



# THE SOPHON

*Michigan Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi*

PHI KAPPA PSI

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SPRING 2019

## HOUSE CORPORATION CONTINUES TO RENOVATE THE CHAPTER HOUSE

*Your Support Is Needed for Safety Improvements*

Brothers, this last year has been very busy for Michigan Alpha. Due to some issues with a contractor and extended negotiations with the city for permits, our relatively small 2017 summer remodel project turned into a massive undertaking in 2018. On top of redoing the original work, reinforcing the floors, we've added a full-house fire suppression system, handicapped accessible bathrooms and entry ramps, and a few other improvements. To accomplish the extra work, during the fall semester we were forced to sublease 1437 Washtenaw at great thanks to the men from Phi Delta Theta. Our students are now settling back into our home at 630 Oxford. Membership numbers are strong at roughly 100 men, we have a full chapter house next year, and as you will read in the president's report philanthropy events and scholastic achievements remain a focus as well.

### DONATE TO MICHIGAN ALPHA

The extra house projects leave us needing to fundraise roughly \$100,000 and we are asking for alumni support. Please see the opportunities to the right for donations.

### Mail Checks:

Michigan Alpha  
Payment Processing  
P.O. Box 2187  
Columbus, GA 31902-2187

### Donate Online:

Make Recurring or  
one-time gifts at  
[tinyurl.com/MichiganAlpha](http://tinyurl.com/MichiganAlpha)

### HOMECOMING WEEKEND

We are excited to host events during Homecoming this fall. Please mark your calendars for the weekend of October 5 as our Michigan football team takes on the Iowa Hawkeyes. We are grateful for your support and encouragement and look forward to serving you as we prepare for another fantastic year for Michigan Alpha.

Live Ever,

**Michigan Alpha House Corporation**  
**Board of Directors**

## MICHIGAN ALPHA - FRIENDSHIPS AND SPACEX

Spotlight on Michael Ellis '02



After being recruited by **Brian May '99** during his senior year of high school, **Michael Ellis '02** developed close bonds with many Phi Psis during the summer leading into freshman year. The decision to pick Michigan Alpha was easy after that. "By the time I got on campus, my friends on campus were all Phi Psis." As an active, Michael continued his close friendships with brothers, many who had a strong impact on him. "To name a few, **Jared Stasik '01** for his integrity and discipline; **Nick Stieber '03** for being loyal and reliable; and **Lou VanHout '03** for his optimism, authenticity, and work ethic." Despite living 2,000+ miles away and having a young, growing family and demanding career, Michael has stayed in touch with about 30 brothers through fantasy football, weddings, group texts, and miscellaneous adventures.

Looking back on his Michigan Alpha memories, spring break in Acapulco, Mexico with brothers sticks out as a favorite. After being entered by his brothers in a "shake your butt" contest, Michael went home the winner of both the contest and the heart of his future wife. "I guess you could say I didn't half-ass it." The 2003 Michigan (#5) vs. Ohio State (#4) tailgate in 2003 with brothers is a close second favorite memory for Michael. "I remember rushing the field after the game with all the rest of the stadium after beating Ohio State 35-21!"

After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in aerospace engineering, Michael took a full-time position at Raytheon Missile Systems in Tucson, Arizona, working as an engineer on the Tomahawk Missile Program. After three years there, he transferred to Raytheon Space  
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# MICHIGAN ALPHA - FRIENDSHIPS AND SPACEX

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and Airborne Systems in El Segundo, California, where he worked full-time as a designer in electro-optical infrared camera systems and was the product line manager for their cryocooler technology (fancy name for space refrigerator). After finishing his MBA in 2013, Michael had a calling for something more entrepreneurial and ended up in a program management position for a small tech company specializing in electronics, something he knew very little about the time. As the space electronics business lead, he grew their revenue in space by an order of magnitude, doubling the size of the company, and the revenue on the space side grew by an order of magnitude. Michael recalls, "The successes and wins were just enough to keep me thirsting for something bigger and better. I wanted to make a larger impact on the world and I didn't feel like I was going to be able to do that one small contract at a time." In 2015 Michael left that company and became a mission manager at SpaceX. At SpaceX he leads and manages the U.S. government satellite launches. His team was responsible for the first competitive launch contract in over a decade, resulting in the successful launch of the first GPS III satellite in 2018. The progress made in his time at SpaceX has significantly reduced the U.S. government's (and taxpayers) cost to access space. At SpaceX, Michael enjoys the fast-paced culture and continuous drive to push boundaries and technology for the security of the United States and a viable future for mankind. "Next stop...Mars."

Michael and his wife, Megan, live in Hawthorne, California, with their two daughters, Emma (4) and Paige (2). In his spare time, he stays active with sports, hiking, or anything outdoors. You can connect with Michael via email at [ellis.michaelj@gmail.com](mailto:ellis.michaelj@gmail.com).



*Brothers celebrate a 7-6 victory over Theta Chi in the 85th annual Michigan Mudbowl.*

## MICHIGAN SUCCEEDS IN CLASSROOM, COMMUNITY, AND ATHLETICS

Following the regional officer training in January, Academic Chairman **Carter Dunaway '17** implemented several changes and programs. He reports he is "receiving lots of great feedback from brothers collecting points and working hard to improve upon their GPAs from last year. The scholarship incentive for good performance has lit a fire under the belly of the brotherhood and everyone is trying hard to relieve some of the financial burden of dues and college life."

On the philanthropic side of things, the chapter once again had a successful fall, raising upwards of \$900, mostly from the annual Hot Diggity Dog Hot Dog eating competition event that took place during Parent's Weekend and resulted in the fall 2016 PC team of **Aidan Birnbaum '16**, **Teddy Joaquin '16**, **Connor Mulliken '16**, and **Christopher Schwarzenegger '16** bringing home their third consecutive win. The winter semester has featured several philanthropic events from a 50/50 bracket challenge to a night at Scorekeeper's Bar & Grill during Mom's Weekend and even a 5K. All these events have raised over \$4,000 for Charley's Fund, a charity started by the family of **Sam Seckler '17** with a mission to accelerate the development of life-saving treatments for Duchenne muscular dystrophy, a rare genetic disorder that affects Sam's younger brother, Charley.

Throughout the fall, none more noteworthy than the 7-6 victory over Theta Chi in the 85th annual Mudbowl played in front of a few thousand on the first Saturday of November. The win was the first in the mud for Michigan Alpha since 2014 and featured players from all four grades led by senior quarterback **Tyler Tick '16** and head coach **Greg Schwartz '17**. The Phi Psi hockey team continued their athletic success on the ice the weekend of April 5-7 in the annual Freeze the Puck game against FIJI. The second semester was sprinkled with unique events like Mom's Weekend, Formal in Chicago, Dad's Weekend, and the ever-growing tradition of a brotherhood pig roast.

Overall, it has been a great year for Michigan Alpha. Despite challenges on the housing front and the constant pressures from the university and the outside world, the chapter has persevered and once again found success in the community, the classroom, and the athletic fields. Most importantly, the brotherhood has grown and learned together. New leadership has taken an initiative to improve many of the areas (including alumni relations) in which the Michigan Alpha Chapter has fallen off in recent years. We hope you enjoy the refresh in this *Sophon* and be on the lookout for our new-and-improved website.

Fraternally,  
**Eli Snyder '17**  
President, Michigan Alpha

From the park to the gridiron, Phi Psis pursued a wide variety of athletic competitions





The 2017 PC pictured on the front steps of the Phi Delta Theta house they occupied during the first semester while the chapter house was under repair.



Over a dozen of the 2016 PC on the beaches of Barcelona where they all met up during Spring Break.



The seniors at dinner with their mothers during Mom's Weekend, April 22-24.



A large part of the brotherhood came together for a relaxing afternoon and a pig roast in the fall.

# Welcome, New Members

## Fall 2018

**Nicholas Andoni**  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

**Owen Dwyer**  
Indian Mills, N.J.

**David Kasabian**  
Fair Lawn, N.J.

**Keaton Bell**  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

**Alexander Emde**  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

**Cameron Miller**  
Chicago, Ill.

**Andrew Cargill**  
Bronxville, N.Y.

**Brendan Flynn**  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

**Tyler Robert**  
San Diego, Calif.

**Lucas Carpenter**  
Brighton, Mich.

**Noah Fritz**  
Birmingham, Mich.

**Zachary Steinfeld**  
Los Angeles, Calif.

**William Conway**  
Chicago, Ill.

**Wesley Hobson**  
Basking Ridge, N.J.

**Drew Siskind**  
Weston, Fla.

**Raymond Diaz**  
San Francisco, Calif.

**Thomas Hughes**  
San Jose, Calif.

**Addison Wysota**  
Weston, Conn.

## Winter 2019

**Cameron Behr**  
Evanston, Ill.

**Ryan McCurry**  
Solon, Ohio

**Daniel Serra**  
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

**Andrew Connolly**  
Wilton, Conn.

**Riley Moore**  
Bridgewater, N.J.

**Ryan Toomey**  
Nashville, Tenn.

**Michael Geraci**  
Cornwall, N.Y.

## 2019 EXECUTIVE BOARD

President  
**Eli Snyder '17**

Alumni Relations Chairman  
**Miguel Burelli '17**

Vice President  
**Deven Pathak '17**

Social Chairman  
**Addison Muir '17**

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**Blake Fisher '17**

Treasurer  
**Cyrus Vahabzadeh '17**



# THE SOPHON

*Michigan Alpha Chapter of Phi Kappa Psi*

Phi Kappa Psi  
University of Michigan  
P.O. Box 442100  
Lawrence, KS 66044-2100

*Address Service Requested*

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*Attention: This newsletter is intended for alumni and parents. If your son is currently attending the University of Michigan, he will receive a copy at the chapter house. If he has graduated, please send us his permanent address to update our records. Thank you.*

## SAVE THE DATE

HOMECOMING  
OCTOBER 5  
MICHIGAN VS. IOWA

**VISIT US  
ONLINE**



Facebook:  
Search "Phi Kappa Psi  
Fraternity, Michigan  
Alpha alumni"



Chapter Website:  
[www.michiganhipsi.org](http://www.michiganhipsi.org)