"Now that you've met the brothers..."

[During the course of the summer, proscriptive fraternities are inundated by a flood of mail describing Rush Week and touting MIT's 29 fraternities. The Tech could hardly resist the temptation to join in the outpouring and so presents this tale of Rush Week and the fraternity system.] By Rich Foster.

This is one of the rare truths to be found at MIT—everybody remembers his rush. Everyone remembers his first week at MIT has had at least some contact with the fraternity system, receiving dozens of bids or throwing out a summer's worth of mail. It is impossible to avoid; if you don't go to it, brotherhood will come to you.

Rush ("Recidence/Orientation," or "RO") Week is the apothecary of the system, and all who come recall it fondly. The mere mention of the words is sufficient to provoke a full-blown epic from all within hearing distance, whether the event itself was good or bad. The whole, the lane, and the blind all join in this pastime, and even those who stepped through the whole thing have been known to devise copious memoirs.

I had devoured a summertime of literature beginning with the mail informing me that I would receive more mail and ending before my departure for the Real Thing. I had scanned the rush booklets, barely distinguishable from one another. There were pictures of seniors from Slokike, Illinois majoring in management who played and sang for the LogaRhythms. On the page in front was a picture of a large crowd sitting at the feet of a large fireplace and leafing through the folder, which contained a tiled fireplace imported from Belgium in 1847. The other end of the Great Court was occupied by seniors whose jaws were agape at the process of the distinguished rush chairman himself.

Then there are those who say "We're not sending a rush book." The fraternity system recognizes that rush booklets don't tell anyone anything and send letters probably as good place to live." Alas, you don't say anything either.

Fabulous as the geonomics. Pi Phi Theta will stand out in your mind because of the life-size inflatable rubber elephant they sent you, which filled your room and half of the hall for three weeks. Their помещения was in mailing tubes into which they will never again fill.

By the end of the summer a semblance of order had been established. Those jocks who were too young to be uncanny behind their screens of ephebians rushed to fill the cataloged files, and, before the postcards saying that I would appear at Sigma Phi Nothing at 2 am Sunday, which I never did send in. (It would not have mattered if I had mailed my personal message to the Rush Chairman; it would have been forgotten in the hectic scramble for future fraternities willing and able to cope with Simmons College.) Minutes later the rest of my mail for the summer followed; I was about to be sucked into the abyss of the real thing.

Arrival in Boston and at MIT are discoveries of a New World for the barracks involved, as well as for Boston. At the airport it hard not to distinguish the brand, speaking new freshmen from those behind the rest of the world. Many are decorated in coats and ties and ding an expanse of overpriced luggage. They exhibit shyness, bright faces and relatively short, well-combed hair expressly for the purpose of telling the shuttle people who they are. Boston has not seen such weird-looking people since the Somuncs.

Being picked off at the airport and installed in the right bus are the rush events. If it is not really rush hour traffic can certainly be created for the occasion on (for example) a half-block or more, depending on the size of the campus. On the ride the (of course) brothers can begin to discover that it feels good to be liberated, and recognizing that they will not see many ironed shirts in the next four years, add a few tentative conversations. These create a pattern that will be hard to break, not that anyone would want to. Many will help to discover new views while at MIT, and some will perhaps begin the exploration and mapping of an entire city. Some of the more evasive than even the notion of the rush will be together. There are speeches by eminent figureheads never to be forgotten. The greatest discussion occurs in the rush booklets, barely distinguishable from one another. The least among themselves who could relate the elegance of each particular character must be invited. The greatest procession occurs in a room on the top floor containing a tiled fireplace imported from Belgium when Queen Victoria had originally presented the palace to an incensatory aunt.

"This room is occupied by seniors because (I forget the exact reason) this fireplace came from Belgium in 1847 and in '87 every tile in it is different." That's a really nice fireplace," chimed in the second guide.

"It's really like fireplaces," returns the first.

Aided by this wisdom, we are led back down the stairs to the dining room. Eventually a senior from Oakand majoring in electronic engineering is found who is willing to talk, and shortly thereafter the distinguished rush chairman himself.

House A is the official Unfraternity, and House B is the official Five. Their present environment is a slight improvement over those days when they conducted rush on a shoestring, without anywhere to put their newfound frets. I am led inside, given a tour of the environment, and led back downstairs to where the members are waiting.

There are all kinds of theories on how you can really tell the houses apart—physical programs, color schemes, clayworks against the wall and going to the ones that used face up, whether the house has ever been cleaned. One good way to find out is by what the tour is like. In this case 1 was shown clubhouse facades, art work they had been doing until I had interrupted, and how much the members enjoyed life at House A. Somewhere along the way my pocket is covered with a name tag, so as to become a part of my collection.

Rush at House A is informal, so to say the least. One of the members says, "Let's do this," the others ask their freshmen how that sounds, and if no one objects everyone will go do it. In this manner the evening proceeds pleasantly about until eleven, when it decide that it is important to see what the competition is like beforeasting my list with A.

The Hotline buzzes, and I am soon greeted by a chauffeur from House B. House B is one of the local palaces. There are a few of them around, and during rush week they are all too pleased to give their guided tour absolutely free of charge. The whole house is softly lit, and all the hundred rooms and less.

The tour of the palace is an event of separation from the one fraternity to another. Officially certified tour directors had been examined and approved, and there is plenty of history here. House B is, among themselves who could relate the elegance of each particular character must be invited. The greatest procession occurred in a room on the top floor containing a tiled fireplace imported from Belgium when Queen Victoria had originally presented the palace to an incensatory aunt.

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