

the back bay beta

BETA THETA PI AT MIT | MAY 2015



BUILDING A STRONG BROTHERHOOD

A few summers ago, our house underwent significant renovations. This renovation was the result of a lot of hard work from our local alumni corporation and donations from many different people. This past fall semester, we were fortunate enough to be able to move into the house. At that point, the house was very bare, something like a brand new hotel. The brothers would tend to stay in their rooms and not socialize in the common areas. The general consensus was that, because it was our first semester in the house and our first semester living together, we were just getting adapted to the new living situation. We thought that we ought to do something to make the house more of a home, that possibly this could encourage more interaction.

In pursuit of this, our exec team included painting and making different art pieces for the house in the study breaks that we had every other week. The art made wasn't the best; our brothers are exceptionally talented, although not necessarily in creating art. Fortunately, quality wasn't the point. The point was to make pieces that showed culture, and as a new colony at MIT, culture is something that we have desperately needed. We ended up putting the art pieces around the house, which made the house look a lot better and a lot friendlier. In addition, a lot of the brothers have been very selfless in allowing people to use their engineering equipment, videogames, mini-fridges, etc. As a result, we have managed to create a decent electrical engineering lab in the basement, as well as common areas

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and what we were allowed to do. Before I was involved with Beta, when the junior class was being recruited as a founding-fathers class here at MIT for Beta Upsilon, brothers were told different things about what impact and decisions they would be allowed to make setting up the chapter. Principal among these things was the alcohol policy, which advisors had incorrectly told the juniors that the brothers would be able to decide whether or not they wanted to allow brothers over 21 to have alcohol.

This turned out to not be true, and it caused problems when, last semester, we had debates about the alcohol policy for the fraternity. Because my class of sophomores and the freshmen whom we had recruited had been under the impression that Beta would be completely dry, the fact that Beta were having the debate at all was distressing. It led to the point where several of the underclassmen were threatening to de-brother and quit the fraternity. The debate caused a lot of brotherhood issues for our group, and although we ultimately prohibited brothers from having alcohol within the fraternity, it left our brotherhood shaky at the start of this semester.

Since then, we have come a long way. We have been working to improve the house so that brothers have places to hang out together. We acquired a fraternity pool table, which is now played every day after dinner and gets the brothers to interact with one another more. We have had consistent study breaks this semester (every two weeks) that get the brothers to come to the house, relax for a few hours, and talk to each other. In addition, we had one incredibly successful mixer with one of the sororities—it was tropical themed. We organized the mixer and decorated the house

DETERMINED TO SUCCEED!

in such a way that the women from the sorority said it was the best mixer they had ever attended. The brothers were incredibly happy with the results of the mixer. We had come together to get something done, and I hadn't seen our group happier than at the chapter meeting after the mixer. We have plans to have more mixers in the future, as well as a spring formal for the brothers and their dates.

Our exec team has been working on several other objectives this semester and will continue them throughout next semester until our term ends. Since we are still a new colony, much of what executive officers have to do is not well defined. The exec members have been working on making documents for their positions that detail what exactly they have to do. In addition, we have been working very hard on recruitment, because we have low numbers.

Our strategy for recruitment has changed; we work on making events that are incredibly memorable or unique to both



our Beta and MIT. On the weekend of April 17–19, we had MIT's Campus Preview Weekend (CPW) for pre-frosh. We hosted 12 pre-frosh at the house and had large turnouts to each of our events, which included machine-shop tours, showing off robots

that brothers made, flying around inflatable fish, taking pre-frosh "chairing" through MIT's infinite tunnel system (including pre-frosh riding rolling chairs down the ramps underneath MIT), hosting cardboard tube fights, and having a game night at the house. We plan on working hard to make sure that our recruitment period during the fall will include the pre-frosh who attended the events this past weekend and to make sure that the recruitment period is successful.

We have been incredibly successful this semester so far, and for Beta Upsilon here at MIT, our hard work is starting to pay off; our situation constantly keeps getting better.

Matthew Mellor '17
Chapter President

MAKE SOME TIME TO HELP YOUR BROTHERS

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the restart of our beloved Beta Upsilon Chapter is off to a great start. We have a committed group of fine young men who are doing a great job maintaining our renovated facility in a manner that makes all Betas proud. They have restored the strong bonds of brotherhood that we all know and love.

We can't complete our rebirth and restore our prominence without your help. Here's what you can do:

- 1) As you have heard in our National Chapter Meeting on April 28 (www.beta-mit.org/call), we have been challenged by several generous alumni to raise an additional \$85,000 to match their own incremental commitment to our Centennial Capital Campaign. If you have not yet given, this is the time to make your donation go twice as far. If you have already committed to the campaign, please consider an incremental gift, perhaps by extending your five-year commitment to a sixth year in order for us to take advantage of this exciting matching opportunity. We need your support to tap into the full \$85,000 available to us and to be able to fulfill our plans to renovate the Annex and to fully support the chapter.
- 2) Volunteer to help our association board. We have opportunities available to alumni everywhere, not just in Boston. Here are the areas where we need your help:

Finance: Become a legendary volunteer and the envy of your Beta peers. We need a new treasurer who can keep the house corporation books, file our tax returns, manage our budget, etc. This could be filled by more than one volunteer: a treasurer and an assistant treasurer. This position can be located anywhere in the world.

Communications: Help keep connections going with your fellow alumni. We publish periodic newsletters and have a website that could use more attention. We could also innovate with more regular email newsletters and a social-media presence. This is a great role for someone creative, or could be done by a team of people with a leader. These people can be located anywhere in the world.

Facilities: Help maintain our facilities and plan for the eventual renovation of the Annex. We can always use more help in this area, including mentoring the undergraduates in taking care of the main house. These roles are probably best located in the Boston area.

Mentoring and Leadership: Working with the chapter and giving your input to the alumni board: this is a great role for someone who wants to start getting involved and having an impact. All leadership roles are available over

time, including president and vice president. We have annual elections, and I would love more people to throw their hat in the ring for these positions. For the most part, it's better if these roles are located in the Boston area.

- 3) If you live in Boston, volunteer as a chapter adviser. Each officer slot has the opportunity for an alumni adviser to assist and mentor. There are significant needs in the areas of recruitment and risk management, but any assistance will be welcomed.
- 4) Show up for an event in Boston. We have several chapter-related events each year. If you hear about one, please try to attend to meet the undergraduates and to share your experiences with them. The next opportunity is likely to be during rush week in the fall, where alumni will be needed for some behind-the-scenes work (driving, cooking, cleaning, etc.).

We can't be successful without support from all of our brothers. Please consider additional support for our Centennial Campaign or volunteering to help our association and/or the chapter. You can contact me at mike_feinstein@yahoo.com or at 781-454-5710 to commit your support.

Yours in __kai__,
Mike Feinstein '82

Beta Upsilon Association President

BUILDING A STRONG BROTHERHOOD

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that the brothers now use instead of staying in their rooms. All of this has gone far to help us create a stronger group identity.

We are technically in possession of two houses here at MIT. All of the current brothers who live off campus live within the renovated main house. We do have a second house that we call "the Annex." The Annex was always the extension of the main house, giving the chapter more living capacity. Currently, the Annex is in dire need of renovation. Our local alumni have been working very hard to raise the funds they need to renovate the house so we can have current brothers move over there. The Annex is located across the street from the main house. In the meantime, the alumni are renting the space out to graduate students from MIT. As brothers of Beta, we have access to the space, but we don't currently utilize it. Our plans include cleaning up the common areas so that the alumni



have an easier time renting the space out and so that we can use part of it as another common area. We also plan on adding a weight room in the Annex.

Overall, future plans for the houses include the Annex renovation, adding an exercise room in the Annex, and improving our electrical engineering lab. Plans to improve our engineering space include purchasing a large 3D printer, a mill, a lathe, and other equipment to further turn Beta into a maker space. We are incredibly grateful for the excellent place we have to live here in Boston. Our location is terrific. We are right next to Fenway Park! We are putting effort into making our house a home. We want our house to represent our unique culture here at Beta, and we're making strides toward that goal, and with it, strides toward a more established brotherhood.

Matthew Mellor '17
Chapter President



Members' artwork displayed around the house.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: FOUR MIT BETAS DO US PROUD



Garron Charles joined Beta in the spring of 2014. Although he had originally been planning not to join a fraternity, the friendly atmosphere of the Beta brotherhood lured him in. “I have here something I couldn’t really find anywhere else—not even in my entry at MacGregor, as tight-knit as that community is,” he said. “It’s actually kind of ineffable, really. That extra familiarity and ease that comes with the appellation of ‘brother.’ It’s fantastic.” When he’s not chilling at the house or working, Garron plays saxophone for a band called Love and a Sandwich, which describe its style as “soulful fusion with influences from R&B, hip hop, reggae, and jazz.”



Jack Erdozain also joined last spring. One of the premier builders in the house, you can hardly keep Jack out of MIT’s labs and machine shops. One Saturday evening, the fraternity hang-out plans were cancelled because of some major assignments due the next week. No worries, Jack headed up an expedition to the Edgerton center to teach some welding to any potential MechEs. Currently, he’s involved in the design of MIT’s robo-cheetah.



Elliot Owen is Jack’s little, but is giving him a big run for his money as builder of the house. He and Jack have been working on a secret project for CPW and rush: a walking, talking, loud-mouth, comedic trash-can! “Not only has the project been a great experience working with circuits and Arduinos, and not only have I gotten to know several of the guys really well over the course of building WBLR ... but the laughs my brothers and I got from trolling the hallways with it is not something I’m gonna forget easily.”



Jonathan Zdasiuk is a transfer student from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo who joined this past rush. Coming in as a sophomore, he’s taking the changes in stride and finding himself quickly at home. Beta played a big role in that transition: “The party I had to coordinate with the other pledges was a great experience. Only at MIT will gingerbread be judged not for its taste, but for its structural integrity and aerodynamics.” Yes, the aero-astro major brought his own special touch to the gingerbread building session: the glide-ratio contest.

BETA UPSILON OFFICERS 2015

PRESIDENT

Matthew Mellor ’17, mmellor@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT BROTHERHOOD

Michael McGraw ’17, mtmcgraw@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT FINANCE

Andrew Montanez ’17, amontane@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT RECRUITMENT

Elliot Owen ’18, elliooto@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT PLEDGE EDUCATION

Luke Verdi ’16, laverdi@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNICATION

Marshall Craft ’17, mhcraft@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT PROGRAMMING

Jack Erdozain ’17, erdozain@mit.edu

VICE PRESIDENT RISK MANAGEMENT

Erik Gest ’17, erikgest@mit.edu

A SENIOR’S PLANS



It is hard to believe that I have been at MIT for four years. That is four rush weeks, four spring breaks, five internships, eight finals weeks, 22 finals, and countless stressful moments. But what I will remember the most are the memories from meeting and spending time with people I am proud to call my friends and fraternity brothers. My experiences over these four years have taught me a lot about not only the major I am studying, but also about myself. I will especially remember my time as a Beta, from being a founding father to leading our first year of rush to spending time with the brothers at our new house. Even though I will no longer be living at the Beta house next year, I look forward to stopping by from time to time.

After graduation, I will remain at MIT for one more year to do the Masters of Engineering program (MEng) in electrical engineering and computer science. This will be a great opportunity for me to apply what I have learned during my undergraduate years to a graduate research environment. I also look forward to being a teaching assistant for a few computer science courses. I enjoy teaching because I am not only able to help others learn new material, but I can also solidify my own understanding of the material. Following my masters, I plan to go into the quantitative finance industry, where I hope to combine my knowledge in computer science, mathematics, and finance to a challenging but rewarding environment. Although I will miss the time I spent at MIT, I am excited for what the future has in store.

DISTINGUISHED BROTHER: ELLIOT OWEN

As the year unfolded, Elliot has predictably and reliably surpassed every expectation I have had. Whether it be academics, innovation, social interactions, leadership, or even sense of humor, Elliot is a cut above, despite the competitive MIT environment. He seamlessly balances an advanced course load, an engineering team leadership role, Beta rush chair, and even a side job at a startup, working on novel linear actuators. His work is even featured in the MIT museum—twice.

Known as the “hipster” of our chapter, you’ll often find him in the machine shops of MIT, wearing a remarkably odd sweater and listening to a band you’ve never heard of. My comment about his sense of humor is true for the majority of the time. His fatal flaw, though, is probably his array of puns, including but not limited to “dubstep checking” his homework before turning it in.

If a material scientist were to speak to Elliot Owen, he or she would immediately

assume Elliot was in the same major. The same goes for an architect, an electrical engineer, or even a political science major. His fervor for learning reaches far beyond his major. Truly, it’s his passion that drives him before all else. His love of learning and his need to immediately apply what he learned allowed him to build up quite the portfolio of impressive projects. At MIT alone, he has built autonomous robots, electric scooters, MIT FSAE battery-pack specs, automated plotting systems, sensory electronics, and more.

This summer, he’ll be working at SpaceX as a mechanical engineer: a very competitive position. Did I also mention, he’s only a freshman?

It’s been an honor being his big brother in the fraternity. We all have high expectations for him in the near future, and considering his track record, it’s not unwarranted.

Jack Erdozain ’17
Beta Programming Chair

Youyang Gu ’15

alumni updates

BETA UPSILON BROTHERS SHARE THEIR NEWS AND NOTES WITH US

Donn Barber '42 writes in: "It is taking me more and more time to do less and less, but my motto is 'If you don't use it, you lose it.' So I keep reasonably busy in my retirement community, being chairman at our energy committee, which has saved the community a lot of money. I am participating in an investment club, playing bridge, Wii bowling, and pool, and enjoying my five-o'clock visit at our pub. Unfortunately, only one other member of our pledge class is still living: **Paul Sommer '42**. We do talk on the phone every month or so. My days of long driving trips are over, or I would go out and visit." Write Donn a letter to say hello: evdoba@aol.com; 1207 Greenbriar Ln., West Grove, PA 19390.

"Although I was an MIT Beta for *one semester* only (before starting Navy officer training program and transferring to Harvard)," writes **James Maxwell III '50**, "I've always felt indebted to **Dick Matthews '50** and **John Kern '50**, who brought me aboard. I admire and appreciate their effort and diligent work to promote Beta at MIT." Keep in touch with Jim at betjim@webtv.net or at 1565 St. David's Ln., Vero Beach, FL 32967.

Ward Halverson '56 is still consulting one day a week for N2 Biomedical LLC, which is a spin-off of the biomedical division of Spire Corporation in Bedford, Massachusetts. Spire itself, Ward's old employer, still continues with its principal business of solar photovoltaics. He also plays squash twice a week and took a trip to France last December with his wife, Michele. "Both Michele and I are fine and enjoying life. I would be happy to hear from any of the 20th-century Betas—and others, of course." Let Ward hear from you; write to him at wshalverson@aol.com or at 25 Hutchinson St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

In 2014, **John Elder '66** retired after 20 years as a consultant in the energy industry. "My first post-retirement move was to expand my singing by joining the Back Bay Choral. I am continuing with the Dedham Choral Society and, in the 2014-'15 season, will be performing in six concerts. It all started at the Beta house! Otherwise, I'm taking it easy and considering other options to make myself useful." Reconnect with John at elder44@verizon.net or at 45 Long-

wood Ave., PHC, Brookline, MA 02446.

William Stewart '69 is retired from teaching high school but is still running his fourth-generation family business, Stewart-Glapat Corporation. "Still playing hickory golf. Blessing is eight grandchildren and a happy marriage of 43 years. Hope to travel through Canada in my new Subaru Outback in the next few years." Reconnect with Bill at bstewart@adjustoveyor.com or at 550 S. Samuel Dr., Zanesville, OH 43701.

In October 2014, Jocelyn Gardner McCauley, the daughter of **Wilford Gardner '72**, won the Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii. Jocelyn took first female amateur overall in a field of 600 women, each of whom had to qualify in a previous Ironman competition. Get in touch with Wilf to find out the details: wgardner@ocean.tamu.edu; 6403 Windwood Dr., College Station, TX 77845.

After 35 years as an emergency physician, married with two children and an empty nest, **Paul Hochfeld '72** retired from the ER in September 2014. "We are living happily in Corvallis, where I play bridge and golf, in addition to using just about any chore (preferably involving a shovel and wheel barrow) as an excuse to be outside. I might get involved with the hospital's palliative care program, with the goal of helping people make better end-of-life decisions. In the meantime, I often find myself wallowing in gratitude for all my blessings, knowing that there are large numbers of equally deserving people, both here and abroad, who are suffering unimaginably for no reason other than they were born in the wrong place. I also think about what Mao purportedly said: 'I envy Americans because they live in the heart of the dragon.' As for making sense out of life, it comes down to my tetrad of truisms: 1) it's an arbitrary universe; 2) we're all hanging by a thread; 3) sh-t happens; 4) it's a miracle we are still here talking about it. Be well, my friends!" Keep in touch with Paul at pchochfeld@msn.com or at 1370 NW Forest Dr., Corvallis, OR 97330.

Roger Lacy '79 writes: "Joyce and I continue to enjoy living in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and I have hit the 35-year mark at Boe-

DECEASED

We regret to announce the deaths of:

Raymond S. Poor '31

June 6, 2014

Richard Muther '38

October 15, 2014

Horace B. Ferguson '39

February 1, 2015

Richard A. Markey Jr. '41

February 21, 2015

Richard A. Richards '42

November 2, 2014

Donald T. Axon '44

January 15, 2015

Richard L. Mathews '50

November 25, 2014

E. Gerald Hurst Jr. '60

January 15, 2015

John A. Vliet '70

December 29, 2014

Kenneth H. Gerber '71

August 17, 2012

ing! Our youngest son is at Northwestern University (third year) and loving Boston. Our middle son is engaged to a wonderful woman—they met in drum corps. Our oldest son is a PhD student at Yale in biophysics. I had a great time catching up with several brothers at the Centennial gathering a year ago." Get back in touch with Roger at lacyhome@yahoo.com or at 1002 Bala Farms Dr., West Chester, PA 19382.



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Published regularly by the Beta Upsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at MIT. News and photos should be sent to alumnirecords@beta-mit.org or to Alumni Records Office, Beta Theta Pi at MIT, P.O. Box 390528, Cambridge, MA 02139-0006.