowledge in some of the different areas in a fraternity such as philanthropy, recruitment, etc. I hope I will be able to relate some of the great messages that I have received onto my fellow brothers to share my experience with them and help them kind of understand what I was taught. The speakers were amazing, we got the message they were trying to give in a manner that we can relate to as college students.

I am going to use a lot of the different things I learned to help increase the size and better my chapter at Slippery Rock University. Recruitment is one of our most important areas and because now this is most of my responsibility I attended most of the recruitment sessions that were mainly about how to approach and find the right guy. Overall being able to be a part of the fraternity ritual meetings were an amazing experience that not everybody gets to experience so its extra special. See ya at the next convention!

#myfraternity

A major development that occurred during the convention in which every alumni member can participate surrounds you fraternity experience! You have an incredible story of brotherhood to tell. On Wednesday, September 12 we need you to join with hundreds of thousands of fraternity men around the world to share your story on social media. Text “myfraternity” to 25827 for a reminder on September 12. Learn more at <http://www.myfraternitylife.org>.

But what you can do right now if you have a Facebook page is you can add a frame to your Facebook profile pic. Update your profile pic to include the frame #myfraternity. Simply click update your profile

pic and “add frame” then search myfraternity and Theta Chi. Then on September 12 share your positive story(s) of fraternity.

Day 1

Brother Alan Copeland, the CAB Chair for the Ohio State University who participated in the chartering ceremony and attended the 26th annual Zeta Alpha golf outing, arranged a convention orientation for the ZA Chapter members and several other “new” chapters to walk them through what to expect. We thank Brother Al for taking the chapter under his wing!

Theta Chi offered a cell phone application that offered schedule, speaker, attendee, faculty and other information that help the navigation of the convention.

Members of the Youngstown chapter re-engaged with the Zeta Alpha chapter throughout the weekend and the relationship continued to strengthen.

Opening ceremonies occurred Friday night including the presentation of the Alter Awards, Chapter Achievement Awards and Chapter Excellence Awards. The event included a meet the candidates for the Brothers who were nominated and were running for the vacancies on the Grand Chapter.

The new brothers experienced for the first time the need to be able to “properly identify” themselves as an initiated brother to enter the room that hosted the fraternity’s business session. Anyone who could not “properly identify” would not be permitted access. The International Convention officially opened with the business session including a report from Executive Director Brother Michal Mayer and President Brother Joseph Couch. Attendees were separated by attendees and Delegates.

During the business session, a resolution was adopted by the convention congratulating the Zeta Alpha Chapter on its Chartering after 29-year absence

Once the initial business portion of the meeting occurred, election of members of the Grand Chapter and the new President and Vice President were conducted well into the evening. Brothers Brody and Andrew were co-opted to assist in counting ballots!

A highlight of the evening was the opportunity for the chapter members to meet with and have a discussion with Past International President Richard Elder who was in the early 70’s Zeta Alpha’s Field Executive and shared some interesting stories of his visits to Slippery Rock. He also is the brother as International President most responsible for pushing Slippery Rock up the list for recolonization back in 2016. He expressed his appreciation and congratulations to the Zeta Alpha brothers for their efforts.

Specific topics covered during the convention breakout sessions will be listed at the end of this report for those interested in specific topics and sessions covered.

Each day began with an informal breakfast buffet providing the brothers an opportunity to network, share ideas and establish life-long relationships.

Day 2

The opening of the School of Fraternity Practices and Awards.

The mid-day general session speaker was Kevin O’Neill (A Lambda Chi!) Executive Director of the Fraternity & Sorority PAC who is working with all Fraternities and Sororities across the country. He is

working to lobby state and federal government addressing issues facing Greek organizations such as knee jerk reaction to all fraternities/sororities due to actions by one person or chapter. Freedom of association issues. Promoting support of pro-Greek candidates for office and pro-Greek initiatives.

The Grand Chapter Scholarship Award and the Fleetham Convention Attendance trophy were presented as part of the session. Zeta Alpha came just a few miles short of winning the Fleetham award!

Collegians and Alumni separated for lunch and at the Alumni Recognition Luncheon where a presentation of the David E. Devol Award was presented along with several other awards recognizing service to the fraternity. The keynote speaker was past International president Pat O'Connor who challenged alumni to consider that many issues arising on campuses today can be avoided with more alumni involvement through active Chapter Advisory Boards. During the Alumni Session, we were able to reconnect with Brother Walt Davis who had presented the original charter in 1964 and with Brother Buzz Stroud who served as a Field Executive assigned to Zeta Alpha in 1973-74. He shared several interesting stories related to his visits to Zeta Alpha. He is currently living in Portland, OR.

At the Collegiate Luncheon a "Dine for Success" event was held. The session was designed to review basic etiquette tips in the dining room, board room and beyond!

Prior to the awards banquet, the Foundation Chapter held a Reception/Auction. This was the first time the foundation held an auction at a convention. Brother David May who presided over the Zeta Alpha Chapter installation in April coordinated the event. It was announced prior to the beginning of the event that the alumni brothers "in the room" had made a total combined lifetime contribution to the foundation of \$960,560 and challenged them with the auction and other contributions during the convention to break the \$1 million mark. By the end of the auction, the alumni contribution total finished over \$1,055,000.

During the black-tie awards banquet International President Brother Joseph Couch provided a farewell address and awards presented included the prestigious Reginald E. F. Colley Memorial trophy for outstanding collegian and the Distinguished Service Award. Throughout the awards programs whispers could be heard between the members of Zeta Alpha, "We have someone who could win that." "We could do that." Each Zeta Alpha attendee showed an intense interest in the proceedings and how they fit in what Theta Chi offers and recognizes. They showed up on time and usually sat in the front row of every event.

Day 3

Started with breakfast and breakout sessions.

The general session was conducted by Dr. Louis Profeta an emergency physician from Indiana who shared his "unvarnished" story of how he deals with young people who die or have died before they arrive in his emergency room because someone did not look out for them or implement the concept of Sacred Purpose on their behalf. He graphically showed what a night of drinking looks like in a fishbowl and how it can cause asphyxiation and death trying to get from the fishbowl through a tube! He described the panic in the situation and the loss and grief families experience because of bad decisions. He was not gentle by any means and made the point to all attendees in the room. The session ended with the presentation of the David L. Westol Sacred Purpose Award.

All members of Zeta Alpha attended the Resolute Man ceremony and to the best of our knowledge the only chapter with all attendees in attendance. They were able to witness those who achieved the Resolute Man status and can now share with others the recognition that awaits those in the chapter that work toward this achievement.

The final keynote session was conducted by Brother Tony Paalz, CEO of Park 'N Fly and discussed how undergraduates could SCORE big in their career and in life.

Sunday night attendees were on their own, so the members of Zeta Alpha took on and made a serious dent in the buffet at Harrah's and then did some walking on the strip including taking in the High Roller a 550-foot tall, 520-foot diameter giant Ferris wheel on the Las Vegas Strip, Caesars Palace and the Bellagio fountain display. Black jack was also very popular with the group.

Day 4

Began with breakfast and then transitioned into the final business session. A memorial service was conducted and members of the Zeta Alpha Chapter who had passed since July of 2016 were mentioned and remembered. This was followed by the installation of the Grand Chapter for 2018-2020.

The lunch session included Jud Horras, President and CEO, North American Interfraternity Conference. Jud shared the challenges that face fraternities and sororities especially considering incidents that have occurred at Penn State and on other campuses and at Harvard University and the challenging of the freedom of association for fraternities. This was the session where #myFraternity was unveiled!

The last "official" event of the convention was the closing general session and the topic was "Owning it". Past International President Brother Dick Elder challenged each brother in attendance to stand up and lead. He challenged each attendee to take the things learned from the sessions and friendships made at the convention and share those experiences with those who could not attend.

The last event took all attendees to Freemont Street where the intersection where the Four Queens, The Golden Nugget and others meet. The street has been covered by a roof displaying the Theta Chi logos and individuals zip lining through the center. Dinner and gambling were the highlight of the evening though neither was overdone!

The entire convention was a well-done event and promoted the Sacred Purpose and Resolute Man through deeds and the construction of the event by the Fraternity. It was an event each undergraduate and brother would be proud to be associated and should be an outstanding resource to the members who attended to share with the brothers of Zeta Alpha.

The topics covered during the convention in breakout sessions included:

- A Frog in Boiling Water – A discussion of how a slow eroding of standards can greatly effect a chapter.
- Accountability: Lessons from a Navy Seal – Discussion on what makes, breaks every man, team and chapter.
- Alumni Ambassador Program – A revision to the Chapter Counselor program to be instituted effective September 1.
- Are You in Good Hands? – Discussion of the Insurance programs for the chapter.
- Be the 1% - Resume writing

- Becoming a Recruitment Machine – Taking recruitment to the next level.
- Changing the Narrative – How to change the narrative the public sees regarding Fraternities
- Defined and Delimited – How Sacred Purpose fits your life.
- Defining Success – A discussion of what creates success.
- Gen Z – Communicating with Collegians today
- Get the Dub – Turning unrealized ambitions into attainable goals.
- Getting the Guys You Want – A discussion of recruitment strategies.
- Getting the most out of college – A discussion of how to ensure a collegian does not look back with regret upon graduation.
- G.I Theta Chi – Running philanthropic events.
- Good to Great – how to make a good chapter a Great Chapter.
- Help Me, help You: Collegiate Service panel – How to be the best on campus and get through issues.
- How to Be a Millionaire – A new way to look at your finances.
- How to Eat an Elephant – The art of delegation.
- How to Recruit a Potential New Member in 10 days – How to cut through the noise of other fraternities.
- I am right, and you are wrong – Interacting with others
- I Wish I Knew That (20 Things to Know Before You Graduate) – Preparation for “life” issues!
- I’m Still a Theta Chi – Involvement in Theta Chi after college
- I’ve Got Connections – Theta Chi Online mentoring program.
- Know When to Hold ‘em, Know When to Fold ‘em – How to negotiate your first job and is it right for you?
- Motivating the Middle – How to crack fraternity engagement.
- Navigating the Norwich Blueprint – The process for obtaining/maintaining housing
- Norwich Housing Roundtable – Q&A about the funds, funding and initiatives related to the Housing Corporation.
- Our Grades Suck – Why is it that grades are the first thing to suffer when joining a fraternity?
- Playing All 4 Quarters – Strategies for recruiting outside “formal recruitment”.
- Prim & Polish – Personal presentation seminar.
- Put Down the Phone – How to keep brothers engaged
- Q & A on the Future of Fraternities
- Resolute man Roundtable – How the Resolute Man has changed the landscape of Theta Chi.
- Rising Above the Crowd - Effective Resume’s
- Running a Successful Sacred Purpose Event.
- Self-management: Own your 24 hours – Time management
- Sell me this Pen – Guiding the conversation in an interview
- Send Him to Standards. – Best practices for standards boards.
- Servant Leadership – How to implement the servant leader concept.
- So Now What? – How to prepare for Grad School.
- The Empty Chair – Effective CABs
- The Fun and Secret History of Theta Chi

- The Struggle is Real – The session provides tools and confidence to ask tougher questions brothers need to hear.
- Through Thick and Thin – A discussion of higher education today and in the future.
- Walking Billboards – How brother impact the chapter's PR and ultimately recruitment.
- Walking the Walk – Branding as it relates to the fraternity.
- What do you mean our dues are going up? – Answers on the new dues structure.
- What is Expansion? – How to start a new chapter.
- What's the call? – What is a leader's level of ownership and how to motivate though good times and bad.
- What would you do? Housing Corporation Case Studies.
- Where is all our money? – Best practices for budgeting chapter dues and understanding the international dues structure.
- Who Do You Know Here? – How to embrace moving to a new city when you take a job.
- Why Are My Brothers So Lazy? – Encouraging brother involvement
- Why Men Haze? - The consequences of hazing.
- Work Life Balance – What business leaders are looking for when they hire young professionals.

Theta Chi created a flickr account with pictures from the event that can be reviewed. You will note Zeta Alpha show up in many of the Resolute Man ceremony pictures!

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/thetachiinq/>