

The Back Bay Beta

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

www.beta-mit.org

SPRING 2009

Chapter is in great shape, reaches out to alumni

Brother Betas,

A lot has happened in the few months since the last issue of *The Back Bay Beta*. Our alumni advisory board is picking up steam, we began upgrades to the annex, and we began work on a deal to lease the annex to Pi Beta Phi, the latest sorority on the MIT campus. (Older alumni may remember the BU Chapter of Pi Phi, long considered our "sister sorority." They often joined us for house parties.)

Our advisory board was put together by our district chief, Ben Swartz, a Beta from UConn. It is headed up by Nathan Sanders, Arizona '94. The other members are a mix of MIT Betas, non-MIT Betas, and one "friend of Beta." The advisory team includes Mike Feinstein '82, Frank Leibly '93, Christian Hamer '94, Chris Olsen, a Beta from the University of Minnesota, and Christine McGill, director of student activities, leadership, and scholarship at Northeastern University. This diverse team provides great advice to all of the officers of the chapter.

We didn't actually complete a lease agreement with the women of Pi Beta Phi, deciding instead to retain the annex space for undergraduate use as they pick up the pace on recruitment. The discussions with the sorority got to be quite detailed, even to the point of agreeing on general lease terms. Here, the advisory team was instrumental in com-

municating the commitment of the actives to improved recruitment and to Beta principles. The actives have been much more diligent about attending Beta leadership programs. One excellent example is how they started an effective spring rush that netted four more pledges, for a total of 10 new members this year. With only four seniors leaving this year, the house is definitely expanding. Non-Beta MIT students are housed to fill up the house and to improve the cash flow. Annex management is handled by Raul-David "Retro" Poblano '01, the alumni house manager.

The finances are in very good shape, thanks to Frank Leibly '93, so we could afford a new loan to replace the annex windows and upgrade all of the bathrooms in the annex. Including the renovations from a few years ago, the annex will be a very good living space. The basement still houses the chapter-built band stage, which is an effective recruitment feature.

We could use a few more alumni to help as chapter advisers and in other roles in the alumni association. Feel free to drop me a line at hermanmarshall@alum.mit.edu, even if you live too far to see the house more than once per year.

Yours in -kai-
Herman Marshall '78

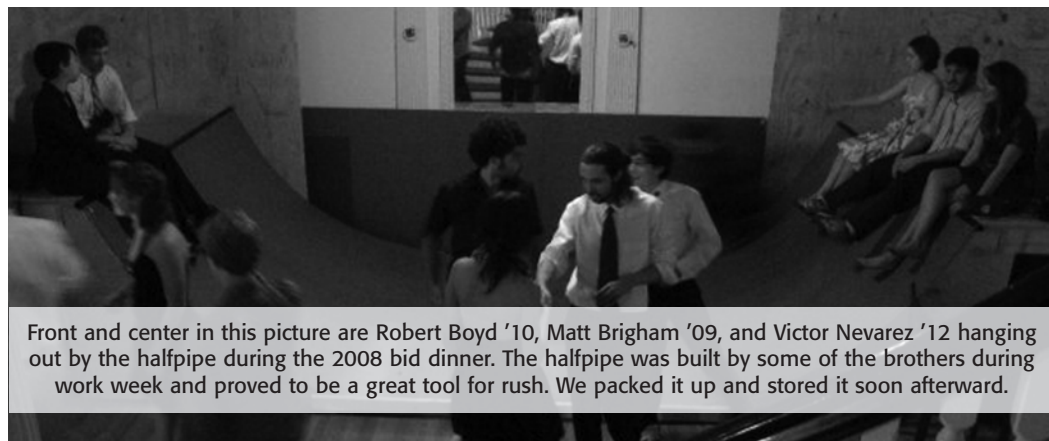
Presidential report: Finding problems and fixing them

Beta has gotten off to a strong start this semester. Several of this semester's officers attended Beta's Keystone Leadership Conference outside of Philadelphia at the beginning of this semester. Our time spent there provided a valuable venue for discussion, planning, and setting goals for this coming spring. My goals for the coming term are to prepare the chapter for the coming fall rush, to start the process of establishing Beta's reputation within the MIT community, and to put effort into improving the chapter's communication with its alumni.

Taking advantage of the help being offered by our alumni association this spring will do a great deal for Beta's recruitment abilities in preparation

for next fall's rush week. Although the feeling in the house is that we're moving in a very positive direction, it seems that our undergraduate community does not currently know much about who we are. Establishing an annual, large-scale community service event will be effective in improving our reputation among MIT students. Organizing more joint social events with other MIT student groups will also be effective as a method of letting other students know who we are.

Finally, I want to ensure that the chapter will begin to put more effort into letting our alumni know about what is going on at the house this
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Front and center in this picture are Robert Boyd '10, Matt Brigham '09, and Victor Nevarez '12 hanging out by the halfpipe during the 2008 bid dinner. The halfpipe was built by some of the brothers during work week and proved to be a great tool for rush. We packed it up and stored it soon afterward.

Introducing the first Beta/EFF fundraiser

The community service chairs are working on behalf of the brothers of Beta to create an annual charity event benefiting the Electronic Frontier Foundation. Founded in 1990, the EFF is a donor-funded nonprofit and leading civil liberties group. The EFF works in the public's interest to defend free speech, privacy, innovation, and consumer rights. Digital rights present a pertinent movement on campus, and Beta will be working with local proponents, such as MIT Free Culture, to hold the first annual digital rights fundraiser this spring. We hope to start a tradition of supporting the causes we feel strongly about at Beta and at MIT. With hard work, we should be able to create the foundation for a successful yearly event.

In addition, the community service chairs have been in contact with the KIPP School in Lynn. The charter school for grades 5-8 provides an educational opportunity for low-income kids, many of whom are now testing in the top two percent of their peers. Beta plans to offer these bright kids an opportunity to tour the MIT campus and potentially begin a tutoring program on Saturdays. Details will be forthcoming. We would love your support!

If you have any feedback or suggestions, please send us an email at either benj_19@mit.edu or gvargas@mit.edu.

Yours in ~kai~,
Ben Judge '11, 1124, and Greg
Vargas '10, 1112
Community Service Chairs

SAVE THE DATE!

The Beta Upsilon Chapter of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity is hosting an open house on June 5, 2009, during reunion week-end from 3:00-5:00 p.m. We would love for you to drop by, tour the house, and meet some of the actives. No RSVP required!

Brotherhood works on increasing accountability

There has been a new focus on accountability this semester that applies to every member of our house. As vice president, it was my responsibility to assess our chapter's readiness to help brothers who habitually neglect their fraternal duties. As it turns out, there was a very weak system in place that made very little use of our chapter's Kai committee. The Kai committee is one of the more effective tools we have to convey some of the more serious messages to our chapter's members. Issues such as missing meetings, neglecting cleanups, allowing grades to slip too far, and falling behind with house bills can be confronted in a more serious and personal environment at our Kai committee meetings.

Because of the committee's ability to address problematic issues so directly, I felt that it was very

important for our house to revive this system. After coming back from Beta Theta Pi's Keystone leadership program, I was able to quickly assemble such a committee composed of some of our chapter's most outstanding members that now meets on a weekly basis. As a committee, we have developed a functional plan that ensures our chapter a venue to supportively confront delinquency and also to help remind us all that being a Beta is a privilege and not the right of anyone. Any advice in this matter would be very much appreciated. Please e-mail me at johnw@mit.edu if you have feedback.

Yours in ~kai~,
John Williams '10, 1115
Vice President

Looking for a good place to study?

In recent scholarship news, Beta continues to be on the honor roll of FSILGs (Fraternities Sororities and Independent Living Groups) for our academic performance. For the fall 2008 term, Beta had a collective GPA of 4.38 out of 5.00 and was ranked as fourth out of the 26 fraternities at MIT. Beta continues to instill high academic standards, and the scholarship chair continues to promote and facilitate beneficial study habits and outstanding scholastic achievement.

In addition to promoting academic excellence at Beta, the scholarship chair continues to utilize the allocation of the \$10,000 education budget Beta receives per semester. As the re-elected scholarship chair for the semester, I continue to be responsible for the use of this educational fund. I have also proposed and am in the process of implementing a library of textbooks for brothers to use. The scholarship chair also promotes academic integrity, provides assistance with classes and MIT academic protocol, and reminds everyone of scholastic deadlines.

Many ideas have been circulating on how to use

this educational fund. I have proposed to start a stock of electronic components and electronic test equipment to complement the existing equipment in our house. A supply of both analog components (capacitors, resistors, op-amps, etc.) and digital components (logic gates, registers, etc.) would be useful in that the many electrical engineering majors (Course 6) could use the materials in their studies. Such a stock of components could encourage construction and devices for use in the house. Additional ideas for the continued use of this budget could be purchasing and setting up new Athena machines (campus-wide MIT computing environment) for use at Beta.

In summary, the scholarship chair continues to use the educational budget to provide a rich environment for academic growth. Please send any questions or comments to nickrhj@mit.edu.

Yours in ~kai~,
Nick Hunter-Jones '11, 1120



From left to right: Ari Miller '11, Paul Jaffe '12, Brian Basham '12 and Josh Bails '11 hanging out on campus.

We have new Betas—now let's get more!

This semester, Beta has been hard at work on rush. Although we are all very happy with the newly initiated freshman class, we recognized at the beginning of this term that there were still some unaffiliated freshmen who would make great Betas. After three weeks of focused effort on rush, we now have a spring pledge class of four. The chapter as a whole put a great deal of effort into ensuring the success of spring rush, and the result is the largest spring pledge class in recent history. We're very proud of everyone in the house. We're especially thankful for the vested interest and advice we've received from our alumni rush adviser, Mike Feinstein '82. Mike will be coming over on a monthly basis during the course of this semester to help the chapter improve our recruitment skills.

Now that our spring pledge class has been finalized, we're looking ahead to next fall. First on the agenda is Campus Preview Weekend (CPW). Very soon, hundreds of admitted high school seniors will be descending on our campus, expecting to be

shown the best of what MIT has to offer. We're planning to give them just that. The chapter is going to strive to show our wide range of interests by hosting events like a talk from artificial intelligence granddaddy, Marvin Minsky; a concert by our very own band, Intergalactic Space Gunk; sailing; and hours upon hours of grilling burgers at the barbecue pits outside of Kresge Auditorium. Convincing students to attend MIT while getting them interested in Beta at the same time is both a lot of work and a lot of fun. We will also be using CPW to begin giving out information about our Men of Principle scholarship, which is another useful tool for rush.

After CPW, we'll be working on planning rush week for this coming fall. Any and all alumni are encouraged to contribute ideas for rush events and, of course, to attend them, too. Contact us by email at dodd@mit.edu or robert_b@mit.edu.

Yours in ~kai~,
Dodd Gray '10, 1111, and Robert Boyd '10, 1110
Rush Chairmen



The band, Intergalactic Space Gunk, rocking out in the stage room in the basement of the annex. The band, from left to right, is Ryan Luersen '09, Paul Jaffe '12, and Ari Miller '11.

We want to learn from you!

Greetings, brothers! The entire chapter is very excited about increasing the level of communication we have with our alumni. All of you have been through many of the things we are going through now and have solved the problems we're trying to solve. Each of you has years of experience that would be extremely useful to us. We would like to open up the lines of communication between any of you who feel you might be able to help and those of us in the chapter looking for advice or trying to solve a problem.

The first way we plan to move toward this goal is by simply asking for help and making sure communication is easy. Most of the articles in this issue of *The Back Bay Beta* have the writer's e-mail address included. If you have any feedback at all, we would love to hear it.

Second, our president, Dodd Gray '10, and I are working on creating an electronic newsletter to be sent regularly to any alumni who are willing to listen. This will be a short "state of the chapter" style address that

will contain any important news or updates coming from the chapter. We would like to encourage you to respond to any of these e-mails with your questions and comments. You are all a part of Beta, so we would like to keep you in the loop.

Third, we want to meet you! The best way for us to learn from our alumni is by meeting them. We would like to invite all of you to this year's alumni weekend, which will be on the weekend of May 1-3, 2009. For more information, contact Mike Feinstein (mike_feinstein@yahoo.com) or go to our website, www.beta-mit.edu. We hope to see you there!

Finally, I want you to have my contact information. If you have any questions or comments (or good advice from a previous alumni relations chairman), please send me an e-mail at gvargas@mit.edu.

Yours in ~kai~,
Greg Vargas '10, 1112
Alumni Relations Chairman

Welcome to the spring 2009 pledge class!

We are proud to announce we have four new pledges in the spring 2009 pledge class! Such a substantial spring class has been unheard of in recent history, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to take the role of pledge educator at such a momentous time. In bestowing the values and history of our great fraternity upon these eager candidates, I look forward to seeing them develop into our chapter's future leaders. This exciting pledge class is composed of:

- **Stephen Riggsby**, from Redmond, Oregon, loves tennis and squash. This 19-year-old hat-sporting racqueteer hopes to study engineering.
- Having grown up in La Mirada, California and being a current member of MIT's Spanish House, **Matt Estrada** brings Hispanic heritage and Course 2 passion to his pledge class.
- This next pledge holds an epic name that only begins to quantify his intrinsic awesomeness. We are excited to welcome **Maximus St. John**, a 20-year-old identical twin from Washington, D.C.
- **Justin Cullen**, an avid climber and our new resident fire poi specialist, joins us from Schenectady, New York.

Yours in ~kai~,
Ari Miller '11, 1119

Finding problems and fixing them

(continued from page one)

semester and in the future by establishing an electronic newsletter that will be sent out regularly. I have high hopes for Beta this semester. If you have any questions or comments, please send them to me at dodd@mit.edu.

Yours in ~kai~,
Dodd Gray '10, 1111
President

Beta Upsilon Alumni Send Their News

Norman C. Bedford '38 sends greetings from 124 Lincoln St., Hingham, MA 02043.

"In my undergraduate years, I rowed in the lightweight varsity crew," writes **Herbert Voelcker '51**, "oscillating between the #4 and #8 seats. After graduation, I did no rowing for about 40 years, then edged back—as an oarsman for a few years with the local Ithaca, New York, Cascadilla Boat Club, then as backup faculty adviser to Cornell's lightweight crews (which are a story unto themselves—national champions in '06-'08, Henley finalists in '05-'08) and 'cheerleader' and fundraiser for the current push to rebuild MIT's rowing program. It was a tough uphill fight for almost a decade, but the tide turned in 2004-'05. I have been working on the lightweight coach's endowment. **Ron McKay '54** has been one of the leaders of the turnaround." Catch up with Herb at 205 Valley Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850; hbv1@alum.mit.edu.

Edwin C. Bell '58 reports a new address: 625 Biltmore Way, #804, Coral Gables, FL 33134.

"As a loyal Beta approaching my 53rd year, may I express my pride at the way the Beta Upsilon Chapter continues to cultivate the

highest aspects of intellectual pursuits and friendship always," writes **Stephen J. Yeretsky '59**. Drop Steve a line at 8 Longhorn Loop Ct., New Waverly, TX 77358; sjyere@gmail.com.

"Janë and I enjoy spending time with many brothers," reports **James Draper '62** (62 Bellevue St., Newton, MA 02458), "including **Mead Wyman '62** and **Tony Aldrich '60** at home and in the Maine woods, **Dave ('62)** and **Bill Koch '62** at dinner and pursuing common interests, especially in sailing and building up the **James Cunningham ('57)** Scholarship for women in engineering and sciences at MIT. This is the senior endowed scholarship for undergraduate women students at MIT. Janë and I spend lots of time with our grandchildren, Catharine, Nick and Alexandria, children of our daughter, Allison, and her husband, Jeffrey, and our fourth grandchild, Zoya, with our son, Stark, and his wife, Michelle."

"In October, the 1961 pledge class held a mini-reunion at the home of Barb and **Mike Monsler '64** in Danville," reports **Robert Grant '64**. "Seven of the original 10 members of the class were there. Sue and **Fred Luconi** were vacationing on the West Coast and visiting their son, daughter-in-law, and grandson in

Pasadena. **Rich Carpenter** flew out from Vermont. Susie Martin, widow of **Bill Martin '60**, also flew out from Boston. The rest were all from the Bay Area: Barb and Mike Monsler, Nancy and **Mike Lardner**, Marge and **Jerry Burnett**, Jackie and **Jim Giffin**, and Sally and Bob Grant." Find out more from Bob at 1030 Homestead Ave., Walnut Creek, CA 94598; ragrant@ix.netcom.com.

"My main recreation is playing hickory golf with 100-year-old clubs," writes **William T. Stewart '69**. "My best finish was a second-place in Pinehurst. I also teach AP calculus and physics at my high school, in the same classroom where I studied 43 years ago. Teaching is in my blood, I guess. I still run our family manufacturing business, and the collapse of the stock market will keep my working for some time. Did everything according to the book and lost a million dollars!" Stewey receives snail mail at 550 S. Samuel Dr., Zanesville, OH 43701; e-mail at bstewart@adjustoveyor.com.

Paul Terwilliger '82 recently moved to 430 Highland Dr., Henniker, NH 03242.

Also reporting a new address is **Nathan Boyd '96**: 4343 3rd St., #402, San Francisco, CA 94124. E-mail him at nate@nateboyd.com.

Jacob A. Stultz '07 is a member of the technical staff and a software engineer at Oracle in Redwood City, California. Check in with him at 239 Dore St., San Francisco, CA 94103; jstultz@alum.mit.edu.

chapter eternal

We regret to announce the death of:

Oswald Stewart '39
January 7, 2009



The 1961 pledge brothers gathered at Mike Monsler's house in October. From left: Jim Giffin, Fred Luconi, Mike Lardner, Mike Monsler, Bob Grant, Rich Carpenter, and Jerry Burnett.

David H. Koch '62 and Albert O. Wilson '38 awarded Bronze Beaver

Two Betas were named recipients of the MIT Alumni Association's Bronze Beaver Award for decades of service to MIT: David H. Koch '62 and Albert O. Wilson '38. The Alumni Association presents several annual awards to recognize, honor, and reward outstanding accomplishment and service to the alumni association and to MIT.

Winners are announced in July, and awards are presented at the annual Alumni Leadership Conference in September.

The Bronze Beaver Award is the highest honor the association can bestow upon any alumni volunteer. It is given to recognize distinguished service to the alumni association and the institute by

alumni who have been active in most or all phases of alumni activity and who have been outstanding in at least one phase. Alf K. Berle '27 and Carole (Cac) A. Clarke '21 were the first recipients of this award, which was established in 1955. As of July 1, 2008, a total of 291 individuals have been awarded the Bronze Beaver. For more



David Koch '62



Albert Wilson '38

background on the award, visit <http://alum.mit.edu/volunteering/RecognitionAwards/AnnualAwards/AwardWinners>.