THIS WAS "the old Beta house," not really so old but now gone, and claimant to a considerable historical distinction on the Ohio State University scene. It is claimed that this was the first fraternity house west of the Alleghenies to be built for fraternity purposes. Since it dated back only to 1907 (some say 1904), there were certainly lots of hand-me-down houses in the hinterland.

Other "first" claims: Beta Theta Pi was the first fraternity to originate west of the Alleghenies and the Theta Delta chapter is the oldest national fraternity at Ohio State. The latter takes a bit of qualifying: "One other Ohio State fraternity was founded as an anti-fraternity society in 1834 but was not recognized as a fraternity until 30 years later."

Beta Theta Pi was founded in 1839 at Miami University of Ohio. There were some interesting agreements among the eight founders. Absolute secrecy was to be observed, no member revealing his membership or openly wearing his badge until after graduation. Membership was to be limited to nine, perhaps a number with some mysterious significance. Needless to say, these rules were soon abandoned. The fraternity grew rapidly. Harvard and Princeton were numbers seven and eight. Thirty chapters were established before the Civil War, including several in Southern universities.

Ohio State University's Theta Delta chapter (69th) was organized December 11, 1885, in rooms above the present Clock Restaurant. (It was at that time Bott Brothers Saloon, plainest in town.) The original meeting rooms were at the same location. One of the founders was Wilbur Henry Siebert, later prestigious Ohio State University professor of history and noted author. Incidentally he continued active in Beta affairs all his long life, attending his last meeting at age 94.

The brothers occupied several different campus area houses up until 1907 when they moved into the house sketched here at 165 East 15th Avenue. It was architecturally a marvel of good taste for its period. Its building was quite a struggle: The bricks of the back (least conspicuous) wall were laid up by members, and showed it, according to some old-timers. A favorite spot inside was the cozy inglenook with long benches flanking an open fireplace. The inglenook was bodily removed from this house and installed in the new one, as was the original chapter room door.

The old house was torn down in 1957 to make way for the present house, thus serving just 50 years. A number of original drawings by one of Beta's most honored members, George Bellows, were found and now grace the walls of the new house.
OSU Betas gather to recall fraternity’s 100 years

By Jane Fitling

Members of the Ohio State University Theta Delta Chapter of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity will be raising their glasses Sept. 13-15 in toasts to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 1885 founding of the chapter.

Approximately 450 reservations have already been made by OSU Betas from all over the United States.

Beta Theta Pi was founded in 1839 at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Other national fraternities founded at about the same time are Sigma Chi and Phi Delta Theta. These three Greek men’s fraternities are known as the Miami Triad.

In 1885 The Ohio State Beta Chapter occupied a house at the corner of Indiana and 15th avenues on land that had been part of the Neil family farm, of which 700 acres made up the OSU campus. This was the first fraternity house west of the Alleghenies.

As the university, which graduated its first class of 24 young men in 1873, grew so did the Beta Theta Pi Chapter.

A second adjoining home was purchased as an annex to the house the increasing membership.

In the 1960s, both houses were torn down and a spacious red brick chapter house with white columns was erected on that same corner. An inglenook (chimney corner) from the first house was carefully preserved and the architect incorporated it into the ground floor plan of the new house.

Probably the most famous member of the Ohio State Beta Chapter was world famous artist George Bellows. His drawings were published in the Lantern, Makio and local papers while he was a student in the late 1800s.

Seven original Bellows drawings were discovered in the attic of the first fraternity house. They were matted, framed and hung in the house for many years.

In order to make them more accessible to the public, Theta Delta Chapter and the Beta Theta Pi Building Association have loaned the collection, known as the Beta Theta Pi Suite, for a semi-permanent display in the OSU Alumni House, Fawcett Center for Tomorrow.

The drawings are entitled Cheerleader, Senior Prom, The Graduate, The Pledge as sketched before the fireplace in the old Beta house. The Varsity Girl, and two unnamed drawings...one of Ohio State football players and one of a Lake Erie beach scene.

A prestigious collection of Bellows oils, lithographs and drawings has been exhibited at the Columbus Museum of Art. The artist loved sports, played sports on the OSU Varsity Baseball Team and guard on the basketball team. He painted many pictures of prizefights, tennis matches, polo matches and other sports with the vigor and vitality of an athlete.

Bellows intended to major in architecture but found art so fascinating that he dropped out of Ohio State during his senior year and went to New York to study.

Among other well known Ohio State Betas are OSU professor Wilbur Siebert; OSU English professor Billy Graves; Jerry Lucas, OSU and New York Knicks basketball star; Escob Sarkinek, assistant OSU football coach and scout; Dr. Ralph Licklider, oldest local Beta alumni; Dr. John Minton, nationally known for his cancer research; and Dr. Robert Murphy, OSU team physician and specialist in athletic medicine.

Planned activities for the 100th anniversary cover the the weekend of Sept. 13-15 and are headquartered at the University Hilton.

A hospitality party Friday evening at the Hilton will include wives. Saturday morning, tours of the chapter house at 150 E. 15th Ave. at 1651 will include walking tours of the OSU campus conducted by active members of the chapter.

The Saturday night dinner at the Hilton will include brief speeches, a slide show of 100 years of chapter history and the presentation of plaques to men who have been members for 50 years.

The anniversary committee, under the chairmanship of Ralph Antolino Jr., has secured 500 tickets for celebrating alumni to the Ohio State-Pittsburgh football game that night.

The anniversary weekend will end Sunday with a farewell brunch for the out-of-towners, also at the Hilton.
Fraternity evicts ‘pranksters’

By Jody Jones
Lantern staff writer

An order to keep four members of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity out of their house because of alleged pranks, including firing a gun inside the house, has been issued against frat brother Selby.

John Robertson, Thomas Sullivan, James Caldwell and Steve Selby were issued temporary restraining orders Thursday telling them to stay away from the fraternity house, located at 165 E. 15th Ave.

According to the complaint filed by the house board of Beta Theta Pi, the defendants “collectively and individually have engaged in acts of destruction and vandalism to the premises.”

Selby, a senior from Portsmouth, said the members were railroaded out. “(The fraternity officers) just went back and drugged up everything that I’ve ever done, exaggerated it, and then turned it into the house board.”

W. Sean Kelleher, Beta Theta Pi’s attorney, said the order was issued because of disciplinary problems.

He compared the incidents to dorm pranks, but said, “eventually, time is reached when enough is enough.”

The fraternity’s complaint claimed the defendants violated the rules and regulations of both the national fraternity and the Ohio State University.

The complaint also stated that Selby “has on at least one occasion discharged a firearm inside the building at great risk of harm and injury to the life and property of others.”

“That was just an accidental gunshot,” Selby said. “That was one of the things they exaggerated.”

Various defendants have threatened to further damage the property and harm officers and fraternity members, according to the fraternity’s complaint.

A hearing has been set for Jan. 30 to determine whether or not the temporary order should be made permanent. Kelleher said he didn’t believe any of the defendants would appear at the hearing. If the complaint is uncontested by the defendants, the order will be made permanent.

Selby said he would not be present at the hearing and didn’t believe the others would be either.

“I don’t care about it,” he said. “I’m not interested in staying in this house at all.”
Fraternity members expelled

A judge has ordered at least four former members of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity at Ohio State University to keep out of the fraternity house for alleged destruction of the property.

Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Lewis E. Williams issued a restraining order against four named defendants and up to four “John Doe” defendants at the urging of the fraternity’s board and its president, James R. Davis of 2186 North Parkway Dr.

The order prohibits the defendants from entering the house at 165 E. 15th Ave. or threatening or harming its occupants or others connected with the fraternity.

A suit filed for the board and Davis by attorney W. Sean Kelleher says the defendants have caused “excessive damage” to the house.

The suit claims house resident Steve Selby “has on at least one occasion discharged a firearm inside the building at great risk of harm and injury to the life and property of others.”

Selby said during a telephone interview yesterday that the gun accidentally discharged. He said the gun belonged to him.

Selby said the lawsuit results from a series of incidents in the last three years, some involving him and some involving other residents.

“They’ve made a big deal over a bunch of little things,” Selby said. “They’re trying to calm the whole house down by ending drinking and partying.”

Selby said he has been a member of the fraternity for three years and has until Friday to move out of the fraternity house.

Another unnamed defendant “has committed acts intentionally calculated to intimidate the resident supervisor, or house mother, and the cook,” the suit adds.

The suit says all the defendants have been fraternity members and OSU students. It claims they lost their privileges to use the fraternity house because they violated rules of both the national fraternity and OSU.

The suit claims some of the defendants “have threatened to commit further acts of destruction to the property and in instances threatened harm to officers and members of (the) fraternity and the board of trustees.”
Greeks to battle on football field to raise money for local charities

By Sharon Kinkley
Lantern staff writer

Campus fraternities and sororities will be fighting each other on the football field this weekend to raise money for two local charities.

Beta Theta Pi and Alpha Xi Delta are sponsoring the football competition with teams from 16 sororities and 25 fraternities. The two houses expect to raise about $2,000 for charities.

The teams will play from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the intramural fields.

Profits from the weekend events will be split evenly between Beta Theta Pi, who will give the money to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Alpha Xi Delta, who will give money to the American Lung Association, said Melanie Rose, a junior from Westerville and philanthropy chairman for Alpha Xi Delta.

Each sorority and fraternity paid $35 to enter the tournament, said Bob Mahoney, a senior from Wellecome and assistant philanthropy chairman for Beta Theta Pi.

Each sorority team will be coached by two members of Beta Theta Pi and the fraternities are coached by members of Alpha Xi Delta, Mahoney said. Sororities will play against sororities and fraternities against fraternities, he said.

In addition to the entrance fee, profits will also come from the sale of t-shirts, which will be sold for $5.95, and sweatshirts, which will be sold for $8.95.

The houses also sponsored a kick-off party at Presley's last night. The houses received 50 percent of the door profits, Mahoney said.

"The Betas usually have had a football tournament for sororities for about eight years. However, we decided to combine the project with Alpha Xi Delta in order to raise more money," Mahoney said.

"We combine with the Betas because we wanted to incorporate the entire Greek system," Rose said.

Last year, the Betas raised approximately $1,200 from the football tournament, Mahoney said.

"We plan to surprise the American Lung Association and Big Brother/Big Sisters with the donation," Rose said.

All of the fraternities and sororities on campus raise money for national charities through a variety of philanthropic fundraising events, Rose said.
3 hurt in house fire near OSU

The fraternity house blaze injured two firefighters and a student. The cause was not determined.

By Holly Goodman
Dispatch Staff Reporter

Two Columbus firefighters and a student were injured yesterday in an early-morning blaze that caused an estimated $75,000 damage to an Ohio State University fraternity house.

All were treated at OSU Hospitals and released, a hospital spokesman said.

Firefighter William Rich, 46, was treated for neck burns, and Firefighter Jerry Crites, 24, was treated for a hand injury.

Student Brian Snyder, 20, was treated for a hand burn and for smoke inhalation.

Firefighters had not determined the cause of the fire yesterday, which began shortly after 3 a.m. in a second-story bedroom in the northeast corner of the Beta Theta Pi house at 165 E. 15th Ave.

Investigator Dave Thompson said it could be days before a cause is determined. But he said the fire did not appear to have been set.

The injured firefighters were leaving the house through a fire escape on the east side of the building when a piece of the roof fell on them, Battalion Chief Ted Porter said. Several cars in an adjacent lot also were damaged.

The house, which has 40 residents, had been evacuated by the time firefighters arrived at 3:28 a.m. The fire was contained at 4:12 a.m.

Beta Theta Pi member Mark Ryder inspects the fire damage from the second floor of the fraternity house.

Porter said.

Fraternity members refused to comment on the fire, which damaged the east wing of the house and destroyed the roof in that area.

The fire, which spread rapidly, was difficult to contain because it was trapped between an original flat roof and a slanted gable roof that had been added later, Assistant Chief John Rees said.

"Probably the most significant thing is that it had a heavy original roof deck," Rees said. The original roof made it difficult for firefighters to break through from above and contain the blaze in the hallway and second-floor rooms.

Missy Halliday, a resident of a nearby sorority house who was in the parking lot when the fire began, said fraternity members ran next door to the Delta Chi fraternity house to get fire extinguishers and battle the blaze themselves.

While waiting for firefighters to arrive, two people jumped from a second-story window into a human net made of friends waiting to catch them, Halliday said.

"I'm sure (the firefighters) came as fast as they could, but I just kept thinking, 'When are they going to get here?'" she said.
Three injured as fire rips through fraternity house

By Damon Taylor 
and Katherine Johns
Latern staff writers

Fire swept through a section of the Beta Theta Pi house, 165 E. 15th Ave., early Thursday morning, injuring one resident and two firefighters.

Brian Snyder, 20, was treated for minor hand burns and smoke inhalation at OSU Hospitals.

The firefighters, Jared Crites, 24, and William Rich, 46, sustained minor injuries.

All three were released Thursday, said hospital spokesman Dave Crawford.

The fire began about 3:15 a.m., said Third Fire Battalion Chief Ted Porter. He said fire crews responded to a call from Columbus police who saw flames coming from the east side of the house.

Battalion Chief Jim Flynn said the fire began near a desk area. The cause has been narrowed to a cigarette or candles.

Kris Jordan, a member of the neighboring Phi Kappa Tau fraternity, said he and some friends were on the second floor of their house when one of them noticed the fire.

They ran across the street and banged on the doors, he said. The group helped residents evacuate, and Jordan said everyone was out of the house by the time the emergency crews arrived.

Thad Haddad, president of Beta Theta Pi, credits the house for its organization under pressure.

"We had a set procedure to follow, and we followed it. The fire alarms worked superbly — they all went off, and the brothers got out with everything well under control," he said.

The flames spread to the roof of the house, which collapsed while fire crews were backing away from the blaze, Porter said. The firefighters were injured when an overhang fell on them from the side of the house.

The overhang landed near an outside staircase and broke into pieces above parked cars.

Damage to the house is estimated at $75,000, but the figure could increase upon further investigation, Flynn said. Haddad said the Beta Theta Pi's insurance would cover the cost of damages.

Workers for the Red Cross tended to the residents' needs through the morning. Liz Monahan, family services coordinator, said Red Cross workers ensured the residents had access to basic needs.

The most crucial losses were clothing and bedding, she said.

"I feel so bad for them," said See FIRE / Page two
Firefighters clear debris that fell from the roof of the house onto parked cars below.

· Fire

Missy Halliday, president of the Delta Gamma sorority and a witness of the fire, "I feel so sad. Guys came up to me upset — 'You don’t understand, my whole life was in that room.'"

Haddad said he informed fraternity members that everyone must be prepared to move out of the house for the remainder of the quarter, and the upper floor is completely off-limits until Monday.

Most residents will be moving into south campus dorms, he said.

Social events would go ahead as planned, and it would be "business as usual," Haddad said.

He said the location for future social events has not yet been determined.

Haddad said the Greek community has been quick to respond to the crisis.

"Every house has offered help — both fraternities and sororities. They've offered dinner, lunch, housing, you name it," he said.

David Strauss, director of the Greek Affairs office, said his office has been assisting the fraternity with living arrangements, cleaning, emergency loans, and book replacements. "We're doing everything we can to help," he said.

Charred debris is all that remains in the room where the fire originated.
Beta house to be rebuilt

The Beta Theta Pi fraternity house will receive up to $800,000 in remodeling this summer after a fire severely damaged it during Spring Quarter.

The house will be ready for members to move back in Autumn Quarter, and the members will have a definite say on the treatment and rules concerning the new house, said Thad Haddad, Beta Theta Pi president.

“Our alumni were very generous and supportive with helping pay for things the insurance didn’t cover,” Haddad said.

Haddad said most of the remodeling will replicate the old house design, still accommodating 51 members.

The money will primarily pay for the repair of the damages. “There are not going to be any new or major changes with the house,” he said.

“The men handled their crisis responsibly and maturely,” said David Strauss, coordinator of Greek Affairs. “It was unfortunate it happened, but the men dealt with the situation very professionally.”

Haddad said OSU Student Services was very helpful. “They provided the men with vans to help them move, loaner textbooks, emergency loans and wrote letters to instructors to make them aware of the situation,” he said.

The Columbus Fire Department is still investigating the cause of the fire.

— Meredith Cleverley
Fraternity dedicates damaged Beta house

By Maureen Flood
Lantern staff writer

Last May, members of Beta Theta Pi fraternity were homeless after a fire damaged their house at 165 E. 16th Ave.

On Saturday afternoon, undergraduates, alumni, family and friends gathered to rededicate the newly remodeled house.

A fire started by either a cigarette or candle caused extensive damage to the house. The fire began in a room on the third floor in the northeast corner of the house, and spread to the roof.

The rededication ceremony took place on the steps of the house. Alan Veatch, Theta Delta chapter alumni association president, thanked the alumni and undergraduates for their donations of money and time that helped rebuild the house.

Thad Haddad, president of Beta Theta Pi, presented a plaque as a thank you to the Alumni Association and Board of Trustees for all their efforts. The plaque will be mounted on the house.

Haddad said construction on the house began more than four months ago. The house now has a new roof, and an entirely new interior since the house was gutted because of water and smoke damage from the fire.

The repairs cost more than $500,000. While insurance covered most of the costs, alumni contributed between $75,000 and $100,000, Haddad said. The Alumni Association and Board of Trustees helped to redesign the house and organize construction efforts, Haddad said.

The undergraduate members of the chapter also had a role in rebuilding the house.

"There were 10 undergraduate brothers, including myself, that worked on the house over the summer," Haddad said. "We worked for the construction crew because we live in the house, and it meant a lot more to us than a paycheck."

Veatch said the fraternity has been unified because of the fire.

"I think this is a classic case of taking a potentially disastrous negative and turning it into a very significant positive. It has brought together alumni to support the house, and the guys as well," Veatch said. "The guys had to help each other out, help themselves out, and live through some tough times, but in the end, they knew that they'd end up with something that we're all very proud of and happy with."

David Strauss, OSU coordinator of greek affairs, said the fire not only unified Beta Theta Pi, but the whole greek system also.
Renovated OSU fraternity house is rededicated

By Connie A. Higgins
Dispatch Staff Writer

When the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house at Ohio State University caught fire nearly five months ago, $500,000 worth of damage occurred.

But the only heat the house endured yesterday was the smoke from hot dogs cooking at the rear of the newly renovated house at 165 E. 15th Ave., where fraternity brothers, friends and family celebrated.

About 200 people attended the rededication ceremony presented by the Theta Delta chapter of the national fraternity.

"About 10 of us guys worked in the house over the summer. We thought it would take eight months to get the house in shape. But we were able to move in four days before school (began this fall)," President Thad Hadad said.

The house was nearly destroyed by the fire that officials believe was caused by a candle or cigarette. Hadad said 36 students were asleep in the 25-room house but all escaped serious injuries.

Since May, repairs have been made to the roof, ceiling and wiring. Carpeting and floors also had to be redone, and a $10,000 fire alarm and sprinkler system was added. The house had fire detectors before the fire, Hadad said.

He said insurance and $100,000 from alumni have allowed the house to be refurbished.

Hadad, a 20-year-old sophomore, gave most of the credit for help to the 2,000-member Beta alumni and OSU administrators, who helped find temporary housing for students after the fire.

Fraternity brothers, roommates and 1938 graduates Jim Miller, 79 of Albuquerque, N.M., and Jack Bell, 77, of Akron were on hand to help celebrate.

"A feeling of sadness hit from the pit of my stomach when I first heard about it (the fire)," Miller said.
Halloween bash aids pantry

By Maureen Flood
Lantern staff writer

For those who aren’t interested in bobbing for apples and trick-or-treating this weekend, Beta Theta Pi fraternity has the event for you.

The 2nd Annual Beta Halloween, a concert featuring The Ark Band, The Rivermen and The Epicureans, will take place at the Beta house at 8:30 p.m. tonight.

Proceeds from the show will benefit Neighborhood Services Inc., 82 E. 16th Ave., a food pantry that serves students and families in the campus area.

The fraternity hopes to raise over $3,000 for Neighborhood Services through ticket and T-shirt sales, said Brian Forbes, public relations chair for Beta Theta Pi.

Dinky Youngsteadt-Parrish, director of Neighborhood Services, said $3,000 could provide many needy families with food over the Thanksgiving holiday.

“If Beta Halloween raises $3,000 for us, we could provide more than 200 families in the OSU area with Thanksgiving food baskets that include meat certificates for a turkey,” Youngsteadt-Parrish said.

Beta Theta Pi has also collected food from other fraternities and sororities on campus to donate to Neighborhood Services, Forbes said.

“I think it’s important for fraternities and sororities at Ohio State to get involved with the community and help those who don’t have as much as we do,” Forbes said. “We’re going to continue helping Neighborhood Services throughout the school year. We’ll unload trucks and help them in any way we can.”

“This is very positive,” Youngsteadt-Parrish said. “It’s great to see a fraternity giving its time and energy to a local agency that needs its help.”

Tickets for Beta Halloween can be purchased at Singing Dog Records or the Beta Theta Pi house for $5.
Freelance photographer is assaulted
Clash in front of Beta Theta Pi draws response from coordinator of Greek Affairs

By Maureen Flood
Lantern staff writer

A freelance photographer shadowing Campus Crime Patrol was assaulted Thursday night in front of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house.

Jared Manders, a photographer for Ivanhoe Broadcast News, said he was videotaping two members of CCP for a nationally syndicated series called "Crackdown on Crime" when the attack occurred.

Manders and the two members of CCP were walking west on 15th Avenue at approximately 11:55 p.m., said Mark Hatch, director of Campus Crime Patrol. As Manders shot footage of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house, 165 E. 15th Ave., a young man approached him from the north and accused Manders of "misrepresenting the Greek system" and "showing fraternities in a bad light," Hatch said. The young man then attempted to knock Manders' videocamera out of his hands.

"He blindsided me," Manders said. "He didn't even have the courage to face me head on. He came from the right where I couldn't see him. I had to hold my camera with my right hand and fight him off with the left.

When one of the CCP members tried to stop the assault, the young man said, "I'm gonna come back and kick your ass, you fucking nigger," Manders said. The CCP member, who wants to remain unnamed, is African-American.

Manders, however, has no doubt in his mind that the young man was a member of the fraternity.

"Everyone at the party acted like they knew who he was," Manders said. "He referred to the fraternity as 'our house.'"

Manders has decided not to press charges with the police because his camera was not damaged and he was not injured. However, he is angry about the attack.

"It shows a lack of moral responsibility," Manders said. "It was a total lack of concern for anyone else's rights. I don't think the university should sponsor that kind of activity. If it was up to me, I'd ban the fraternity."

Manders isn't the only person who's angry about the assault.

"This type of behavior is unacceptable." Hatch said. "Pushing someone around who's independently standing on the sidewalk is no way to treat a guest in our community."

Hatch said CCP is still investigating its options and has not yet decided whether it will press charges with the university.

David Strauss, coordinator of Greek Affairs, said he notified the Office of Judicial Affairs about the incident on Friday. Judicial Affairs will start its investigation of the assault today.

"We're not going to tolerate it. This is the type of behavior the university doesn't want," Strauss said.

Strauss emphasized that it is not known if the perpetrator is a member of Beta Theta Pi.

Manders taped the whole episode, and WSYX Channel 6 aired footage of the assault on its 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. broadcasts Friday. Manders' assailant is clearly identified in the tape.

Manders said the episode is ironic.

"This was my first contact with any Greek system," he said. "This guy was worried that I'd show the Greek system in a bad light. Now look at what's happened."

Beta Theta Pi could not be reached for comment.
Investigation of Beta Theta Pi continues

Judicial Affairs is still in the process of investigating the alleged assault of a freelance photographer outside the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house, case manager Elizabeth Allan said.

The incident occurred on Thursday, April 28, when photographer Jared Manders and two members of the Community Crime Patrol were attacked while walking west on 15th Avenue.

As Manders filmed footage of the Beta Theta Pi house, a man assaulted Manders, claiming he was "misrepresenting the greek system."

When one of the CCP members tried to intervene, he was verbally threatened by the man. Manders recorded the entire incident.

Because the incident involved possible violations of the Code of Student Conduct, the case was referred to Judicial Affairs earlier this month.

"Little by little we are collecting the information," Allan said. "Once we do that, we will file formal charges if necessary," she said.

Along with reviewing the video, Judicial Affairs is also interviewing witnesses to the incident.

If formal charges are filed against Beta Theta Pi, it should happen next week, Allan said.

-Randi Lewis
Assault incident ends in Beta ban

Beta Thet Pi pres., legal counsel walk out of hearing

By Julie Stebbins
Lantern staff writer

The Office of Community Development and Judicial Affairs decided Thursday the university will no longer recognize the Beta Theta Pi Fraternity as a student organization.

"Beta Theta Pi is to lose immediately and permanently... their recognition as a registered student organization and a registered greek organization affiliated with The Ohio State University," said Peter Pappas, chairman of Judicial Affairs.

Judicial Affairs said Beta Theta Pi violated five sections of the Code of Student Conduct on April 28 when a man believed to be a member of the fraternity assaulted a videographer and yelled a racial slur at a member of the Community Crime Patrol.

Pappas said Beta Theta Pi violated the following codes: 3335-25-01 (B), which regards the infliction of bodily or emotional harm; 3335-25-01 (E), which regards dishonest conduct; 3335-25-01 (H), which includes the use, distribution, production, possession, or sale of drugs or alcohol; 3335-25-01 (J), which regards disorderly conduct; 3335-25-01 (K), which is the violation of university rules.

At the beginning of the hearing, the president of Beta Theta Pi and the fraternity's legal counsel decided not to take part in the hearing and exited the building.

Sheldon Guerra, a senior from Streamwood, Illinois, and a member of CCP, testified he accompanied freelance videographer Jared Manders on the night of the assault. Manders was shadowing CCP for a nationally syndicated television show about urban crime.

Guerra said a man approached Manders as he stood on the sidewalk in front of the Beta Theta Pi house, 166 E. 15th Ave. The man told him to turn his camera off because he was "showing theGreek system in a bad light."

Guerra said the man tried to knock Manders' camera out of his hands. When Guerra told the assailant to back off, he began to curse at him.

Guerra said the assailant eventually gave up and headed toward the fraternity house. Manders taped the entire episode.

"At this point, he turned around and made statements towards me, personally," Guerra said. "He basically said, 'I am going to come and kill you, nigger bastard.'"

Larry McCoy, a member of CCP who was also on duty that evening, testified that while the assailant seemed upset, he could not tell if he was drunk.

McCoy said he saw the assailant go inside the fraternity house and change his shirt.

"I then went to the side of the building and watched the hallway from the open door," McCoy said. "A member of the fraternity came to me and asked me to leave the premises. I told him when the police officers were there, I would do so."

During the hearing, Guerra said he recognized the assailant in the hallway before the proceeding began.

The Judicial Affairs panel and the witnesses then viewed the tape that was taken by Manders.

Both McCoy and Guerra said they noticed during the tape that when the assailant first approached Manders, he said, "What are you doing at our house?"

After announcing that Beta Theta Pi would no longer be endorsed by Ohio State, Pappas said the fraternity has created an environment in which numerous violations to the Code of Student Conduct have occurred. He added the Judicial Affairs panel was aware of the fraternity's past violations of the code, such as hazing and assaults, when it decided its punishment.

"When the sanctions are made by the judicial panel, previous violations of the student code are made available to us so that students or organizations have shown repeated violations we can take that into consideration," Pappas said. "We will not tolerate repeated violations."

Pappas then said the fraternity had 14 days to appeal the panel's decision.

David Strauss, coordinator of Greek Affairs, said Beta Theta Pi had also been in trouble with the Inter-Fraternity Council before, but would not elaborate.

With Beta Theta Pi no longer recognized by the university or the IFC, Ohio State now has 33 fraternities.

At the end of the hearing, Guerra said he felt the Greek system has no respect for anyone that is not Greek.

McCoy agreed and said the Greek system needs to show more respect for both the community and those who are trying to improve it. He added if the fraternity had cooperated that night, this incident would have ended then and there.

Chad Kelly, president of Beta Theta Pi, said he would not comment on the matter and referred the Lanter to the chapter's advisors. The advisors did not return the Lanter's telephone calls.
Beta Theta Pi gets OSU boot for misconduct

By Jennifer E. Markiewicz
Dispatch Staff Reporter

Ohio State University's Beta Theta Pi fraternity has been given immediate and permanent revocation as a campus organization.

A university judicial panel found the fraternity guilty of misconduct charges.

Judicial Affairs Director Lenora Barnes-Wright said the ruling Thursday means the fraternity is no longer recognized as a Greek organization at Ohio State. Beta Theta Pi is not allowed to participate in any OSU activities including rush, Greek week, fund raising, social events and athletics.

Barnes-Wright said representatives of the fraternity were present but "walked out" at the beginning of the hearing. She said the fraternity's attorney, Walter Reckless, made a brief statement expressing dissatisfaction with the process.

Reckless was out of town and could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Charges against the 91-member fraternity include violation of the Ohio Ethnic Intimidation Act and five violations of the OSU code of student conduct: infliction of bodily or emotional harm, dishonest conduct, use of drugs or alcohol, disorderly conduct and disregard of university rules.

Charges were filed after an April 28 incident outside the Beta Theta Pi house at 165 E. 16th Ave. Fraternity members allegedly threatened a video cameraman from a Cleveland broadcast news service and shouted racial slurs at a member of the Community Crime Patrol, a private group that patrols the campus area.

Barnes-Wright said that although the hearing concerned the April incident, the penalty was a reaction to "a pattern of behavior from this particular fraternity."

Four faculty and three student members made up the panel.

Beta Theta Pi has 14 days to appeal to the dean of student life. Grounds for appeal are procedural error, misapplication or misinterpretation of the rules, discovery of substantial new facts or finding of facts not supported by the evidence.

David Strauss, OSU Greek liaison, said he believes the fraternity will appeal the decision. Beta Theta Pi members could not be reached for comment.

The national organization has been notified of the judicial panel's decision, but it has not issued a statement. Strauss said the national organization could permit Beta Theta Pi to continue operation, but the fraternity still would receive no official OSU recognition.

"When we enter into a partnership with a national to be a host institution, it's our expectation that the national works in cooperation with the institution," Strauss said.
BY JEFF LONG

Ohio State has just about had it with those frat boys.

Last week OSU officials sent a clear message to the entire Greek community when they kicked out the venerable Beta Theta Pi chapter. A judicial panel found the Betas guilty of all kinds of misconduct relating to a party in April where a cameraman was assaulted and a racial slur was shouted.

No one was hurt, no criminal charges are pending—but it gave OSU an excuse to lay down the law to fraternities: We kicked out the Betas and we'll kick you out, too.

"I think this is the university saying, 'Clean up your act,'" said Thad Haddad, president of the OSU Interfraternity Council, who also happens to be a Beta.

Haddad thinks the Beta house—one of the biggest on 15th Avenue's Fraternity Row—is being unfairly singled out: "The university wants to make an example out of somebody."

OSU officials say that the Betas had it coming. Lenora Barnes-Wright, judicial affairs director at OSU, said the April party was part of a "pattern" of behavior.

"The charges all stemmed from that incident," she said. "The severity of the sanctions is because of the pattern."

The OSU Greek community has had all kinds of problems in recent years, and the Betas have been responsible for their share. After a fight with another fraternity during winter quarter, some Betas were called on the carpet by the judicial affairs office and forced to participate in a "confrontational workshop" as punishment.

Last May, the Beta house caught fire. Two firefighters and a student were injured. Beta members wouldn't comment on how the fire got started. (Fire investigators determined it was accidental.)

In 1986, the Beta president asked for and received a restraining order to keep eight fraternity members for destruction of property—one of them fired a gun in the house—and threatening behavior. One member was accused of committing "acts intentionally calculated to intimidate the house mother and the cook."

In 1984, a Beta died after he fell off the roof of the house after a rush party.

There have been other minor incidents, but none gave the OSU administration the kind of excuse it was looking for to hammer the Greeks in the wake of the latest round of bad press about fraternities.

Until the April 25 party at the Beta house.

"We had a social event that evening. It was under guidelines and rules because it was a sanctioned event," said a Beta member. He was referring to the alcohol policy adopted in 1992 under which Greek houses agreed to eliminate keg parties and check IDs at the door.

About 200 people were at the party in front of the Beta house. A Community Crime Patrol unit walked by the house with a film crew from out of town that was doing a story on community-based crime-fighting efforts.

A male partygoer came out of the crowd and, apparently under the assumption that the patrol and the film crew were there to do some sort of expose on frat parties, attacked the cameraman and yelled racial epithets at a black patrol member. Witnesses said the attacker then ran into the Beta house.

At this point, the Betas could have saved themselves a lot of their current grief by finding the guy and turning him over to the police. But the Betas said they didn't know who he was, said it might not even have been a Beta.

"To this day, the Betas maintain they don't know who the attacker was, which hasn't won the fraternity any friends on the judicial panel."

"The fraternity was charged because it is our belief that this individual was a member," said Barnes-Wright. "The fraternity has taken the position that they don't know who it was. We didn't have a lot of direct investigative response."

Which means the Betas wouldn't cooperate. When the judicial affairs office first asked the Betas to come in and talk about the incident, they didn't show, Barnes-Wright said. When the Betas were brought before the judicial panel for a hearing, they and their attorney walked out before they presented their case.

So the panel revoked the Betas' connection with the university. They're not allowed to build a float for the homecoming parade, they're not allowed to rush new members. No more party raids. As far as OSU is concerned, they don't exist.

Haddad said the Betas will appeal. "As far as the judicial process, the fraternity was not able to get their side of the story in."

One of the charges against the Betas was that they had violated the Ohio Ethnic Intimidation Act when the alleged member used a racial slur. Haddad believes this was the ammunition the OSU administra-
tion was looking for.

"I believe it (the punishment) was so severe because of the political correctness on this campus and the things that have happened at the law school," said Haddad. (The law school was the center of a racial controversy this spring.) "This is a deeper-rooted thing. They were under media pressure because of all the incidents that have happened in the Greek community this year."

The April 28 incident was widely reported in the media, as was a riot last month in which police were attacked when they tried to break up a party near some fraternities. The party was not a Greek function, but it was near several fraternities and that was enough to move OSU officials to focus on the Greeks.

"Fraternity presidents have had numerous meetings with the university, with the Columbus police, with Dean (Richard) Hollingsworth, the dean of students," Haddad said. "Beta members and others in the OSU Greek community say the Betas are nowhere near the worst house on campus. What the Betas may be guilty of above all else is bad timing—their fracas came on the heels of several fraternity incidents embarrassing to the OSU administration.

The beta punishment is certainly much harsher than that meted out to Sigma Alpha Epsilon last June. That fraternity was also accused of racial harassment—painting a swastika and "Jews suck" on the Alpha Epsilon Pi house, a Jewish fraternity. Sigma was put on probation for three quarters and given 800 hours of community service. Alpha Epsilon Pi was also punished since its members' vandalism at the Sigma house precipitated the anti-Semitic graffiti.

Last April, a Sigma Chi fraternity member fell to his death after he fell asleep and rolled off the roof of the Delta Delta Delta sorority house.

Last February, Phi Kappa Tau members were caught using a cat. A woman who said she saw members blowing marijuana smoke into the cat's lungs took the cat to an animal shelter. But the cat tested negative for pot, and the fraternity was cleared.

In 1990, seven members of the Alpha Pi and Alpha Alpha Phi houses were arrested and an OSU police officer was injured after more than 100 people were involved in a fight at a fraternity dance.

These are not the only way around for the Greeks. Membership is declining, chapters are closing. The national organizations have been forced repeatedly in recent years to come into their OSU chapters and clean up. The Alpha Tau Omega house was closed by its national body for "drugs and risk-management violations," said David Strauss, OSU's Greek affairs coordinator.

The Betas, too, were cleaned out by their national members several years ago when word of unsavory behavior reached alumni.

Which leads to the question of what the national Betas will do about this latest deal. The Betas won't say. The OSU chapter president, Chad Kelly, said, "I was instructed to refer you to my adviser." Haddad said all chapter members had been told not to talk to the press.

The national office also refused to comment, referring questions to local advisor/attorney/Beta alum Walter Reckless. He did not return phone calls.

Will the national Betas lean on the local chapter to cooperate? (The house the Betas live in is owned by an alumni group—the Betas couldn't all find themselves on the street in a hurry.) OSU officials say there's still time for the Betas to provide evidence to the judicial panel and possibly lessen their penalty.

"The nationals will want to get to the bottom of this so the chapter won't be closed," said a source within the Greek community. "This is one of the biggest campuses in the country. They don't want the chapter closed.

If the Betas cling to their fraternal honor and don't give up the culprit, they'll be gone. And few will be sorry to see them go.

"If they don't want to be a positive attribute to this campus," Strauss said, "then we don't want them."
Betas await results of reinstatement appeal

By Lisa Marie Miller  
Lantern staff writer

As early as today, members of the banished Beta Theta Pi fraternity might learn whether they will once again be formally recognized by the university.

This summer, Ohio State reduced the fraternity’s lifelong suspension to five years. And recently, the fraternity filed an appeal to gain immediate reinstatement.

The fraternity was banished last spring after an alleged member assaulted a photographer and yelled a racial slur at a student.

OSU President E. Gordon Gee said Monday he decided the fate of the fraternity, but would not discuss it. He said the decision was passed along to the Beta president and the fraternity’s faculty advisor, who are expected to make an announcement today or Wednesday.

The tenuous status of the fraternity, however, did not appear to stop members from trying to attract new pledges.

Within the past ten days, a large “Rush Beta” banner was seen outside the stately white fraternity house on 15th Avenue — a sight that drew criticism from both administration officials and created confusion among students. Inter-Fraternity Council is holding formal rush this week.

At least one student said Beta Theta Pi fraternity members were sitting on their porch, yelling to prospective members.

“I did not understand why the sign was up, so I asked people in my house,” said Steve Reischman, a junior in Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. “We have no clue why.”

Elizabeth Allen, case manager for the Betas in OSU’s Office of Community Development and Student Judicial Affairs, said that until the fraternity is reinstated, it is not allowed to participate in any form of rush sponsored by the Inter-Fraternity Council.

That was a sentiment echoed by OSU Vice President for Student Affairs David Williams II, who said the fraternity’s suspended status prevents it from attempting to attract new members.

“Our interpretation is that the last sanction should be in effect until something else comes down.”

Williams said.

Members of the fraternity refused to comment on the appeal or the rush sign.

However, a former president of the fraternity said he did not think there was any prohibition from informally attracting rushes.

“Nothing says we cannot informally rush,” said Thad Haddad, former Beta president and current Inter-Fraternity Council president.

“Just because we are not recognized by OSU does not mean that the house is shut down completely,” Haddad said.

Another fraternity president agreed.

Jason Straka, president of Phi Kappa Theta, said, “They could rush if they wanted to. What’s to stop them? All they have to do is just tell people (rushes) to go there.”

Previous articles published in the Lantern Spring Quarter reported that the banishment of the fraternity occurred after a young man, suspected of being in the fraternity, allegedly attacked a freelance photographer for Ivanhoe Broadcast News.

Jared Manders, the photographer, said he was videotaping two members of the Campus Crime Patrol for a nationally syndicated series called “Crackdown on Crime” when the attack occurred.

Manders said he was shooting footage outside of the Beta Theta Pi house, 165 E. 15th Ave., when a young man approached him and accused him of portraying greeks in a negative light and tried to knock his camera out of his hands.

Manders said the alleged attacker yelled racial slurs at an African-American CCP member and he tried to stop the attack. Manders later reported a riot almost occurred.

Other members of the CCP and the Columbus Police Department broke up the scene. When police tried to find the young man involved in the assault, the fraternity denied that he was a member and refused to let police search the house, said Manders.

After a university hearing, the house was suspended indefinitely on June 2.

The fraternity appealed the ruling and on Aug. 12, Dean of Student Life Richard A. Hollingsworth reduced the sentence to five years.

The fraternity’s only avenue for immediate reinstatement was an appeal directly to President Gee.
Beta house awaits fate; appeal pending

By Lisa Marie Miller
Lantern staff writer

The pending executive appeal by Beta Theta Pi fraternity has not yet been revealed by Beta officials.

Beta faculty advisor Jim Davis said he has not received any information regarding the appeal. "It is not appropriate to speculate at this time," he said.

"We don't have anything yet, but expect it momentarily. If we have it, I am not aware of it and I don't know what it will be," Davis said.

Recommendations regarding the appeal have been sent to the fraternity, said David Williams II, vice president for Student Affairs. A meeting today has been suggested to clarify the litigation.

Williams said he has not heard from the fraternity and does not know what time the meeting will be.

Chad Kelly, president of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, said the information must be sought through Walter Reckless, the fraternity's lawyer.

Reckless could not be reached for comment.
Betas in spotlight again
OSU investigating two more possible code violations

By Lisa Marie Miller
Lantern staff writer

While Beta Theta Pi fraternity kept silent Thursday about whether it had regained university recognition, Student Judicial Affairs is investigating the fraternity for two more violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Lenora Barnes-Wright, director of student judicial affairs, said her office is currently investigating a complaint by an OSU student who alleges he was assaulted at 2:15 a.m. on Sept. 4 by members of Beta Theta Pi.

Barnes-Wright could not specify the number of fraternity members who were involved in the incident.

The alleged victim, George Loewenthal of Miami, Fla., said he was followed home and taunted by members of the fraternity, who knocked him down and kicked him in the ribs.

Loewenthal, a senior and member of Delta Chi fraternity, said he threw a punch prior to being knocked down. He said he called the police to the scene but did not press charges.

The incident came at a time when the Betas were awaiting word on their appeal for reinstatement to the university. The fraternity was suspended last spring after allegations of another assault and racial threats.

"At first, I thought it would be sad if a fraternity was kicked off campus because of their history and significance," Loewenthal said. "But after this, I have no bad feelings."

Barnes-Wright said an investigation is still pending, and further information cannot be divulged because it would interfere with the investigation.

Loewenthal said he thinks his case is moving slowly through the Office of Judicial Affairs because the fraternity's status is uncertain. Loewenthal said if the fraternity is not reinstated, he will pursue his case through the Columbus Police Department.

Regarding this incident and the Betas executive appeal, Loewenthal said, "If fraternities and sororities can just appeal to the president, it is like anything can go on (throughout campus)."

"It is like saying everyone can do what they want and the Office of Judicial Affairs can be done away with," Loewenthal added.

The second case pending against Beta involves a 120-person brawl on Dec. 3, 1993 between members of Beta and Phi Delta Theta fraternity.

Elizabeth Allan, a case manager for Student Judicial Affairs, said a report was filed with the Columbus police on the night of the incident.

Allan said the report was forwarded to OSU Police. There were no arrests at the scene.

Allan said an agreement was reached with both fraternities which involved all members participating in educational seminars on alcohol and violence.

Allan said Phi Delta Theta fulfilled their agreement. Beta did not.

Allan said charges against Beta will be officially assigned today for their "non-compliance" with the previous ruling.

Beta President Chad Kelly referred all questions about the appeal to house lawyer Walter Reckless.

Reckless was unavailable for comment, as was Beta advisor Jim Davis.

OSU President E. Gordon Gee and Vice President for Student Affairs David Williams II, who have decided the ruling on the Beta executive appeal to get the fraternity reinstated with university recognition, have been unavailable for comment.
Betetas have new hope
Frat could return soon if it meets OSU conditions

By Lisa Marie Miller
Lantern staff writer

Although the Beta Theta Pi fraternity is now under a three-year probation, the university could recognize it as an official organization by Winter Quarter.

The Office of Student Judicial Affairs suspended the fraternity indefinitely last spring for an alleged assault of a free-lance photographer and racial threats against a member of the Campus Crime Patrol.

David Williams II, vice president for Student Affairs, met with members of the fraternity on Thursday to discuss the probation and its six conditions.

Williams said the university will hold the five-year suspension of the fraternity in abeyance if they meet the following conditions:

* The Betetas must perform 120 hours of community service every month from September 1994 to June 1995.

All officers and at least 80 percent of the members must participate in the projects that Student Affairs select. Williams said the community service may take place anywhere in the city.

"We reserve the right to send them down to the so-and-so soup kitchen if we want to," Williams said.

* All Beta members must attend four educational workshops per year. Two will be held this quarter, and additional workshops will be held during Winter and Spring quarters.

Student Affairs will plan, conduct and supervise the workshops.

Workshop topics include violence and nonviolence, alcohol and drugs, student's rights and responsibilities under community standards and the student code of conduct; and multiculturalism.

* During the first two years of probation, no member of Beta Theta Pi can serve as an officer on the Inter-Fraternity Council or chair any IPC committee.

Williams said this means the current IPC president and treasurer, both Betetas, are no longer permitted to fulfill their duties.

* The fraternity must employ a live-in adult advisor, who Student Affairs must approve.

Fraternity officers must meet with Williams at the beginning of each school year to discuss the conditions of the probation.

* The fraternity cannot participate in any rush, intramural or sponsored social event activities.

The university will lift the ban after the Betetas meet four conditions: employ the live-in advisor, have their first meeting with Williams, conduct their first service project and attend two of the four mandatory educational workshops (held during Autumn Quarter 1994).

As of Saturday, the Betetas had fulfilled two of the requirements. They had their meeting with Williams Thursday and participated in the community cleanup, "High On Pride," on Saturday.

Williams said the possibility of a possible exception to this activity ban could be made to allow the Betetas to host a father-son dinner on Oct. 8.

"As long as it's just them and their dads, I don't see any problem with it," Williams said.

If the Betetas fail to meet any of the six conditions, the university will extend the five-year suspension, Williams said.

"We hope that what we've given them is doable and will lead to some substantive improvement," he said.

Williams said he did not know if the two cases against the Betetas in Student Judicial Affairs would have any bearing on the conditions of the probation.

Williams said he was not going to pass judgment on the Judicial Affairs panel that decided to indefinitely suspend the fraternity last spring, but he saw the need for an intermediary step.

"I would have liked to have seen a probation step there," Williams said.

"My way is working with people...I want to take the position of being an educator, not an eliminator," Williams said.

Williams said he hopes to send a message of action if people don't perform within community standards.

Fraternity members have to meet certain standards if they want to stay on campus as part of a university-approved organization, Williams said.

"If you can't do that, then the other shoe falls," he said.

The Betetas lawyer and faculty advisor could not be reached for comment.

Chad Kelly, president of the fraternity, did not wish to comment.
Once-ousted frat recognized again by university

By Mark Vitt
Lantern Staff Writer

An OSU fraternity can once again participate in rush, intramurals and social functions after having completed four university requirements.

However, Beta Theta Pi fraternity, 165 E. 16th Ave., will stay on probation for three years. The probation requires the chapter to complete 120 hours of community service each month and attend university workshops through June 30, 1995.

The four requirements the Betas had to complete included: Employment of an approved live-in adult adviser; meetings with Vice President of Student Affairs David Williams II; participation in an October community service project; and completion of two university workshops.

Though the fraternity has found an adviser who met Williams’ approval, the individual is not yet living in the chapter house. The adviser will be hired pending his admission to the OSU Law School.

Sanctions were placed on the Betas after they were found guilty of violations to the Code of Student Conduct pertaining to an incident on April 28, 1994.

On this date, a freelance photographer who was taping members of Campus Crime Patrol for a syndicated television show was assaulted by a young man in front of the Beta house. The assailant also shouted a racial slur at one of the CCP members before disappearing into the fraternity house.

After an investigation, the Office of Community Development and Student Judicial Affairs found the fraternity guilty of violations to the student code of conduct, including disorderly conduct, infliction of bodily or emotional harm and dishonest conduct.

On June 2, 1994, Judicial Affairs permanently ended the fraternity’s affiliation with the university, essentially removing Beta Theta Pi from the Greek system.

In July, the suspension was shortened to five years after the fraternity appealed the decision to Judicial Affairs. This was further amended in September by Williams, who placed the chapter on its present three-year probation.

Peter Pappas, professor of zoology, was chair of the University Judicial Panel that presided over the initial hearing at which the Betas were banned. Pappas said the panel had no input in changing the suspension to probation, nor in allowing the fraternity’s rush privileges to be reinstated.

According to Pappas, Williams made the decision to restore full privileges to the fraternity.

Jim Davis, the Beta’s chapter adviser, said he is glad the situation has been resolved. He complimented OSU administrators on their work throughout the hearing and appeal process.

"The university has been close to the matter and cooperative throughout," Davis said.

Others were not as pleased with the outcome, including Erv Johnson, director of communication for Beta Theta Pi National Headquarters in Oxford, Ohio.

Johnson said the fraternity’s national advisers were upset with the initial steps taken against the chapter in the spring.

"We never agreed with the university that the incidental actions of one member should have led to the action against the entire fraternity," Johnson said. "The general fraternity has not agreed with this situation from start to finish."

Henry Kim, a member of Beta Theta Pi, said his fraternity brothers are pleased that they can once again recruit new members.

"The house is united and looking forward to rush as a building block for the future," Kim said.
Greeks teach kids about burn awareness

By Amy Power
Lantern staff writer

Each year, one million children sustain burn injuries and approximately 3,000 children die as a result of burn injuries, and more than half of them are preventable.

Dr. David Teplica, plastic and reconstructive surgeon and professor of surgery at the University of Chicago, designed The Children's Burn Awareness Program. His purpose was to educate people about burn injuries and encourage children to talk with their parents about burn hazards.

The program was brought to Ohio State by the campus chapter of Beta Theta Pi, said Anthony Kish, vice president of Beta Theta Pi. In 1993, the Beta Theta Pi fraternity adopted the program as its national philanthropy.

Members of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity and several sororities visited local elementary schools to educate children about burn injuries this week as part of the program. They showed a short video about burn hazards narrated by a nine-year-old and give the children a checklist with suggestions for preventing burn injury.

The Betas will also host "Totally 80s" at Newport Music Hall on Saturday to benefit the Burn Awareness Program. The money raised for the program will be used for research and to improve educational material.

"Scars of Childhood," a photography exhibit showing young burn victims, was also on display at the Hopkins Hall Art Gallery to kick off the local Burn Awareness campaign.

"I was overwhelmed by child burn injuries," Teplica said, "I want to show people what burn injury is all about."

The display included black and white photographs taken by Teplica of children who were hospitalized for burn injuries.

Photographs of tiny blistered fingers and helpless bodies wrapped in gauze and tangled in webs of tubes, tug at the heartstrings of their viewers and provoke questions in children's minds, he said.

"Children have a beautiful reaction to the photographs," Teplica said. "They ask, 'Mommy, what happened to that child?'"

This is the intention of the display, he said. The anguish of being burned as a child and growing up with physical and emotional scars is portrayed in excerpts from an essay included in the display written by Ellin Brown, a child burn survivor.
Behavior problems cause Ohio State fraternity to close

By Encarnacion Pyle
The Columbus Dispatch  Monday April 16, 2012 12:40 PM

Ohio State University’s Beta Theta Pi fraternity will shutter its doors because of ongoing behavior problems, including a recent hazing allegation.

Members of the fraternity met with advisers Sunday night.

Beta Theta Pi’s national board of trustees voted to suspend the OSU chapter because of a pattern of problems and “a lack of transparency and forthrightness during the investigation process.”

“I want to assure you that it is extraordinarily difficult and emotionally stressful any time a chapter of the fraternity must be closed,” David Schmidt, the fraternity’s general secretary wrote in a letter to OSU members and their parents on Sunday.

Schmidt cited repeated violations of the fraternity’s conduct standards and policies as the reason for closing the chapter.

“While afforded multiple opportunities to correct members’ attitudes and actions, the chapter perpetuated an on-again, off-again cycle of unacceptable behavior, which resulted in multiple status changes and sanctions,” he wrote.

Schmidt added that a recent hazing allegation prompted a joint investigation by fraternity and university leaders. Neither the fraternity nor Ohio State has released details about the allegation.

The fraternity’s Ohio University chapter was closed last year after a series of alcohol violations, including the group’s hosting of a 100-person party while on probation.

OSU officials will likely help the fraternity members living at the house at 165 E. 15th Ave. find alternative housing.

Although the chapter has been disbanded, it will remain on suspension, which will allow the fraternity to return to campus if the university and fraternity agree. The suspension will be effective through at least January 2014.

Founded in 1885, the OSU chapter has 2,466 alumni, 45 undergraduate students and 18 pledge members.