

# The Back Bay Beta

The Beta Upsilon Chapter  
of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity  
at the Massachusetts  
Institute of Technology

[www.beta-mit.org](http://www.beta-mit.org)

SPRING 2008

## Alumni Update: Building on a Solid Foundation

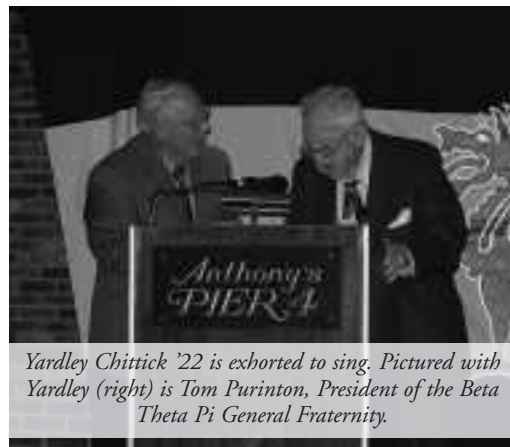
So much has happened since our last update it will be difficult to give all of it sufficient coverage. The biggest event was a dinner hosted by the general fraternity at Anthony's Pier 4 in Boston for all New England-area Betas, including all MIT alums. In October 2007, more than 100 Betas and guests gathered to reconnect and renew some Beta spirit. The highlights of the dinner included honoring the long service of Bob Danner '47 and John Lacy '42 to the Beta Upsilon Chapter. Both received Distinguished Service Awards from the general fraternity, with Roger Lacy '79 accepting on behalf of his father. Also, Yardley Chittick '22 regaled the crowd with his rendition of "Take Me Back to Tech," the old MIT "fight" song. Traveling the farthest was Alan "Tex" Laves '82, who came from Austin, Texas. All of the active Betas attended from the chapter, as did some recent alumni. Many other Betas from all eras attended, and a great time was had by all!

The alumni association continues to invest in renovating both chapter houses and providing a safer and enhanced environment for the active members. Although the houses are improving, there is a steady stream of projects to be done in order to keep the facilities in working order. One area of investment has been the dining infrastructure for the house. Some kitchen improvements were made. Also, new dining room tables were purchased that preserve the original design conceived by Steve Beeler '77 that has been in use since 1976. New chairs were purchased for both the dining room and the chapter room along with a new complement of

dishes, glasses, and flatware that allows the actives to dine as a group in the dining room for the first time in years. This was a fine complement to the new chef who took over after the retirement of the long-time Beta cook, Jim.

Additional investment is also taking place in the Annex, where some of the bathrooms are undergoing a long-overdue renovation. The main goal of this renovation is to maintain the facilities in working order rather than to dramatically improve them. More significant renovation will be considered in the future.

There has been a significant increase in the interaction between chapter officers and alumni  
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*Yardley Chittick '22 is exhorted to sing. Pictured with Yardley (right) is Tom Purinton, President of the Beta Theta Pi General Fraternity.*

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## Convention Delegate Discusses Proposed Changes to Ritual

As the Beta Upsilon delegate to the 168th General Convention of Beta Theta Pi, I had the undisputed privilege of helping to pass a number of revolutionary reforms to the code and ritual of our brotherhood. The most significant task before this year's delegation was reviewing the proposed changes to our ritual, as recommended by the ritual review task force, a committee that had been appointed by the 166th General Convention. These changes included the following: Reordering the physical layout of certain sections of the ritual book; including a standardized pledge father ceremony during the pledge period; adding an additional ceremony to the initiation rites; tastefully updating the flow of the story during the Wooglin and Dragon ceremonies; and including a glossary of unusual terms at the back of the book. Although there was much contention and debate, all of the proposed changes were approved for a trial period of one year. Correspondingly, each chapter will receive 10 paper copies of the revised ritual to use throughout this academic year. Upon final approval by the 169th General Convention, these provisional changes will become final, and a new set of bound ritual books will be printed and distributed to all of

the chapters of Beta Theta Pi.

On a contextual note, I am personally very pleased with the changes that have been implemented. The additional ceremonies all serve to illuminate important principles that have not been stressed enough in the past, and the editorial changes to the Wooglin and Dragon ceremonies make them both more deliberate in purpose and more compelling in content.

I would like to make it known, however, that I voted against the inclusion of a glossary of terms in our cherished ritual. This section merely provides the definitions for subjectively uncommon words found in the ritual text. I believe that its presence is beyond completely unnecessary, for it sullies the traditional gravity of the ritual and discourages personal intellectual discovery, thus conflicting with our purpose as an organization. If you would like to send me your thoughts on the matter, or ask me questions about the new ritual, my e-mail address is [vsinow22@mit.edu](mailto:vsinow22@mit.edu). As always, above and beyond, proud to be a Beta.

Yours in \_kai\_,  
Victor Sinow '08, Vice President  
Beta Upsilon Chapter

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## Brothers look forward to community service

The brothers of Beta Theta Pi are starting off on the right foot this fall with a strong line-up of community service events to come. As of this writing, the Friday before Halloween weekend will see a group of Betas shipping off to the Franklin Park Zoo to help with the Zoo Howl, an annual community outreach event that hosts various family activities. Brothers will be setting up and decorating the haunted maze this year.

On a larger scale, Beta is in the process of planning a fundraising event for the near future. Such an event has the potential to involve others in Beta's service goals, and all proceeds will be donated to the house's cause of choice.

Yours in \_kai\_,  
Chris Chronopoulos '09  
Community Service Chair



## A Great Pledge Program Pulls in Unequaled Pledges

We are proud to announce we have eight new pledges in the fall 2007 pledge class! What's more, they are the tallest pledge class in recent memory, with an average height of over six feet!

Dion Cabeche is a 19-year-old from Tampa, Florida, who plays cello and is interested in nuclear engineering. At 17, Ari Miller is our youngest pledge. The Newton, Massachusetts, native loves music, plays the piano, and rips on his trombone in his ska band. Ben Judge is another Massachusettsian from the little town of Tewksbury. A possible course II major, this 18-year-old likes snowboarding, waveboarding, paintballing, and soccer. Our star pitcher, Andrew Lamson, hails from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He loves wearing fedoras. Josh Bails is 18, coming from the motor city, Detroit. He is a movie, music, and video-game enthusiast who has his own radio show, "Hidden Gems," on MIT's radio station, WMBR. Eighteen-year-old John Mendoza comes all the way from Whittier, California, and is most proud to be the third of three hybrid Mexicans in the fraternity named Jon/John. Speaking of thirds,

Nick Hunter-Jones is the third pledge from Massachusetts—from Lincoln, to be exact. He plays guitar and bass and listens to lots of angry heavy metal music that makes the face bleed. Brutal. Lastly, we have Tristan Delaney, a 19-year-old from Ventura, California, who runs cross country.

So, enough about the pledges; on to the pledge program. New this year is a weekly discussion centered around the three highest aims of Beta Theta Pi. I believe that actively discussing the values upon which our great fraternity is founded will encourage committed and involved brothers who are eager to become leaders of the chapter and add to its success. The strength of a chapter lies in its ability to maintain strong leadership year after year, so it's exciting to see so many new people who have the potential to lead. All they need is the right kind of encouragement, and I hope the newest version of the pledge program provides that encouragement.

Yours in \_kai\_,  
Ryan Luersen '09, #1107

## Beta Upsilon Alumni Send Their News

"I attended our 65th reunion at MIT in June 2007," reports **Donn W. Barber '42**. "Unfortunately, neither of my still living Beta classmates—**Paul Sommer '42** and **Jack Crandall '42**—were able to join me. (**Walt Netsch '43** was initiated with me but was in the five-year architect program.) While there, I went by the old Beta house that I knew—241 Kent St., Brookline. It is still a grand old house, but has fallen on hard times. The barn (famous for Beta barn dances) is long since gone, by fire, as I remember. Then I went to a reception at 119 Bay Street. I enjoyed discussions with Mike Feinstein and several undergrads and alums, plus a tour of the house. Quite different from our 'cold dorm' system, but good, reflecting good use of entirely different facilities. The house was still very impressive." Catch up with Donn at 1207 Greenbriar Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

**Richard L. Mathews '50** writes that he and his wife, Polly, have moved from their home in Schenectady to an apartment in York, Pennsylvania, following Polly's fall down the cellar stairs. "This sudden move marks the end of a 30-year term on the Niskayuna School Board." Find out how Dick and Polly are doing at 172 Oak Ridge Dr., York, PA 17402; rmathews@nycap.rr.com.

"Brother **Herbert B. Voelcker Jr. '51** was awarded the Priz Bezier from the International Solid Modeling Society in 2007," announces **Joseph N.**

**Sherrill Jr. '51**. "Herb was on the MIT rifle team and the lightweight crew. After graduating in Course II, he accepted a regular Army commission, served in the 82nd Airborne division, and was on the USA Olympic rifle team for the games in Australia. He earned his masters degree at MIT and subsequently his doctorate in England. Herb was married in 1954 to Jean Hunter, and they introduced me to my wife, Nancy Gray. Herb and Jean have made their home in Ithaca since he joined the Cornell faculty. They have two sons: John lives in New York City, and Ned lives in London." Get in touch with Joe at 28 Chateau Ct., Wichita Falls, TX 76302; jsherrill@scglaw.com.

"I enjoyed seeing several of my Beta brothers at my 50th class reunion," writes **Alfred E. Wechsler '55**. "I am almost retired, still doing occasional consulting. Nancy and I spend most of our time visiting our three children and eight grandchildren who are scattered across the country and traveling to Europe and Asia for the holidays." Al's new mailing address is 7 Wainwright Rd., #70, Winchester, MA 01890. Drop him an e-mail at aewechsler@aol.com.

"I've moved!" reports **Edwin C. Bell '58**. "My new address is 625 Biltmore Way, #804, Coral Gables, FL 33134."

Also reporting a change of address is **Allan J.** (continued on page four)

## New Dining Situation at Beta is Very Satisfying

I am pleased to announce several welcome additions to our happy family. MIT makes available a generous sum of money for us to use on educational improvements to our house. Last year, we decided to put this money to good use and purchase equipment to transform a previously unused room into a fully functional electronics lab. We now have a workspace with a digital oscilloscope and signal generator, power supply, microscope, solder station, and a computer hooked up to MIT's network. Essentially, we have almost everything one would need to do lab work at home. We finally have a solution to the problem of on-campus labs closing at early hours (i.e. before morning).

With help from our alumni, we have replaced our old and out-of-commission dining room table with a shiny new heavy-duty table, complete with shiny new chairs. The dining room has sprung back

to life as both a communal eating room and as a study area. Come by the house around dinner time and you will see Betas gathered around the table enjoying dinner. Come by the house when you would otherwise be asleep, and you will see Betas gathered around the table studying. In either case, the table, large enough to seat about thirty people, has been seeing much use, and will see even more in years to come.

And what new dining room table would be complete without a new chef? Although it was sad to see Jim go, our new chef, Beverly, has been keeping our bellies satisfied with her cooking. It has been exciting to run downstairs at dinner time to be greeted by trays of hot food and then to run back upstairs to enjoy it with our brothers.

Alex Bakst '08

## Beta website relaunches with a new design

This winter, the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi relaunches its website with a new design at:

<http://www.beta-mit.org>

In addition to a cleaner look, we hope you will enjoy the functionality of the member section, which includes a "find other members" feature, PDFs of previous newsletters, and career networking, among others.

You can also make a donation to Beta through a secure form in the "dues and gifts" section of the site in both the public and member areas.

As we continue to enhance the features of the website, we hope you will send us your feedback on what you like and what you'd like to see added to the site in the future. Contact us at [alumnirecords@beta-mit.org](mailto:alumnirecords@beta-mit.org). We hope to hear from you soon!



From left: Josh Bails '11, Tristan Delaney '11, Ari Miller '11, Nick Hunter-Jones '11, and Dion Cabeche '11 put on a skit for the actives, alumni, and guests at the Christmas Party.

## Alumni Update: Building on a Strong Foundation

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advisors. This has helped improve communication between alumni and the actives, led to improved chapter performance, and helped capture some of the best practices from previous years. As pledge education advisor, it has been great for me to see how seriously and earnestly the actives work to integrate the initiates into the chapter. If you are interested in sharing some of your experiences with the actives in an advisory role, please let me know.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our donors for their consistent support. Without that, we could not have made the level of investment in the chapter that we have already accomplished. However, there is so much more to do in order to continue to build the chapter and its facilities back up to full strength. When asked, please try to give

generously to the Beta Upsilon Association. Donation information is on our web site at [www.beta-mit.org](http://www.beta-mit.org). In addition, if you choose to donate to MIT, please mark your donation for the Independent Residence Development Fund (IRDF). This is a source of funds that we continue to tap for low-interest loans and grants.

We have many ways for alumni to get involved in making sure that today's and tomorrow's undergraduates have the same experience we all had. Please contact me if you are interested in helping out, or if you have any questions about the chapter or your alumni association.

Yours in \_\_kai\_\_,  
Mike Feinstein '82  
Vice President  
[mike\\_feinstein@yahoo.com](mailto:mike_feinstein@yahoo.com)



### THE BACK BAY BETA

is published regularly by the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at MIT. News, address changes, and photos are welcome and should be sent to Beta Theta Pi at MIT, Alumni Records Office, P.O. Box 390528, Cambridge, MA 02139-0006.

# Beta Upsilon Alumni Send Their News

(continued from page two)

**Maclaren '60:** 698 Altamira St. NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907. His e-mail address remains mdnmaclaren@aol.com.

Jackie and **James Giffin '64** write that they will attend the Beta reunion this year. They now live at 1305 Singingwood Court, #5, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

"I have recently retired from Schafer Corporation where I was executive vice president and headed Schafer Laboratories in Livermore, California," announces **Michael J. Monsler '64** (26 Pescadero Ct., Danville, CA 94526). "In 1996, several colleagues and I did a leveraged buyout of Schafer and built it into a \$120M/year technical services firm providing physics and engineering support to the Departments of Defense and Energy. I am enjoying a new road bike, time to read and play with a granddaughter, trading financial futures such as T-bonds, the Euro, and gold, and playing in a boccé league. I am married to the same Wellesley woman I pinned in the Beta house in 1962 (Barbara Bollen), and we are fortunate that our two kids, Eric and Karin, and their families also live in the Bay area. I am active in the largest angel investing group in the Bay area funding early stage companies, and spend three days a week at a getaway house in the hills of Napa valley." Mons receives e-mail at traderhawk@aol.com.

**Terry J. van der Werff '66** recently moved. His new mailing address is van der Werff Global, Ltd., 3316 Huntington Abbey, Hoover, AL 35226-3356.

"I'm still working in the oil industry," reports **Paul Haines '78**, "but now working as an O&G subject matter expert (SME) for the information management practice of HP. We consult for O&G companies, service companies, etc., in the IM space. I'm still in Houston (2614 Silent Spring Creek Dr., Katy, TX 77450), still happily married to Suzie, etc. My older son, Zach, is teaching high school French and is the tennis coach. My younger son, Andrew, is a sophomore at Colorado School of Mines. He did not pledge Beta, as he says they are not cool there. Oh well!" Drop Paul an e-mail at paulhaines@comcast.net.

**Thomas Hauer '79** resides at 9740 Farmcrest Dr., West Chester, OH 45069. His current e-mail address is thauer@cinci.rr.com.

"We were surprised last summer when Kim found out she was pregnant," reports **John**

**Bartholomew '86.** "Sixteen years after our first (and only) son! Our second, Alec, arrived in January and we couldn't be happier. Both mom and baby are doing well. I've been working for the past four years at Ambric, a startup building a massively parallel processing chip. (Our first commercial chip has over 300 microprocessors.) It's been a busy and exciting ride so far, with a ways to go...I can be reached at jbartholomew@alum.mit.edu."

"Zoe and I were pleased to have several Betas attend our wedding in May 2007," writes **John Sell '91.** "We live in San Jose, California. Zoe is a financial advisor at Morgan Stanley. I am a manager with Intel's optical platform division. Please let us know if you are in the area. We would be happy to get together." John's contact info is 6074 Paso Los Cerritos, San Jose, CA 95120; john\_sell@alum.mit.edu.

**Michael W. Miller '96**, who is a sales engineer for Google, writes that after commuting from Austin to Mountain View for almost eight months, he has finally moved to the Bay Area from Texas! "My wife, Hillary, and two kids, Ava (4) and Harrison (3), look forward to entertaining many local Betas at our house in Palo Alto—please drop us a line!" Mike's new address is 3173 Morris Dr., Palo Alto, CA

94303. His e-mail address is mwmiller@alum.mit.edu.

"I have moved to Paris for a year-long work assignment," reports **Mehal P. Shah '02.** "Any Betas looking for a place to crash in Paris are welcome." Take Mehal up on his offer at 42 Rue du Mont Cenis, 75018 Paris, France; mshah1025@alum.mit.edu.

**Sameer Shah '03** writes that he moved to Brooklyn to be a math teacher at the middle and high school level. His new contact info is: 303 Garfield Pl., #4, Brooklyn, NY 11215; samjshah@ucla.edu.

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## chapter eternal

We regret to announce the death of:

**Adam C. Gambel '38**  
March 7, 2007

**George E. Motzenbecker '49**

**Steven Alexander '80**

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*The photo above was sent in by Herman Marshall '78, who writes: "We visited Ray Poor '31 last year when he turned 100. I looked up his roll number afterward. He's #236." Standing: Herman Marshall '78, Rajiv Eranki '07, Gavin Lund '10, and Jake Bernstein '07. Sitting: Ray and John Herrera '10.*