



The Alumni Forum

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America – Iota Alpha Chapter
Eddy Music Building ♦ Alma College ♦ Alma, MI 48801
PMA@alma.edu ♦ <http://www.sinfonian.com>

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Alumni Secretary Update

Dear Brothers and Fellow Alumni,
It is with great pleasure that I write to you! Many changes have come to our chapter since our last Alumni Forum. And all these changes have been to the benefit to our beloved Iota Alpha.

I want to start out by apologizing for not publishing a newsletter during the 2003 winter and fall terms. It was decided in early 2003 there was just not enough to write about to make a publication worth your time and to make it as cost efficient as possible. After being taken up by the chapter, and with some of my input, the Bylaws were changed such that the Alumni Forum would become a yearly production. This change will allow the chapter to save money and give our alumni the best newsletter possible! And to help even more, we will be offering the forum in full



color on the website for you to download.

The times have changed!! You would be surprised to know that the tiny chapter of five you read about last has turned the state of the fraternity around... to the tune of 15 new members (probies included)! It is been a joy to hear from the current and new members about where they want to take the fraternity, and from the talk on campus, Phi Mu Alpha is the place to be!

Within this newsletter, we have included biographies for each of the new members as well as a few of the articles that were prepared to ship out last year (indicated by a 2003 in title of the piece).

With the fraternity back on track on campus, we are now working to get our alumni back in action! Preparations are already underway to make the 2004 Homecoming a fun and memorable time for all.

Joey 'Wallrus' Martin

State of the Chapter

Greetings! We have had a fun and exciting year. We decided to focus on brotherhood this year and forgo a probationary period fall term to grow as a group. Most Friday nights fall term included Movie Nights with Matt Bryan in the PMA room. A small group of brothers got together and won Songfest. Overall, the fall term was productive not only in growing together as a brotherhood but also giving a good chance to meet and get to know potential probationary members fairly well.

Winter term brought a chance for the increased interest in the group to come to fruition. We pinned 10 probationary members. One of them shortly dropped after deciding it was not for him. The other nine probationary members have fit in like they have always been with the group. They are a very diverse group of men and, in addition to the current members, make for a wide range of influence of Sinfonia on Alma's campus.

This term has also brought about the best American Music Concert in recent history. There

were many people in attendance and all seemed very impressed and appreciative for the increased musicianship of the group and concert. Jazzfest seems very promising. With all our brothers, we no longer will be enlisting the help of SAI for the execution of this event.

I would like to express the great joy I have in seeing where the group has come in the two years since my initiation. We have both increased and diversified our brotherhood. We will have 19 members, after initiation, which are in many different groups on campus, live in dorms other than Bruske, and have a variety of majors. The group is becoming well recognized on campus and the impression of the group is good. The prospects of a house are looking up and with my increased time next year I plan to make that my mission. I have watched Sinfonia grow immensely in the last two years and can't wait to see where the chapter is at in another two years with the current growth of the brotherhood not only in quantity but quality.

Dan 'Windu' Rito

Meet Brandon Fry

Hello all! My name is Brandon Alexander Fry. Hailing from Lake Orion (a small town close to the Palace of Auburn Hills).

Speaking of Alma, I suppose it would be nice to know my major. I have no definite major in mind, but I am tentatively leaning towards a major in Business Administration with a minor in Economics. I just find the fields of business and econ to be interesting to me for some odd reason....

When I am not busy hitting the books studying (yeah, right..) I am usually singing first tenor in the Chorale at Alma. I also recently found out that I was accepted into the Choir, so



I look forward to the opportunity to singing in that group. In addition to the choir, I also do private voice work and sing with the opera workshop group. I guess you could also consider vocalizing with my Phi Mu Alpha brothers a form of music group.

I decided to pledge PMA primarily because I enjoyed the camaraderie I observed between the brothers. Although they may bicker and complain (being a member of the God family, you tend to get taunted quite a bit I noticed), you know that they are still friends and will always support each other. I also have a profound love of music, so that naturally lead me to PMA. I hope to bring more leadership influence into the chapter, and hopefully guide our

chapter in new directions. Ideally, I would love to see the Iota Alpha chapter double in size in my stay at Alma College.

Within the brotherhood, my fraternal father (Adam Bradley) has aided me greatly in understanding some of the ins and outs of the group. However, if asked who was my greatest influence from the chapter, I really could not answer; each brother has given me a unique perspective into the chapter and all the brothers have demonstrated brotherhood in different profound ways.

I would like to close saying that I look forward to the years to come and am excited about being a new brother in the Iota Alpha chapter of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia.

**Brandon 'Nebuchadnezzar' Fry
Initiated Winter 2003**

Meet Dan Martin

Hi! My name is Dan Martin. Right now, my plan is to double major in Physics and Mathematics, and pull a minor in French...we'll see how that goes though.

I have lived in Southeast Michigan all of my life, and I currently live in Rochester. I have been playing the Trombone (the best instrument) since sixth grade and I have been singing bass with the senior choir of my church for about six years now. I have also started playing the Euphonium again, which is coming along okay. Thus far I've only been in the Marching Band and the

Kiltie Band, with a few random interested in being a part of it. With performances with the orchestra. I hope, if my schedule allows, to be in orchestra next year and maybe to be in choir next winter term. Right now, I am the second-chair in the band, under my good friend Tim, but that will soon change...

I decided to pledge PMA because of the other guys that were involved. Soon after, though, I wanted to see what the fraternity was about and I became more



joining PMA, I hope to bring some order to the senselessness that abounds...actually, I hope to bring a little bit of fun and use my musical talent to help this group and its purposes. I also want to recruit more men with instrumental talent, as those in choir greatly outnumber those in band.

With Dan "Windu" Rito as my father, I will stand by and uphold the Bolde name!

**Dan 'D Squared' Martin
Initiated Winter 2003**

Sinfonian, Hostage!

A piece of Iota Alpha History has been kidnapped! Early in March 2004, a group of unidentified individuals came into the PMA room and took a vital piece of Iota Alpha's history. Jurassic has been taken hostage and a ransom has been demanded for its return. In a letter left behind, the hijackers demanded \$500 for the couch's safe return, with the threat of a fiery end to our beloved couch if we are unable to pay by April 15th.

Previous attempts to find the perpetrators have failed so we are left to try and raise the money necessary to pay off the ransom. With this tragic occurrence (and a lack of funds), we are coming to you, the alumni, for assistance. If you value the historical icon that is Jurassic and don't wish to see that go up in a wisp of smoke, then please donate some money to help us pay off the ransom. We can only hope that as a network of alumni and Brother's we will be able to come up with the ransom by the deadline to secure our couch's safe return.

Brandon 'Nebuchadnezzar' Fry

Meet Sean Galloway

Hello. My name is Sean Galloway. I'm 20 years old, majoring in music (I'm not sure exactly what in music, but hopefully something good), and I will be graduating in the year 2006. I have lived in the town of Howell, Michigan my entire life, and I am looking forward to moving somewhere warmer after I graduate. Musically, I sing in the Alma choir as a Bass/Baritone and I also play the piano and drums on my own. I am currently involved in the Alma choir, as well as a few other small groups. I'm a member of "Scots on the Rocks", the a cappella group here at Alma college. I also have a small a cappella guys group from back home called "The regulars", which performs all sorts of doo wop

music. I was also be a member in the cast of the previous spring term musical *Ruddigore*.

I was drawn to Phi Mu Alpha through their dedication to music. Every member shares a love for music and wants to grow in knowledge, while also having a good time. That shows me that these guys have their morals in the right place. Speaking of the guys, they have all been very helpful in my transition from pledge member to active member. No one person has been more helpful then any other member. My fraternity father



is Jonathan Cuttitta which makes me a member of the Boldes. Boy, I feel special now. Jon has done a great job in tutoring me in the ways of Phi Mu Alpha. I have learned much. I really have very little to bring to PMA. I just want to enhance what is already there. I want to make Phi Mu Alpha the best music fraternity around, and make it known to other fellow classmates. Hopefully, PMA will be a place everyone will want to be a part of. With all the members working together, Phi Mu Alpha is definitely on the rise.

**Sean 'Little Jonson' Galloway
Initiated Winter 2003**

Meet Sam Capasso

I am Samuel Joseph Capasso III, fraternal son of Adam "Solomon" Bradley which makes me a God, at this wonderful place of higher learning, Alma College. Like Wilson Nichols, I am a local boy from the same town as my locale of education. I am currently most interested in physics and history, though I am not sure which I will major in. Though I am not in any choir this year, next year I plan on singing in the



chorale. On the topic of pledging, I did so because I have a great interest in music as well as the other arts. I would like to help expand the membership and recognition of Phi Mu Alpha, and hopefully manage for us to attain a house on campus. I would have to say that all the Sinfonians are having an influence on me, but I have been around Tim Ricci and Matt Bryan the most.

**Sam 'Heman' Capasso
Initiated Winter 2003**

Stevies Corner - 2003

A lot has happened in my world since any brothers heard from me. I have recently divorced, (and yes I am happy thank you) from my wife of over 10 years. My beautiful daughter Kaitlyn is now 9 years old and is doing WONDERFUL throughout all of this.

After some soul searching I left work in the field that Alma trained me for, Social Work, and am now in the most secure job in the country, selling Alarm Systems in Detroit!

I continue to work at a number of Renaissance Festivals throughout the country including my favorite in Holly, MI. For those of you who have been there, I work the Vegetable Vengeance game, I hurl insults and the crowd hurls tomatoes, it's a living!

I encourage all of my fellow actives and alum to drop me an email at haveatomato@yahoo.com and let me know what's up in your lives. I would love to hear from you all. And perhaps a re-founding father's night at the chapter room? To sit and revisit the "good ol' days" and beat some youngsters at some rugged football? OAS AAS LLS Brothers!

Steve 'Stevie #1' Morgan

Meet Thomas Mate

Greetings to all brothers! My name is Thomas Mate. I am originally from Howell, Michigan. I am currently a German major and hope to eventually teach the language. I do not play any instruments, but I do sing. I am involved with the Alma College Choir and plan to be for the remainder of my years here at Alma. I decided to accept my bid to Phi Mu Alpha because the members were great guys. I also identify and agree with the purposes of the fraternity. I hope to bring a certain level of sex appeal to the fraternity. No, I am just kidding. I really do hope to bring a



positive attitude and love of music that can be shared with the rest of the brothers and the whole world. I really cannot say that any one brother has had the most influence on me, but I must thank Matt Bryan for introducing me to the group. Consequently, the same Matt Bryan is my father and I am the youngest in the Bolde line. Nothing like being the baby! I look forward to the years ahead with the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia!

**Thomas 'Figjam' Mate
Initiated Winter 2003**

Meet Wilson Nichols

Hello Alumni! My name is Wilson Nichols. So I guess I'm supposed to write about myself. I've never been that comfortable writing about myself, talking about myself sure, but writing is so formal and easy to sound pompous, which I am but never mind, here I go. Let's just get this out of the way. Yes, I am Doc Nichols' son. I am about to declare a music performance major. I'm quite busy with singing. I'm involved in the choir and an a capella group called "Scots on the Rocks" with brothers Matt Bryan and Sean Galloway. Last spring

term a fellow choir member and I shared a lead role in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore*.

When I finally picked Alma I was a bit worried about being so close to home. But I have gone away to school even if I haven't gone far away. I love Alma and I'm really having a blast with everything I'm doing. PMA is a great addition to my schedule, I like the idea and I like the guys and I can't wait to really get started. My fra-



ternity father Bill "Platypus" Sawin really helped me decide to join Sinfonia and I thank him for that. With the rest of my class I feel we can take PMA to a new level of prominence here on campus. I could ramble on much more and I probably will in future forums but for now I will spare you. Hail Sinfonia.

**Wilson 'Wolf' Nichols
Initiated Winter 2003**

Conquering Songfest

Every year, Alma College has a musical competition in November called Songfest. Different individuals and groups perform in front of a panel of judges. Winners are selected in three categories: solos, small groups and large groups. The top three places in each category receive money as reward. It has quickly gained popularity and is a mainstay in the minds of most students.



This year, Phi Mu Alpha decided to join in the fun.

PMA created a small group called "Men of Music" that was made solely of PMA members. The five members, Dan Martin, Tim Ricci, Brandon Fry, Bill Sawin and Sean Galloway worked hard for two months on a song by Weird Al Yankovic titled "One More Minute". This song turned out to be the perfect combination of both musical skill and comedy that the audience fell in love with. Along with some interesting choreography, PMA took the stage by storm and delivered a stupendous performance that left the crowd chanting for more. All the hard work paid off as "Men of Music" took first place for the small group category and walked

away with \$150. Pretty good for a group that most people don't even know exists.

But winning was not the ultimate goal. The main goal of the group was to learn a great song and have a blast on stage. The performance and crowd reaction was the best reward the group could have ever received. The members grew in friendship and brotherhood throughout the entire process and let people see how much fun PMA can be.



But this is just a stepping stone. Next year, "Men of Music" has a title to defend. And believe me, we can't wait till next November.

Sean 'Little Jonson' Galloway

Super Bowl Party

This year's Super Bowl Party was better than ever! Many brothers and



probationary members were in attendance along with their other friends and girlfriends. Food was prepared by some of the Brothers, but mostly from the Phi Mu Alpha girls that have come to be known as Bachchantes! There was also a special surprise birthday celebration for Brother Tim Ricci for his 21st birthday on the 2nd. Resident adjunct faculty, Tony Patterson, was in appearance and added to the fun of the night. Overall, it was great to have thirty-plus people in the Chapter Room. We hope to



continue this fun event in future years to come.

Matthew 'Private Hans' Bryan

F.E.O. Update

Greetings from the Fraternal Education Officer! This year's probationary period, the Alpha Theta class, has gone great so far. Our nine probationary members have passed their National Exam with flying colors, begun their class project, performed their class musicale, and have performed their Myth of Orpheus skit to the Brothers.

We decided to try the probationary period a little bit different this year. Our first goal was to get the National Exam completed by Week 5. The first four weeks were solely dedicated to learning the material on the National Exam, as well as reading in our *Themes for Brotherhood*. This seemed to work out very well as a majority of the probationary members passed their exam on the first attempt. The next four weeks were dedicated to Color Nights and brotherhood building activities.

After that, the probationary members participated in our American Music Concert singing "Kung Fu Fighting" with the



rest of the brothers. The probationary members performed their hilarious rendition of the Myth of Orpheus by incorporating the skit with the hit show, "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"

For Red Night, sixteen of the brothers and probationary members drove up to Brother Bill Sawin's house in Manton, Michigan, where he had a small cozy cabin in the

woods, a perfect place for Red Night. Unfortunately, two probationary members were unable to attend due to a funeral. Before driving to Manton, we stopped at the grocery store and picked up some hotdogs that we cooked out on the fire. After a journey on a tractor-trailer ride through the snow and through a river, we spent the rest of the night playing cards at Bill's church. The next morning, Bill's parents cooked us a wonderful breakfast consisting of pancakes, sausage, eggs, warm applesauce, orange juice, and coffee. YUM!!! Overall, my best Red Night ever.



The Probationary Class and the Brothers have really grown quite close in the past six weeks. We look forward to initiating them on March 27th!

Tim 'T-Boner' Ricci

The Room's a' Changin'!

The chapter room was recently given a facelift in the form of a new paint job, new stadium style seating, and a rearrangement of furniture. Brother Matt Bryan, with the help of others, finally followed through on his probationary project and gave the walls of the room a good few coats of white paint. The wall bearing the painted crest and signatures was left untouched. The room has a cleaner look and a brighter feel as a result of the efforts.

In the midst of this project, Brother



Tim Ricci took it upon himself to build an elevated platform for chairs and/or a couch to be placed on. It was built using pieces of Brother Thomas Mate's loft, which had been stored in the room for a portion of the first semester. The

platform is now the home to three comfy chairs.

Another platform is in the works to complete an elevated back row of seating.

Finally, the chapter room has benefited from a rigorous cleaning and reorganizing initiative, led by the one and only Brother Thomas Mate. In his first reign as room manager, Brother Mate has

implemented a rigorous doctrine reform with still more changes on the way. Though the basic set up of the television and seating remain relatively the same, the meeting table is now on the platform in front the signature wall, the piano is at the opposite end of the room, and the rottenest carpet has been thrown out. Drawers have been raided and cleaned, couches and chairs have been vacuumed, everything is regularly dusted, and the carpet is vacuumed on a weekly basis. There are now also lamps present in the room, giving brothers a popular alternative to the charming fluorescent lighting.

All in all, the room has become a more attractive place to hang out and have meetings. Great job to all the brothers who contributed their time and effort to this project.

Thomas 'Figjam' Mate

Meet Alex Bos

Hey, my name is Alex Bos. I am a Biology major and Computer Science minor. My goal is to become a small animal veterinarian and move to Arizona. Originally I was from Virginia but I now call Grand Rapids, MI my "home." Actually Grand Rapids is only my permanent address. Alma College is home right now. I never really thought about joining a fraternity when I came to Alma. The only knowledge that I possessed about what fraternities stood for was drunkenness, disregard for rules and morals, and hazing for all of the pledges. This was before I met the



brothers of Phi Mu Alpha. Matt Bryan invited me down to the PMA room on several occasions my freshman year. I finally listened to him and went to check out what Phi Mu Alpha was about. All the brothers there were incredibly nice to me and they were serious about becoming better people. I was deeply impressed with what I encountered and knew that Phi Mu Alpha was something I definitely wanted to be a part of.

**Alex 'Trismegistus' Bos
Initiated Winter 2004**

Meet Danny Balger

Danny Balger was born in Maywood, IL but spent the first several years of his life growing up in Kalamazoo, MI before moving to Okemos, MI. He is a music education major with vocal emphasis (a fancy way of saying "i wanna be a choir director!!"). Danny enjoys reading and writing and...long walks on the beach...? and...anime and role-playing games and other activities of a dork-like nature. Oh, and music. Definitely music. Danny also enjoys religious studies and chillaxin with his friends and girlfriend back home. Above all things Danny is a singer and a man of God.



**Danny 'The Flash' Balger
Initiated Winter 2004**

Meet Cailaen Dinwoody

The life story of Cailaen Dinwoody is a fascinating tale of mythical proportions. He was born in Gratiot Community Hospital on April 27th, 1983 and has lived in Alma his whole life since, garnering him the distinguished title of "townie." After attending a private Catholic elementary school for what seemed like an eternity, he joined the ranks of the walking dead in the Alma Middle School in the 8th grade. In these, Cailaen's formative years, he developed a deep love and distinct appreciation for music playing the cello and piano. He didn't incorporate his love of music into his academic career until his junior year of high school, when he joined the 10 o'clock jazz band, playing keys. His life has been very music-oriented ever since; he is now a sophomore music education major at Alma College.



**Cailean 'Wolverine' Dinwoody
Initiated Winter 2004**

Meet Brian Paul

Hi, my name is Brian Paul. I was born and raised in Indianapolis, but moved to Grand Rapids my freshmen year of high school. I followed my sister to Alma, and I love it here. You great people make the difference. I honestly didn't see myself going to college, because I didn't really care about grades in high school. But I'm glad I made it. Moving right along, I like just about all kinds of music other than country and pop. My favorites are Sublime (R.I.P. Bradley), RUN-DMC, Blue Man Group, 311, and last but not least Mustard Plug. I am a music education major, with a vocal emphasis. As far as hobbies are concerned, I love to play the guitar, work on cars, kickboxing, and just plain hanging out and having a great time. I also enjoy long walks on



the beach, deep conversations, and kisses from little puppies. Oh yeah, and I also like hugs too. Definitely hugs. If you see me, and want to give me a hug, it's more than welcome. Back to music though, it has always been a major part of my life. It's what gets me up in the morning, and tucks me in at night. Without music, life would be pointless. And I'm glad I've found a group of people that embrace that feeling with me. Not only that I've found them, but that they accept me as one of their own, is truly amazing. Life is good. Thanks for taking the time to read my little story, I hope you enjoyed it. Peace my new friends.

**Brian 'The General' Paul
Initiated Winter 2004**

Meet Cameron Ray

I am a sophomore music student writing a Program of Emphasis in Music Technology. I was born and raised in Indiana for 12 years before I moved to Grand Rapids. I attended Caledonia High School where I studied both saxophone and percussion. My motivation for continuing on in music came through playing with Strike Percussion Ensemble under the direction of Don Raaymakers. I came to Alma College with plans to major in Music Education and continue my studies in percussion. Last year, I made the decision to change my major to Music Technology by writing a P.O.E. Through this I was able to combine many of my passions into a field of study here at Alma College, which would not otherwise be possible.

I have a deep appreciation for many forms of music from Classical to Jazz and Contemporary Christian. I enjoy learning



of various musical techniques and composers through my studies in Music Theory. While I continue to perform with the Alma Percussion Ensemble and study privately in percussion, my emphasis is in the manipulation and editing of sound through live sound reinforcement and audio recording.

My current home is in Colorado Springs, CO near the Air Force Academy. I have one brother, Ben, who is 22 years old and lives in Colorado Springs. I have other interests outside of music that include following my favorite sports teams such as the Indiana Pacers, Indianapolis Colts, and of course the Indiana University Men's Basketball team. While I do not have any specific career goals after college, I would like to eventually work in a recording studio.

**Cameron 'Hoosier' Ray
Initiated Winter 2004**

2004-2005 Officers

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Brian 'The General' Paul

Meet Eric Sieh

Hi, I'm Eric Sieh, sophomore and undecided in my major. I'm from Rochester Hills, Michigan and graduated from Avondale High School. Over the last 10 years I have been very involved with music. I have played the trumpet since 5th grade in school bands and my church ensemble. In the spring of 2000, my high school band performed in the International Youth Music Festival held in Harrogate, England. In the same year I was chosen to be a part of the on-stage band for the production of "The 1940's Radio Hour" at the Fringe Festival held in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since attending Alma College I have broaden my musical experience once more by joining the Kiltie Marching Band this past fall.

When I am not in band, which is hardly ever, I enjoy hanging out with friends, watching movies, listening to music, and playing video games. I am also gifted with a talent for computers, electronics, and audio/visual thingies. After getting some kind of degree, I hope to enter a career relating in some way to one of the areas I have experience with.

**Eric 'Inspector Gadget' Sieh
Initiated Winter 2004**



American Music Concert

The American Music Concert here at Iota Alpha on February 19th went really well. The concert featured a brass quintet, an a cappella group on campus and, of course, the ten current members of our chapter along with our nine probationary members. To say the least, it was definitely Sinfonia's night: there wasn't a piece of music performed that did not include a brother or a probationary member. And attendance was up from last year!

The night started off with *The Star Spangled Banner*, and then the five brothers who make up an a cappella group called **The Men of Music** sang *In the Still of the Night*, with Sean Galloway dedicating it to his girlfriend for Valentine's Day. The brass quintet played, Brother Tim Ricci had a Trombone solo, and an a cappella group called **Scots on the Rocks** sang. The highlights of the night, however, were the **Men of Music** singing Weird Al Yankovic's *One More Minute*, and then the 17 brothers/soon-to-be-brothers singing *Kung-Fu Fighting*. Actually, I would say that song was the highlight of the night because we had a drum set, a gong, karate moves, and all of our lip-synching perfected. We had lots of fun preparing and spending time together, and the people that showed up had a great time as well! I give it an A++.

Dan 'D-Square' Martin

Meet John Kruse

It all began on a rainy New England day in Vermont...the 28th of May, 1984. On this day, Memorial Day, a child was born. This child was John Kruse and he would forever alter the state of the universe and of music. Shortly after his birth, he was moved to Kentucky, not far from Nashville. Should this proximity to a world center of music be noted as just coincidental? I think not. This was a sign of many things to come.

He was nurtured until the ripe old age of 5 and was then moved to Midland, MI, where he continues to reside. After a few years of average childhood, John moved on to bigger and better things. He began piano lessons in third grade. This was the official start of it all.

Although he hated it at first, John soon grew to love the piano and music in general. By sixth grade, John branched off into vocals and drums and joined the Midland Youth Honors Choir and

Bullock Creek Middle School band (as first chair percussionist). When he made the leap into high school, John's love of music truly blossomed when he realized that chicks dig the musician. This realization soon had him involved in not only piano, percussion, and vocals, but also guitar, bass guitar, and drum set. By his sophomore year of high school, John's epic tale had finally found the path that guides him today...he began composing. By senior year of high school, John had written approximately five original songs. One of these songs, which he wrote for his graduating class, was eventually chosen as his class song for graduation.

The pinnacle of John's high school career was his live performance of Goodbye at Bullock Creek High School's commencement in May of

2002. However, even bigger and better things were to come from this story. He soon decided to attend Alma College and study music technology. During the course of his freshman and sophomore years, he recorded a seven track CD that has seen excellent success and rave reviews.

However, the pinnacle of John's career so far was the winning of Alma College's Songfest Solo Act competition. He regards that as his crowning achievement so far, besides joining Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia...of course! As his repertoire continues to expand, look for even greater things to come from this man of music, and man of God.



**John 'Eliathah' Kruse
Initiated Winter 2004**

Meet Mark Zeeff

My name is Mark Zeeff and this is my third year at Alma College. My native country is these United States of America, located in the Western Hemisphere. My musical background consists of eight years of private percussion lessons, amateur didgeridoo playing, and recently I picked up a conch horn. My favorite composer/piece as of late is Rachmaninov's "Prelude in C-Sharp Minor", and my favorite band/song is currently "Ramble On" by Led Zeppelin. One occasionally squirrely yet still incredibly enjoyable musician I like to listen to is Chick Corea.

Some pleasant past-times of mine include bowling, golf, fishing, gambling, and seeing how much I can mumble yet still be understandable (employing such phrases as "yeah-pry", and simply humming pitches that are commonly associated with words and phrases, like "I don't know",

or "Is it not an interesting coincidence that Wagner's opera series 'The Nibelung's Ring' has virtually the same story line as J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' series?"), and also making obscure jokes that less than one out of three people understand, and laugh at, which makes the other people around laugh uneasily and unknowingly, trying desperately to fit in.

Some of my future hopes and dreams are to be a lottery winner, a cruise ship enjoyability tester, Batman, or all else failing but probably equally likely: a performing musician.

To conclude, one of my favorite quotes is "Never let your schooling get in the way of your education" - Sam Clemens.

**Mark 'Tommy Lee' Zeeff
Initiated Winter 2004**



Jazzfest 2003

Once again, the Alma College Jazzfest was a success. This year 16 bands from around Michigan traveled to Alma, Michigan to participate in the ever-growing Alma College Jazzfest. Some of the bands included Alma High School, Ithaca High School, St. Louis High School, Beal City High School, and St. Ignace High School. Phi Mu Alpha's participation in Jazzfest has grown this year as we tried to do as many of the jobs as possible. Sigma Alpha Iota aided in filling the spots that Phi Mu Alpha could not fill. Since originally the Jazzfest was solely a Phi Mu Alpha event, we asks the ladies of ΣAI if we could bring back the idea of Jazzfest being a Phi Mu Alpha event. The response was yes. They understood that we asked ΣAI if they wanted to help in Jazzfest when they were first getting off their feet to recruit for members. As time went on, the numbers in ΦMA dropped and the aid of ΣAI was needed. Now that ΦMA is on the rise, we wanted to take the Jazzfest back under our wing.

The day started early with setup and continued with great performances from the high schools. As the day went on, soloists were picked out for awards and "best section" awards were chosen. The day was finished off with the Alma College Jazz Ensemble playing their concert for the high schools. Highlights of the concert included Buddy Rich's "Big Swing Face," and the up-tempo tune, "Plain Brown Wrapper." After each piece, Mr. Metcalf presented a few awards to the respective winners. Phi Mu Alpha would like to thank Mr. Metcalf for his work in aiding us in the Alma College Jazzfest.

Tim 'T-Boner' Ricci

Meet Andrew McCracken

Andrew McCracken was born on June 12, 1983 in Toledo, Ohio. He grew up in a small town of Ottawa Lake, Michigan not far from the Michigan-Ohio Border attending Whiteford Agricultural Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, respectively. Upon coming to Alma College he eventually decided on a major in Psychology with Math and Philosophy minors to supplement it. He also got involved with many campus activities like WQAC, ACUB, Psi Chi, Pi Mu Epsilon, Kiltie Band, Alpha Phi Omega, and a RA position. Within those activities he stayed active with radio shows, working as Technical Coordinator of ACUB for two years, as well as serving as WQAC's News and Sports Director & Business Director; he has also been hired as President of



ACUB and General Manager of WQAC for the 2004-2005 academic year.

His body type has been described to him by friends as that of Captain Kirk; he does not know if that is a compliment yet. He likes the movie *Dogma*, as well as any movies by Kevin Smith, Guy Richie, or Quentin Tarantino. He enjoys the musical stylings of *Something Corporate*, has read *The Lost World* by Michael Crichton more times than he can remember, and loves to watch Woody Allen movies. He digs Hawaiian shirts and Buddy Christ, as well as London, England and Jager Bombs and German Beer. Mr. McCracken is a huge fan of *Calvin and Hobbes* and was even dubbed "Spaceman Spiff" at his initiation, which he dug like a hole.

**Andrew 'Spaceman Spiff' McCracken
Initiated Winter 2004**

Adam Bradley leaves... 2003

Dear Brothers,

Well, I bet you are wondering about this letter. Well, due to an increase in tuition and a desire to not become a teacher, I have decided to no longer pursue an Alma College education. At the end of Spring Term, I am going to be joining the ranks of alumni Sinfonians, which means that I will also have to take up the challenge that I presented in my Historian letter. At the current time, I do not know where I want to transfer to; I only know that I want to try my hand at accounting. Hopefully, I can find another school that has a Sinfonia Chapter. If not, maybe I



can find a place with enough interest to either start a new chapter or revive an inactive one. Who knows? I do have some experience with the Colony program, after all.

During my one year as a member of the Iota Alpha Chapter, I had the "honor" of being one of five guys fighting to keep the chapter from going under. Although this meant that I had to go to MSU every week Fall Term, it also meant that I got to immerse myself in a cause worth fighting for. As historian this term, I also had the privilege of trying to figure out what everything that we kept meant, who was in the pictures in the room, and although I didn't figure it out, where that dang can of beans came from. It was also fun getting introduced to those brothers that made it back for Homecoming. Hopefully, wherever I go, I will be able to make it back for Homecoming and see how this new group of guys is doing.

Once a Sinfonian, Always a Sinfonian,

Adam 'Solomon' Bradley

Singing Valentines

On Friday February 12th the brothers of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia traveled the campus, delivering singing valentines. Around twenty singing valentines were sold to Alma College ladies.

Door to door, dorm to dorm we went, handing out flowers, singing "Earth Angel," "In the Still of the Night," and the ever present "Serenade to a Girl." Not an eye (or seat) was dry when the PMA boys were done. Newberry Hall heaved a collective sigh as the brothers left. Heads popped out of doors and windows as the dark-suited Sinfonians passed by.

Several active brothers were joined by more than half of the new pledge class to renew Phi Mu Alpha's greatest fundraiser, the first fundraiser of its type for the current members. Due to the popularity of the event we expect to do it again next year. Happy Valentines!

Wilson 'Wolf' Nichols

The Alpha Theta Class



Music Ensembles 2003

It's almost that time again when all of the Alma College Music Ensembles scramble to get their acts together! I can tell you that every ensemble is planning on a great end-of-the-year performance. The Jazz Ensemble is revving up for its concert and following on the next day the Alma College Jazzfest. Featured pieces include *Told You So*, *Big Swing Face*, *Misty*, and *Song of India*. The Alma Choirs combine with the Alma Symphony Orchestra for its end-of-the-year extravaganza to perform Haydn's *Creation*. Featured soloists tell the story from Genesis as the world was created following with choruses from the Choirs and from the Orchestra. The Chorale and the Women's Glee performed at their "Love Song Waltzes" concert on Valentines Day. The concert was a hit as it was an "appetizer" prior to a late dinner for couples. The Alma Choir returned from its Spring Break Tour on the east coast and had their Post-Tour Concert for the Alma community to enjoy. David Zerbe takes his skills to the Alma Kiltie Winds for its concert. Music performed will include Grainger's *Irish Tune of Danny Boy*, feature the percussion section in Robert W. Smith's *Africa*, Joplin's *Elite Syncopations*, and will feature some small ensembles including a trombone quartet performing the *Russian Sailor Dance*.

Also, as a side note to the Kiltie Band, the Kiltie Band's uniform drive has been a success. This uniform drive was kicked off near the end of the marching season and its goal was to collect \$15,000. This goal was met and the new tartan has been ordered. Around 70 new kilts will be made for next fall. This means that the entire Kiltie Band will be in traditional Alma Tartan kilts. It is an exciting time for the Kiltie Band as they make their way as a premier liberal arts ensemble. Finally, David Zerbe works to perfection as the Percussion Ensemble gets ready for its end of the year "smash" performing pieces including Gillingham's *Paschal Dances*, Ravel's *String Quartet No. 4 in F*, and Becker's *Charleston Capers*.

Tim 'T-Boner' Ricci

Historian's Corner 2003

Brothers, with the ending of the previous school year, the Iota Alpha Chapter will be comprised of men initiated either in the Winter 2002, Fall 2002, or Winter of 2003. As you can notice from the dates mentioned, it appears as if the chapter has had a changing of the guard, which isn't a bad thing. However, from a historian point of view, things could be much better. Unfortunately for us, when we went through all the miscellaneous junk, whoops...I mean souvenirs from over the years, we had no clue what most of it was or meant. As historian this past term, I tried to tackle the enormous responsibility of trying to solve the riddle of some of the various items that could have a historical explanation. However, it was too large. So I decided to limit myself to a few different projects. One of the projects I completed was an online version of our Family Boards. As the only active God this term, I felt someone had to remember all the families, not just that one family that the rest of the actives belonged to. Hopefully, this project will make it to the Chapter Website.

Another project I decided to get started deals with the pictures our chapter has collected over the years as well as trying to make sure we had pictures from this term. I started this project by taking a large stack of around 400 pictures (this was just one large stack that was lying around on a shelf) and started scanning them into my personal computer as JPEG files. I have sorted these pictures into 2 groups; those that were blank on the reverse side and those with something written on the back to help in identifying what was pictured. One item to assist in this endeavor was the purchase of a digital



camera from Brother Bryan's father. From now on, the Chapter Historian will be able to take digital pictures and then transfer them to computer instead of sitting down and scanning for hours.

Alumni Brothers, here is the part that directly concerns you. As of next year, the entire chapter will be composed of sophomores and juniors, many of whom have barely met any alumni. The first task I charge you with is to come back to Alma and visit. If this is not physically feasible (for those of you who may be scattered throughout the country, and not you guys that live within an hour or two of Alma), I ask you to email or write the chapter and introduce yourself. It occurs to me that newly initiated brothers describe themselves to the Alumni, but Alumni rarely give background about themselves to the Collegiate members. That is task number one.

Task number two is best accomplished with task number one. I charge every alumni member to help us piece together our chapter's history. When you visit, and this is not an "if" you visit mind you, take a look at some of the souvenirs that we have found and help us figure out, first what they are, then why we should keep them. Also, another thing I hope to have happen is to have some of these recently scanned pictures put up on the Website with a spot for Alums to go through and explain who is in the picture and why it was taken.

So you have your mission, and when you accept it, our chapter will become more aware of its history. It will also become a better chapter to not have to repeat the same mistakes that might have been made in the past but ones that the current actives do not know about.

Adam 'Solomon' Bradley

Website Moved!

Recently, the Iota Alpha chapter finally moved their website over to it's new location located at 'www.sinfonian.com'. With that in place, it will be updated much more frequently as time goes on.

If you would like to change your mailing address for future publications, you may update it on the website on the

alumni pages (at the bottom of the page). In the near future, we are looking to integrate a database onto the site that will allow people to log in, receive member only information, and change their information on the site in real time!

If you have any suggestions to make the site better drop us an email!

Joey 'Wallrus' Martin