



# THE TECH TEKE

Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity | Georgia Institute of Technology | Summer 2009

Alumni Relations Office | P.O. Box 80828, Atlanta, Georgia 30366 | www.betapitke.org



## From the Board: Trustees Continue to Improve Facility and Alumni Affairs

By Michael A. Smith (#783, '85)

**Facility Care:** A year ago, we conducted an alumni survey that yielded some definitive feedback on what you wanted to see in an organization. We took that feedback seriously. While plans for the major renovation remain on hold until the economic outlook becomes clearer, we are going ahead with facilities and alumni projects that will make the Board, the alumni association and the undergraduate chapter stronger and better able to move quickly when the situation improves. Here are some of our recent activities:

- In the spring, we replaced doors in the House that had worn out, including the major doors on the first floor leading from the social quarters to the dormitory.
- The BOT now schedules and pays for regular maintenance including termite and pest control, all fire prevention and alarm systems, HVAC servicing, kitchen equipment, grease traps, and fire-safety. We have added gutter cleaning and upkeep to that list.

- The undergrads have created a list of bathroom maintenance issues and we'll resolve them this summer. This is a major quality of life issue.
- We are addressing a ventilation issue in the dormitory that should result in increases in the air quality inside and a reduction of mold and mildew.
- In late summer we will have some work done in the kitchen to address some health and safety concerns and to increase the capacity and flexibility of our facility. John Reagan is heading up this project that will create far-reaching benefits for the organization.
- We have directed the undergraduates to implement a "uniform appearance" policy concerning the north-facing windows of the dormitory, something that will improve its appearance during the day at least. The BOT will pay for materials.
- Beginning in a week, Chad

**See Beta-Pi, continued on page 4**



Beta-Pi undergraduates playing basketball in front of the old Tau Kappa Epsilon social quarters, spring 1985.

## Alumni Spotlight: George Kirkman

After getting out of Tech in 1984 with a BS in Physics with Highest Honors, the lure of Hollywood and the Pacific Ocean drew **George Kirkman** ('84) of Greenlawn, NY to California. He settled into an apartment one block from the ocean and a sweet job at Hughes Aircraft Company, where he worked in R&D on optical and microwave sensors for government space systems.



Frater Kirkman holds one of his "Rolling Robots". He launched his company in May 2009.

After several years enjoying Hermosa Beach and the 80's rock-n-roll scene of the Sunset strip, George enrolled full time at the University of Southern California with the goal of completing the PhD degree in Electrophysics, a relatively new (at the time) specialization of electrical engineering. After working on some projects in small technology companies and a brief stint as a visiting scientist at MIT, he returned to Hughes.

For about ten years, George worked at Hughes on commercial space systems including the satellites for DirecTV, XM satellite Radio and similar systems for Europe, India, China and Japan. He traveled all over the northern hemisphere including two round-the-world flights and stops in exotic places such as Nepal and the Golden Triangle region in Southeast Asia, where the borders of Thailand, Burma and Laos meet. He visited Ahmedabad in India, the site of Mahatma Gandhi's ashram and the current home of India's space program. And, after searching the world, he found the love of his live life back home in California, a Chinese import named Bing Jiang, who happens to be an engineer.

*“Some of the things that helped me the most in life were the experiences of managing the business we call The House.”*

George and Bing married and have two children: Jacqueline, born in 1998, and Josef, born in 2001. They have created their own little multicultural experiment, blending George's mixed Russian-American background (including a large dose of New York) with Bing's Chinese ancestry. George, who speaks English with a distinct "Loooooongiiiiisland" accent remarked, "Did you know that a Chinese person from Beijing China has a very thick accent that labels you as a Beijinger wherever you go?"

In 1999 George found his weekends lacking for activity so he enrolled in the MBA program at the UCLA Anderson School of Business. "In Los Angeles for a USC man to go to UCLA is like a Tech man going to Georgia, so I need to know who I am talking to before I describe my education," George said. After three years of classes every Saturday, he completed his MBA.

While at UCLA, George caught the entrepreneurial bug. So after

**See Robots, continued on page 3**

# State of Beta Pi

by Greg Gallagher, Prytanis

This past fall has been a rollercoaster ride of emotions. Starting the year off strong, the entire house teamed up to recruit a record 33 pledges. As diverse as they are talented, the fall pledge class of 2008 pulled their weight in fraternal duties and now occupy 6 officer positions in the house. These pledges, now members, have proven to be a great addition to our fraternity and are a very promising future for the Beta Pi chapter.

Placing sixth overall in homecoming last fall, we at the Beta Pi chapter considered it to be a success. Placing in the top 3 in the Banner Competition, Knock Out, The Stand, Rock-Can-Roll, and the swimming portion of Iron Buzz, we were an undeniable presence in this year's competition. The most prestigious accomplishment however, was obtaining second place in Display. Designed and organized by Frater Scott Edwards, this year's display stood over 18 feet tall and was awarded Best Mechanization of all the Greek Displays.

Organized by Frater Keith Martiny and Alpha Xi Delta philanthropy chair Akhila Rajaram, this year's philanthropy volleyball tournament was a complete success. Altogether, we raised over \$3,400 for St. Jude's Children's hospital and had a blast doing so. Thanks to Frater Jake Hinton's Red Bull connection, the event was highly caffeinated and well officiated by beautiful Red Bull representatives.

And last, but not least, we were informed of this just as we went to press: Josh Taylor won the 2009 Homecoming Logo Contest! His design will be placed on all publicity for Homecoming used by the Student Center and the Greek Executive Committee. Congratulations, Josh!



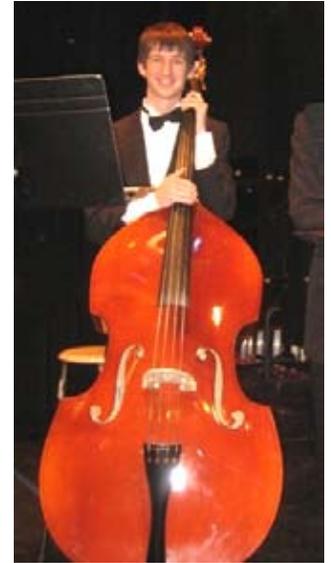
# Chapter News

## Member Spotlight: Thomas Brumby

Frater Thomas 'Gumby' Brumby, a newly initiated first year, has already proven to be a valuable asset to the Beta-Pi Chapter. While maintaining a 4.0 GPA in Chemical Engineering, he still finds time to jam out on his Classical Bass, which he can be seen carrying around campus.

He enjoys costumes, tacos, and spending time with his adorable girlfriend Elizabeth Wall. This past spring he was elected as Hypophetes and has already made enormous, 6' 6" strides in the name of education. Additionally, he has served as the unofficial TKE liaison to other fraternities and organizations across campus. It is undeniable that Thomas Brumby will be a force to be reckoned with in the near future.

We are proud to have Frater Thomas representing the men of Beta-Pi and hope that you will have an opportunity to stop by the house and get to know him as well.



## 2009 Executive Officers

- Prytanis: Greg Gallagher, gpgallagher@gmail.com
- Epiprytanis: Michael Bennett, mbennett1416@gmail.com
- Grammateus: Tim Kolesar, tkolesar@gatech.edu
- Crysophylos: Jeremy Ku, jeremy.ku@gmail.com
- Pylortes: Matt Biggers, biggers.matthew@gmail.com
- Histor: John Ganter, jgant3@gmail.com
- Hypophetes: Thomas Brumby, tbrum@gatech.edu
- Hegemon: Ethan Lotz, ethan.lotz@gmail.com
- Rush Chair: Brendan Patterson, brendanp16@yahoo.com
- Rush Chair: Jake Hinton, jakehinton@gmail.com



Clockwise starting left: The winning 2009 Homecoming logo won by Frater Josh Taylor; Undergraduate members enjoy Spring weather and play volleyball; Beta Pi's Homecoming Display featuring Buzz won Best Mechanized and second place Overall; and our award winning Homecoming mural.

## Robots, *continued from page 1*

eighteen years in the aerospace industry, he started dabbling in start ups. In May 2009, he launched Rolling Robots in the Del Amo Fashion Center in Torrance, California. Rolling Robots features an interactive Battle Bots-like game that George built and a “robotics lab” in which kids, mostly those from five to nine years old, can build their own robots with friends. According to George, “Rolling Robots engages children in technology by allowing them to build their own robots and then compete in a real world gaming environment that brings the multi-user competition and fantasy world of online video games to life. Although I am working harder than ever before with a plan to grow the business to a nationwide franchise, I am happy and stress free. This job incorporates all of the things I love, technology, educating children and of course lots of parties!”

Of his time at Tech, George said, “Looking back on my years at Tech there are a great many memorable experiences, mostly of the social aspect of the brotherhood, including lots of practical jokes and antics. Some of the things that helped me the most in life were the experiences of managing the business we call The House. Most notable were my two terms as Crysophylos. The activity that really pulled it all together for me was being on the Wreck crew. Building those contraptions and making impossible things work with a short and hard deadline, the long nights with a tight team of friends with a common goal, positioned me for success in engineering and business.”

George added, “We are living now in Palos Verdes, California. Even out in this far corner, I manage to keep in touch and see a few



*Rolling Robots opened its doors in May 2009 at the Del Amo Fashion Center in Torrance, California. The retail site allows people of all ages to build their own robots and compete in a “battle-bots” game.*

close friends made at the Teke House. It is amazing to me that, even when years have gone by without seeing a close brother, the bond is still there. When we get back together, it returns just like that old New York accent on a trip home.”

George Kirkman can be reached at his business, Rolling Robots (<http://www.rollingrobots.com>) and on Facebook. He has also put up a YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/rollingrobots>.

## Ryder Cup, TKE Style

By Brad Sampson (#1071, '99)

What could be better than getting together once a year with fraternity brothers to eat, drink, play golf, play poker, and catch up on each other's lives? Not much if you ask me, but then again I am biased because I've been organizing a golf trip for the past nine years. I wish I could take credit for the idea but I can't.

The idea started way back in 1992, before I even arrived at Tech, when my mother planned a 50th birthday gift for my father that included a golf trip with seven of his life long friends to the famous Pinehurst Golf Resort in North Carolina. I watched them turn that one-time event into an annual pilgrimage, and I knew then that it was an idea I wanted to copy.

We started our first trip as a group of eight in 2001. Then we expanded to ten in 2005 and then again to twelve in 2006. We have traveled to Myrtle Beach six times and once each to Fripp Island, Amelia Island, and Montgomery (Robert Trent Jones Trail). Most of the golfers live in Atlanta or within a couple of hours, but we do have several guys who travel in from New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Tampa every year.

Of course the purpose of the trip is to keep the bond between us as strong as

possible understanding that time, distance, and life changing events will always be working against us. Consider that in 2001 we were all technically bachelors with zero children and nine years later only two bachelors remain and the number of children almost equal the number of golfers.

Only four golfers have been fortunate enough to attend every year so opportunities have come up for other fraters to join us. **Robert Phillips** (#1122, '01) joined us for four years, **Tim Marriott** (#1093, '99) for three years, and most recently **Stew Meny** (#1103, '99) filled in for **Kevin Strada** (#1122, '01) this year as Kevin was anticipating the birth of his first child (Lillian Mae born on May 9).

Each year we start the golf trip with a practice round on Thursday afternoon because once Friday morning rolls around, the competition begins and the mood changes. The twelve golfers are divided into two teams and compete in a Ryder Cup format that always



*(l to r) Ben Pocisk, Matt Queen, Brad Sampson, Stew Meny, Ryan Riggs, Rob Turner, Ben Aune, Matt Durbin, Adam Reece, Jarrett Sydell, Steve Rybos, and Jeff Pike.*

ends up creating more drama than is really necessary. We play 36 holes on Friday in a two-man best ball format; then we transition to individual matches on Saturday and Sunday where we play 18 holes each day.

This year was especially dramatic because both teams were tied after Friday's rounds and again after Saturday's round so we knew it would come down to wire. Team Europe was the defending champion and only needed a

**See Golf, *continued on page 4***

## Beta-Pi, *continued from page 1*

Patterson, the RA, will make regular rounds in the public areas of the house with a “Flip” video camera and post files on the web so that Board members can keep better tabs on the state of the facilities.

- We are working with the undergraduates to improve the way they divide up their part of the work of maintaining the facilities and the organization.

The BOT is improving its competence as a “landlord”, working out how to make routines out of the tasks of gathering information, making decisions, and paying vendors. We are putting money into the House. Some of this will carry forward into the renovation but not all of it. However, it is shortsighted and dangerous to hold back in the belief that the coming renovation renders a dollar or an hour spent maintaining the current facility a waste.

Quality of life and health and safety issues affect the fortunes of the undergraduates now. We don’t want the facility to be a recruiting issue except in the positive sense. The appearance of the House affects the impression people create of TKE and of Georgia Tech now. We are well along in the life-span of our current facility while many of our competitors are in the early stages of theirs. Our House, fundamentally sound but a “dame d’un certain age”, requires more TLC just to make an adequate impression. And, when alumni show up at the House, it is what we see now that informs our opinion of the organization. An organization that hopes for

our support should demonstrate its ability and willingness to make good use of our resources.

When you show up in the fall, the changes you see may not strike you as dramatic. You won’t see a social quarters full of beautiful furniture, for example, or artwork hanging from the walls. But there will be changes and, if you look closely, it’s what you’ll see less of that will indicate the improvements at TKE.

**Alumni Affairs:** Richard Sapp (Beta-Pi #648, ‘79) and Wes Schiel (Beta-Pi #1060, ‘99) have done a great job with communications and events, which never occurred regularly before. These are essential to creating and maintaining that network of friendships and contacts that is an important benefit of membership in the long run. It is also essential to creating that base of contacts and knowledge that we intend to be a great help to undergraduate members.

In recognition of the importance of alumni programming, we are increasing the number of pages in our regular newsletter to six so that we can run more stories about and of interest to alumni. We’ll be starting some regular columns soon as well. Ultimately, we’d like to see all alumni affairs completely self supporting so, if you haven’t helped us out financially this year, please take a moment right now to send in a donation to support the TKE Annual Fund. Our goal is 100% participation, no matter what amount you give. We certainly appreciate those of you who are regularly sending in \$250 or more, but we know some of you will be more comfortable in the under \$50 range. Everything helps!

Last year’s alumni reception at Park Tavern was probably the most attended alumni affair we’ve had since the dedication of the “new” social quarters in ‘94. Wes has started the planning for Homecoming 2009 and will be considering several new venues this year. Expect to receive more news about that as he firms up his plans.

**Looking Forward:** I know these are unpleasant times for many people. But I tell you that these are also exciting times for our Chapter. I don’t mean exciting as in “Touchdown, Georgia Tech!” but in the sense that there are challenges worth facing ahead, questions to research, costs and benefits to weigh, hard nuts to crack (and perhaps a few heads as well), and decisions to make that will have far-reaching consequences. If we act with bold vision, resolution, and competence, we stand a good chance of creating an organization that has a sustainable advantage and that, empowered and improved by an awesome virtuous circle, sets a higher standard in the Greek world.

Every time I show up for a Board meeting and look at who else is at the table, I remind myself of how lucky I am to be in the company of such excellent people who share a willingness to work towards the creation of this Good that we envision through TKE at Georgia Tech. Could we settle safely for less? Yes, we could. Will everyone be happy moving forward? In a word—no. Is success assured? Absolutely not ... but neither is failure inevitable. *And that is why it’s exciting.*

## Beta-Pi Golf Outing, *continued from page 3*

tie to retain the cup, and **Rob Turner** (#1065, ‘98) pulled through by sinking a four foot putt to win his match. The five years that we have played the Ryder Cup format has resulted in four dramatic finishes, but the credit card roulette game at dinner usually creates the most nerve racking moments of the weekend.

This year Team USA was made up of **Ben Pocisk** (#1033, ‘98), **Ben Aune** (#1086, ‘99), **Matt Durbin** (#1066, ‘99), **Jeff Pike** (#1032, ‘97), **Adam Reece** (#1134), and **Stew Meny** (#1103, ‘99) while Team Europe was made up of **Jarrett Sydell** (#1090), **Matt Queen** (#1036, ‘98), **Rob Turner** (#1065, ‘98), **Steve Rybos** (#1139, ‘02), **Ryan Riggs** (#1107, ‘99), and **Brad Sampson** (#1071, ‘99).

I think that all of the golfers except for one would agree that the one frustrating aspect of our golf trip is that fact that **Jarrett Sydell** (#1090) has become the Tiger Woods of our world. If you know Jarrett or remember his golf game when he was at Tech, you know

how unbelievable the previous sentence reads. We use handicaps during our matches to level the playing field but it has become almost impossible to take the individual title from Jarrett who has reduced his handicap over the years from 49 to 29 and won four of the past five years (currently three straight). We don’t know how he does it, especially with two young boys at home, but since he works at JP Morgan we are starting to believe that some of our bailout money was funneled to him to pay for secret lessons. Regardless, it gives us a good excuse to give him a hard time, which is definitely still one of the things we do best.

Next year is our tenth year and we are tentatively planning on going to Kiawah Island to play the famous Ocean Course where the real Ryder Cup was held in 1991. I hope that twenty years from now I am still submitting stories about how a group of fraters continued their bond through this golf trip because I believe each year that goes by helps



(l to r) Matt Queen, Rob Turner, Jarrett Sydell, Brad Sampson, Ryan Riggs, and Steve Rybos.

us appreciate our friendships and memories from Tech even more . . . and it doesn’t get any better than that.

*From the Editor: Thank you, Brad, for sending in this excellent story. We encourage all alumni who have stories to tell to write them down and send them in. Thanks!*

# Alumni News & Notes

**Max L. Dufeny #141**, '60's new grandson, Owen Charles Dufeny, was born on 7/5/08.

**Frank K. Horton #295**, '66 was gratified to read in the Winter newsletter that Frater Bob Kirkhuff was awarded the Order of Beta Pi. Bob has aged well over the years since I was active in the early 60s. He is part of my cherished memories of Beta Pi and played a very important role in the Chapter acquiring and renovating the old Pike House to become the North House, as we knew it. What wonderful times when we all knew we could do just about anything! Congratulations Bob!

**Bruce Noggle #583**, '75 ran with the Bulls in Pamplona, Spain last summer, fulfilling a lifelong college dream. This two week festival, The Feast of Fermin, included a total of 8 runs, 5 of which Bruce ran, culminating in the bull ring, where baby bulls were let loose to be chased. The intensity of this endeavor was off the charts, and was human chaos at the extreme. 4,000 people crammed into a narrow cobble stone street, with 6 black bulls and 6 herder bulls, running out of control. Exciting to say the least.



Bruce, far left, with red baseball cap. Photo courtesy of Cleveland Sun Courier and Bruce Noggle.

**R. Scott Schmidt #603**, '76 has a new job back in Atlanta after being in Hilton Head Island, SC for 2 years.

**W. Tate Cantrell #974**, '93, after five years with Dupont Fabros Technology, which culminated in a successful IPO in late 2007, Tate has accepted the CTO position with a start up: Purveyor of Green Data Centers in Iceland. William Tate Cantrell III celebrated his first birthday in December 2008 with brothers Nico & Zachary. Sylvia, Tate, and the boys reside in Falls Church, VA.

**Gregory L. Willis #981**, '94 is transferring to Dell Singapore Consumer Group, from the Dell US Consumer group.

**Peter L. Bradley #1021**, '98 works for Thrust Interactive: online interactive video games and virtual worlds for children.

**Tyler D. Patterson #1031**, '97 and Robin just welcomed the newest addition to their family on February 25, 2009: Ian Dean weighed in at a healthy 9 lbs. 11 oz. They, and Ian's older sister, Kaci, are having a great time with the newest family member.

**Eric O. Hunter #1040**, '97 recently relocated to Portland, Oregon.

**Timothy W. Collins #1051**, '98 has a two year old boy, Ben, and a baby girl on the way due in June 2009.

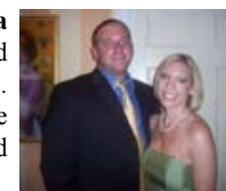
**Todd A. Weiser #1192**, '04 and his wife Kimberly (Georgia State) are pleased to announce the birth of their son Anton Edward Weiser on March 2, 2009. Weighing 9 lbs 4 oz at birth, Anton is a happy and

healthy Baby. Todd is currently a Project Engineer for Clark Construction in the DC area and the Company Commander for B Co., 221st Military Intelligence Battalion. Kimberly is an Account Coordinator for Fishbowl Marketing in Alexandria, Va.



**Brooks W. Hingson #1189**, '04 will marry Nicole Cozza in Old Town Alexandria, VA on Sept 19, 2009.

**Michael F. Plachta #1216**, '06 is engaged to be married to Ms. Noelle Travis. The ceremony is scheduled for Spring 2010.



The following Beta Pi members graduated from Tech this spring. Welcome to the Alumni ranks and we look forward to seeing you during football season!

Scott Griffin, Civil Engineering  
Courtney Mitchell, Biomedical Eng.  
Ray Jurek, Mechanical Engineering  
Colby Clements, Management  
Zachary Zegar, Marketing Management  
Geoff Greenhill, Management  
Jack Gardner, Biochemistry

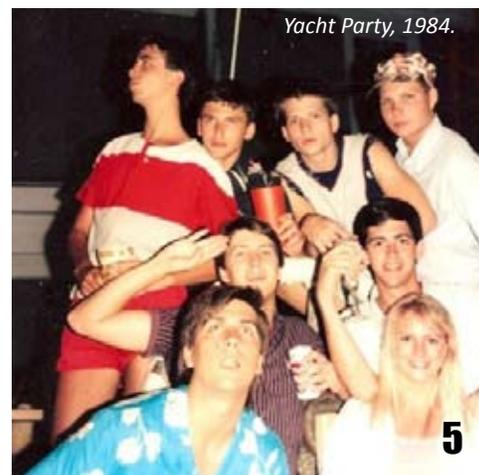
*Have news you want to share? Please send it to: Alumni Relations Office | P.O. Box 80828, Atlanta, Georgia 30366.*

## Stay Connected with Beta-Pi Online

Find us on facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). Our group name is "Georgia Tech Tekes," and find us on LinkedIn under "TKE Beta Pi Alumni Association" ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)). Share chapter news, alumni events, and connect with your fellow Beta Pi brothers. Also be sure to get up-to-date with our alumni website at: <http://gatechtke.org/alumni/> and the chapter website at: [www.gatechtke.org/](http://www.gatechtke.org/)

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Yacht Party, 1984.

# 2009 Annual Fund Donors

## Apollo Society (\$500 +)

James (Ron) Davis '65  
Paul Ausley '84

## Triangle Society (\$250-\$499)

Joseph Evans '71  
Russell Hill '78  
Michael St John '84  
Michael A. Smith '85  
W. Tate Cantrell '93

## Red Carnation Society (\$100-\$249)

Joseph Anderson '58  
Max Dufeny '60  
Daniel Mowrey '65  
Coe Bloomberg '66

Richard Park '67  
Michael Harrell '70  
Timothy Chandler '72  
Daniel Jens '72  
Richard Hunter '74  
Harold Taylor '75  
Stephen Powell '78  
Richard C. Sapp '79  
Edward Watterson '79  
Preston Holland '81  
Dana Stelk '03

## Cherry and Gray Society (\$50-\$99)

Richard Phelps '53  
Reginald Chung '55  
Thomas Clement '55  
Charles Dettman '64  
Ray Day '66  
Charlie Freel '66  
Warren Williams '66

William Bailey '73  
Mark Shoemaker '76  
Dave Rapsas '82  
Michael Smith '82  
Steve Levinson '84  
Chad Smith '01  
Colin Caviness '07

## Sustaining Member (\$1-\$49)

William McKibben '61  
Terry Moore '66  
Patrick Moriarty '68  
Robert McGarvey '72  
Linn Lower '74  
Donald Bach '81  
Chad Colman '97  
David Wofford '01

*Not listed as a current Annual Fund donor?*

*Please send donations, made out to*

*TKE of Georgia, Inc., to:*

*Beta-Pi Alumni Relations Office*

*P.O. Box 80828, Atlanta, Georgia 30366*



*Dinnertime in the old social quarters, spring 1980.*

## Save the Dates

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TAU KAPPA EPSILON FRATERNITY  
ALUMNI RELATIONS OFFICE  
P.O. BOX 80828  
ATLANTA, GA 30366

TKE Conclave  
August 6-9  
New Orleans Marriott

Fall Rush  
August 14 - 19

Homecoming  
Georgia Tech vs. Virginia Tech  
Saturday, October 17

Alumni sponsored event on Friday night, details t.b.a.

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