

“Selective Memories” from 800 Chautauqua - Fall 1979-Spring 1985

(... from Long-Haired Country Boy to Preppy, and Back Again, ...or, Sort Of)

A Collaborative Effort among:

Donald M. Lehman '83, Rob F. M. Robertson '84, and Many Other Good Brothers*

*A special thanks to Wade L. McClure '82 (current Dallas County Candidate for Garbage Inspector), for reminding us we all have “*selective memories*” of our otherwise memorable years at 800 Chautauqua, Norman, Oklahoma. The authors also express thanks to many other “veterans” of the Beta House in the early 1980’s who took their time to contribute their own *selective memories* - some of which, for various legal reasons, cannot go into print.

Preface: A Studious and Historical Perspective of the Early 1980’s at 800 Chautauqua:

The proof is in the pictures. Or, more specifically, the proof is in the Chapter’s composites and Party-Pics. In retrospect, the period from Fall 1979 to Spring 1985 saw major changes in the picture of “Joe Beta” hanging over the mantle in the Dining Room at 800 Chautauqua, as well as the world in which Joe Beta enjoyed his college experience and planned for the future.

In the late 1970’s “Joe Beta” had shoulder length hair and wore a jean jacket or a goose-down vest as a fashion statement. By the dawn of the 1980’s, except at “Barn Dance Time” and during ski trips, Joe was a relatively clean-cut guy appearing in our Chapter composite with a Polo or Gittman Brothers button-down shirt, donning a thin, neatly dimpled tie with regimental stripes, and he was probably wearing topsiders without socks. Polyester was out and cotton was back in. By 1985, Joe’s hair was longer again, at least in back (with a “tail” for flare), and Izod and Ralph Lauren were no longer “mandatory” attire. The early 1980’s could be defined as the “preppy oil boom and bust era” at the Beta House in Norman, transitioning between the days of late 70’s Urban Cowboy Cool, to a more conformist style (remember our “d--k head” haircuts and no sideburns?), to the slightly less traditional style of the mid-1980’s (can you say mullets?). Many of us turned into “yuppies” shortly after graduation, which seemed to be the natural evolution from the largely “preppy” mode of most of our college years.

First, for the serious stuff - to put all of this in a somewhat historical context for future generations, as opposed to our own present personal amusement (which should be adequately covered below). Our era of the early 1980’s began in Fall 1979 with the Iran Hostage Crisis, record gasoline prices, a nasty recession and record unemployment in the northern industrial belt (“Last one to leave Michigan, Turn Out the Lights”), double-digit inflation, and a prime lending rate soaring to over 18%, all of which were largely responsible for the election of President Reagan in Fall 1980 and the beginning of his two terms in the White House, which spanned our time at the Beta House. However, in early 1980’s Oklahoma and the other energy-producing

states, anyone who wanted a job for regular wages could find one; and even those with only grade-school educations could make a pretty decent living working in the oil patch.

Most of us remember where we were when John Lennon was shot in December 1980, and the afternoon John Hinkley, Jr. attempted to assassinate President Reagan in late March 1981. In Summer 1982, the Great Rig Sale occurred and Penn Square Bank failed, but Joe Beta did not know what that would mean to him in the upcoming years, or in his immediate quest to find a job, which was, after all, one of the reasons Joe went to college. Most of us remember the invasion of Grenada in October 1983 - watching U.S. troops invading a foreign country live on cable for the first time - and we remember worrying, at least momentarily, that our registration for the Selective Service (*i.e.*, the Draft) might not have been the meaningless formality most of us thought it was.

During the early 1980's, the Oklahoma economy went from thriving to diving, and many of us left the state for better jobs and opportunities, or changed majors and career plans out of necessity. The days of record farm foreclosures, home foreclosures, bank failures and bankruptcies in the Sooner State had not quite yet arrived, or were only just beginning by the early 1980's. During college, most of us had family involved in the energy business, in one way or another, or our family had business interests that were reliant, to one degree or another, on either the energy or agricultural industry. We were from medium-sized or small towns throughout Oklahoma, or the "Greater OKC" area, or sometimes from T-Town or its environs, and, sometimes, but less frequently, that state south of the border. We often worked in the oil patch during the summers doing menial jobs at pretty good wages for the time - \$4 per hour, and \$6 per hour overtime in Summer 1981, or maybe a couple of bucks more per hour if we took a dangerous job working on the floor of a drilling rig.

We have many memories of the entertainment we enjoyed in the early 1980's, mainly sports, music, television and movies. We went to class with Wayman Tisdale and Marcus Dupree and Brian Bosworth (or at least a couple of classes), a pair of NBA rookies named Larry Bird and Magic Johnston started their first pro games in Fall 1979, and we remember the Dallas Cowboys starting out 7-0 in 1983, only to lose their last three games, including the Wild-Card to the Los Angeles (not St. Louis) Rams. The early 1980's was a period in which we finally saw the "Death of Disco," and the song "*Video Killed the Radio Star*," was symbolic of the era, with the birth of something new called MTV. A former child star named Michael Jackson revitalized his career with an album called "*Thriller*" in 1982, but around 800 Chautauqua, you were just as likely to hear the tunes of Heavy Metal, Big Hair Bands, New Wave and Synthpop, with a decent amount of Country mixed in, especially at Barn Dance Time. *M*A*S*H* was a favorite on the tube, until we saw the lame final episode, a new late night show called *Nightline* kept us up to date on the news, along with *60 Minutes* on Sunday evenings. Johnny Carson, David Letterman and *Saturday Night Live* kept us occasionally entertained on the few nights we were not out on dates, studying or hanging at one of the local establishments. Sundays in the fall often began with a stop at the nearby McDonalds at Berry and Lindsey, followed by a pair of NFL games in the afternoon. *Monday Night Football* was a weekly tradition, and our girl friends made us keep up with Dallas and "Who Shot J.R.?" However, we don't remember tuning between classes to soaps called *All My Children* and *General Hospital* (although some of us confess we remember the highly publicized "Luke and Laura" episodes, we will now blame our memories on our

female acquaintances of the time). Any movie with Bill Murray, John Belushi, Chevy Chase, Eddie Murphy, Dan Aykroyd, Steve Martin or John Candy was a must-see, including classics such as *The Blues Brothers*, *National Lampoon's Animal House* and *Family Vacation*, *Caddy Shack*, *Trading Places*, *48-Hours*, *Stripes*, and *Beverly Hills Cop*.

Although Joe Beta was oblivious to this fact at the time, the early 1980's saw the birth of the new technology age. We remember the first (legal?) Cable TV (enabling all-night television viewing and some gratuitous partial nudity, although we *don't* remember watching *Mandingo* thirty times). We also remember the new inventions called VCR and Beta Max, but they were beyond most of our means. We remember that arcade video games, like Space Invaders, Asteroids and Pac-Man, were the ultimate in high-tech in the early 1980's. At 800 Chautauqua, electric typewriters were the norm - but not everyone had one - which frequently caused logistical problems when term papers were all due at once. Audio CD's had not yet taken the place of cassettes, but 8-Tracks were on the way out. No one owned a personal computer, or even thought you could fit a "computer" into one of our rooms at 800 Chautauqua. The closest thing to laptops for most of us was our study boards, which were usually manufactured and given to us by our girlfriends, and decorated with the obligatory Party-Pics to remind us who we were dating. Although there were some novel devices that hit the market in the early 1980's, called the Commodore 64 and Apple McIntosh, no one had one at the Beta House, and IBM's "PC" was still a couple of years away from finding its way into the general marketplace.

Because Joe Beta had no VCR, camcorder, or other means to easily preserve digital images or electronic files, the "archives" of the early 1980's are not much different than those for the early 1970's, or, for that matter, the early 1950's. Our era was only preserved in yearbooks, class composites, Party-Pics, something affectionately called the "Butt Bible" (the Greek yearbook), and our own personal recollections. Some things we remember well, and some things we have forgotten (or at least we conveniently claim to have forgotten). Unfortunately, in the pre-cell phone, pre-PC, pre-HD, pre-BlackBerry, pre-digital world, we did not preserve much tangible evidence of "*everyday life*" at 800 Chautauqua in the early 1980's. Alas, for the most part, we are now, some 20-plus years later, left largely with only our own individual (and distorted collective) memories retained in the not-so-high-tech device, known as grey matter. As illustrated below, memories of our college days in the early 1980's tend to be somewhat imprecise, although one might suspect that it is actually *selective memory*, rather than *failing memory*, which prevents us from telling the full unabridged story of the Beta House between Fall Semester 1979 and Spring Semester 1985.

A Good Place to Start: Memories of Our Social & Ritual Calendar:

Life at the Beta House revolved around what we could call, and will call (because we are the authors), the "Social and Ritual Calendar," which, in the early 1980's, usually went something like this:

May/June: We remember Spring Finals, which ended the second week of May, followed by graduation the second Saturday of May at the LNC; we remember that Summer Rush began in mid-to-late May; and we remember the Rush Apartments at Village West (or "Village Waste") and the Royal Orleans (but we *don't* remember the eviction notices); we remember the annual

Float Trip down the Illinois River; we remember lots of Rush Parties in Norman, OKC, Tulsa, and every small town where we had members or alums who would agree to buy us beer, both before and after they switched the drinking age from 18 to 21 in 1983;

July: We remember July for more Summer Rush Parties and early Pledge Signing Day, when we always signed the vast majority of our pledge classes, usually at the Grey Fox - (more on what we *don't* remember about Rush and Signing Day later...);

August: We remember Work Week (some “work” is recalled, but not as much as the lack of adequate air conditioning); we remember Room Draw (and remember the key was to room with the guys with best grades to claim one of the few newly-refurbished “cool” rooms - p.s. personal thanks, Poodle Head, for the semester with Shed in Fall 1981 in Room 14); we remember Sorority Rush (rating girls from 1 to 10 with crude hand-painted signs as the sorority rushees walked into Chi-O House, while we were sitting on the Aaron Rents sofas we pulled out of our rooms onto the front lawn); we remember Sorority Signing Night and checking out the “new talent” of the sorority pledges; and we remember the Loving Cup Ceremony on the front lawn, “*Oh, pass the Loving Cup around...*”;

September: We all remember the annual night called B---- F----- (can you still whistle the tune to *Tubular Bells*, and see the beautiful candles adorning the windows as we walked in front of the House toward the “pledge door” for the first of many times?); and we remember Victory Party (although we remember we were bummed out a couple of times with one of the then-all-to-common early season losses to the likes of Stanford (John Elway), Ohio State, West Virginia and USC);

October: We remember Pre-Dally Rally and Big Brother Night (we vaguely remember incidents with “The Rogues,” who graciously sponsored our entertainment - but G. Calvin does *not* remember the liberation of a certain Official Rogues Leather Jacket and ensuing near death experience); we remember OU-Texas Weekend when we hung out at Cardinal Puff’s and other hot spots on “Lower Greenville,” we hit The Fair (not the State Fair); and we remember staying at the Hilton on Commerce or the Fairmont, both in downtown Dallas - choice depending on budgetary constraints; we remember Mid-Terms (cramming at “The Blender”); and we remember Halloween Parties (the Lises’ “costumes” at the Holiday Inn party in N.E. OKC located on the recently-renamed MLK Boulevard come to mind...we have Party-Pic evidence...);

November: We remember Dad’s Day and Casino Night, and hanging out with our dads until early morning; we remember “minor walk out” to exciting destinations, such as Enid; we remember that “*It’s Barn Dance Time!*” and have lots of fond memories of Barn Dance: Barn Dance Songs, the Annual Barn Dance Serenade of the sororities; we remember barnyard animals in the front yard for Barn Dance and swarms of attracted flies invading the House (and resting comfortably on Chuck OU’s exposed belly in Room 8 in Fall 1982); we remember we moved the Barn to the side court for first time in 1983 to hold a sorority “talent” competition called “Farmer’s Daughter,” and we remember the “Barn Dance Judges” riding in a limo and imbibing in spirits for several hours before the competition (and we remember Judge Jay Edzards “accidentally” knocking down a newly-planted tree in his zest to find a seat at the judging stand, although we are sure Ezy does *not* remember this); we remember Homecoming and the

occasional effort by the pledges to build a float with a selected sorority; we remember Thanksgiving Break and some time at home with our families, except for the years when we came back to the House early because we were playing Nebraska for the Big 8 Championship on Friday (and, thanks to friend Jim Beam, we kind of remember the 1983 NU game in the freezing rain when OU was a huge underdog and, thanks to heroic efforts of Spencer Tillman and Earl Johnson, we almost beat the likes of Turner Gill, Mike Rozier and Irving Fryar, ... at least until Brent Burkes jumped offsides);

December/January: We remember dreaded Fall Finals (and the “legend” of the Beta Wedge, and all of the SAE’s waiting en masse on the corner of Parsons and College so they could attempt to “fly the [rumored] Wedge”); and we remember Winter Break and big group ski trips to Colorado - Breckinridge, Copper Mountain and Vail, and renting skis at the Ski Chalet in N.W. OKC, and the big “calf fries” sponsored by the Edzards; and, then we remember we eventually had to go Back to School....;

February: We remember Valentine’s/Winter Formal (we think we remember this was usually with the Phi Delts in Oklahoma City); and we remember something about a Viking Party (which started in 1984 or 1985) and turkey legs as party favors....;

March: We remember Spring Break, including more Colorado skiing, South Padre Island, the Bahamas and Mexico; and we especially remember what followed after Spring Break -- that special week that usually culminated with Initiation (which makes us remember things like significant house “improvements” - such as digging a 15-foot deep hole on the north side of the house for no reason); and we remember the wonderful pre-Initiation music, like *Ballero*, and a using pillow cases for head attire;

April: We all remember Mom’s Day - Sooner Scandals, the Medieval Fair at the Duck Pond, shopping at Campus Corner with our moms (especially Harold’s and Squire Shop); and we remember the last “major” party of the year - Beta Lei (we think we remember a “waterfall” off the roof on the front of the house for at least a couple of years);

May: We remember Spring Finals and, we remember that it lead us back to graduation and Summer Rush, when we started our Social and Ritual Calendar all over again.....

Other Selective Memories from the Early 1980’s...

We remember **daily life around the House**, which often began with something called “8 o’clocks,” and the policy that the House was closed to outsiders during pledgship activities (which was most of the time between BF in early September and Initiation in late March); we remember daily meals in the kitchen, starting with cold cereal at breakfast, and highlighted by “Burger Day” lunches on Wednesday (when the out-of-house members usually chose to redeem the weekly meal provided by their out-of-house dues); we remember catching some “rack” between classes, and having trouble waking up in time for early morning classes (although we *don’t* remember oversleeping for our 2:00 p.m. Aviation class at Max Westheimer Field); we remember watching TV, sometimes until the sun rose, thanks to the new concept of Cable TV;

we remember watching HBO and a new channel called ESPN, and some commercials, such as those for Lowenbrau (“Here’s to good friends, tonight is kind of special”), Miller Light (“Great Taste vs. Less Filling”), and a dog called Spuds McKenzie (funny how we remember the beer commercials more than others - some marketers were hitting their target audience). We remember some intense pick-up basketball games on the side court, and going to the brand new Houston Huffman Center that opened in 1981 or 1982 for a workout, racquetball or intramural basketball games; and we remember Formal Dinners on Wednesday nights, served by our always-obedient pledges; we remember the routine assistance graciously provided by the pledges in cleaning “heads” and how much they enjoyed “room cleans”; and we remember cramming for major tests with “all-nighters” at the Physical Science Center (a/k/a the Blender) or Dale Hall; and we remember our weekly Sunday night meetings with our Brothers (pledge meetings at Dale Hall, or Chapter meetings in the Dining Room with the window shutters closed and the front doors firmly chained shut);

We remember **we prided ourselves in winning grades** almost every semester (the IFC Scholarship Trophy was pretty much a permanent fixture in the early 1980’s); and **we remember always doing well in intramurals**, with some heated gridiron and hoops battles with the Sig Eps and others (although we *don’t* remember we usually only placed second in the overall IFC competition);

We remember **we excelled at extra-curricular activities** on Campus. We remember we usually won Sooner Scandals, and practically swept the Scandals Awards in 1980 with the Tri-Delts, in 1982 with the Thetas, and in 1984 with the Chi-O’s (and we remember we would have won in 1981 and 1983, but we chose not to compete those years to give the lesser frats a chance). We remember we had many outstanding men recognized for academic and leadership roles on campus, from Top Ten Freshman to Top Ten Seniors, to officers of IFC, and several members of Gamma Gamma (top 5% of Greeks). We also remember we were the leaders in charge of the majority of the major campus events, ranging from Howdy Week to Homecoming to Dad’s Day to Mom’s Day. We remember Betas were always strongly represented in anything that was “going on” on campus; including events such as the Annual “Snorter Luster” Boxing Tournament, in which we remember claiming several championships, including one in which Greg Jones pummeled someone nearly to death to win the heavyweight division in 1982;

We remember **our “after-hours” hangouts** - The Mont, Denco’s (both old and new), the Jock Strap, Winchester’s, the Deli, the Grey Fox, Jazz Night at Legend’s on Wednesdays, and something called Zanzibar’s; we also remember occasionally going to J. R. Buckaroos, Dallas Dallas the Dancin’ Palace, Pinks, Liberty D’s, Mr. Bills, Town Tavern and Fuji Gardens; we remember taking our dates to dinner at GOT (Greater Oklahoma Territory), Crosstimbers and Legend’s; and we remember that the bread sticks at Pinocchio’s at Stubbeman Village single-handedly added to the “Freshman 15” on many a freshman girl;

We remember our **weekly “functions” with sororities** and themes - such as “Punk Rock,” and “Pimp and Prostitute” (accentuated in 1980 with Brett Chandler’s Olds Toronado parked on the front yard of the House); we also remember the Toga Party in *Animal House* had nothing on our Beta Toga functions; we remember functions with a 50’s or 60’s theme, and other costume parties (some of us remember Fitz dressed as the product of a bowel movement at a function the

night before BF in 1980, although Fitz *does not* remember it); and we remember going to Goodwill on Lindsey to purchase our function attire; and we remember purchasing massive amounts of spirits at Ole John's Liquor Store on Lindsey to serve our female guests;

We remember **the "Banowsky Era" at OU** (not talking about Bill, Jr., but University President William S. Banowsky, Sr., who became an honorary Beta during the early 1980's); and we remember the "big money" days of the early 80's and major changes to the face of OU's campus, such as the \$75 million renovation of Bizzell Memorial Library and construction of the new Clock Tower; and we remember Bill Saxon pledging \$40 million to OU, only to have the bad fortune of making his pledge in his oil company stock on the eve of the oil bust;

We remember **the dawn of the Reagan era** and the politics of the early 1980's, the fast-and-lose days of the oil boom, followed by the bust; and we remember the number of PLM (Petroleum Land Management) graduates with jobs went from about 1400 in 1981 to about 11 in 1984), and our engineering majors changing majors because petroleum (and other) engineers could not find a job with the oil companies by 1985;

We remember **the beginning-of-the-end of the Cold War**, and hating the Soviets ("Ruskies") with every fiber of our beings, although we were deprived of watching Team U.S.A. compete with them in both the 1980 (Moscow) and 1984 (Los Angeles) Summer Olympics, because of political reasons, which seems quite silly in hindsight; we also remember the beginning of the modern terrorist movement, which began with a certain sinister looking (and even more sinister acting) middle-eastern dictator called the Ayatollah Khamenei; and we remember the 220 U.S. Marines who gave their lives to a terrorist truck bombing in October 1983 at their barracks at the Beirut airport;

We remember **the music of our generation**, and, as noted above, the "Death of Disco" (thank, God!); and we remember some of the popular bands of the time (in no particular order or genre): Led Zeppelin, Steve Forbert, KISS, Twisted Sister, Duran Duran, Poison, Motley Crew, AC/DC, Pink Floyd, Flock of Seagulls, Little Feat, Little River Band, Steely Dan, the Cars, Quiet Riot, Bon Jovi, Rush, Rockpile, Journey, Guns N' Roses, Bryan Adams, Billy Joel, Foreigner, Cheap Trick, the Police, Aerosmith, the Eagles, Pat Benatar, Blondie, Cyndi Lauper, Heart, Tears for Fears, Wang Chung, the Sex Pistols, Prince, Huey Lewis and the News, Phil Collins, Dire Straits, John Cougar Mellencamp, U2, Madonna, Def Leppard, Queen, the Go-Go's, Robert Palmer, David Alan Coe, etc.); and we remember an attempt at a major rock concert at Owen Field as school began in Fall 1980 called Rocklahoma;

We remember **the "styles" we wore to be cool**: early on it was jean jackets and Clark's Wallabees, soon to be followed by just about anything from Harold's; button downs; thin striped regimental ties and navy blue blazers with white button-down shirts and khakis ("pledge cool"); Levis 501's (or Wranglers Ropers if you were from Lindsay or Hollis); we remember polo shirts (Izods and, later, Ralph Lauren) and the need to have at least a half-dozen different colors of each; we remember some of us wore flannel shirts, even when it was not Barn Dance Time; we remember hairstyles - from long hair to the "d-head" (the one neatly parted down the middle), to Vlasimsky's (and others) "tails" (a close cousin to the mullet), although we also remember Rob Raley's USMC "high and tight" doo; we remember "rack hats" were an absolute necessity, no

matter which hair style you had, although we did not know to “curve” the bills back then; we remember our “shades,” such as Ray Bans and Vaurnets; we remember something called Nikes were becoming popular, and high tops no longer meant Chuck Taylor Converse, and a pair of white leather Stan Smiths was not un-cool; we remember Sperry topsiders (sans socks) and ostrich-skin cowboy boots; we remember that it was “boxers (plaid), not briefs” (tightly-whities for pledges only); and we remember tube socks were clearly on their way out, and Bermuda shorts made their first return to campus since the early 1960’s. We remember that there was a clothes washer and dryer at the House in the basement, but most of us took our laundry to Doc Smith’s on Campus Corner or some other place that washed and folded laundry by the pound (about \$5 every two weeks to clean, dry and fold for our entire wardrobe);

We remember that we usually furnished **our rooms at the Beta House** each semester with a new order from Aaron Rents in south Oklahoma City (Styrofoam-based furniture); and we remember the hassle of switching phone numbers (land lines) each semester (and getting our roommates to pay their share of the phone bill if the phone was in our name); we remember that we almost all slept in the closets on bunk beds stacked three-high so we could fit a couch, small coffee table, 19-inch TV, stereo, and possibly a mini-fridge; we remember putting dead bolts on our doors for times when the Good Brothers were not welcome to congregate in our room; but we rarely remember locking our doors or being alone, unless it was on purpose (with a female acquaintance); we also remember the occasional object d’art that adorned our walls, which was usually a poster thumb-tacked to the wall;

We remember **arcade video games** taking the place of pin-ball in the basement, and spending many “quails” on the likes of Space Invaders, Defender, Donkey King, Joust and Pac Man in the wee hours of the morning;

We remember that the **City of Norman** was about half the size it is today, and practically nothing was west of I-35 except Sooner Fashion Mall, which was definitely NOT a big Beta hangout;

We remember that **sporting events**, and especially OU Varsity Sports, were a big part of our lives; we remember we watched OU Football with a passion, and many of us traveled to away games other than in Dallas and Stillwater (like USC); we remember that, thanks to Wayman, we were the first to fill up Lloyd Noble Center on a regular basis, sometimes arriving three hours before a game to get a good seat (we especially remember the OU-Georgia Tech game in 1983 when native Oklahoman Mark Price played for Tech, and a couple of great Bedlam games with OSU that went down to the buzzer, and finally being competitive with KU and Mizzou in hoops); so we definitely remember the end of “Bliss Ball” and the beginning of “Billy-Ball” in Norman, and Billy Tubbs accidently running into a vehicle on Highway 9 while jogging; we remember they moved the OU baseball field from next to the football stadium to the new L. Dale Mitchell Park north of the LNC, and we remember baseball Coach Enos Semore. We remember a time when a Bedlam wrestling match with OSU would fill up the LNC to capacity, and we remember “Dr. Death” Steve Williams. We remember that the OU Football team was up and down during the early 1980’s, after winning the Big 8 Championship in 1979 and 1980, the 1981, ’82 and ’83 seasons were a disappointment with unexpected losses we all too painfully remember to USC, Texas, Missouri, West Virginia and Ohio State; and we remember when

Marcus Dupree suddenly left the team after the loss to Texas in 1983. We also remember the Texas game in 1984 when three blind mice (the refs) made one of the worst calls in college football history when Stansberry intercepted a pass in the endzone, and the greasy shorthorns kicked a field goal for a last-minute tie in the pouring rain. But, we will never forget the comeback in Stillwater in 1983 when Tim Lashar hit a last second field goal, or the win at Nebraska in 1984 for the first time since 1980 that led to another Big 8 Championship; and, although it was not “technically” in our era, the majority of us were still attending OU during the improbable 1985 season, when Troy Aikman went down against Miami and Jammin’ Jamelle Holieway led the Sooners to the National Championship over Penn State in the Orange Bowl. We also remember other sports and sporting events, such as the U.S. Open at Southern Hills in 1982; and we remember the Cardinals winning the World Series in 1982, and Darrell Porter was the MVP. We also remember viewing duels at the Majors between Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson, as well as classic matches between McEnroe and Connors and Borg, back when many of us actually cared about men’s professional tennis;

We remember **the days before ATM’s** were on every corner, and a Mr. Short Stop check cashing card was an essential of life; we remember very limited choices for late night delivery - pizza was the only choice - from either Orin’s, or later a new place called Pizza Shuttle, which probably forced Orin into bankruptcy; we remember early morning meals on Lindsey Street at the Kettle or HoJo’s, or the Omelet Shoppe on Campus Corner; and our more senior group remembers the Original Denco’s (closed in 1982 - Dad’s Day was last night it was open, and many of us were there that night with our dads, but didn’t know it was Pat’s last chance to throw something at us);

We think we remember that **we occasionally imbibed in tobacco**, but it was usually not cigarettes or expensive cigars; we remember we used (or at least all tried) old-fashioned chaw, Skoal and Copenhagen (darn, that addiction was hard to break); and we sort of remember the inevitable times when someone (or his date) would mistake a “spit cup” for another beverage, and the ensuing (and sometimes amusing) retching that took place following consumption of the same; we remember stocking up on caffeine in any form we could ingest it to cram for tests (a six pack of Mountain Dew and No-Doze, or some concentrated caffeine pill called “turkey speed” available over-the-counter on Campus Corner);

We remember some **“chick stuff”** (mainly from Party-Pics) - the “feathered” look of the late 1970’s (ala Farah Fawcett or Cheryl Tieges), and the new wave “big” frizzy hair that took its place. We remember leg warmers (at least on certain girls) and walking shorts (not so hot) replacing cut-off jeans (unfortunate); and we remember the “major” Sorority Parties, like Kite & Key; Chi-O Ski Party; Pansy Pile; Monmouth Duo and Jungle Party; we remember Party-Pics and all of the kind and supportive comments written on the “proofs” that were left in the Dining Room after each major party and function; and we remember Party T-Shirts (considered by some as a badge of honor), and especially Trippy Thompson’s always-brilliant designs for our Beta Party Shirts; and we remember the “fun” we had when a Brother was pinned, including chaining the victim to the tree on the south front lawn and “feeding” him leftover food that had been “cooking” outside for several weeks under the back porch (so as to gather maggots and other vermin), followed by a solo swim in the still-effervescent Duck Pond;

We remember some **“unique” words and terms** in our vocabulary, only a few of which survived our era, such as: 8 o’clock’s; butt gods; rack gods; rack head; “coffee cuppin’ around,” snowy; cool jerk, “The Mines for you!,” functions, quails (quarters), spook, screamer, “If you want to smoke dope, go to the Fiji House!!!,” our dates “being turned to sh*t,” and being told to “pack ass!”;

We remember **the nicknames** that almost all of us had at one time, too numerous to mention them all, but some are still occasionally spoken: Chuck O.U., Pugs a/k/a Spanky, Poodle Head, Thurston, Big Slick and Little Slick, the Emmi, Shed, Butt Lips, Joe Bob, Poster Child, Fish Eyes, Horse Face, Smoosh Face, Chubb, Tuna Boat, Mopey Vic, Leamie, Dobie, Jimma’ Frank (not really a nickname), Elwood, Englef--k, “G”, and countless others;

We remember the **“cool” rides** of the time: Trans Ams (made popular by the movie *Smoky and the Bandit* and our own Scott Shedrick), Cameros, and Elwood’s Corvette; and we remember the “not-so-cool” rides that the majority of us parked in the Beta Lot south of the Chi-O House, usually used pickups or “boats”, not to mention Jordan’s de-commissioned post office delivery truck and Ford LTD mud yacht (so named after a trip with some Chi-O’s to Mount Norman/Bullet Hill); Robertson’s Chevy Citation that lost its transmission on I-35 on the way back from OU-Texas in 1983 (and the valiant rescue effort by Scott Guthrie, who happened to spot the disabled vehicle on the side of the road, along with Robertson, Fellrath and dates);

We remember **the cost of living at 800 Chautauqua**, which varied, depending on one’s parents’ means and generosity, as well as one’s part-time job (or lack thereof); we remember the average “allowance” of around \$100 per month, although some of us were much more fortunate, and some much less so; we remember the prices of food (a Big Mac cost about \$1.00, five tacos at Taco Mayo for \$1, a Sonic burger for 89¢, a McDonald’s hamburger for 39¢ or cheeseburger for 49¢, and a large Orin’s pizza delivered to the door for \$6, unless it was “liberated” by Trippy prior to delivery), we remember “pizza bones” (the leftover crust that commanded a high price at 3:00 in the morning); and we especially remember the price of beer (Coors 12-Pack for \$3.99 at Safeway or Wright’s IGA, or \$4.99 at Mr. Short Stop - you always pay for convenience), and gasoline prices went up (from 40¢ to 75¢, and then back down again); we remember a Season Pass to the OU Football games was \$38, and one for OU Basketball was only \$28; we remember and the costs of clothes (\$39 for a new Ralph Lauren Polo; \$28 for an Izod, and \$12 for a new pair of Levis 501’s); and we remember the cost of books (\$100-\$150 per semester, depending on class and major), and undergrad tuition (usually less than \$300 per semester); we remember the Beta social dues and assessments and house bills (\$700 per semester for room and board?); and we remember salaries for House officers (the President made about \$150 per month, while the Treasurer and kitchen crew made about \$70/month);

We remember **the “real adults”** we regularly interacted with during our stay at the Beta House, especially our beloved House Moms: Mom Oklahoma Miles Sain (retired after the 1979-80 year); Mom Osachuk (and her pre-school or kindergarten-age daughter, Elicia, who we babysat on occasion) (1980-82); and finally Mom Barbara McCain from Mississippi (1983-?). We also remember Professor “Doc” Nolan was our “Faculty Advisor” during the 1980’s, and he always appreciated a good bottle of single-malt scotch in the spirit of the Holidays (or was it in the spirit of Finals?), and we especially remember the Good Doc’s Classical Mythology class (was there a

Beta in this era who did not get at least three hours of “A” from Doc?). We also remember “The Corporation,” and our occasional differences with our dedicated alumni, and that we were not too thrilled with their input on how we should run what we considered to be OUR HOUSE (as a former and current member of the once-dreaded Corporation, your authors can state that time certainly changes perspectives on certain things, like the wisdom of alumni involvement). We also remember OU’s new anti-hazing policies of the early 1980’s, and post-midnight “raids” by University Officials Joe Johnson, Jack Matkin and Keith Allen (later, and still, owner of Brothers on Campus Corner); we remember the friendly and courteous way with which we were always treated by the OU Campus Police (they refrained from using night sticks and mace for sport, at least most of the time); and we remember the Norman PD began using their new high-tech “noise detector” to issue citations at all major parties and most functions for “excessive noise,” usually to the soberest Chapter Officer on hand;

We remember **some unique events**, such as Christopher Cross playing at the House in 1980 (and having to pay \$15 a ticket to see him a year later at a sold-out LNC), we also remember Bowley & Wilson brought their act up from Dallas for an afternoon gig at Barn Dance in 1982; and we remember the 75th Anniversary of Gamma Phi in Fall 1982 at the Union Memorial Ballroom (and we remember how fast 25 years can fly by, as we are now getting ready for the Centennial Celebration on October 20, 2007, while hoping we all live to see the Sesquicentennial Event in 2032);

And, of course, we all fondly remember **our freshman year and pledgship**, although we cannot publish all of our memories of pledgship, or even most. We remember moving into Walker Tower and Adams Center, including McCasland Tower (named after a great Beta family), and we remember eating at Couch Cafeteria (for some reason, we remember the “swamp burgers,” although not fondly). We remember the days of “grace” before we first heard the sound of *Tubular Bells* ringing from the windows at 800 Chautauqua, when we did stupid freshman things, like bring our girlfriend to a pre-BF house clean (Banowsky), or try to pick up a member’s girlfriend (or sister) at a pre-BF function (no names). We remember something called a line speech and the kind and gentle voices of the members as they greeted us into formal pledgship; we remember white crew neck t-shirts and tennis shoes were a must-have on Friday nights; we remember practicing Beta songs until the sun would rise, and we could finally exit through the “pledge door” to greet the Kappa’s with the announcement (repeated three times) that, “*It’s a Great Life!!*”; we remember four hours of study hall each night, Sunday through Thursday (unless we had a function), and we actually remember studying. We remember getting together on Friday evenings to study Beta things before moving en masse to the House for our weekly Midnight Date with the members; we remember we always put a “bounce” in our step around the House, and proper etiquette required us to address our elders as “sir,” and to stare straight ahead when pondering a significant question posed by a member. We remember it was always good to know “10 Facts,” as well as our Gamma Phi and National Lore. We remember an occasional pledge function with a sorority pledge class (and our always-caring members waiting in the parking lot to make sure none of us left alone and lost our way); and we remember that thing called Lock, and that there was safety in numbers after dark; we remember morning and night time heads; we remember that the “stair master” cardiovascular program (F-F’s) began in earnest in late October or early November and continued to keep us in condition until Initiation; we remember “minor walk-outs” in the fall and “major walk-outs” in January or

February, and we remember how wonderful the House looked when we returned from walk-outs, after the members worked day and night to redecorate the House for us; we remember that our pledge classes started with large numbers (47 in 1979, and 54 in 1980), but that by the time pledgship ended, many had de-pledged (initiating only 27 in 1980 and 36 in 1981); we remember keeping an eye on the initiation dates on the member's Initiation Certificates hanging on their walls, and hoping we would be initiated sometime before second semester ended; we remember the beginning of the end and the several final "ordeals" of pledgship; and we remember getting our Beta pins, and thinking that we could not wait until next year's pledges arrived so we could provide them with all of the love, caring and attention that the members had so graciously given us.

We remember the men who served as **presidents of the House:**

Early 80's - Chapter Presidents:

Fall 1979 - Gary Walker
Spring 1980 - Jeff Anthony
Fall 1980 - Jeff Morrell
Spring 1981 - Greg Jones
Fall 1981 - Bennett Fuller
Spring 1982 - Wade McClure
Fall 1982 - Brooks Mitchell
Spring 1983 - Brent Rody
Fall 1983 - Jeff Roberts
Spring 1984 - Steve Nell
Fall 1984 - Charlie Towe
Spring 1985 - Chuck Knapp

And, we remember **our rush chairmen**, who convinced us to make the life-altering decision that made us shout at the top of our lungs that, "***I wanna be a Beta!!!***":

Early 80's - Rush Chairmen:

Summer 1979 - Dale Reneau; Mark Miller; Kevin Redwine
Summer 1980 - Greg Jones; Brad Boone; Wade McClure
Summer 1981 - Bill Banowsky; Jeff Dietert; Richard Howell
Summer 1982 - Peter Emmott; Jay Fitzgerald; Pat Jordan
Summer 1983 - Charlie Towe; Jay Pettit; Chuck Knapp
Summer 1984 - Mark McDaniel, Greg Hollinger; Carter Baumert

[Your authors apologize for not having a more complete list of all of the men who served the Beta House and the University in various capacities during the 1980's, and welcome your recollections.]

And ... Some Things We *Don't* Remember:**

For all of the things we do remember of life at the Beta House in the early 1980's, there are many things we have forgotten, or at least say we have forgotten due to our *selective memories*.

**[WARNING: The rest of this trek down memory lane is rated, at least, PG-13].

We do not remember over-imbibing in alcohol, or spending the night puking out of the front room on the third floor onto the front porch after too many tequila shots with Rick Mooney (and then literally crawling half a block to the Beta Lot to sleep in our car); nor do we remember that those who fell fast asleep after too many cocktails were targets to be “painted up,” usually with black indelible magic markers, and usually in various areas that would be obvious at the next day’s class or social function (or their next date);

We do not remember a tradition called “douching,” which involved pouring water (sometimes with herbal essence) on a pledge during a lineup, or the “ice water” version reserved for the Good Brother who was soundly at rest in the rack;

We don’t remember going to an establishment on Lindsey Street called the High Horse or a place called Walter Mitty’s, or of a tradition called “feeding the fish.” We don’t remember instigating a snowball fight in Winter 1983, which led to a near campus-wide riot that finally ended when Buster Rhymes (then an OU Football star) fired his Uzi from the Jock Dorms into the air;

We do not remember selling our books for cash money after finals each semester to fund our end-of-the-semester party binge, before heading home for the winter or summer break;

We don’t remember some of us reportedly using the “utility tunnels” on campus to gain access to the offices where tests were kept in order to obtain “study materials,” or bribing janitors for access to late night study aids in professors’ offices;

We do not remember the tradition of the “Barracuda,” or that the designated Barracuda Pledge traditionally bit a selected girl’s derriere during a function at the behest of the members (although we do remember catching a real barracuda in the Turks & Caicos with the real “1980 Beta Barracuda” during a family Spring Break a couple of years ago);

We do not remember many of the brands or concoctions of alcoholic beverages we consumed, although most selections were based on price, and not taste: Little Kings, Brown Derby, Mickey’s Wide Mouths, Pabst and Scotch Buy Beer; “Yards” of beer at the new establishment called Brothers; or Trash Can Punch (literally mixed in a 32 gallon plastic trash can - usually clean - with a very healthy mix of vodka, gin, rum, Ever-Clear (or other pure grain alcohol), and a little fruit juice (grape and orange) mixed in for flavor. We remember selections of cocktails from the Beta Game Day Bar in the basement, including the “Best Bloody Marys Ever Invented” (thanks to Vic’s secret red pepper chips and the right mix of Snappy Tom cocktail and plain Campbell’s tomato juice, along with other secret ingredients);

We don’t remember certain things around Barn Dance Time, especially certain songs we sang during the annual Sorority Serenade, including Jerry Jeff Walker and David Allen Coe tunes, such *Pissin’ in the Wind*, *Why Don’t We Get Drunk and Screw?*, *Sangria Wine*, and *Up Against the Wall Redneck Mother*, and, we definitely **don’t** remember the infamous *Cow Song* (the latter of which we don’t remember leading to several formal apologies by our Social Chairman to

virtually every sorority as a prerequisite for acceptance of future function invites). We don't remember painting the Greek letters "KKG" in blue on the side of the Barndance Pig, or that Chuck (from Altas) let him loose in the Kappa House in 1983. We don't remember "Death to the Tube," when a perfectly good television with an extra long extension cord was hurled from the third floor fire escape onto the side court, usually during the *Tonight Show, with Johnny Carson*.

We do not remember certain Beta members playing the "saxophone" on a regular basis in the late evenings and early morning hours, although we remember they usually had the courtesy to drop a damp towel at the base of their door to prevent the rest of us from being distracted by the "noise" that often emanated from late night "saxophone" playing;

We do not remember the "great trenching wars," before the iron rails were installed around the Beta Yard; and we don't remember sitting on the roof of the Beta House with John Wesley Raley, discussing Manchurian philosophy, while waiting to throw bricks at the next offenders who tried to trench Our Yard; and we certainly do not remember an early morning "trench" through the Chi-O front yard in Elwood's Corvette in Spring 1982;

We do not remember "pearl necklaces" or hitting golf balls at the DU house in the very early morning hours, with extra points scored for broken windows;

We don't remember sneaking into the sole remaining outdoor drive-in movie theater in Norman with several of us and a case of cheap beer hidden in the trunk; nor do we remember Shed hiding fish all over the kitchen, or Banowsky sliding down the Kappa gutter and cutting his hand. We definitely do not remember the easy-access way into the second floor Chi-O bedrooms through the top of the Chi-O kitchen roof; and we especially do not remember the rekindling of the fabled "Snake Dance" on the south fire escape during a power outage in 1983;

We don't remember betting on football games through the various sports investment services offered by the Good Brothers (or taking advantage of our Beta brothers at Nebraska to get a better spread on the OU-NU game); and we don't remember wagering on whether the pledges would break Lock when given the opportunity during a friendly discussion with three guys adorning ceremonial garb; and we definitely do not remember when one of us and the Shed were collectively down \$2000 after a bad weekend, and had to bet it on Tampa Bay on Monday Night to get even or face almost certain death from bookies or expulsion from our parents (although we remember Tampa Bay covered by 1, thanks to LeRoy Selmon);

We do not remember the snowy winter night in 1983 when one Chuck O.U. Dobbs sat "buck naked" in a lawn chair on the front yard of the House "drinking case after case of the Red," although rumor has it that some photographs still exist that might refresh our memories;

We do not remember 1981 major walkout in Dallas when Brad Boone uttered the advice, "Just run," to Greg Jones after a personal encounter with a certain Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader and the Dallas P.D. (the warrant is probably still out for Jones' arrest);

We don't remember many Rush Stories:

For example, we do not remember the annual Rush Float Trip included 27 canoes and 68 cases of beer; and we certainly do not recall abandoning our canoes without life-jackets to tip over other boaters to liberate their unused beverages when our boat ran dry;

We do not remember the “Train and Crane Incidents” that occurred on a single night in Summer 1981, when an Oklahoma City rushee named Charlie Towe (proving his aptitude to be a future rush chairman), hijacked a train at Denco’s, engaged the drive and jumped the train as it headed down the tracks with no conductor. Nor do we remember the same night when Charlie showed his prowess at operating heavy equipment by entering the cab of a crane at a University construction site and lowering the hook, until the OUPD arrived to remove him from the driver’s seat;

Nor do we remember something called “Chuck O.U.’s Lost Weekend,” which allegedly occurred during Pledge Signing Weekend in July 1982. We don’t remember that the Lost Weekend went something like this: Starting innocently enough with a late morning swim party at President Banowsky’s residence, during which COU proceeded to consume a bottle of Tequila (pronounced “khu-teel-uhh”), and then jumped off the pool house roof with drink in hand, only to be loaded into the trunk of a rush chairman’s car for the drive back to the rush apartment at the Royal Orleans. We don’t remember that COU then proceeded to assault various members and rushes with a cast iron frying pan before reclining on the couch, where black indelible ink was not used to completely paint half his body black. Nor do we remember COU waking up after the signing party had begun, only to somehow find his way to the Grey Fox and a napping place, where was inadvertently left until after the establishment closed and the doors were firmly locked behind him. COU does not remember searching for a “quail” on the floor to use for a pay phone to call for help, and Peter Emmott, Pat Jordan and Jay Fitzgerald don’t remember an early morning phone call from the Norman Police Department to retrieve one COU from the Fox, still adorning most of the indelible ink that had been applied the afternoon before.

We don’t remember an impromptu event called the “Phi 500” in Summer 1981, when a Suburban generously loaned to the rush team was used to trench the Alpha Phi yard and dismantle a fence. Nor does Banowsky remember the next morning, when the Norman PD arrived at the rush apartment with a piece of the Suburban’s grill left in the Alpha Phi yard, which perfectly matched the missing grill piece of the rush vehicle. We don’t remember Banowsky’s feigned dismay at the situation, his promise to take care of it, and the rush team rebuilding the Alpha Phi fence and repairing the Alpha Phi yard to atone for their sins;

We don’t remember a night in Seminole in Summer 1982 when our wanderings led us to Maple Grove Cemetery in the wee hours of the morning and an encounter with the Seminole P.D., which, in turn, led to the apprehension of one Poodle Head, while Jeff Dietert and Rob Robertson climbed on top of a nearby mausoleum to avoid incarceration, and conceal very audible laughter (to this day, we are thankful Pood locked up and took the hit for us, although it did not keep him from becoming a member of the Orange Bowl

Committee 20 years later, and a somewhat respectable member of Miami (Florida) society);

We do not remember Chuck O.U.'s campaign for President of UOSA in 1983, or the "Chuck OU Chant," sung to the cadence of the OU Chant: "*C-H-U-C-K-D-O-B-B-S, his fat rolls on and on; 300 pounds of heart and flesh on a sleek athletic frame; he's fat, and he's greasy and overweight; he's never had a party date; despite the western skies, Chuck OU's chant will never die; live on obesity...*". We just don't remember that Bluto Blutarsky (John Belushi) of Animal House had absolutely nothing on Chuck.

We don't remember the song of the Pledge Class of 1979, which we don't remember being sung to the tune of the theme from the Beverly Hillbillies: "*This is a story of a high school stud, the biggest ass cool jerk that there ever was; Then one day came William Dale Reneau, why sign Beta, we will never know, Theta that is, Pi, '79; The next thing we knew we were standing in the dark, our thumbs at our seams and our toes behind the mark; When the lights came on there were 80 members there, the next thing we knew we were cleaning pubic hair; Heads that is, getting' reamed, ... G** Damn right.*"

POSTSCRIPT: Your authors do not claim to have prepared a comprehensive tale of life at the Beta House in the early 1980's, although this ended up a much lengthier work than either of us anticipated. Some things we can proudly hand down to our children, and some things we cower to think about telling even our own spouses. However, we can all take solace that the statute of limitations have run on our college day transgressions (or at least most of them), and that we have all contributed, in one way or another, to the proud legacy of the Gamma Phi Chapter of Beta Theta Pi at the University of Oklahoma. After all, it was, and still is, "*A Great Life!!*"

Yours in ~ kai ~

1815 & 1836