

*The Sigma Chi*

BEAVER SIG



*Rushing Issue*

ALPHA THETA CHAPTER  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Alpha Theta Chapter House  
Sigma Chi Fraternity  
August 10, 1949

To the Members of the Class of 1953

Dear Freshmen:

I want, first, to congratulate you on having been admitted to the class of 1953 at the Institute. For the next four years you will be identified as a member of '53 and the years that follow the phrase "class of '53 at MIT" will follow you each time you gain recognition from your fellow men. Be proud of your class and do your utmost for it both in class work and extra-curricular activity.

Speaking of extra-curricular activity, a very important part of MIT is the role that fraternities play. Foremost among the benefits to be derived from fraternal association and the rich, varied life which it comprises at its best, I believe, is the experience of sharing with a democratic group the conduct of its own affairs toward a common goal; self-development as a component part of group betterment.

Probably of more obvious interest to you freshmen is that a good fraternity offers not only fun, companionship, social opportunity, and athletics, but also help from the members in studies.

During Rush Week you will be busy rushing from one fraternity house to another trying to see as many as possible in the short time allowed. Undoubtedly you have already received much valuable information on fraternities, but may I offer one suggestion. It would, it seems to me, be helpful to you: In a careful, critical assessment of the fraternities you elect to visit during Rush Week, observe "the man behind the manner" in various bull sessions you will be joining. In other words, allow yourself time to absorb the characteristic "spirit" of a particular house.

Elsewhere in this issue some of the members of the fraternity present some fine practical suggestions on how to evaluate a fraternity, and there is also helpful information on problems that bother freshmen every year. I hope this pamphlet will be of use to you, and don't hesitate to ask questions on your visits to the various houses and take your time in making a final decision.

We are looking forward to meeting you in September.

Cordially,

Warren M. Cheek, Consul

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Alpha Theta Chapter House  
Sigma Chi Fraternity  
August 10, 1949

To the Members of the Class of 1953

Dear Freshmen:

You, as an incoming freshman, are entering upon one of the most perplexing and confusing periods of your life. You are starting your college education at the finest engineering school in the country, and right now you are concerned about choosing a fraternity.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to help you make the right decisions. First, whether or not you want a fraternity, and second, which is the best fraternity for you. We have also included an article about activities at Tech and one of interest to you concerned with studying and "tackling Tech." We are not trying to sell Sigma Chi to you by printing this pamphlet for you. We feel that we will influence you the way only Sigma Chi can influence you when we meet you in September. We are vitally and sincerely proud of our fraternity, and not one of our brothers ever slightly regretted his choice.

Good luck to each and every one of you. Sigma Chi is watching you, and we are interested in meeting and knowing you.

Sincerely,  
Robert M. Briber, Associate Editor

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### **WHY CHOOSE A FRATERNITY AT ALL?**

Many people look upon fraternities as purely social organizations; by the term "social," they mean giving many dances, cocktail parties, and picnics.

To me a fraternity means more than that. I am not trying to diminish the value of social functions; as a matter of fact, I firmly believe that a well organized "fun providing" program is absolutely essential on any school's campus, and at the good old MIT any kind of entertainment which will divorce you for at least a few hours a week from the mad world of technological lingo and sliderulers is a desperate necessity. (That is, if you attach any value to remaining as nearly mentally balanced as possible.) But when you pledge a fraternity, you should keep in mind the fact that most of the next four years you will spend with the men in that fraternity, and that not all of those four years will be devoted to having fun. No matter how brilliant you are, you will find that at Tech you will have to work and work hard to get better than average grades. Although men in the fraternities usually work their problems individually, there will always be someone on hand to help you with the one that you just can not crack.

When you enter college you are a boy; when you graduate, you should be a man. This change is not easy. There is no course that you can take to obtain the "degree of manhood." You will have to learn multiple things. Among these you will have to learn to live with other men, and you will find that they, too, have faults and weaknesses; you'll have to learn how to tolerate and how to accept tolerance; how to recognize true, genuine friendship, and how to appraise the value of mutual respect.

Living, dining, studying, and playing together with a few score of other men in your age group will give you the very best opportunity to get to know them. You will soon find that although you like some of the boys better than the others, the entire chapter will become a part of you and you will become a part of it. And you will feel that, although an individual, you are not going through these four very important years of your life entirely alone.

By Laurence G. Brown

## **RUSH WEEK—IMPRESSIONS AND EXPRESSIONS**

Every day of Rush Week you are going to meet men you have never seen, men who are brought to Boston by a common interest. The first impression you give them, and the one they make upon you, is going to be of prime importance in deciding which of them are going to become your lasting friends. If you are interested in knowing how to impress them correctly, and in knowing what to look for in them, stick around—this article is for you.

A simple thing like a firm handshake, and a clear "Glad to meet you" mean a lot in a first impression. Beware of the "wet fish" handshake. After the introduction comes the conversation. Whether this conversation is mere chit-chat, or whether it becomes a "bull session" is of little importance, for, in either case, an impression is going to be made. Try to keep the talk interesting and spirited, and remember, if you do not like the views put forth by the people you are talking with, chances are you won't like their fraternity. Too much cannot be said about the importance of a good impression, for a friendship is just a series of good impressions.

From this side of the fence, as members of a fraternity, we are looking for a few very special things in our conversation with you. First of all we are looking for a presentable figure. Chances are we will notice whether or not your shoes are shined, your trousers are pressed, your hair is combed, and your fingernails are clean. After that, we are looking to see if your interests are, to a certain extent, in common with ours. If the fraternity down the street is interested in men who came to school to play and party, the one next door is probably looking for just the ordinary guy who can contribute something of value to the fraternity in personality or character. Realize, though, that no fraternity is interested in only one type of person—they all have different groups interested in different things.

From your side of the fence, where we were not so very long ago, you know, you should be looking for pretty much the same things, plus a little more. You should be sure to meet every member of the fraternity you are interested in, because you are going to live with all of them, not just the outstanding few. Be sure the fraternity physically offers you what you want. Be sure your fraternity has a firm financial standing, and, if possible, find out how it fits into campus standing. Campus standing can be measured by seeing how a fraternity stacks up scholastically, socially, in activities, and in athletics. Many rank high in one or two of these things, but a strong house ranks high in all four.

You are going to have a hard time choosing a fraternity, and the fraternity is going to have a hard time picking you. If you are bid, take your time, and think it over carefully. Beware of the house that tries to rush you into accepting a bid. Four years is a long time. Good luck.

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Oscar Wilde said it: "Experience is the name everyone gives to his mistakes."

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Much happiness is overlooked because it doesn't cost anything.

## **THE FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Recent events have put fraternities and fraternity life and ideals very much before the public, and these same events have caused fraternities to reflect upon the past and to think about the future. Most of this free publicity that was meted out so liberally by the press was not of a complimentary nature and led the reader to assume that fraternities were no more than a group of roustabouts banded together for a continuous round of social events interrupted only occasionally by school work. The social side of fraternity life has been the target of a great many critics because that seems to be the facet most often seen by the public.

These events have caused us to think, and to try to evaluate ourselves. We have asked ourselves questions concerning our social life and have come up with satisfactory answers. Are we right in assuming that a social program is a necessity and an actual advantage in correlation with school work? Can a social program be planned that will give students the broadest type of social outlook? Can this program of broad coverage be one that will be satisfactory to all as an outlet for the tensions of school and still be one that will conform to the ideals and desires of present day conventions?

These questions, of course, must all be answered with a knowledge of the particular conditions that exist at MIT; because, naturally, it is in the problems of MIT that we are interested. After a study of these conditions we are able to answer all of the above questions with an emphatic YES!

I doubt if anyone comes to Tech with the illusion that he can get by with little or no work, and the fellow is the exception who does not spend five to six nights of the week studying. We work hard at Tech, and it is this pressure that makes it almost mandatory for a student to have a chance to relax. This relaxation is provided for in a variety of ways by the different living groups and by the school itself. That a social outlet is a good thing is evidenced by the fact that most schools sanction and heartily endorse student social functions. We, of course, are interested in the fraternity social outlook here at MIT. Fraternities here, because of their small size and therefore greater flexibility, are able to have a varied social program that functions throughout the school year. This program includes informal and costume parties; small, closed house parties; formal banquets, and informal singing sessions.

We believe all that encompasses the social program is a necessity and an actual advantage to any student. Studies are the primary factor in attending college, true, but it is also desirable for the student to be at ease with members of his own sex as well as members of the opposite sex, to function as part of a group as well as an individual, to be able to plan a social function, be it an informal songfest or a banquet for the president of the school. Along with this is the ability of the student to get along with the executives and administrators of the school, to be able to meet them on an equal social footing and to have the necessary "savoir faire." These are some of the reasons that we believe social activities to be desirable.

By this same reasoning it is to be seen that we are able to put forth a social program that will fit the desires of the individual as well as benefiting them. There is a great deal of difference between a picnic at the beach and a reception for a noted world figure, but such events are to be found many times at the different fraternities on the campus; and because of their variety they bring about an overall development in the personalities of the students.

Aside from the home itself, there is no better place to develop the character of an individual than in a congenial group of his fellow men, where his best interests are the interests of the group as a whole. Fraternities have long recognized this and have realized the responsibilities by which they are faced in taking a man into their group. The ideals of the men in fraternities at Tech, and subsequently the policies of the social life these men lead, is a cross section of college men all over the country tempered by the ideals of the fraternities and the men surrounding them. We feel that we are intelligent enough to conduct ourselves on a plane conforming to the conventions of the day, which are, after all, no more than decency, fairness, and good manners.

Fraternities have often been called nothing but a social organization, but although we are actually more than that, we are proud that we can lay claim to contributing to the social development of our fellow students.

By Stanley W. Moulton, Jr., Social Chairman

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Mark Twain said it: "To be good is noble, but to teach others to be good is nobler—and less trouble."

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"A little actual experience will modify a great many academic theories."—Martin Vanbee.

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President Lowell of Harvard, explaining why universities have so much learning: "The freshmen bring a little in, and the seniors take none out, so it accumulates through the years."

## **STUDYING AND "TACKLING TECH"**

Tackling Tech is like tackling any other university—it requires study, but in the right places. There is no such thing as a student who can learn without studying.

The peak of perfection is learning how to budget your time. More students have trouble doing that one thing than anything else at the Institute. Just spending four hours every night is not enough. Don't get me wrong; it isn't that more time is required; it is how to use your time. I have seen many spend excess hours and yet have poorer results simply because they did not know how to study and what to study.

When a freshman first starts classes, he is momentarily floored by the amount of material presented by the school. Keep in mind that the Institute is presenting in every course much more material than they expect you to absorb. Your problem is to pick out the important facts.

At first this is not easy and you will often ride off the track, but before long you will become quite efficient.

Here are a few pointers that may help you get started. Keep a separate spiral notebook for each subject. Take notes in lecture and in class. Carefully follow the instructor. Do not try to copy everything off the board indiscriminately, and then analyze it later. You will find only a big jumble of facts you cannot unscramble with this method. Instead, try to record only those points that the lecturer stresses or tells you are of importance. Try to keep alert. Every well-spent minute in lecture or class is usually worth ten at home.

One time-wasting thing that I have seen freshmen do is to copy lecture notes over into another spiral. Believe me, I tried it, too, and this time is not well spent. It is more valuable to spend this time studying your notes than copying them over. Try to take notes in final form. Use ink because you will want to keep them all year, and possibly all four years.

Almost every chapter or topic you will study has one big principle from which many smaller ideas and formulas are derived. This fact can almost always be stated in a sentence or two. Be sure that you understand the foremost principle of every subject you study. Every formula you learn, and every problem you solve is just an application of one of these principles. I have heard many say, "Learn the principle, and it will pay off." They are right.

Homework at Tech is practice in utilizing these principles. It is not always required in a particular course. The test of your ability is the quiz. Freshmen have quizzes on Wednesday and Friday mornings at nine o'clock. Your grade is almost entirely based upon these quizzes, so you will want to do your best. Do not neglect a quiz that is coming up; it counts.

For your night work, try to plan a schedule that will enable you to do every subject's work. You will be able to do this easily after you know your program. The average student spends four hours a night, from eight till twelve, studying. Some spend more, but I am convinced that four is plenty and even two is adequate some nights. I cannot tell you how to absorb the material. We all know that every person has a different system. The point I wish to stress is to study hard when you do study. Everyone has heard that statement over and over again, but at Tech it is really important. Try to spend the entire night before a quiz on that particular subject. Do the planned homework for that night beforehand. A good system in studying for the quiz is to first review all your lecture notes, class notes, and text. Make out a small "poop" sheet putting details and formulas under their respective principles. Finish your review by trying a few scattered problems using the principles you have just reviewed. When you first encounter a problem, say to yourself, "What principle or principles are used in this problem?" If you know the principles, again I say, you have licked the problem. Do not learn problem types. Quiz problems are often different from those you worked at home. It is difficult to trace mentally from a homework problem to a principle and back to the quiz problem you have before you. Know the principle, and you will be all right. Tech is not

interested if you make a mathematical mistake; we all slip. They are interested to know if you know what you are doing.

In tackling Tech one must have the proper mental attitude. There is no disgrace in being a good student. There are many jokes about fellows studying long hours and studying hard. We all have a good chuckle over them, but seriously, it is the man who is the good student that has time for other activities that are so necessary for a well-rounded personality. Tech is a place to study, but is also a place to have fun, to have dates on weekends, and to grow socially and mentally along with the other fellow. Keep this fact in mind, and we shall all climb the ladder together.

By Gerald F. Laufs

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"One of the greatest labor saving devices of today is tomorrow."—  
Duncan Caldwell.

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How desperately difficult it is to be honest with oneself. It is much easier to be honest with other people.

### **FRESHMAN CAMP—AND FOR B.M.O.C.'s\***

The freshmen will once again have the chance to attend Freshman Camp. Freshman Camp guarantees fun and also the first chance for the class of '53 to get together on the athletic field or in informal bull sessions. At camp several assemblies are held to introduce to the freshmen the various activities at Tech. During this period the freshmen can scan the field to see in which activities they would like to participate.

After Freshman Camp, "smokers" are held in which the freshmen have a better chance to learn about the specific activity they wish to enter. The men who join first have the advantage on others who join later since seniority is a prime factor in promotion. Tech's publications offer many opportunities. "Voo Doo," the humor magazine, the newspaper, the yearbook, and the "Tech Engineering News" can satisfy the wishes of the journalists. The different bodies of the student government are open to the incoming class. Hobby clubs and dramatic organizations present another field to freshmen. Athletics are by no means slighted at Tech. Athletes can go out for practically any sport from lacrosse to sailing.

Field Day is the highlight of the fall. On this day the freshmen and the sophomores clash in several sports. Teams compete in a regulation football game, tennis, swimming, crew, tug of war, and the Glove Fight—the grand finale! Spirit is brought to boiling levels during the pre-Field Day encounters. In the past the sophs have usually held back the freshmen, but the competition never slackens between eager frosh and avenging sophs.

By C. F. "Bob" Frey

\*Big Men on Campus.

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Thomas Huxley said it: "The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher."