I guess most MIT students have had the opportunity to visit other college campuses and make comparisons with the "Ivies." A hobby of mine recently came back from "Berkeley-land" and was taken aback by the mellowness of the place. Since I spent last summer in Berkeley and also a week at the beginning of IAP, we had some stories and observations to exchange.

My visit in January was dominated by the fraternity/sorority system while he was spent investigating the possibility of graduate school and just checking out the area. I did that last summer. I also lived at the chapter of my fraternity in Berkeley and consequently made a few friends in the "greek system." It's too bad my buddy did not have time to look at the greek system; he might have found it interesting.

What I mean by the greek system is a system of living groups which consists of both fraternities and sororities. In southern and western parts of the country this is usually referred to as the greek system. However in the northeast, if someone said that they were a greek, one would probably think they were referring to "Somerville." Perhaps one of the reasons this term is being used is because the fact that most colleges only have a half a greek system — they lack sororities. This is too bad because sororities do add a different twist to student life.

I was well acquainted with the idea of brotherhood, which I learned as a pledge, but I never considered sisterhood. The two concepts are very much alike as they imply unity, but it was culture shock to see that kind of rivalry and competitiveness between women in a sorority. I really felt at home in the one Berkeley sorority I spent some time at — there were so many similarities to the fraternity I enjoyed at MIT.

Unity cuts beneath the arguments and petty disagreements that arise from living together. It's something you can feel and appreciate. It's also learning to take criticism well. At MIT it might be explaining to a pledge why he should not refer to your sect as a sisterhood in Berkeley it's explaining to a pledge why she can't wear a Mickey Mouse t-shirt so the SAE formal.

Also, there are the crazy things that you learn to laugh and live with: one girl with a fifty-dollar, radio-controlled R2D2 and another tramping around the house in ski boots trying to break in. At MIT it's a brother turning the fifth floor of the house into an assembly station for a cruise missile.

I was "on tour" of this sorority with a friend of mine, a Berkeley-land, was taken aback by the mellowness of the place. Since I spent last summer in Berkeley and also a week at the beginning of IAP, we had some stories and observations to exchange.

In general the social scene is different, with more semi-formal events. We have traditions at MIT too. We have Smoots on the Harvard Bridge, the Shuffle party, the FIJI Island party, piano flying off roofs, etc. These are integral parts of MIT (no pun intended); a sorority system would lead to different traditions than we have, but they would become our traditions.

With the rising number of female students at MIT and the influence of a strong fraternity system (which is incidently one of the largest in the Northeast) it is only a matter of time before MIT has the other half of the greek system. If this ever occurs it will bring about some changes in our student life. Can you imagine a fraternity giving a sorority inviting only men rather than the customary fraternity parties that are closed to non-brothers. The day may even come when we have a female instead of the Ugliest Man on Campus as our homecoming guest.

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