The intricacies of finding a place to live

By Leigh J. Passman
Leigh Passman '81 is a member of an MIT fraternity.

Residence/Orientation week can be an exciting, exciting week making new friends, finding a place to live, and getting acclimated to the MIT environment. It can be a confusing and exhausting if things don't work out as you might hope. Undoubtedly the most pressing concern for freshmen first arriving on campus is the choice of a living group. There are over 40 living groups, each with its own distinctive flair and flavor.

Your first choice of a room is made at the R/O Center on the second floor of the Student Center. You are given a temporary room assignment in the dorm of your choice, as available. Definitely request a room in the dorm of your choice, not some other room you might prefer based on what you've read in the Freshman Residence Book. This will provide you later with more to base your dorm choice on. Then leave your excess luggage in the storage area in the Saal Dei Portico (next to the R/O Center); it is safe there and you are not bothered dragging all your possessions around until you know definitely where you will be living. You may also lock up your bike there.

Getting Sorted
Once you have been given a temporary room assignment, your best bet is to take whatever possessions you will be keeping directly to your room (especially if you will have your parents around to help you carry it). You will be given keys to your room, and linen and towels at the dorm's desk.

If you are seriously considering the fraternities as a living group, it is to your advantage to tour the various dormitories before today's picture for you may want Friday evening (Sept. 1) through Monday (Sept. 4), to concentrate your time and energy on the fraternities. Although it is not due at the R/O Center until Monday, Sept. 4, the sooner you get your dorm preference card turned in, the less you will be preoccupied with rushing. "Chasing" is not a word you want to be associated with, but it is the word you want to avoid if you would like to back up should you not receive a bid. Clearly, though, the fraternities place no time limit on getting a bid. Most fraternities have activities or events, often on Monday morning the earliest a bid can be made at the R/O Center, Dave Maurer, IFC Rush Chairman, phone 536-3939 or Jim Thompson (IFC Chairman) phone 536-2057. Rushing fraternities is very easy, and, as you will see, a lot of fun. A few points to keep in mind are: Rush starts immediately after the picnic, so you shouldn't have early family or other emergency, but it facilitates the R/O process to get to know more about the frat brothers. However, taking away from the Boston/Cambridge area also takes up a lot of your time and makes you inaccessible to other frats. The IFC imposes a five or six hour limit on the length of time a frat can have you away from their house. After all the daily activities, the frat may invite you to stay overnight.

Fraternal activities can extend their first bid Sunday morning; with Monday morning rising the earliest acceptance date. Bids are quickly extended and quickly accepted. Indeed last year 27 of nearly 400 freshmen who eventually pledged fraternities had done so by 9:30 am Monday (the first day of pledging).

Fledging

Most fraternities give you at least several days in which to accept or reject their bid, and a very few fraternities place no time limit on their bid. Clearly, though, the sooner you give them the courtesy of a response, the sooner they will know how they stand in their efforts to get a certain number of new members.

Keep in mind that you should have a dormitory preference card turned into the R/O Center by Monday morning in case you do not wish to pledge or choose not to live in a fraternity. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the process, Dave Maurer, the IFC Rush Chairman, the Officer of the Dean of Student Affairs or Housing, or even The Tech itself, in spite of the many precautions of R/O Week, try to enjoy yourself!