



The Back Bay Beta

Beta Upsilon Chapter

Beta Theta Pi Fraternity • Massachusetts Institute of Technology

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

SPRING/SUMMER 2000

Chapter Focuses On Alumni Relations

This semester the primary focus has been on strengthening our connection with our alumni. There are many changes occurring at MIT that will require us to alter many of our policies and procedures, and we see Alumni Weekend as an opportunity not only to form better relations, but also to ask for advice and guidance on dealing with the new policies—most importantly, the change in rush. We have enjoyed Mike Johnson's term as the house corporation president and were sorry to learn of his intention to resign. We are now searching for another strong alumnus to step up to the position and lead us.

We initiated 11 new brothers in early spring. They have brought a new life to the house with lots of energy and new ideas. Many of the new initiates took it upon themselves to bring the house to participate in many new intramural sports this year. While I cannot say we won every game, we had a great time. It was an inspirational time when we could all bond as men of Beta.

We have also had a strong showing in the IFC executive branch. With brothers in the top of the IFC, we have been helping to plan and arrange rush procedures for the years to come while also helping to serve the community. The semester seems to be rolling smoothly to an end, and we are looking forward to another productive term.

Jesse Gonzales

Beta Welcomes 11 New Initiates

As IAP came to a close, so too did this year's pledge class work week. Despite mixed feelings and a couple of attendance mishaps, I'm sure that all parties involved would agree that those who put their heart and soul into the week got the most out of it.

With IAP's demise comes the abandonment of the slothful January lifestyle in favor of a more regimented academic, social, and vocational schedule. Lifestyle changes were not the only contributing factors to this yearly period of flux. The Beta pledge program had new issues to contend with as the inevitable day of initiation drew nigh. The freshmen continued to fulfill their requirements from first term at a leisurely pace, while the actives violently scrambled to reassemble the ritual gear from all corners of

our district and pin down a date for the fateful day.

Even after negotiating these hurdles, we were still left with the daunting task of pulling off a ritual while having no former ritual chair in the vicinity who was able to assist us. But newly elected Ritual Chair Andrew Martinez rose to the occasion, and initiation proved to be a life-changing experience for some, while for others it remained a stress-free day of wholesome goodness.

Our 11 new initiates will surely determine how they can best contribute to the 119 Bay State experience and perpetuate the Beta name far into the new millennium.

Robert N. Tunick
Pledge Educator

2002 Committee Modifies Pledge Program

As our newly elected pledge educator for the pledge class of 2004, I would like to tell you a little bit about our brand new 10-week pledge program, which the 2002 committee just passed through the chapter. The reason for the change is to prepare for 2002, when the pledge program will be non-residential. This new pledge program ties in some ideas we feel will be necessary for 2002 while keeping in mind that this year the pledges will still be living in the house.

Ultimately, we tried to maintain many of the same exciting aspects of our old pledge program while improving certain areas, bringing back ideas that had been lost over time, condensing others areas, and generally making sure that we have pledges who are fully prepared to become brothers before spring. The new program is split into two phases. The first 10 weeks (before Thanksgiving) focuses on things like lore and interviews and is much like the traditional pledge period, only more

structured. The next 10 weeks focuses on reflection on your pledge period and your desire to become a brother. If all goes well, initiation will be at the very beginning of spring.

Many features of the pledge program are still the same. The pledges will still make pizza every Friday. They will still go on a sneak, have a Christmas party, have a pledge work week, have a T-session, live with an active first term and pledge brothers second term, and have all the aspects of initiation that I am sure you remember and cherish from your experience. The difference lies in several new features and some other changed features.

Lore will be taught not only through reading the Son of Stars, but through typed notes and discussion of these notes during the pledge meeting. In addition, an officer will be brought in to every pledge meeting to teach the pledges about his office, what his plans

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Committee Modifies

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are, what issues an interested pledge might bring to him, and how an interested pledge might become involved in that area.

The pledge program will focus a little more on academics than in the past. Introducing the vice president as the man responsible for academics early on and giving the pledges information on tutoring services and the academic strengths of the brothers will not only help the pledges develop academically, but also show them that the house takes academics seriously. I intend to write a letter to the pledges' parents immediately after they pledge, explaining to them the academic benefits of our program as well as the many other benefits their sons will enjoy as Betas.

Interviews will still be completed before Thanksgiving. A reasonable schedule of three interviews per week will be demanded of the pledges. To assist them in this task, each active will have to provide the pledges with at least one time slot a week when a pledge can sign up to interview him. The schedule with these time slots will remain on the first floor of the main house. In addition to this schedule, a calendar of pledge events and a checklist for interviews will be maintained from day one to encourage the pledges to get things done on time.

The new ideas focus mainly on teaching the pledges responsibility and the work ethic and organization it takes to be a Beta officer. They will have a budget to spend on biweekly chapter dinners. These dinners will be mandatory for all actives and pledges and will occur right before the chapter meeting on Sunday. The pledges will be responsible for buying take-out food and ensuring that they stay under budget.

In addition, the pledge class will have three larger tasks to complete during the pledge period. The first is a large community service event, to be organized so the entire chapter can attend and which will be mandatory for all pledges. The second is a large social event. It is my hope that this can turn into the first true Beta formal in a hotel ballroom, where brothers and their dates can enjoy a truly classy evening. (On a side note, we counted recently, and well over two-

"The records available to date show that I am the oldest living patent lawyer still registered to practice before the U.S. Patent Office," writes C. YARDLEY CHITTICK '22, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on October 22. Send best wishes to "Yard" at 227 Pleasant St., Apt. 308, Concord, NH 03301.

When we last heard from IRA H. LOHMAN '38, he was looking forward to seeing DICK MUTHER '38, AL WILSON '38, and DON WEIR '38 at Don's place in Beverly Hills. Ira and Louise can be reached at 23800 Amapolo Court, Villa 7, Cupertino, CA (lohmani@attglobal.net).

Stay in touch with EDWARD M. GARDINER '41 at 4919 NE Tolo Rd., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 (egardine@linknet.kitsap.lib.wa.us).

An avid bird watcher, WALTER E. BORDEN '45 recently spent three weeks on Attu Island and three weeks in northern Ecuador. "I have now seen 3,900 species in the world." He lives at 105 Alder Circle, Saint Simon's Island, GA 31522, and his e-mail address is birdweb@juno.com.

HAROLD V. SMITH '47 resides at 2672 Moss Creek Dr., Dalzell, SC 29040.

Five class of '51 Betas and their wives enjoyed a minireunion in October 1998 at the Richmond Hill Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. Attending were Jean and HERB VOELCKER '51, Nancy and JOE SHERRILL '51, Suzie and GEORGE UNDERWOOD '51, Emily and FRED WEITZ '51,

thirds of our members have significant others.) The third pledge class task is a pledge project. This will be something that is completely up to them. I will provide some guidance, but the goal is for the pledges to show the house what Beta means to them and that they are ready for initiation.

Overall, the new pledge program requires a lot more of the chapter. Brothers will be expected to know songs as well as pledges so that during house meetings everyone can sing together. Cleanups will be split among the actives and pledges, actives responsible for the upstairs and pledges responsible for the downstairs. Most importantly, actives will be expected to support both the pledges and the pledge program on a much higher level

and Julie and GREG GENTLEMAN '51. Greg was not well at the time and has since passed away. Herb writes, "Greg served Beta Upsilon as house president in 1950 and is sorely missed by all to whom he was a steadfast friend over the intervening years." If anyone wants to know what Herb is doing professionally, visit his faculty web page at <http://www.mae.cornell.edu/faculty/Voelcker.html>, or send him an e-mail at hbv1@cornell.edu. He and Jean live at 205 Valley Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850.

JOHN D. RIDDELL '53 makes his home at 517 N. Center St., Naperville, IL 60563.

We offer our condolences to ROBERT C. BRIGHAM '56 on the death of his wife, Deirdre, last August. Bob teaches mathematics at the University of Central Florida and can be reached at brigham@cs.ucf.edu or at 700 Euclid Ave., Orlando, FL 32801.

"I completed my aeronautical engineering career by retiring from Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation in January 1999," reports ROBERT A. MacDONALD '56 (24 Landon Lane, Savannah, GA 31410; N106ab@aol.com). "Since then, I have been indulging my interest in drawing and painting by attending Savannah College of Art and Design. I'd love to hear from any Betas who find themselves in or near Savannah. Stop by for a visit." "Mac" adds that ROBERT CARLSON '56 is now teaching business courses at the new Asian University of Science and Technology in Thailand.

GERALD HURST '60 retired in 1996
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than in the recent past. With only 10 weeks to "polish the rough-cut diamonds," it is the attitude of the actives that will make or break this pledge program.

I have been attempting to write a new bid session and am finding it difficult. On the one hand, I want to make sure the pledges do everything that is expected of them; on the other, I do not want them to think that their pledge program is going to be unpleasant. Next year will surely be my biggest challenge as an officer, as well as Beta's biggest challenge as a chapter.

Russell L. Spieler
New Pledge Educator

A New Initiate's Letter To Beta

Here is what I have so far. I have to write up three other articles—pledge trainer, vice pres, and alumni secretary/weekend. I figured that there was no use in holding onto what I have so far. My man who could hook up the jpeg is out of town. I will get the pictures to you as soon as the rolls come back from CVS and I can get them in an envelope or in jpeg format.

First and foremost I have to tell you that I am living in a fraternity. It just fit me so well, this place. Everyone does his own thing; this is the fraternity that is all about the brothers' uniqueness making up the character of the place, rather than the fraternity's uniqueness making up the character of the brothers. It is totally for me. If anything, living in the fraternity has been the one thing that has kept me in check about not changing for the sake of fitting in.

—Letter dated September 7, 1999

I wrote that at the beginning of my freshman year. It is now nearing the end of my first year here at MIT. I still feel the same. Freshman year here has been hard. I never expected to spend eight hours on a single problem and still not get the solution! I never expected that I could study for a test for days and still get a 66 on it (and later find out that I got above the class average). I never expected that I would be able to go for days on only a few hours of sleep. I never expected any of that.

And yet...I never expected to be so happy. I never expected to have so many awesome memories with my pledge brothers, from going to see Beat Down Sound at the Middle East, to getting in a car accident on the Boston highways, to making donut-shaped pizzas (because making round pizzas is just way too hard). I never expected to have a group of 30-some people who were willing to help me in almost everything I did. Whether it is for help doing a community service project, finishing a problem set, or just having someone to talk to, I've never been at a loss. This is Beta. This is why I decided to live here. And I don't regret it.

Sameer Shah

Possible Plans For The Annex

The Beta Upsilon Association is still in the process of deciding what to do with the annex. No decision has been made at the time of this publication.

In addition to reformatting the pledge program, the 2002 committee has generated many ideas to lead Beta in a positive direction for 2002. One of the committee's first and best ideas is to house graduate students. After analyzing several financial scenarios for 2002, including selling the annex, building a fifth floor on the main house, or even moving to Cambridge, the 2002 committee decided the best plan for 2002 is to house grad students in the annex and house brothers in the main house. This is based on several factors. Above all else the committee wanted stable house bills, flexibility for the future, maintenance of our home-like atmosphere, and minimization of risk.

Housing graduate students is particularly attractive for all of these reasons. MIT has offered to subsidize graduate student housing by up to 80 percent in 2002, which will make finding graduate students easy and financially sound. Assuming that some day we might again have larger pledge classes, keeping the annex will allow us to move brothers back into the annex.

Keeping the graduate students separate in the annex will allow us to hire a professional annex house manager who can maintain the annex as a separate entity. With the exception of laundry, there will be no need for brothers to go to the annex while it is populated with graduate students. The house will maintain its character by housing brothers in 119. Finally, the risk will be minimized because the residents of the annex will not only be liable to us, but also to MIT. The university will be able to intervene in

any disputes.

To pilot this program, Beta has decided that we shall find two graduate residents to fill the rooms on the fourth floor of the annex. The third room is already occupied by our resident adviser. Because the idea was passed only late last term, we were unable to find any graduate students for this spring, but we put up a friend of the house (a female MIT undergraduate), and that worked out great, giving us an additional \$2,000. All money raised by the pilot program is being saved for emergency use in 2002 and beyond. We have already seen some interest from MIT graduate students for next term.

Other ideas passed by the 2002 committee include the return of summer boarders, passed by both the Boston Licensing Board and Beta General Secretary Jerry Blesch. This summer, there will be over 20 boarders residing in our house and helping us raise money for 2002. If we save every summer, we should have raised significant funds for the transition. We also planted the seeds that rooted into this year's Alumni Weekend and have plans in the works to develop a biannual community meeting to improve relations with our neighbors. Overall, I hope that the 2002 committee continues to shape and prepare the house for the 2002 transition and that after the transition it continues to serve as a planning committee continuously trying to improve Beta for the future.

Russell L. Spieler
2002 Committee

Beta Couch Survey: Two Thumbs Up

So I've been at Beta now for nearly the entire year, and I've been carefully studying what I consider the most important aspect of the house: the couches. For me, the house would be nothing without its ample supply of couches. I've slept on many, and, after careful analysis, I've come to some conclusions about each couch that I've sat and slept on, and how they relate to the house.

Starting at the entrance, we have the two matching faux-suede couches in the first floor of the main house. These twin sofas are definitely at the top of the Beta-furniture hierarchy. When dining with my brothers and sitting on either of these couches, there is a great sense of community, and we eat well. If these couches were not there, what would we do? We could not eat from the floor, and chairs wouldn't have the same comfort level. But the couches pull us together. And after a

filling Jim meal, what better place to kick up and take a nap than on these very couches? Also, after a night of partying, who wants to walk up to the fourth floor to go to bed? The couches are right there with open arms, ready for you. The noisiness of the first floor of the main house is hardly worth considering because of the natural supremacy of these couches.

Walking up a floor, we find the couches of the chapter room. These couches, often found in use during a chapter meeting or a pledge chorister meeting, give us structure without sacrificing a casual atmosphere. The brown leather couch is another great place to crash when you only have enough energy to make it up to the second floor. Plus, the sound insulation in the chapter room creates a serene environment for napping any time of the day.

The couches of the third floor, mainly
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Beta Couch Survey: Two Thumbs Up

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located in Darnell's room, are not worth discussing as the loud reverberations of his music make them intolerable to sit on or nap on.

If you have enough energy to make it up to the lounge, the couches here won't disappoint. The large couch to the right can seat at least four people, so if one can find three ladies who find him captivating, he has the perfect couch upon which to sit. The window couch is excellent for those who seek to recline or put their feet up while sitting against the window. On the left, the split couch forces the middle person to choose a side on which to sit, so those pining after the same person can have her decide through the couch. And the small couch facing the window is barely large enough for two people, so those who want to get a little closer can use this to their fullest advantage. Once people start filing out of the lounge, and you're too tired to go all the way down to the first floor, the large right-hand couch and window couch make superb crashpads.

That's my survey of the main house couches. Clearly my favorite is the first floor, and of a possible "4 throw pillows" rating, I give each one a 3.75 (the .75 of a throw pillow is missing a little cushioning). Look for a review of the annex sofas in the next issue of *The Back Bay Beta*.

— kai —
Matthew Saunder

DAVID SAMUEL '94, the CEO of Spinner.com, can be reached at dave@spinner.com or at 55 Grace St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

EDWIN L. SPRAGUE '96 has moved from Boston to Seattle (13725 32nd Ave. NE, Apt. A302, Seattle, WA 98125), where he's doing freelance writing for financial journals and working on a couple of creative projects. His e-mail address is ed.sprague@alum.mit.edu.

DECEASED

We regret to report the death of the following alumni:

D. KENNETH FINLAYSON '35,
February 16, 2000

SAM FRY '41, *September 23, 1999*

GREGOR J. GENTLEMAN '51,
October 27, 1999

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after 27 years as a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He's now working in a company that he cofounded while at Wharton, which supplies software and services to the mortgage industry. Drop him a line at 435 Newbold Rd., Jenkintown, PA 19046 (hurst@wharton.upenn.edu).

A manager of air force reentry systems for Lockheed Martin, ALLAN MacLAREN '60 makes his home at 1125 McIntosh Creek Dr., San Jose, CA 95120. He writes, "We have five grandchildren—three in Palo Alto and two in Taipei, Taiwan. We get over there once or twice a year to see them." Send e-mail to Allan at allan.maclaren@lmco.com.

Write to RICHARD H. OELER '60 at 25 Grey Wing Pointe, Naples, FL 34113.

"Involuntarily retired" from ITT Cannon, GARY W. BICKEL '61 writes that he was ready for a change anyway. He'd worked for the company for 17 years (1973-'83 and 1992-'99), so he "got a decent deal," and is now working at Boeing. "The kids are now dispersed to North Carolina, Colorado, and Nevada. I enjoy the freedom and the opportunities to go see them." Gary's address is 3761 Holden Circle, Los Alamitos, CA 90720 (bickelgary@mindspring.com).

ALEXANDER ROSS '61 retired from Chevron Corporation after a 38-year career that included many different assignments and projects. He writes, "I and my wife, Tinka, now hope to spend a lot more time doing all those things we have put off for many years. We also want to spend more time with our grown-up children and our mothers, both of whom are in their late 90s." The Rosses' address is 89 Dominican Dr., San Rafael, CA 94901.

B. GREG BROWN '62 reports that he's been busy "stomping out heart disease" at the University of Washington and raising a five-year-old, Siena, who "has taken control of the parents." E-mail reaches him at bgbrown@u.washington.edu and "snail mail" at 3201 Evergreen Point Rd., Medina, WA 98039.

Last year JAMES S. DRAPER '62 enjoyed social gatherings with numerous Betas, including DAVE KOCH '62, BILLY KOCH '62, DICK WILLIAMSON '61, MEAD

WYMAN '62, TONY ALDRICH '60, DAVE KORKOSZ '62, and HARRY LEE '56. Then, ending the year with a bang, he sold his engineering company. To find out what he's up to now, write to him at 18 Bellevue St., Newton, MA 02958 (jtd@ktaadn.com).

Stay in touch with DAVID H. KOCH '62 at 1040 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10028.

EDWARD G. INSEL '82 (ed_insel@msn.com) is the director of IS&T at Applied Materials, and his wife, Karen, recently left the "corporate rat race" to do volunteer consulting work with local non-profit organizations. Last summer they enjoyed a visit from Debbie and BILL CHESTERSON '82, who'd come out west for Bill's brother's wedding, and they recently bid farewell to DAVE KRALL '82 and his family, who have returned to the East Coast. Any Betas who find themselves in the Bay area are welcome at 955 Stonehurst Way, Campbell, CA 95008.

MICHAEL E. FLANAGAN '85 now works for Instrumentation Laboratory after nearly 11 years with a direct competitor. His current assignment is moving a disposable cartridge manufacturing operation from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Lexington, Massachusetts. Last August he attended the wedding of KEN SHINE '85 on Long Island, where he saw DIMITRI KAZARINOFF '85, BOB STRUBLE '85, STEVE SILBERBERG '83, CRAIG RICHARDS '83, and SNEHAL PATEL '85. Michael lives with his wife, Sheila, and two daughters, Alice and Beth, at 196 Valley Rd., Needham, MA 02492; e-mail reaches him at michael.flanagan@alum.mit.edu.

"I have taken a new job in business development at Dow Chemical and will be able to remain in Germany for the next few years," writes KEN BRYAN '88. "I have moved into a house in the Black Forest (Schafhofweg 20, 77830 Buehlertal, GERMANY) and am doing a lot of great mountain biking." He was among the 500-plus Betas who attended Euchre '99 in New Orleans, "outstandingly organized by SCOTT STULL '88."

An associate at Shearman & Sterling in New York, ALEXANDER V. CHACHKES '91 resides at 8 Stuyvesant Oval, #7D, New York, NY 10009. Send e-mail to Alex at thisalex@aol.com.

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