Greetings from the Master

Dear Friends and Alumni,

I am pleased to say that Fall semester of 2006 was marked by much success for Beta Rho. From the first day on campus, brothers worked hard for our annual furniture sale, from which we raised over four thousand dollars, half of which was donated to the American Jewish World Service. Social Chair Toby Cohen made his mark early when designing Body Chemistry X. Nearly 500 people attended and it was a night to remember for all.

In addition to these accomplishments was a triumph more priceless than any other: the building of our brotherhood. The newly initiated Xi pledge class integrated itself well into Beta Rho, taking important leadership roles in many of our events and showing the brotherly skills instilled by the Tal Itzkovich’s pledge program last spring. The future of AEpi is in good hands next semester with Jonathan Levin taking over at the helm.

This semester we had the pleasure of initiating 5 new members in our Omicron pledge class, the largest fall pledge class in the history of our chapter. These outstanding men are a great addition and will contribute in the upcoming semesters to strengthen Beta Rho.

To summarize some other accomplishments this past semester: our Lions won the 3-on-3 basketball championship; we painted a tutoring center for underprivileged students in Providence; we had many successful study breaks and concerts; alumni returned in November for our alumni weekend; the Omicrons built a box to store our firewood; we built a sukkah on our porch that can be used for years to come; but most importantly, our bonds of brotherhood were strengthened with enthusiasm, passion, and happiness.

After finishing the semester on a high note with our formal at the beautiful Gatehouse, we are looking forward to a successful spring rush under the discretion of world renowned nice jew boy Devin Cohen. If our fall rush is a measure of what we’re capable of for the spring, we should have a strapping Pi pledge class.

Lastly, I’d like to talk about this spring semester, more specifically about our 10 year anniversary celebration and the kickoff of the Decade Project. From March 16-18th we are having a weekend full of festivities to commemorate our 10th year as a chapter of AEpi. In this, we are trying to reach out to our alumni community, as AEpi prides itself on commitment for a lifetime. As part of our capital campaign, the Decade Project, we hope to increase involvement and challenge Beta Rho alumni to invest back in our house. For more information, please check out brownaepi.org/tenth.

As you read through this newsletter, it will become more and more clear how great a place Beta Rho is and how close our brothers are. I greatly enjoyed serving as Master this past semester and look forward to much success in the upcoming semesters.

Most fraternally,

Steven Beckoff (Nu ’08)
Master
Lieutenant Master: There's nothing minor about this board!

It has been an absolute pleasure serving the Beta Rho chapter this past semester as Lieutenant Master. Working with Master Steven Beckoff and the e-board was a privilege. I am extremely pleased with the current state of our chapter and the work that we accomplished as a brotherhood in the past semester.

A major role of the Lieutenant Master is to work with the minor board, a group of brothers appointed to, along with the Brother-at-Large, arrange the day-to-day programming of the house. This semester, we used the minor board as a way to involve the Xi pledge class in their first full semester as brothers, as well as to capitalize on the enthusiasm and leadership of many older brothers. We began the year with a meeting where we brainstormed ideas for the semester's programming.

Toby Cohen (Xi ’09) acted as our social chair this semester. Not only did he help throw some of the best larger parties on campus through Body Chemistry X and cocktails that included “Blue Steel,” a Zoolander party, and “Where the Wild Things Are,” also the pledge cocktail, but he also stepped up in planning and throwing our smaller social events downstairs. Needless to say, Toby made sure that AEП was always the place to be during the weekend.

Michael Morgenstern (Nu ’08) worked as our webmaster this fall, which he integrated with his responsibilities as Scribe. Not only did he spend countless nights working on the design of our website, making it more visually appealing and user friendly, but he also helped develop many of the backend technologies behind it, developing an alumni and current brother database. Additionally, the website can now be easily accessed at brownaepi.org.

Matthew Jacobs (Xi ’09) worked as our alumni relations chair, helping to keep in touch with many of our alumni and maintain the growing contact database. In addition, he planned a very successful alumni weekend on November 3-5, which was attended by a number of recent alumni. It was a great opportunity to have some fun and reconnect with the recent graduates. He is currently helping to plan our 10th anniversary weekend, which will take place on March 16-18.

Jacobs also served as Coffee Co-Op Chair, ensuring that fresh coffee was served each weekday and before our Sunday meetings.

Matthew Slen (Xi ’09) served as community service chair. We continued our tradition of helping to advertise for Brown's blood drives, for which the director spoke and thanked us at one of our meetings. We also expanded our community service efforts, painting a room at a tutoring center for the Providence School District on Saturday, November 11.

Adam Robbins (Xi ’09) was our chapter historian for the fall. He is never found without his camera, and his countless Facebook albums of AEП activities are a testament to that. He is also currently putting together a photo album to keep in our library.

Adam Lubitz (Xi ’09) served as our study breaks chair, helping to put together events including a BURP (Brown University Relaxation Project) session, and a number of shows by Evan Stone’s (Xi ’09) band “Silent Via Severity.”

Max Chaiken (Xi ’09) worked as our Jewish affairs chair, helping to put together a Rosh Hashanah study break that included tons of apples and honey, a Yom Kippur break fast with bagels and lox, and a Channukah party featuring an endless supply of latkes. Max is also very involved with Brown Hillel and functions as a great connection between the brotherhood and Hillel.

Stephen Alerhand (Xi ’08) filled the position of athletics chair this fall with tremendous success. AEП athletics showed its strength, winning the championship in basketball, reaching the softball final, making the playoffs in football, and going undefeated in the first half of the hockey season. More than those achievements, athletics has become a focal point of brotherhood bonding and a great way to make our presence known on campus.

Caleb Miller (Xi ’09) served as our Greek Liaison, working with community service chair Matt Slen and the rest of the Greek community to put together a fun event for “Halloween on Wriston.” They entertained underprivileged children from Providence’s elementary schools with mummy wrapping contests in our lounge.

Danny Scheinerman (Xi ’09) was the Academics chair of the fall semester, and initiated a number of projects to bring some life to the position. He set up a textbook exchange and purchasing program between brothers at the beginning of the semester, and also developed an online system to record what classes brothers have taken in the past.

The hard work and dedication of the minor board has proven very healthy for the house. Not only are the events and activities that they arrange fun and extremely beneficial to the brotherhood, but it has also enabled more brothers to take active leadership roles in the house.

I truly enjoyed serving as Lieutenant Master for Beta Rho this fall. While the position has demanded a large amount of effort, seeing the successes of the chapter makes all of the hard work worthwhile. I am very proud of how much fun we have as a house and the unity of our brotherhood, and I am very much looking forward to a tremendous spring as Master for Beta Rho.

Jonathan Levin (Nu ’08)
Lieutenant Master
Social Report

The semester was marked by stand-out party themes. We kicked off the semester with the tenth annual Body Chemistry party, establishing AEП as one of the social powerhouses during the first weekend of school. We had a summer-themed party in September (complete with beach umbrellas) and a sinfully delightful devils and demons themed party the weekend before Yom Kippur. Guests raved afterward that they most enjoyed our hilarious themes and matching decorations.

In honor of our fall pledge class, we threw a Zoolander themed semi-formal titled “Blue Steel”, which many claimed to be one of the best AEП parties ever. That title was quickly challenged when the Omicrons, under the leadership of Pledge Social Chair Ryan Gise (Omicron ’08), threw their own party, “Where the Wild Things Are”, inspired by the Maurice Sendak classic.

Working with Zeta Delta Xi again, Oktoberfest returned, which despite torrential downpours was a success with people emerging from our huge tent on Wriston Quad full of sausages and themed beverages.

Under the organization of Lieutenant Master Jon Levin (Nu ’08), we finished off the semester with a fantastic formal dinner and dancing at The Gatehouse overlooking the Seekonk River. As we look ahead to the spring semester, I’m sure that AEП will continue to hold fun and exciting events.

Tobias Cohen (Xi ’09)
Social Chair

Community Service Report

As a fraternity, we have a great opportunity to come together and accomplish things that none of us alone could do.

Our biggest project of the semester was one in which we painted a part of a mentoring center for children in Providence. Run by Volunteers in Providence Schools (VIPS), the center is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to giving Providence public-school children an equal opportunity to succeed. We did much-needed repairs that allowed them to focus completely on their goal of tutoring in a freshly painted space.

Along with Greek Council, we also provided an opportunity for underprivileged children to trick-or-treat with Halloween on Wriston. Set-up and run almost entirely by our own Michael Morgenstern (Nu ’08), this event was a huge success. Some brothers and pledges participated in bringing kids around to all of the Greek houses while Caleb Miller (Xi ’09) and myself helped run the event—a mummy wrapping contest with toilet paper. All the kids left with handfuls of candy and big smiles on their faces.

Then, the brothers collaborated with Kappa Alpha Theta to promote two blood drives hosted by the Rhode Island Blood Center (RIBC). By spreading publicity and manning a ratty table, we helped the RIBC collect enough blood to help over 1800 people.

We have gotten a lot done this semester, and are already planning to go further.

Matthew Slen (Xi ’09)
Community Service Chair
An Alumni Weekend to Remember!

As Beta Rho approaches its 10th anniversary this spring, we are in a unique position to involve its growing alumni population with the current brotherhood. The current undergraduate brothers enjoy all opportunities to reconnect with graduated brothers that they know and meet those that they don’t. Even stronger ties to our alumni will solidify lasting communication between all future generations of generations of the house and past ones.

A first step in this effort was our past alumni weekend at the beginning of November. Alumni arrived throughout the day on Friday, November 3rd and enjoyed some fine Providence cuisine at Pane E Vino. The rest of the night was spent casually catching up and bonding.

Saturday morning started early with some tailgating outside the house and the Brown-Yale football game, a heartbreaking loss of 24 to 27. Still, the brothers had a great time. We unwound for a bit, then headed to one of the house’s favorite authentic Chinese cuisines, Red Ginger, for a delicious meal. The night was finished by an undergrads-alums Beirut tournament in which everybody won.

On Sunday, alumni stayed for a day and enjoyed the sense of brotherhood one feels in the company of close friends. We had a bagels and lox brunch and alumni were encouraged to share significant experiences during good-and-welfare.

Both alumni and current brothers were thrilled to see each other, and the alumni had a fantastic time. Rob Lazerow (Kappa ’06) thought “the weekend was a great way to come back and spend time with current undergraduates. It was great to see so many people enjoying the house.”

We continue to focus on building lasting relationships between generations of brothers. The upcoming 10th Anniversary event will be a strong push in this direction, and the whole brotherhood is looking forward to it.

Brothers and alumni (left to right: Alumni Tal Itzkovich and Rob Lazerow, Brothers Jon Levin ’08, Steve Beckoff ’08, Dave Guttman ’07, Alex Levi ’07, and Ben Logan ’06.5) enjoy themselves at the Brown Football game
It takes extreme dedication, tremendous organization, and an attractive campus image to usher in a pledge class during the fall. This past semester, our stars were evidently aligned.

We had the privilege of guiding the Omicron pledge class: Jordan “Pink Sock” Berg (‘09), Matthew “Gobbles” Cline (‘09), Ryan “Busy Bee” Gise (‘08), Adam “Ollie” Lewin (‘09), and Brian “Precious” Luu (‘09), through a pledge program that held on to many of our sacred traditions, and brought in new innovation.

They mastered our chapter’s history and the national ritual, we were introduced to the brothers through brothers’ books, organized a house cocktail and a community service project repainting a tutoring center, and began to forge the connections with each other and the brotherhood that will stay with them for years to come.

This year for the first time, they also had the chance to showcase their gentlemanly qualities in preparing an evening of fine cuisine and ice skating with five gorgeous dates. They also learned from Beta Rho brothers of years past, both during our fall Alumni Weekend and, more recently, while staying with Immediate Past Pledgemaster Tal Itzkovich (Kappa ‘06) during an overnight quest through Boston on their pledge retreat.

Admittedly, I was initially ambivalent about taking on the role as Pledgemaster this fall, foreseeing a busy semester of medical school interviews that I was afraid would distract me from leading the pledge program effectively. However, due in part to the resourcefulness of my assistant pledgemasters Michael Morgenstern (Nu ‘08) and Paul Savitz (Nu ‘08), and in part to the passionate commitment that the Omicrons demonstrated from the outset of pledging,

I found the role to be one of the most rewarding that I have taken on as a brother here. Yes, it was an intense responsibility. It was as much work as pledging again, but with the added behind-the-scenes responsibility of planning, execution, and philosophical considerations.

However, I do not regret the opportunity for a moment. Maybe it was watching the Omicrons mummy wrap Wriston’s very own Caesar Augustus in blue and gold string, or possibly seeing them work together, struggling under intense pressure to complete their firewood box, or potentially watching their faces light up as they introduced themselves as brothers for the first time. Either way, being part of these moments left a profound effect on me.

I truly believe that Beta Rho is exhibiting the strongest sense of brotherhood that I have seen since I was initiated in the spring of 2004. Though Mike, Paul, and I were officially guiding the pledge program this semester, the work that every brother put in to participate in pledge events, ritual, kidnapping, and even ad hoc planning sessions was a true testament to the commitment we show to each other in our chapter.
Omicron, Yeah Baby!

“Are you coming to the lounge tonight? There will be free pizza...” These words lured the five members of Beta Rho’s largest fall pledge class in its history to the path of joining AEII. It was just the beginning of an extraordinary, action-packed semester for all of us.

A Fall pledge class experiences the pledge program on a smaller scale than a larger Spring class in some respects, but more intense in others due to the high concentration of events onto fewer pledges. A recent addition to Beta Rho tradition is “the brick,” which we found and painted. Brothers attempted to steal it from us, and if they were successful, we had to do something to get it back. Holding onto our brick was very challenging for us, as each of us held it 20% of the time, which made stealing it much easier for the brothers. This led to some very funny brick losses and even more hilarious attempts to earn it back, like the serenading of the Omicron written “We Want our Brick Back” at a brothers’ meeting to the tune of “I Want it That Way” by the Backstreet Boys or our marching around Harvard Yard screaming the Brown fight song during our pledge trip to Boston.

Another challenge that we faced was our party. It is not easy to throw a party with only five planners that is on par with one a spring pledge class can produce, but we were able to pull together and turn out “Where the Wild Things Are,” a great time for all who came and an overall huge success.

One of the best pledge events was our “date night.” Pledges and brothers brought dates to the lounge to enjoy the fine cooking of the Omicron pledge class: salad, bread, grilled chicken, rice, broccoli, cheesecake, apple pie, and cookies, followed by a lovely ice skating session at the rink downtown.

We did a Gate shift as our fundraising project, and quickly discovered which of us could successfully make a sandwich and which of us (i.e. me) were better off baking pre-prepared pizza, which was about as simple a task as eating pre-prepared pizza.

For our house improvement project, we built a wood box to contain...wood! Complete with a locking door, the box is a large and attractive addition to our porch and a much better place to keep firewood than under a tarp. Hopefully it will keep our wood clean and dry for years to come!

I am extraordinarily proud to be in a pledge class with such fine gentlemen. The time we spent together and with the brotherhood will forever leave a bright memory in my mind, and the constructive experiences we had while pledging have led to the satisfaction that I believe we all now feel as brothers, largely thanks to the enormous efforts of Pledgemaster Dave Guttmann (Lambda ’07) and Assistant Pledgemasters Mike Morgenstern (Nu ’08) and Paul Savitz (Nu ’08). Though I met some of my pledge brothers for the first time at the beginning of this semester, I can definitively say that they are now some of my closest friends.

Adam Lewin (Omicron ’09)

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Rush These Days

This semester we successfully rushed the largest fall pledge class in Beta Rho history. Fall pledge classes never consist of freshmen, so they are historically very small. This time, though, rushing went amazingly and we bonded with the five Omicrons through events such as “Snakes On A Plane” and regular trips to Seekonk. As they lived in house, we had the opportunity to interact with Brian Luu, Adam Lewin, and Matt Cline on a daily basis, while Jordan Berg and Ryan Gise stopped by often enough that they seemed to live in house.

We are already gearing up for next semester’s rush. We have had some events and are planning more for the 2007 rush season. I am confident that by the strength of Beta Rho’s leadership, camaraderie, and character, we will be sure to draw a stellar pledge class next semester.

Devin Cohen (Xi ’09)
Rush Chair
AEP Lions dominate the field

The Beta Rho chapter’s tremendously successful fall athletic season was fueled by each athlete’s desire to see his fellow brother achieve victory. No one complained about what position they played, how many shots they took, or how many passes were thrown their way. Furthermore, no player could be heard talking after games about how many home runs he hit or touchdowns he scored, only about what a good game the team played. The AEII athletes displayed a passion and hunger throughout the semester that was unmatched by any opponent. Right down to the final whistle, every player supported his teammates in the most pressured of game-time situations and gave all the effort he could possibly muster. He did this for the brother standing next to him.

The enthusiasm shown for the Beta Rho athletics program extended off the field as well. Whether it was our crowd cheering wildly during hockey games, our fans jumping on Steve Beckoff (Nu ’08) after monstrous Homeruns, or hockey star Brett Cropp (Nu ’08) practicing his puck handling in the hallway, Intramural sports were never far from the minds of the AEII brothers. Moreover, while the performance of such players as AEII Athlete of the Semester Danny Scheinerman (Xi ’09) was certainly expected, the astounding widespread participation displayed by the brothers contributed greatly to the strength of the athletics program.

Along with the devoted support of the rest of the fraternity, such camaraderie demonstrated that a victory in any intramural game was truly a victory for the entire house as well.

Injuries, women, and other various commitments proved no match for the determination of the AEII athletes.

The tone for the season was set early on by Justin Markovits (Nu ’08), who upon spraining his wrist slipping around first base, proceeded to continue rounding the bases for the game-tying home run in the softball season opener. Later on in the season, number three hitter Devin Cohen (Xi ’09) cancelled a date with a fine-looking female to ensure that he could be there for that night’s flag football game.

Most of all, the players’ devotion to the team was best exhibited by second baseman Matthew Drooyan (Nu ’08) and pitcher Jay Levin (Nu ’08), co-winners of the Samuel Adams Decision of the Semester Award. Having an important school commitment in Pennsylvania on the night before the softball playoffs, these two players made the almost unfathomable decision to actually take a plane back to Brown in time for the first game. Needless to say, actions such as these received considerable respect and admiration from the rest of the fraternity.

Led by Noah Blitzer (Xi ’09) and tournament MVP Benjamin Logan (Lambda ’06.5), the AEII Lions overcame a rough early start to take home the 3v3 Basketball Championship. However, in the words of Jonathan Levin (Nu ’08), a man who epitomizes the AEII athlete, “we cannot afford to be complacent.” In the spring, the fraternity will look to build upon the unprecedented winning of the fall semester, as the players set their sights on avenging their loss in the softball finals. With the addition of stellar fall and spring pledge classes, nothing seems impossible.

Because we are AEII. And we are the Lions.

Steve Alerhand (Xi ’08)
Athletics Chair

A Little Lounge Music

Evan Stone (Xi ’09), in house for his first semester, shows what happens when brothers find a passion outside the fraternity.

Evan is a member of a band, “Silent Via Severity,” with three high school friends from his home town of Easton, MA. Even at different colleges, they have managed to keep the band together and have played shows across the region.

Because he is so involved outside of the fraternity, everyone wins when he comes to our lounge to play—he’s done it three times this semester alone. The shows are a great way to support his band and relax to some awesome music. They present a great image for the house on campus, and are one of many offerings that make AEII the place to go for a great time!

Mark Grabiner (Nu ’08)
Stories from the second floor

What cannot truly be explained to a rush or pledge is how well fraternal relations actually form. As a pledge last semester, I saw the house as home to a few really cool people that I liked to hang out with. I did not acknowledge over half of the brotherhood as anything more than acquaintances. Pledging brought me very close to my pledge class, but, prior to living in house, I did not feel the same way about most brothers.

As early as the first week of orientation this semester, I began to understand what fraternity really means. Prior to living in house, I was worried that it would be awkward living with a group of guys that already knew each other very well. I worried whether I would be excluded for a while, if I would have to earn my way into an inner circle of friends, though I had already pledged. But, surprisingly, I never had to become accepted by anyone; I already was. The readiness of the entire Beta Rho chapter to accept me and every member of my pledge class with such enthusiasm and without question made me truly understand what this house stood for.

Fraternity means talking to someone who is taking a shower or using the bathroom without feeling awkward. Fraternity means joining a game of hallway hockey without having to ask to play. Fraternity means yelling someone’s name, who you hardly ever talk to, down the hallway and starting a random conversation just because you can. The essence of fraternity is a mutual understanding of the unconditional acceptance brothers must have for each other.

The parties we throw help to keep us entertained and sustain our friendships. The meetings and elections we hold remind us that we share a common living space. But the little things, such as always getting a high five when walking down the hall or always having ones name announced when entering the striped room, are what keep us as brothers. I have learned that a fraternity is not always a society of friends, because brothers don’t always get along. We are a fraternity because, despite arguments and bickering, the substance of our relationships cannot be broken. It comes from common experience, close living quarters, and a desire to form a strong community inside Brown University.

This is something I could not have told you six months ago, and could never truly communicate to a rush, but it is greater than anything I could have hoped for when I decided to join AEΠ. We have our good times and our bad times, but we will always have times, together, under the roof of Marcy House.

Caleb Miller (Xi ’09)

Thursday, September 21st, we put together our annual Rosh Hashanah study break. Entitled “Apples and Honey, Oh Yea,” the break had apples, honey, challah, good music, and good company. We bought over 80 pounds of apples at the Farmer’s Market on Wriston Quad, and many brothers helped to wash and cut the apples and set up the lounge. Brothers and friends mingled and took a much-needed break from our normal weekly activities. Sitting among dozens of leftover apples, our content minds and full bodies were looking forward to a new year at the end of the night.

Max Chaiken (Xi ’09)
Jewish Affairs Chair

Brothers Paul Savitz ‘08, Dan Gradess ‘07, Kamyl Bazbaz ‘07, and Caleb Miller ’09 are ready for the infamous Blue Steel party!

Piet Walvoord (Nu ’08), Adam Robbins (Xi ’09) and Matt Jacobs (Xi ’09) are ready to enjoy the AEΠ Formal

Paul Savitz (Nu ’08) and Michael Field (Nu ’08 ) help construct our newly purchased sukkah
Fall 2006 Officers

Master: Steven Beckoff
Lieutenant Master: Jonathan Levin
Pledgemaster: David Guttmann
Scribe: Michael Morgenstern
Exchequer: Michael Field
Sentinel: Justin Markovits
Brother At Large: Michael Gladstone
House Manager: Mark Grabiner
Immediate Past Master: David Guttmann

Spring 2007 Officers

Master: Jonathan Levin
Lieutenant Master: Paul Savitz
Scribe: Matthew Jacobs
Exchequer: Michael Field
Sentinel: Adam Lubitz
Brother At Large: Steve Alerhand
House Manager: Tobias Cohen
Immediate Past Master: Steven Beckoff

This issue of The Front Rho newsletter is brought to you by Scribe Michael Morgenstern (Nu ’08). Photographs by Historian Adam Robbins (Xi ’09)