

The Back Bay Beta

Beta Upsilon Chapter

Beta Theta Pi Fraternity • Massachusetts Institute of Technology

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

FALL 1997

MIT Reviews Alcohol Policy In Wake Of Recent Tragedy

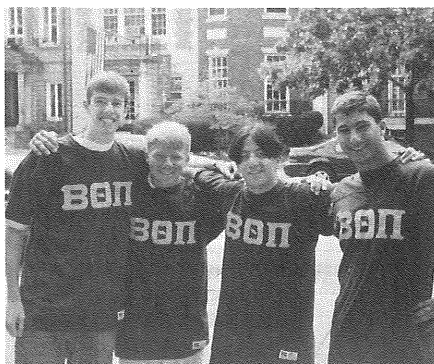
As reported in the national media and elsewhere in this issue of *The Back Bay Beta*, an MIT freshman died in September as a result of acute alcohol poisoning.

The loss of a student, and a first-year student in particular, has raised many questions within the MIT administration, the faculty, and the student body on the need to examine the problem of increased alcohol consumption among college students, as well as the orientation students receive when they first arrive at the Institute. There may be major changes to the current residence/orientation week, effective as early as this coming year.

The best way for me to communicate to you the most up-to-date information is to have a special insert to this newsletter. This will allow the main newsletter to go to press on schedule, with the insert added after my analysis of decisions made at an important November 19 faculty meeting.

Proud to be a Beta.

Yours in _ kai _,
Mike Johnson '80
House Corporation President



New pledges! Left to right: Andrew Hogue, John Beckos, Dave Chau, and Russ Spieler. Story on page three.

Beta Theta Pi Brotherhood Knows No Bounds

Traveling to convention in Washington, DC, this summer with our sophomore delegate, Randall Graebner '00, I thought about what it means to be a member of Beta Theta Pi. I listened to speeches from, among others, General Secretary Jerry M. Blesch, Centre '60, and former General Secretary B. Hume Morris, Centre '68. I attended sessions in which many of the policies of our fraternity were mapped out for the coming year, and I brushed up on my lore, songs, and Beta traditions. But perhaps most importantly, I had a great time with Betas from our chapter at MIT and Betas from all over Beta's broad domain. In one particularly memorable incident, the president of the South Dakota chapter reported that their house had been destroyed by floods. The next day, we passed around a hat to raise money to help rebuild the chapter house, and chapters from all over the country and Canada offered gifts and assistance.

In the last week of September, a Phi Gamma Delta pledge at MIT drank himself to death and sent shock waves throughout the Greek community. We held a meeting at the house as soon as we heard the news and talked about what had happened. Needless to say, people were shocked and confused. After all, we at MIT are accustomed to feeling ourselves isolated from the senseless disasters that befall students at other colleges. But this incident has reminded us that we are not immune to these situations and that we must take precautions to preserve the brotherhood we hold so dear.

Our hearts, of course, go out to the pledge who died so senselessly. The tragedy has forced the brothers and pledges of Beta Upsilon to reassess the valuable things in their lives. In the aftermath of the

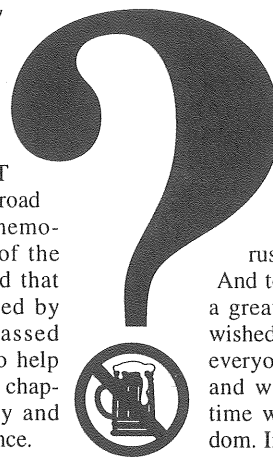
accident, the Interfraternity Council voted to disallow alcohol at all fraternity events. At our meeting that weekend we talked about what to do in response to this decision. Could we have a brotherhood without alcohol? I recalled the words of Sigma Phi Epsilon's president in the *Tech* last year that people were kidding themselves if they

thought fraternities weren't based on beer. What would pub night be without beer? Could we still gather on Thursday night? Could we still share a brotherhood without intoxication? Without hesitation, the answer from the brothers and pledges came back: "Yes." So we had pub night without beer and the rush women's dinner without a bar.

And to no one's surprise, everyone had a great time. I cannot say that no one wished there were some drinks to make everyone a little more merry, however, and we certainly look forward to the time when we regain our former freedom. In the meantime, though, the chapter is strong. Alcohol is not the glue that binds us together; it is merely something many of us enjoy. In times of such crises, however, people fall back on what is really important in their lives. The Betas at MIT have chosen their friendships in the house.

Convention was an excellent experience. I learned a lot about what it means to be a member of Beta Theta Pi. We are a brotherhood that knows no bounds—neither national, racial, ethnic, nor economic. Brothers will be there in times of disaster, and they will be there when your lifestyle is threatened. For the bonds of Beta transcend the friendships of convenience and social climbing. As president of the chapter I can say that brotherhood at Beta Upsilon is alive and well. I hope all those who read this brief letter will take a moment to recall

(continued on page three)



Brother Reflects On Alcohol Use And Abuse

On the night of Friday, September 26, 1997, Scott Krueger, a pledge at Phi Gamma Delta (Fiji) at MIT, drank a great deal of beer and rum, ultimately slipping into a coma. When his doctors disconnected him from life support systems the following Monday, he died. Scott was only 18 years old.

This tragic event was a shock to all of us here. I remember the sick feeling I got in my stomach when I saw Scott's picture in the paper and realized who he was. I met him when he came to the Beta house during rush this year, and just a month later he was dead. None of the goals, hopes, and aspirations he worked so hard for will ever be realized because of his actions on one night.

What made Scott's death even more dreadful was the way in which he died. I do not know how many times I have seen someone drink enough alcohol to pass out. I have done it myself at times. Not one of those times did the thought ever cross my mind that the person lying unconscious before me might not wake up. Never have I thought that I could actually harm myself by

drinking too much. This scares me. All the times I have heard about people dying from drinking too much, I never considered that it truly does happen.

I am sure that when Scott was doing shots of rum and chasing them with swigs of beer, he never considered that it might have a fatal outcome. Even when he was getting sick in his room later in the evening, he may not have understood the seriousness of his situation. How often is such a scene repeated on college campuses (and elsewhere), although usually with less dire consequences? This is not responsible drinking, nor is it mature. Everyone who drinks owes it to himself to do it responsibly. In addition, leaving someone alone when he is drunk and getting sick or passed out is foolish. Unfortunately, Scott's friends discovered this the hard way.

In the wake of this tragedy, we must take a hard look at how and when we use alcohol—if at all. In the meantime, my heart goes out to Scott's family for the suffering they are enduring.

Wade Morehead '98

Beta Upsilon Continues Traditions Of Academic Success...

Beta continues our tradition of academic success as this term passes. Led by the ever-promising senior class, the juniors are expected to repeat their performance from last year. The transition to grades from pass/no-record is going smoothly for the sophomores, while the pledges are enjoying the transition to college classes without the stress of making grades.

The house trip to the state park in Worcester went well despite the early loss of our soda cooler. Everyone still had fun, including alumni Bob "Bocci" Ramstad '90 and Marshall "Boxer" Schnabel '95. More area alumni are encouraged to participate in this semiannual festival next spring.

Drew Mutch '98, Vice President

...And Civic Responsibility

The Beta Upsilon Chapter continues to show a strong sense of civic responsibility, as Betas take the time to serve the community this year. The extensive involvement of brothers exemplifies our enthusiasm to take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy each other's company while giving of ourselves to improve the community.

Excited to begin volunteering and with the assistance of Community Service Chair Steve Lefkowitz, Betas started early this year. Even before rush week ended, pledges and brothers alike participated in City Days, a campus-wide activity designed to provide a day of fun and learning for elementary school students. But this was only the beginning of our involvement. During Com-

munity Service Day of Greek Week, Betas enjoyed a day of service projects in and around the Boston area, offering assistance at such places as the Boston Aquarium and the Boston Guild for the Hearing Impaired. On an ongoing basis, volunteers act as teachers at the Edgerton Center, a weekly program involving technology-related projects for Cambridge children.

The Beta value of civic responsibility is as evident now as it ever was, and with the continued efforts of the house, the goodwill will no doubt continue into 1998 and beyond.

Yours in _ kai _,
Steve Lefkowitz '00

BΘΠ

BETA UPSILON ASSOCIATION

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HOUSE CORPORATION PRESIDENT

MICHAEL A. JOHNSON '80

HOUSE CORPORATION TREASURER

MICHAEL G. FEINSTEIN '82

...

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PLEDGE EDUCATOR

MATT GOLDMAN '98

HOUSE MANAGER

WADE MOREHEAD '98

RUSH CHAIRMEN

STEVE LEFKOWITZ '00
ROB TUNICK '00

ALUMNI SECRETARIES

JEFF REICHBACH '99
JEFF DARDARIAN '99

BΘΠ



Go, Beta rush!



Ready for a ride in the sleek red convertible.

Following Phi Gamma Delta Tragedy, Chapter Has A Successful Rush, But An Uncertain Future

Although the future of rush is looking uncertain at the moment following the death of a Fiji freshman, the brothers of Beta ran a successful '97 rush. The house was determined to bring in the best class possible through a strong summer rush with road trips to New York, New Jersey, Washington, DC, Detroit, and Chicago. Smaller bands of Betas made showings in Texas, California, and Seattle.

The events were much the same as in the previous few years. Friday evening is our house's chance to provide freshmen a tour of our beautiful brownstone while at the same time meeting the freshmen in a friendly atmosphere. Saturday was our annual alumni dinner. The weather provided the perfect atmosphere as Betas and soon-to-be-pledges launched lobsters into the sea. That night our party also proved to be a success as Betas and rush women entertained the incoming freshmen. Following Saturday's success, the majority of bids were given out by Sunday morning. By Wednesday afternoon, all of the 12 pledges had said the magic words, "I pledge."

Despite Beta's success, however, the

Interfraternity Council's rush was poor. This forced many house to reduce their standards and take in boarders. Much of this failure was blamed on a drinking incident at LSU, where a Sigma Alpha Epsilon pledge died of alcohol poisoning. Although many believed that it could not happen here, Scott Krueger, a Phi Gamma Delta pledge, recently died of alcohol poisoning after remaining in a comatose state for a few days. The MIT administration's recent decisions are leaning toward greater restrictions on fraternities and perhaps even eliminating the Greek system at MIT altogether. Needless to say, next year's rush will be tough as MIT is expecting a smaller class size due to Krueger's death. The future rush chairs will have their work cut out for them, but we're sure they'll rise to the occasion.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the alumni and parents who helped the house out during rush. With your help, the residents of 119 Bay State Road made this rush a year to remember.

Jeff Dardarian '99
Jeff Reichbach '99
Rush Chairs

Twelve Pledges Prepare To Join Beta Upsilon

As many of you know already, Beta Upsilon has 12 new pledges this year. We are about six weeks into the term, and they are already halfway through our pledge manual, *Son of the Stars*. In addition to the weekly pledge meetings, choristers Jaydeep Bardhan '00 and Alan Krasnick '00 have been holding separate meetings to teach Beta songs to our new pledges. Their efforts and the singing talents of the pledges were evident at the annual rush women's dinner, during their rendition of "Beta Sweetheart."

Looking toward the future, the pledges will need to concentrate on finishing their interviews with all of the actives. This may become their biggest obstacle. Other activities coming up are the pledge sneak (all details unknown, of course), the annual Christmas party, and pledge work week in the winter. As for sports, a number of the pledges are interested in playing IM hockey. We were unable to recruit more than a couple of the freshman class last year, so the hockey lovers in the house welcome the interest of this year's freshman class.

In general, I have high hopes for this year's pledge class and believe they will become a strong part of Beta Upsilon's future.

Yours in _ kai _ ,
Matt Goldman '98
Pledge Educator



Brotherhood Knows No Bounds

(continued from page one)

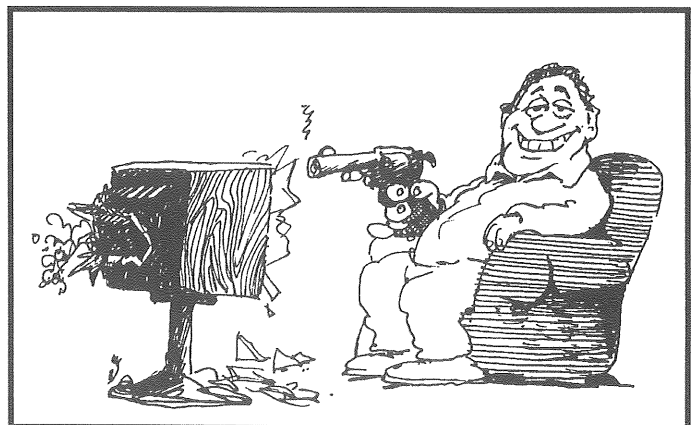
their times at the house and the trials they went through during their college years in which a Beta friendship pulled them through. If those experiences are many, as I'm sure they are, come by the house for our Christmas party in December, to the alumni party in the spring, or anytime you feel the urge, and you will be again welcomed with the Beta grip and a brotherly smile.

Proud to be a Beta.

Yours in _ kai _ ,
Nick Tornow '98

The winning caption will be printed in the next issue of **The Back Bay Beta**. Send your entry on a newsform to the address provided at the bottom of page four!

You supply the caption!



NBΘΠ NEWS

"Now that I have retired as founding district chief of Beta's District XXXVIII," writes WALT MASSEY '51, "I watch the 'ups' with pride and the 'downs' with sorrow as they occur in my district—the 'ups' being the many accomplishments of the chapters and the addition of the Lawrence Chapter, the one huge 'down' being the loss of the McGill Chapter (one day, hopefully, to return). I am currently appearing in the television series *Lassie*, on Animal Planet TV, as retired veterinarian Dr. Stuart. (I've finally gone to the dogs!) The show has been renewed for a total run of 65 episodes." Best wishes can be sent to 1951 Tupper St., Shaughnessy Village, Montreal H3H 1N6, CANADA.

BILL WIDNALL '59 (22 Summit Rd., Lexington, MA 02173) writes, "Four years ago (fall 1993) when President Clinton nominated (and the Senate confirmed) my wife, Sheila, to be Secretary of the Air Force, I retired from paid employment. It has been a very enjoyable four years. I have been playing the 'Dennis Thatcher' role, accompanying Sheila on many of her official visits and trips. It has been an exciting time in international affairs since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. I have particularly enjoyed visiting some of the newly freed countries in Central Europe, hearing firsthand the joy of these people to be free from Russian domination. We are so lucky to have been born in America. Sheila plans to resign her position this fall to return to academic life at MIT, so we will be back at our permanent residence in Lexington."

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN '82 (3 Harvard Dr., Bedford, MA 01730) is enjoying work in his new position at Oak Communications, a networking start-up in Acton, Massachusetts. He has two children, Ben (4)

and Samantha (1). Mike can be reached via e-mail at mikef@ma.ultranet.com.

Heart physician BOB LABARRE '83 receives mail at 7 Joann Circle, Westport, CT 06880. His e-mail address is LabarreMD@aol.com.

News will reach STEVE SILBERBERG '83 at 6061 Village Bend Dr., Apt. 1312, Dallas, TX 75206-3529.

"This is an excellent booklet," writes SNEHAL PATEL '85 of the recent alumni directory. "I wish I had it five years ago." Snehal's new address is 3 Lowlyn Rd., Westport, CT 06880. He is currently a strategic planner for Bayer Corporation.

MIKE RECHTIN '89 hangs his hat at 1648 N. Bissell St., Chicago, IL 60614. He works for the firm of Burke, Warren, Mackay & Serritella, P.C., and his e-mail address is mrechtin@msn.com.

ALEX CHACHKES '91 welcomes correspondence from friends at 95 Olive St., Apt. 2, New Haven, CT 06510. His e-mail address is thiisalex@aol.com.

The new environmental engineer of Malcom Pirnie, Inc. is DAVID LOCKWOOD '96 (292 Main St., Apt. 6H, White Plains, NY 10601). His e-mail address is dlockwood@pirnie.com.

DECEASED

We regret to inform you of the following deaths:

JOHN M. DOYLE '86
WARREN MURDOCK JR. '45

SEND IN YOUR NEWSFORM

When was the last time you sent in a newsform? Your brothers love to read about what's going on in your life. Include your fondest Beta memories, what Beta Theta Pi means to you, and how the brotherhood has enriched your life. The continued success of this newsletter is due, in part, to the participation of our alumni. Please take a moment to fill out your newsform and return it to the address provided at left. Write and let us know what you've been up to before the next issue of *The Back Bay Beta*.

With The Main House In Fine Shape,

Actives Focus Their Attention On The Annex

Greetings from your friendly house manager. As usual, work week in August this year put the main house back in order and looking splendid for rush. I believe the three new couches on the first floor were a key element in our getting 12 pledges from rush. Also, the new, leak-proof skylight above my loft in the best "closet" in the house is being enjoyed. Thanks should go to Drew Mutch '98 and Phillip LaFond '98 for their tremendous and unrelenting leadership during work week.

Because of the excellent condition of the main house, we have been able to focus our efforts on the annex over the course of the term. We hope our attentions will slow or reverse the decline of the old brownstone, beginning with the bathrooms. By the time pledge work week rolls around in January, I hope the annex will be ready for some major improvements rather than the cosmetic remedies typical of the week. Wish us luck.

Finally, I would like to thank the alumni (you know who you are) for the new full-size refrigerator/freezer in the kitchen. It replaces the old milk fridge and also allows us to keep ice for our beverages. We love it.

Wade Morehead '98
House Manager

*Congratulations go to
Walt Massey '51 for his
winning caption, selected
by our international staff of
professional adjudicators.*



*"No, you do not have a 'birdie.'
I'd have settled for a bogey 'FORE,'
thank you!"*

THE BACK BAY BETA

Published regularly by the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at MIT. News contributions, address changes, and photos are welcome and should be sent to Beta Theta Pi at MIT, Alumni Records Office, P.O. Box 390575, Cambridge, MA 02139-0007. Photos will be returned after use in the newsletter.