



FALL
2025

BOBCAT SIG

THE BETA RHO CHAPTER OF SIGMA CHI FRATERNITY
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

A New Chapter Begins

BETA RHO CELEBRATES RENOVATION AND HOMECOMING

There were plenty of smiles and laughter this September 26, a historic day with perfect weather—blue skies and 75 degrees. Taking place at the historic Story Mansion across from the chapter house, an ideal location to comfortably accommodate a record turnout of over 120 Beta Rho alumni, undergraduates, pledges, and their guests, the renovation celebration was followed by the traditional Homecoming reception and a catered meal.

Brian Brown '95 kicked it off by welcoming attendees and introducing the various dignitaries. Among them were Chapter Consul **Mark Lebrini '27**, House Company President **Paul Boylan '64**, four Order of Constantine brothers, two Beta Rho Significant Sigs, and MSU Dean of Students Matt Caires.

Ryan Roseleip '97 recounted key milestones along the long road from concept to renovation, highlighting the formation of the initial fundraising organization in 2014, major funding milestones and contributors, delays and cost escalations during and following COVID-19 and, finally, the completion of the renovation design and hiring of a contractor.

Rick Dissly '66 updated attendees on the financing of the project (see page 4 for those details), while Dean Caires delivered greetings from the university and spoke about Beta Rho's 107-year contribution to the MSU community. During his talk, the new MSU President, Dr. Brock Tessman, made a surprise visit and gave a short welcoming presentation—an honor that underscored the significance of the event.

Paul Boylan and Rick Dissly presented a ceremonial house key to Consul Lebrini. On behalf of the chapter, Mark expressed the brothers' excitement about having a renewed home, thanked alumni for their dedication and generosity in initiating and managing the renovation, and committed the chapter to maintaining the house's value for future generations.

Mark also called for increased alumni involvement and support before inviting all attendees to cross the street and tour the construction progress.

The renovation project is on track for completion by January 1! Following the demolition phase, those parts are now being rebuilt. Major updates—including new electrical systems, heating, fire sprinklers, internet cabling, dorm walls, and a fire escape structure—have been completed. Drywall installation for dorm rooms and dedicated study spaces is also finished.

The tour was a resounding success, filled with smiles, laughter, and agreement that the renovated house will be a cherished space, as the celebration marked the start of a new 100-year era for Beta Rho at MSU.



Presentation of the Key



New Dorm Rooms



Fire Escape Structure

A Year of Growth, Resilience, and Renewal

Even as we navigate a major chapter house renovation, our brotherhood remains steadfast—united by shared goals, service, and enduring values.

Philanthropy and Service

One of our proudest achievements over the past year was raising more than \$50,000 for the Huntsman Cancer Institute through Derby Days and a new campus-wide fundraising initiative.

We've set an ambitious new goal: \$60,000 for Huntsman. We've already raised over \$6,500 and plan to move Derby Days to the spring—the perfect opportunity to showcase our newly renovated house and rally even more campus and community support.



Braxton DiMaggio '28 (left) and Cutter Thompson '28 attend the Huntsman Cancer Retreat after being invited in recognition of our chapter's outstanding fundraising efforts last year. They are accompanied by Kenzie Loomis, the International Sweetheart of Sigma Chi.

Academic Progress and Scholarship Initiatives

We continue to push toward our GPA goal of 3.3. While we haven't yet reached that benchmark, our scholarship committee has implemented several initiatives, including structured study hours, peer tutoring, and academic mentorship pairings, that are already showing results. Both the campus and chapter house libraries have remained busy!

Brotherhood and Chapter Life

Despite being temporarily displaced, brotherhood remains at the heart of Beta Rho. Regular chapter dinners, off-campus retreats, and participation in intramural sports have helped preserve our unity and traditions. The anticipation of moving back in has only deepened our appreciation for the lifelong bond we share.

Campus Leadership and Alumni Engagement

Beta Rho brothers continue to lead and serve across the Montana State community from student government and campus clubs to volunteer outreach initiatives. This fall, we hosted a successful alumni tailgate during Homecoming; brothers from across generations celebrated our shared history and the exciting future ahead.

Looking Ahead

Our goals remain clear: uphold our values, support one another, and ensure Beta Rho remains a beacon of brotherhood and excellence at Montana State University. With a renovated house on the horizon and a brotherhood stronger than ever, the future of Beta Rho is bright.

In Hoc,
Blake Taft '28
Tribune

Undergraduate Update



Beta Rho's Homecoming float, built by Will Caron '26, Bridger Hardgrove '26, Sam Jackson '27, and Jimmy Mendoza '26, rolls down Main Street.



From left: Mitch Lovett '27, Duncan Ward '27, Mark Lebrini '27, and Daniel Bitton '27 take a weekend trip to explore the Grand Tetons on a backpacking trip—bringing brotherhood into the backcountry.



Beta Rho brothers don costumes and visit Brake Time Bozeman, a local campus favorite, for a public relations event supporting small businesses. Pictured: Rowan O'Neil '28, Andrew Hayles '27, Mitch Lovett '27, Daniel Bitton '27, Ryan Karlsgodt '27, Max Slettland '27, Nathan Hayles '25, Evan Sherfey '27, and Thomas Middleton '25.

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Beta Rho carried out an exceptionally successful recruitment season. Beginning in late August, the chapter hosted engaging events designed to attract potential new members and showcase what makes Beta Rho special.

Under the leadership of **Ryan Karlsgodt '27**, the chapter conducted 60 interviews, ultimately extending 36 bids. The pledgship period lasted six weeks, featuring a condensed yet highly meaningful education program.

Taggart Crouse '27 did an outstanding job leading the pledge education process and instilling a deep understanding of what it means to be a Sigma Chi. On October 18, 26 men were initiated.

With their diverse temperaments, talents, and convictions, this class has already made a remarkable impact. Their early and enthusiastic participation in public relations and philanthropy events, including the annual Highway Cleanup, has infused the chapter with renewed energy, growth, and brotherhood.

*Fall
Recruitment
Success
Report*

Welcome, New Members

William Antram '29 | Eagles Mere, Pa.

Griffin Arne '29 | Medina, Minn.

Dawson Campbell '29 | Missoula, Mont.

Reece Carlson '29 | Fargo, N.D.

Oliver Compton '28 | Seattle, Wash.

Jack Denzin '29 | Wayzata, Minn.

Caden Edgarton '29 | Missoula, Mont.

Cooper Fahey '28 | Seattle, Wash.

Brody Hammer '28 | Pasco, Wash.

Colton Hill '29 | Littleton, Colo.

Ty Holterback '29 | Bozeman, Mont.

Ben Jackson '28 | Saint Paul, Minn.

Casey Jones '28 | Centennial, Colo.

Noah Komanecky '29 | Cincinnati, Ohio

Ethan Larsen '29 | Gilroy, Calif.

August Liddell '29 | Northville, Mich.

Samuel Lunder '29 | Mountlake Terrace, Wash.

Evan Mars '29 | Lone Tree, Colo.

Jonas Morash '29 | Dallas, Texas

Gus Olson '29 | Anchorage, Alaska

Carson Sahd '29 | San Diego, Calif.

Owen Simko '29 | Bozeman, Mont.

Zachary Smith '29 | Lewistown, Mont.

Ethan Vega-Soler '27 | Riverview, Fla.

Jeremy Widders '29 | Fredericksburg, Texas

Jack Woodward '29 | Minneapolis, Minn.

WHY THESE BROTHERS JOINED SIGMA CHI

**Brody
Hammer '28**

"I wasn't just looking for a fraternity. I was looking for a group of guys who genuinely support each other. From the first recruitment event, Sigma Chi felt like home."

**Colton
Hill '29**

"What really stood out was Sigma Chi's commitment to something bigger. Raising money for the Huntsman Cancer Institute is a cause that unites us. I wanted to be part of that impact."

**Ben
Jackson '28**

"My brother, Sam '24, always speaks highly of Sigma Chi, but seeing how it shaped him made me want to join. I knew Beta Rho was where I belonged."

**Gus
Olson '29**

"My mentors told me Sigma Chi was all about leadership, values, and lifelong friendships. After meeting Beta Rho, I saw it for myself and knew I wanted in."

**Zachary
Smith '29**

"I came to Montana State not knowing anyone, and Sigma Chi gave me instant connection. The brotherhood here isn't just talk—it's something you feel every day."

Future Alumni Support

Rejuvenating the
House Company Board
for the New House

Even more important than financial contributions is the active involvement of younger Beta Rho alumni in leadership roles to support the chapter. With a new house for the future, it's time to rejuvenate the House Company board to ensure the chapter house is properly operated and maintained for years to come.

Leadership Transitions and New Roles

Paul Boylan '64, president of the house company, will be stepping down next year after the renovation is complete, marking nearly 30 years of dedicated service to the board and the chapter. **John Hertz '89**, who joined the board two years ago, will eventually succeed **Rick Dissly '66** as treasurer, helping guide the next chapter of financial stewardship and alumni engagement.

Opportunities for Alumni Involvement

Currently, three board members represent the 1960s; we are seeking brothers from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to step forward and carry the torch. Geographic location is not a barrier—directors can live anywhere in North America, as most meetings and communications are conducted virtually. Current directors are based in New York, San Jose, Spokane, Ontario, and Montana. (We *are* hoping for at least one brother from the Bozeman area to provide on-site support as needed, however.)

Why Alumni Involvement Matters

Sigma Chi International Headquarters has long observed that chapters with strong alumni participation thrive and prosper, while those without struggle and eventually decline. Brothers who stay engaged consistently find it deeply rewarding, not only by helping ensure the success of Beta Rho but also by mentoring young men and strengthening the lifelong bonds that define our fraternity.

Fraternally,
Rick Dissly '66
rdissly@comcast.net
(408) 348-4337

Norm Achen '66
norm@normanachen.com
(289) 242-2551

STRONG SUPPORT and STEADY PROGRESS

House Renovation Financial Update

At the renovation celebration, House Company Treasurer **Rick Dissly '66** provided an update on renovation costs, fundraising, and bank financing. The results are encouraging: \$1.85 million has been received in donations from 300 alumni. Of that total, \$850,000 went directly to the House Company renovation account, while \$1 million was contributed through our account with the Sigma Chi Foundation.

Major Contributors and Leadership Support

These key brothers were instrumental in launching the fundraising effort and made significant contributions of over \$50,000 each, collectively totaling more than \$1 million:

Brian Loucks '64

Jim Barfknecht '74

Russ Wilcox '91

Rick Dissly '66

Steve Spencer '79

Andy Wilcox '92

Dave Kem '67

Walt Smith '85

Ryan Roseleip '97

Bruce Burkitt '72

Mike DiFronzo '91

Thank
you
Alumni!

Financing and Mortgage Details

The estimated total project cost is approximately \$2.6 million. With \$1.85 million in donations already received, this leaves an anticipated mortgage of about \$750,000. Currently, the house company has secured a construction line of credit at 7% interest with a local bank. This will convert to a 25-year adjustable-rate mortgage, with interest rates adjusted every five years.

Importantly, mortgage repayment will not begin until August 2026, providing sufficient time to complete post-renovation projects, including repaving the parking lot. There are no prepayment penalties and no balloon payments at the end of any adjustment period, allowing flexibility to pay down the loan early.

Continuing Fundraising Efforts

Fundraising will continue after the renovation is complete with two primary goals: repaving the parking lot and reducing the mortgage to a more manageable level. To recognize the generosity of donors, plaques will be displayed throughout the chapter house, including at the entrance, in bedrooms, study rooms, the chapter room, and the living room, depending on donation level.

All brothers who contribute at least \$5,000 will be listed on a plaque at the house entrance.

To allow brothers time to increase their giving and move up to the next recognition level, plaques will be installed after additional fundraising opportunities. Donors can view their current donation level at bobcatsigs.org/donor-list.

Tax Benefits

Donations to the Sigma Chi Foundation earmarked for the Beta Rho Renovation Project remain tax-deductible. This is an excellent option for alumni seeking tax benefits. For older brothers, contributing from a Required Minimum Distribution can help avoid ordinary income tax, which is a particularly advantageous giving method.

For more details or assistance with tax-efficient donation methods, please contact Rick at (408) 348-4337 or rdissly@comcast.net.

Investing in the Future

BRUCE BURKITT '72 IS PAYING IT FORWARD

Why Sigma Chi

Bruce Burkitt '72 joined Sigma Chi for the principles on which the fraternity is based. "I thought that being a member would help me navigate college and give me educational experiences I would not be exposed to otherwise. And they looked like a fun group of people." That balance of values and camaraderie made Sigma Chi an easy choice.

Proud to Be a Brother

What stood out most to Bruce was the chapter's sense of responsibility. "The idea of a group of young men forming a self-governing body with good aspirations—it was a positive experience," he recalled. That independence, paired with shared goals, gave him pride in being part of something bigger than himself.

Unforgettable Moments

Life at the house was filled with memories both meaningful and lighthearted. "Ginny was our cook and mother to all, which meant a lot to us," he shared. "Initiation was always special." He also remembers the time a brother tried to start his car on a snowy day by popping the clutch—only to slide straight into a police car.

A Global Career

After earning a business degree, Bruce spent five years in the Army, beginning his MBA while stationed in Okinawa and finishing it on campus at the University of Oklahoma. He was later recruited by Conoco and spent 25 years in Houston in natural gas commercial roles.



"At one point, there were five Beta Rho Sigs working at Conoco!" he shared. Eventually, he transitioned into international business development and worked in Saudi Arabia when 9/11 occurred. He retired in 2003.

Lessons That Last

Bruce credits Sigma Chi for helping shape his character. "The community experience, the friends, the fun, and the challenge of being treasurer were all early lessons in leadership and connection that have stuck with me."

Giving Back

In light of his experience, supporting the house renovation campaign was a natural decision. "It's a way to give back while ensuring the continuation of something meaningful," Bruce said. He hopes the improvements will "make the house a desirable place to live and keep the chapter going." To fellow brothers considering a gift, he added, "It's a great way to support Sigma Chi and an efficient investment with a great return."

Life in Maui

Bruce and his wife, Cindee, were married in 1974, just before moving to Okinawa. They've now been together for more than 50 years and have called Maui, Hawaii, home for nearly two decades. Bruce has served on his HOA board for 17 years (15 as president), is active in his church, and plays golf three times a week. For 15 years, he has volunteered at the Maui PGA tournament and chaired the marshal committee for the final two years.

If you'd like to connect with Bruce, you can reach him at bburkitt@hawaii.rr.com.

Where Are Beta Rho Alumni Today?

Beta Rho shaped the beginnings of our adult lives, and now our brothers are making an impact everywhere. Point us toward a fellow alumnus so we can share where they've been and where they're going by emailing hharwood@penningtonco.com with "Sigma Chi MSU" in the subject line.

CHAPTER ETERNAL

William Mills '55
October 22, 2024

Wallace D. McRae '58
June 22, 2025

John B. Davenport '71
October 3, 2024



Ted Rowland '77 celebrated his 70th birthday by climbing Mt. Fuji with his son.



BOBCAT SIG

Beta Rho Chapter of Sigma Chi

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MORE ALUMNI NEWS BELOW!



ALUMNI NEWS

J. Cal Bower '62 is still retired and living in Greensboro, NC. "Any Sigs that remember me and get back here, give me a call!"
Email: johnbower@trinicoag.com

Thomas A. Overturf '64 retired with Carolann in Las Vegas, Nev. He is a political and MSU Watch Party volunteer.
Email: tomoverturf@gmail.com

Thomas E. Bivins Jr. '69 is a life loyal Sig in Dover, Pa. Email: tebmjb@gmail.com

Terry A. Bullis '70 retired after working as a funeral director for 50 years. "I sold Bullis Mortuary in 2022. It was owned and operated since 1914 by the Bullis family. There is a replica of the Bullis Mortuary at the Bighorn County Museum. I served as BHC coroner for 48 years." He lives in Hardin, Mont.
Email: flyboybullis@gmail.com

Larry A. Parker '70 lives in Granbury, Texas, but has a small ranch in the Black Hills near Newcastle, Wyo., where he spends four months each summer. "I'm a retired (2007) general director of maintenance planning for BNSF Railway. Grandkids, golf, and motorcycles all keep me occupied. Life is good!"
Email: parkerlarry@rtconnect.net

Robert M. Fitzsimmons '77 shares, "after 52 years in Montana, I have returned to my roots and am now living in Mundon, N.D."
Email: bob.fitzsimmons54@gmail.com

Hugh W. Ross '80 retired in 2024 after more than 44 years in banking. "I'm living in Bend, Ore., and enjoying traveling, fishing, hiking, kayaking, hunting, and other retirement activities." Email: hwross@yahoo.com

Mark W. Peres '81 shares, "I've been busy designing small modular nuclear reactors in recent years (NuScale, Kairos, Deep Fission), working on my golf game, and enjoying grandkids. Enjoying the Greer, S.C., area—a LOT less snow than Bozeman, which is nice."
Email: mark.peres@att.net

John H. Burton '85 retired from nearly 34 year career with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on March 31, 2023. He recently moved back to Kalispell, Mont., and splits time between the Flathead Valley and his second home in Southern California.
Email: jhburton63@yahoo.com

Brekk C. Macpherson '86 is nurse practitioner in Boise, Idaho. "I will be a grandpa in September!" Email: bcm9463@gmail.com

The Kind of Man You'd Stand Beside

Think of the men you'd trust
in your corner—the ones who...

- SHOW UP
- LEAD BY EXAMPLE
- MAKE OTHERS BETTER

That's the kind of man we're
looking for to join Beta Rho.

If you know a young man who fits that description, we want to meet him!
Please send his info to Ryan Karlsgodt at rjkarlsgodt@hotmail.com or (720) 705-3029 so we can get in touch and show him what our brotherhood is all about. Be sure to include his name, year in school, email, and why you think he'll be a good fit.