Convention Under the Arch

The 62nd National Convention of Alpha Rho Chi, held March 19-22, 2009 in St. Louis, was the second-largest on record, attended by nearly 200 people.

On the first night of Convention brothers were already climbing the walls. The City Museum’s extensive collections of salvaged architectural ornament alone would have been an impressive setting for the Convention’s welcome reception. However, these stately works of stone were content to serve as counterpoint to a multistory architectural fantasy of catwalks, tunnels and slides that wove in and out of the former shoelace factory. On arrival, brothers immediately started exploring the structure, encountering both new and familiar faces in unexpected places for hours.

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J. Scott MacKay Awarded Alpha Rho Chi Silver Medal

The 62nd National Convention voted to honor J. Scott MacKay with the Alpha Rho Chi Silver Medal, its highest honor for fraternal service. Brother MacKay is the 17th member to be honored with a silver medal. The medal was presented to Brother MacKay at the annual awards banquet March 21, 2009.

Brother MacKay was initiated to Alpha Rho Chi at the University of Illinois in 1981 and helped steer the chapter as Worthy Architect during a dark period. In the early 1980s, the Anthemos chapter house suffered severe damage due to a burst pipe that flooded the ground level. The catastrophe subsequently caused the floor to collapse into the basement below. It is hard to imagine that a college student would be able to help lead the chapter through this massive disaster. However, the house was not lost, and the chapter recovered.

One of the ways the chapter survived was to admit women into the chapter. Anthemos was the last chapter to go coed. As Worthy Architect, Brother MacKay led the chapter courageously after it made the controversial decision, despite dissent from some active and alumni brothers.

Upon graduation from the University of Illinois, Brother MacKay remained involved with the Anthemos Alumni Association, and was soon elected to serve on the Anthemos Control Corporation, the holding company that manages the chapter house. He was at the helm of this body when the house underwent a major renovation, which brought the house up to code.

It was at this time, Brother MacKay turned his sights at national service. Elected as Worthy Grand Estimator in 1986, he stressed that the Grand Council should operate transparently, opening the financial records to all interested brothers. Following his term as WGE, MacKay also served as Worthy Grand Scribe and twice as Grand Advisor. His tenure as a member of the Grand Council was only exceeded by three others in Alpha Rho Chi's history (Dwight “Pop” Ely, Verle Annis, and Richard E. Murray, Jr.).

MacKay is credited for helping shape the Alpha Rho Chi Leadership Conference into what it is today. Although the notion of holding a conference to enhance leadership skills in our members had been discussed for years, it was under his leadership that the idea stopped being an out-of-reach dream and became a reality.

One of the most memorable contributions that Brother MacKay made to the fraternity was a leadership skills workshop that he gave based on Wess Robert’s book Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun. For the 2001 conference, MacKay showed up at Anthemos chapter house with a veritable arsenal of medieval weaponry to enhance the message. Dressed in a kilt, he instructed each attendee to choose their weapon. After they did so, they gathered around a bonfire for a fireside chat, much like the Huns would have done during Attila’s time. To spread the message beyond the fireside, MacKay wrote a series of articles based on this topic, published in The Archi and Alpha Rho Chi Letter and distributed directly to interested brothers.

A registered architect in four states, MacKay operates a private practice in architectural technical services out of Marengo, Illinois. He and his wife, Dawn Marie, spend much of their time tending to their new horses.

Other National Awards

These winners of APX national awards were announced at this year’s awards banquet at the 62nd National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri.

- **George “So” Whitten Scholastic Achievement Award** and the **Alpha Rho Chi National Service Award**
  - Dinocrates Chapter, University of Texas, Austin

- **Alumni Association of the Year**
  - Anthemos Alumni Association

- **John Ross Scholarship**
  - Jennifer Rearich
    - Satyros Chapter, Arizona State University
Another highlight was the evening’s White Rose Formal, held at the Tallahassee Country Club. The evening of dinner, dancing, and tributes featured a moving memorial to the dearly departed Ronald Grogan, the former WGAA and Grand Lecturer who was instrumental in the founding of Seshait Chapter.

Saturday was a relaxed day of barbecuing and fun at the park, with the brothers all basking in the fellowship.

As everyone departed Sunday, we each pledged a renewed commitment to Seshait and the Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity as a whole.

Meanwhile in Blacksburg, Metagenes actives and alumni celebrated their chapter’s 40th anniversary at Virginia Tech. A full day’s events began with a tour of Tech’s architecture buildings, Cowgill Hall and Burchard Hall (both named for brothers). A midday picnic was followed by a banquet on campus in the evening.

Several national officers and guests from as far as Arizona attended. The most honored guests were Troy A. Watson, a founder of Metagenes, and Allen R. Carney, alumnus of Kallikrates at Virginia.

In 1968, while on summer break, T. A. Watson discovered Carney’s architectural practice in his hometown and soon became Carney’s unpaid assistant. One day when T. A. expressed his desire for greater fellowship in the architecture program, Brother Carney told him about Alpha Rho Chi. Arrangements were made for T. A. and his roommate, Mark Kavanaugh, to attend Convention that winter in Columbus. The two were surprised on arrival with an offer to be initiated. Becoming Alpha Rho Chi’s first members at Virginia Tech, they would soon recruit the other charter members of Metagenes Chapter.

On April 3-5, 2009, the brothers of Seshait Chapter gathered in Tallahassee to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the founding of Seshait Chapter and the 95th anniversary of Alpha Rho Chi.

Brothers came from as far away as Detroit, California, and Washington, DC. One of the highlights of the weekend was the debut of the Phi Line, the newest brothers of the Seshait Chapter. The debut was a wonderful and moving tribute to the history of the chapter and a uniquely FAMU celebration that moved several of the founders of the chapter to tears.

On April 19, 2009, as this issue was being readied for press, the Sostratus Chapter of Alpha Rho Chi was installed at the Andronicus chapter house in Los Angeles. Congratulations to our new brothers at Washington State University. The next issue of the Alpha Rho Chi Letter will feature the new chapter.
Business sessions began early the next morning. Once the Cleisthenes and Cossutius Alumni Associations were officially recognized and other delegates were seated, 31 chapters and alumni associations were represented at Convention – the greatest number in the fraternity’s history. Scott Strnad (Anthemios) and Robert Ford (Apollodorus) were elected as the convention’s president and secretary, respectively. Rounding out the convention officers were Michael Ellars (Andronicus) as parliamentarian and Nathan Steeber (Rabirius) serving as sergeant-at-arms.

The Convention moved through its business at an efficient pace over the two days. Although the Convention spent time to discuss weighty issues such as the work of the Branding Committee, the work was punctuated with recesses for tours of the landmark Old Courthouse and newly constructed Busch Stadium. The business ended on a high note with the acceptance of the petition of Sostratus Colony at Washington State University to become the next new chapter of Alpha Rho Chi.

This year’s annual awards banquet was filled with memorable moments. Marking the creation of the Kenneth Kohlen Memorial Faculty Advisor Award, Shawna and Ryan Upp presented a moving tribute to the late Brother Kohlen. Advisor to Daedalus Chapter at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Kohlen’s example demonstrated the impact faculty can provide to extend education beyond the classroom and shape the lives of students. As guests of Daedalus Chapter, Brother Kohlen’s widow and daughter were present to accept a painting by Vern Swansen from the chapter and the gratitude of the entire fraternity.

In another special moment, WGA Vicki Horton presented the Alpha Rho Chi Silver Medal on behalf of the assembled Convention to J. Scott MacKay, Anthemios Alumnus and former Worthy Grand Scribe. Past silver medal recipients Stephen Janick (Iktinos) and Charles Nickel (Demetrios) were on hand to congratulate Bro. MacKay.
Brother Robert Ivy, FAIA (Imhotep honorary) concluded the banquet by speaking on “High Value Design.” His presentation included examples of design solutions to problems at the scale of industrial design, architecture, and global urbanism. Not surprisingly, the Editor in Chief of Architectural Record challenged designers to better communicate the value of their creations to their clients and the broader community. Although architects may speak the language of design, they must translate it into quantifiable benefits such as profitability for the client or improved health and well-being for the users.

Summary of Convention Business

62-01 Motion to order of Convention business in Art. 1 §02 of the APX By-laws replacing suggestions for future locations with a report of the Convention Director. Passed

62-02 Motion to fix cross-reference in Art. XIII §04 of the APX By-Laws. Passed

62-03 Motion to require 60 days advance notice before Convention can raise dues (Art. XV §03 of APX By-laws). Passed

62-04 Motion to add “violations of the law which threaten the existence of the fraternity” to Art. XVIII §01 of APX By-laws as cause for suspending a chapter or alumni association. Passed

62-05 Motion to amend order of business at future Conventions (Art. 1 §02 of the APX By-laws). Out of order

62-06 Motion to bestow Alpha Rho Chi Silver Medal to Brother J. Scott MacKay. Passed

62-07 Motion to establish Kenneth Kohlen National Faculty Advisor Award. Passed

62-08 Motion to establish an official description of Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity. Withdrawn

62-09 Motion to organize a competition for a new official logo. Withdrawn

62-10 Motion to extend the Branding Committee until next Convention. Passed

62-11 Motion to accept Sostratus colony’s petition for affiliation as a chapter of Alpha Rho Chi. Passed

Elections
Scott Swanson (Daedalus) was elected as Worthy Grand Associate Architect.

Erin Froschheiser (Pytheos) was elected as Worthy Grand Estimator.

Both ran without opposition and were elected by acclamation.

Next Stop: Richmond
March 25–28, 2010
Meet the New Grand Council Members

Erin Froschheiser was elected as Alpha Rho Chi’s next Worthy Grand Estimator. Although she does not take office until July, for the past year she’s been learning the ins and outs of the national fraternity’s financial operations as Associate WGE.

Erin graduated from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln with an Master of Architecture degree in 2003. As an active, she served as Worthy Architect of Pytheos Chapter. Since graduation, she has served as the Pytheos Alumni president and for several years as an APX regional director. In 2008, Pythoes chapter recognized her service with the Dwight Palmer “Pop” Ely Award.

A registered architect in Nebraska, Erin works for FHA Architects, an Omaha firm specializing in the restaurant industry. She earned her LEED accreditation at the beginning of the year. In addition to her professional and fraternal commitments, Erin finds time to volunteer as a fund raiser for a local high school and as a leader in her Catholic church.

Scott Swanson was elected as Worthy Grand Associate Architect. Initiated as a member of Daedalus Chapter in 2000, Scott credits spending spring break at Convention in Lincoln for teaching him that Alpha Rho Chi is a national fraternity.

Scott graduated from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 2001 with a major in City and Regional Planning.

Scott served over 4 years as a forestry technician and wildland firefighter in Tulelake, California. He swapped coasts in 2007, taking Department of Interior jobs closer the nation’s capital. Until recently, he served as a public affairs specialist for the Eastern States Wild Horse and Burro Program, working to get private citizens to adopt wild horses and donkeys into private care.

For several years Scott has served as the fraternity’s National Director. During his tenure, Scott’s leadership is credited with raising the standards and effectiveness of APX’s regional directors by giving them increased support, training and direction.

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All In the Family

Before enrolling in architecture at Virginia Tech, Allison Miller already had a connection to Alpha Rho Chi. Both her parents, Jeannette Quon and Todd Miller, were alumni of the University of Southern California and Andronicus Chapter. Initiated by Metagenes Chapter on December 5, Allison became the fraternity’s first “double legacy.”

Unusual legacies are not new to Metagenes. David Zurek and Amy Zurek Carter are an earlier example of father-daughter brotherhood. The chapter also had a pair of fraternal (not identical) twins in Julie and Jane Koehler.

Allison Miller went home over winter break to show her parents/brothers her new letters.

An issue The Rise will be published this Spring with a collection of esoteric articles. Copies will be distributed to each chapter and alumni association. Additional copies will be available from the Grand Council for members on request. Contact the Grand Lecturer glec@alpharhochi.org to contribute to upcoming issues.
THE ALPHA RHO CHI FOUNDATION:
• A NOT-FOR-PROFIT philanthropic organization
• Dedicated to funding the professional growth and vitality of Alpha Rho Chi
• Dedicated to expanding Alpha Rho Chi’s presence in architectural education and research.
• Awards scholarships to members of Alpha Rho Chi
• Sponsors professional programs and publications
• Underwrites the Alpha Rho Chi Bronze Medal program
• Promotes new and innovative educational opportunities
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• Supports participation of professionals at academic and other venues, to expand the educational experience and the interaction among practitioners, educators and students
• Underwrites the cost of professional programs/educational experiences at the National Convention
• Provides matching funds to active chapters and colonies for professional programs

VERLE ANNIS APX ENDOWMENT PROGRAM
• Funds the promotion of professional achievement awards and research
• Underwrites the Alpha Rho Chi Medal program
• Supports for research and dissemination of knowledge through publication of professional papers and articles

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