

The Way of the Fen: Fenway House for Dummies

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1 Introduction (The Way of the Fen)

Welcome to Fenway House. FenBeings past and present have conspired to create this wonderful document to help you get settled, if you have decided to move in. If you are still pondering whether or not to live here, you might want to spend some quality time at the house. Talk to people. Hang out. Soak in the culture, the ambiance, and the light from Mr. Sun. And read this document, which should give you some useful information about how the house tends to work.

As you will see, almost nothing about the house, with the possible exception of the foundation, is set in stone. Fenway exists in a state of constant flux, a moderated anarchy of sorts. When asked about house rules, FenBeings often respond:

- The banister is not structural!
- The sanitizer is not a dishwasher!

Well...actually, the sanitizer was recently replaced by a dishwasher (which is also a sanitizer), and the banister is getting more structural every year. If you really want some general guidelines for living at Fenway, perhaps these will be more useful:

- Respect the rights of others.
- Consensus is your friend.
- Clean up your own mess.

FenBeings are free to live, work, and play as they like. To achieve a state of happy, harmonious cohabitation, however, residents must make at least a minimal effort to avoid stepping on each others' toes. This means that if your plans could affect other people or common house resources, you should consider letting people know about them. It means that people who have issues with each other or the house should talk to each other, or call a house meeting. Major decisions in the house are generally made by "consensus." This means that if no one in the house has a prevailing "objection" to something, it can get done. The house may consent to take a certain action (to make a major purchase, for example), to delegate a task, to take a vote on an issue, or even just give up in frustration. Consensus is not our policy. It is our practice. All it means is that we have to live with each other, and at some point, we have to talk to each other.

Likewise, this document is not policy. It would probably be our policy not to have policies, if we didn't have such a lack of policy. Instead, this is a collection of practical, philosophical, and very relevant items of note which should make getting used to your new home a lot easier.

2 Resident "Selection" (Who Gets to Play with Us)

Fenway House is open bid for MIT sophomores and undergraduate transfer students during their first year at MIT; that is, we offer housing to anyone who wants it and is allowed to move in. Juniors, seniors, and graduate students can move in after they've been accepted at a house meeting. Once you have toured the house and spoken with several residents about living here, we will give you a yes or no answer within 72 hours. Summer housing is restricted to MIT affiliates and people that term-time residents can "vouch" for (i.e, friends, family, heads of state, etc.). Talk to a FenBeing for more information.

3 Essentials (Things You Need to Get When You Move in)

- A signed lease. See the House Manager. The lease contains information about your legal obligations to the house, as well as your housebill and payment schedule.
- A room. Ask a FenBeing for a house tour! We allocate rooms at a house meeting at the beginning of each semester, though a gentle interplay of crowding, anti-seniority, inertia, and moral suasion. In other words, we all sit down and haggle until we find some arrangement that everyone can live with. Summer rooms are usually dictatorially allocated (with summer resident input) by the Summer Housing Manager. Housing for IAP is managed as an extension of Fall and/or Spring Terms. All rooms should include a bed, storage space for books and clothes, a desk, and a chair. If you are missing any of these things, please see the House manager.
- A housekey. Granted by the House Manager upon signing of the lease.
- A long distance calling code. See the Accountant.
- To be added to the house mailing list (fenwayhouse@mit.edu /and/or fenway-summer@mit.edu, depending on your term of residency). Send e-mail to fen-request@mit.edu if you don't get added automatically.

- A working phone for your room and a network connection for your computer, if any. See the Network Mangler.
- A key to the mailbox and roof. See the House Manager.

4 Decisions, Decisions (Mouse Heating!)

There are three general ways decisions are made for the house:

- A “Fenmind” is defined as any group of three FenFolk who agree that something is needed for the House. A Fenmind may make a purchase of up to \$30 for the house and get reimbursed for it by the Accountant. A Fenmind is also necessary to start a fire. (Currently, the only fireplace that is functionally maintained is in the library.)
- Larger decisions (purchases, repairs, policy) are made by calling a house meeting. Any resident has the right to call a house meeting to discuss any issue. However, it is polite to try to schedule said meetings for a time when as many people as possible can attend, and to give as much notice as possible.
- House officers may make summary decisions concerning those parts of the house which are their responsibilities, and where a quick decision is called for—e.g. the House Manager may summarily decide that a particularly dangerous piece of electrical wiring needs to be replaced. The officers are still encouraged to seek the opinion of the House when the decision is not time-critical.

5 House Officers (People Who Can Deal with Your Issues)

Officers are generally chosen at house meetings, usually for a semester or other relevant time period. There are often other, less serious offices, which are recorded in the housebook.

Offices with mailboxes (count as a house chore):

The Accountant is in charge of house finances. Questions about housebills should be directed here; checks (payable to “Fenway House”) should be placed in the Accountant’s mailbox. This officer sets the housebill, tracks long distance phone calls, and reimburses people who have made purchases on behalf of the house.

The Steward is in charge of making certain the House has food, water, and other staples, such as light bulbs, toiletries, and cleaning agents. If any of these are lacking, they should be written up on the whiteboard in the kitchen.

The House Manager is responsible for the physical maintenance of the house. This person also takes care of miscellaneous tasks, including house repairs, keys, and organizational duties involving, for example, the Alumni Corporation, the City of Boston, MIT, and various contractors and vendors. FenBeings can write to the HM about physical maintenance and other issues on the whiteboard, on the tool room door. The House Manger is not the (only) President.

Other Important Offices:

The Rush Chair organizes Fenway's generally low-key participation in MIT Orientation and Residence Selection. This person may also facilitate other publicity or new-member activities at other times in the year. Also the house's representative to the MIT LGC Rush Committee and MIT Women's Conference.

The LGC Liaison represents the house to the MIT Living Group Council. This person is responsible for keeping the house informed about LGC-related issues, and for sampling house opinion to enable us to vote at meetings.

The Risk Manager is an office required by MIT, charged with a vaguely defined responsibility to maintain a Risk Management Plan and work with the MIT housing office Risk manager.

The Summer Housing Chair is in charge of summer rooming assignments, and any other organizational issues relating to summer housing.

The Network Mangler maintains the House's internal ethernet and Internet connection and tries to be generally useful regarding computer issues. This is the person to talk to if you want to put your computer on the house network.

The Soda Sprite manages our capitalistic, non-deterministic soda fridge, and deals with the recycling of aluminum cans. Soda is 50 cents a can, except during Work Week and Rush.

The Recycling Czarina makes sure the House's recycling is taken out every Monday night or thereabouts. As of Fall 2000, this also counts as a house chore.

Resident Advisor MIT requires all FSILGs to "hire" an RA; the Institute then reimburses houses for rent and food costs. This person is available to residents as a person specially trained to provide informal mentoring and advice, while simultaneously being a full and equal member of the house.

The President You are the President of Fenway House. So is every other rent-paying FenBeing. Deal with the responsibilities of this title as you see fit.

6 Requirements for Living at Fenway

If you want to live in our happy commune, there are a few requirements you need to satisfy. First off, you need to sign your house lease. Note that not signing it doesn't get you off the hook however. Under state law, if you live at Fenway, you're bound by the terms of the lease, regardless of whether or not you signed it. You will also need to pay rent; if you can't pay by the deadline, talk the accountant and you can work out a payment schedule. Finally, you will need to perform a house chore and attend two work weeks per year.

6.1 House Chores (Mouse Smoires)

Each resident is expected to devote approximately one hour per week towards house chores, in addition to cleaning up after themselves. House chores are divided up by room or area, and are assigned through a lottery run in some agreed-upon fashion by a designated FenBeing. Some house chores cover multiple rooms (like the hallways), some rooms require multiple people (like

the kitchen,) but most have a one-to-one correlation (like the bathrooms). Being House Manager, Accountant, or Steward counts as a house chore unto itself, and these officers are chosen by a consensus-driven election.

People are allowed and encouraged to help with others' chores if they find their own is taking less time than anticipated; swapping is also possible if one can find a willing partner. People are also encouraged to...morally suade...those with unkempt house chore areas. But play nice – it is far more effective to offer to help or evidence some basic human compassion, rather than to merely whine and bitch incessantly.

Cleaning supplies are available in the Grotto of Saint Marc, outside the basement bathroom. More supplies are located in the kitchen and bathrooms, and the SAMmy Alley closet (where the vacuum lives). The key to the dumpster hangs on a nail inside the right pantry, and should be returned promptly after use. (The dumpster is emptied on alternate Thursdays.)

6.2 Work Week (Work, dammit, work!)

Term-time residents are *required* to devote 48 hours of labor (per semester) to the maintenance of the house. This is usually accomplished during the phenomena known as Work Week, seven days at the end of the Summer and IAP, when the house becomes a construction, destruction, and reconstruction zone. Residents (and often friends and alums of the house) work together on fix-it jobs and house cleaning, cook gigantic communal meals, enjoy hanging out together, and generally get completely exhausted by the time the house gets put back together. Residents who live in the house during the fall semester must participate in summer work week while those that live in the house during the spring semester must participate in winter work week. Residents do not have to participate in the work week that precedes their first semester at Fenway.

6.3 Work Week Contract System (Work, or else!)

Even though Work Week is a lot of fun, it is exhausting, and takes up valuable time that we'd rather spend working or having fun. Consequently, when a resident doesn't show up for Work Week, or doesn't complete all their hours, people feel cheated. To deal with these problems, Fenway House invokes a system for ensuring that people who haven't completed their Work Week hours either make up all their hours or leave the house. This Work Week compliance system is designed to be flexible; if you're only a few hours behind and you finish your hours in a reasonable amount of time, nothing bad will happen to you. If for some reason you absolutely can't attend Work Week, the house will work with you to come up with a schedule to finish your hours. The goal is to prevent unscrupulous people from taking advantage of everyone's work without contributing. The Work Week Compliance system is described below.

If someone fails to complete all of their work week hours by the end of work week, they must make a public contract with the house to complete their hours. Compliance with the contract is overseen by the contract manager, which is an elected housechore. If this first contract is broken, a house meeting is called, at which point a second contract to complete the remaining work week hours is made. If the second contract is broken, then another house meeting is called at which point two things happen:

1. a third contract is made, and
2. "light" punishments can be assigned

There is no explicit definition for "light" punishments, but examples of light punishments that have been used in the past include taking the garbage from a room once per week or buying fruits from haymarket once every two weeks. Light punishments that have been considered and rejected for reasons other than because they were too harsh include doing a certain number of loads of dishes per week or so many minutes of dishes per week.

If the third contract is broken, another house meeting is called. Two things happen:

1. a fourth contract is made, and
2. "major" punishments can be assigned

Major punishments that have been discussed (note that some of these have been considered too harsh) include removal of parking privileges and disconnection of house network (net disconnection is particularly harsh, depending on the individual in question). One major punishment that was actually decided on at a house meeting but never enacted because the person's work week hours were complete was speeding up the person's progress through the work week system on their next iteration (i.e., making it so that in the next work week, light punishments can be assigned after the first contract is broken, major punishments can be assigned after the second, etc).

If the fourth contract is broken, a house meeting is called and three things happen:

1. an immediate vote to evict the person is conducted (see the sublease for details of how eviction votes are conducted).
2. if the person was not evicted, a fifth contract is made
3. if the person was not evicted, major punishments can be assigned.

After that, everytime a contract is broken, the same cycle repeats: eviction vote, and assuming the person was not evicted, new contract, and major punishments.

The portion of house meetings where punishments are decided upon have a special format. First, discussion is held with the person in the room. When everyone is satisfied with that portion of the meeting, the person in question leaves the room, and the discussion continues without him. At this point, he can request that someone act as his advocate while he is not in the room. The advocate argues on his behalf and says anything the person wants said. The advocate need not side with the person in question in matters of consensus, but simply speaks on their behalf during discussion. The decision as to what punishments if any to assign to the person is made while they are still outside the room.

(decided spring 2000)

7 Public Areas (It's Your House, Too)

When it comes to cleaning public areas and maintaining them in a usable state, it seems that even if everyone cleans up after themselves, entropy or forgetfulness can cause mess to accumulate that nobody claims responsibility for. Thus, it's a very good idea, when cleaning up after yourself, to take the time to do a little bit more and leave the area nicer than when you entered it.

7.1 The Kitchen/Breakfast Room (The Chemical Warfare Development Lab)

Fenway House has a large, generally decently stocked kitchen. Unlimited access to it is included in your housebill. Here are some practices that are designed to make it a more useful place for everyone:

- The Steward is responsible for making sure the kitchen is stocked with staples. If the kitchen is running low on a staple, or you would like to have something that is not currently stocked, write it on the whiteboard next to the pantry. The Steward may veto a request based on cost or difficulty of storage (storing food for about twenty people is not a trivial organizational task!) but will otherwise generally make an effort to get what people want.
- All food in the kitchen, unless specifically labelled with a name and a date, is for public consumption. So, if you buy or cook something special for yourself, label it clearly with your name and the date, and possibly "NO EAT." It is then not to be touched—unless it gets moldy, in which case it may be arbitrarily thrown out. Note that some foods "are supposed to look like that."
- Pious FenBeings who cook more than they care to eat store it in the kitchen with the label "EAT ME." Feel free to partake of this food. If you do, it becomes your responsibility to clean up what's left—a small price to pay for free food. However, be aware that labelling food as "EAT ME" and storing it, while a kind and generous act, does not absolve you of responsibility to clean it up if nobody chooses to take it. "ASK 1ST" and "CLEAN 1ST" (which requires a few minutes of kitchen cleaning) are other popular labels.
- After eating, clean up the dishes and any mess you have made. Spritz any food particles off plates, silverware, and glasses before running them through the dishwasher. Pots and pans (except for cast-iron) usually need to be hand scrubbed; they may optionally be dishwasher for sanitary reasons.
- To cold-start the dishwasher, run the hot water until it's steaming. Then press ON. At any time, you may load dishes and soap (use only about one-third of a spoonful of dishwasher soap only!) Soon, you will see the FILL light come on and the water will heat. Press WASH at any time, and when the dishwasher is ready, it will clean your dishes.
- To run the dishwasher when it's already on, just put in a fresh rack of dirty dishes and a third of a spoonful of dishwashing agent. Press WASH and 120 seconds later, you should have clean, 180 degree dishes.
- The dishwasher does not work miracles! Unless dishes are single-stacked and spread out enough so that the spray nozzles can hit all surfaces from either above or below, they will not get clean. Nor will the dishwasher remove dried on crust or large gobs of leftover food. Spritz, soak, and scrub as necessary. The dishwasher will effectively remove germs, grease, light stains, and thin layers of moist food-goo.
- Do not put unclean dishes away. Either cycle them again or clean them by hand.
- If you are not going to be using the dishwasher for more than 15 minutes, push OFF, wait for it to shut down, and then leave the door open so it will dry out and not rust.

- The Sink is a dish. Wash it.
- Be careful not to leave sharp knives where innocent dishwashers might accidentally be injured by them.
- Cast-iron frying pans need to be treated with special care. If allowed to sit in the sink, they rust quickly! They should generally be scraped clean and wiped out, without water. If they must be washed with soap and water, they need to be reconditioned. To recondition, after washing them, dry thoroughly, heat over a low flame, melt a little vegetable shortening in them, and wipe clean with a dry paper towel.
- *Drosophila melanogaster*, also known as the common fruit fly, have been known to frequent the house, most often during the summer months. They are attracted to food, garbage, and standing water. The most effective way to combat them is to be extremely anal-retentive about cleanliness. Take out garbage regularly or when stinky, make certain food is not left out uncovered in the kitchen, and do your dishes promptly. Then they will die off or move to Sigma Nu. We employ fly paper and other extermination methods, but they are not effective unless the kitchen and bathrooms are kept clean.
- Fenway House recycles. Metal, compatible plastic, and cardboard materials (not including pizza boxes) go under the large cutting block in the kitchen. Newspapers and plastic bags may be recycled in the Breakfast Room bin, and paper/cardboard receptacles are located throughout the house. Cans and bottles with deposit/refund in MA may be placed on the shelves opposite the soda machine. Please rinse out food and drink containers before leaving them in the recycling bins; otherwise they will attract our friend *Drosophila*. Also, please do not place sharp objects, such as can tops, in the recycling, for the personal safety of the Recycling Czar(ina). See the posters in the kitchen and the tool room for more information about exactly what can be recycled. Reduce, reuse, reincarnate.
- Do not run the kitchen hood exhaust fan on high, as this damages the motor (and makes lots of scary noises). Turn the fan off when you leave. Leaving the fan on for more than a few hours, even on low, will cause it to overheat and shut down.
- If you are making excessive smoke in the kitchen: turn the exhaust fan on low, open the outside windows and door, and close the door between the kitchen and the hallway. If smoke escapes into the basement hallway, it will set off the fire alarm.

7.2 Tool Room/Laundry Room

This is just what it sounds like. If you use any tools from there, be sure to return them when you're finished (tools are expensive to replace!).

Unlimited use of the washer and dryer is also included in your housebill. Detergent and a supply of plastic laundry bags is next to the washer, and stocked by the Steward. When you wash clothes, the general idea is to push other people's laundry through the system. If you discover someone else's clothes in the washer, once the cycle has finished, transfer the wet clothes to the dryer (remembering to clean the lint trap and to add a dryer sheet), and wash your own clothes. If someone's clothes are in the dryer, wait until they are dry and then place them in a plastic bag before drying your own. Do not leave people's wet clothes in a bag in order to get your clothes

finished faster. If you need your clothes treated specially (where specially is defined as anything other than 70 minutes of standard tumble-dry), it is your responsibility to make sure someone else doesn't mistreat them; it is infeasible for everyone to know how to do everyone else's laundry. Leave a sign, or preferably, be there when the load is finished. The plastic bags may be reused, and are also useful as trash can liners. Claiming your finished laundry promptly will prevent it from being spilled onto the floor, and will also minimize crowding in the tool room.

The house does collectively own a number of towels, sheets, etc. These items may be borrowed for guests, or put to use in public areas, especially bathrooms. Consider processing house laundry with your undersized loads, or as a house chore. Clean house laundry is stored in various locations, including the third floor closet and the ping-pong room.

7.3 Bathrooms

The house has three full bathrooms in the basement and on the third and fourth floors, and one half-bath on the second floor. You will note that this is an average of one shower for every 6 or 7 people. When showering during peak hours, please be considerate of others waiting to use the showers and keep your showers as short as possible.

Toilet paper and soap should be restocked when down to 1 item, not zero. (It's very embarrassing to have to run through the house for more toilet paper when the bathroom is out.) Get an armful of said item and leave them in the bathroom.

There is not enough room in the showers for everyone to store all of their personal shampoo, conditioner, and other paraphernalia. Thus, anything left in the shower itself is considered to be for general consumption. There are cabinets in or near the bathrooms for storage of personal toilet articles; only use something from these cabinets if it's yours or if it's clearly labeled as house property.

7.4 Driveway

The House's driveway in back has room to park two cars. Parking priority is given to residents, then to guests, but is otherwise first come, first served. If someone is the first person into the driveway, they should pull far enough in that another car can park behind them. If someone parks in outer space in the driveway (such that they are blocking someone else in), they must be willing to either leave a car key on the hook in the kitchen pantry so that their car can be moved, or be willing to be found, woken up, shouted for, or otherwise bothered to move their car any time the blocked-in car needs to be moved. Similarly, car keys may only ever be removed from this hook with the permission of the car's owner, or to move the car, after which they must be immediately returned. If this is unacceptable, the person should park on the street. Resident parking permits, which legalize parking in front of the house and on nearby streets, are available from the City of Boston, though Massachusetts registration is required.

7.5 Library and Music Room

Books are in the library. The piano is in the music room. Various items, such as personal TVs, VCRs, and game systems, music books, pillows and blankets, and such, float around. People generally tell the house if they are going to use these rooms for special events or guests, mostly to prevent conflicts. Priority on use of these rooms is managed mostly by negotiation, though

of course academics, reading, playing the piano, and pre-announced activities are generally given precedence.

7.6 The Pit

The Pit is a sub-basement area for dead storage, accessible through a trapdoor in the sanitizer/freezer room. If you choose to store things there, make sure that they are packed in a reasonable container and clearly labelled with your name. Please note that after storage in the pit, clothes especially will smell musty. (Sealing items in airtight plastic will prevent this.) The Pit has on rare occasion flooded (i.e. in the Boston floods of 1996), so you may wish to store certain items on higher shelves.

8 Telecommunications (“It’s ringing again! I thought I’d fixed that.”)

8.1 The Telephone

Unlimited local phone calls are included in your housebill. Long-distance calls are not included with your housebill. Each FenBeing is issued a calling code number by the accountant to facilitate tracking and billing. Charges will be added to your housebill. (This system is on the fritz as of September 2000; please let the Accountant know if you make any particularly expensive long distance calls.) If you prefer, it also works to get a calling card and use it for long-distance calls. Some residents have also been known to get cell phones for personal use.

The house has four phone lines which are shared by the following extensions:

101	Basement hall	212	Office
102	Living room	213	Doorbell
103	SAMmy Alley	221	2-4
104	Second floor hall	222	Library
105	Third floor hall	231	Back-3
106	Fourth floor hall	232	3-2
201	Future (B-1)	233	Front-3
202	Present (B-2)	234	Rick Greene
203	Past (B-3)	241	4-4
204	Pit	242	Chah-Min
205	Kitchen	243	4-2
211	1-1	244	Front-4

Phones on extensions 1xx are “digital”; 2xx extensions are “analog.” The former are spluftier, have more buttons, have speakerphone capability, and are quite expensive.

8.1.1 How to make calls

- To reach any Fenway House extension, just dial the number.
- To get an outside line, press 9.

What colors mean on the line buttons (digital phones):

- Flashing green: Someone is calling. To answer, pick up and press button.

- Solid green: You are talking on this line.
- Flashing red: This line is on hold. Anyone may pick it up.
- Solid Red: Someone else is talking on this line. Only they can access it.

8.1.2 To put someone on/take someone off hold

- Press Hold (digital).
- Press Flash (analog).
- Hang up for half a second (cheap analog).
- To pick up a hold from an analog phone (other than the one that originally put the call on hold) dial 8, then the line number.

8.1.3 Recieving Calls

When someone calls the house, the phone company automatically routes them to the first available line, and the digital phones start chirping. If no one answers after 5 rings, the system will play an automated message listing everyone's available extensions. Hopefully, the caller will dial an extension and that phone will ring. If they don't, nothing happens until they hang up. (Maybe someday we will figure out how to fix that.) If you'd like to answer the phone before the system picks up, you can do the following:

1. Pick up. Digital: press button. Analog: Dial 4*.
2. It's probably not for you. Now you have a few options...
3.
 - Page the person the caller is looking for. Put them on hold. Dial 32* and speak after the tone. Or, take the traditional approach and yell really loud.
 - Transfer them to the extension they want and hope someone (or their answering machine) picks up. Digital: Press "Transfer," dial the extension number, and hang up. Analog: Press Flash (this is the same as hanging up for about half a second) then dial the extension number, and hang up. If no one answers, the system will bounce the call back to you. If you hear a digital phone making an annoying "booooooooooop!" noise (as opposed to the usual "beep boop bip!" or "enh! enh!") this is probably what's happening.
 - Call the extension yourself. Put them on hold. Dial the extension. If no one picks up, you can take them off hold and take a message. If a person or a machine picks up, you can just hang up, and they will automatically be connected.

If you do take a message, leave it on the narrow corkboard in the living room near the phone, or stick it in their mailbox. For people who live on the 3rd and 4th floors only, the 3rd floor chalkboard is also convenient. (Please don't assume people who live on lower floors frequent the 3rd floor hallway, or else they'll never get their messages.)

8.1.4 Other useful tips

- To make an announcement that will be audible from all digital phones, press 32*, and talk after the beep.
- On digital phones, press the speakerphone button to speak without using the handset.
- At least one "auto-answer" light must be on somewhere in the house (look at the digital phones) for the system to pick up when someone calls.

When someone calls in, they will get the first available line (in ascending order) even if someone is on the line at the number they actually called. So, 437-1043 is the only number you should ever need to give out. However, in case you ever need to know (like if someone with Caller ID is confused) the "real" line numbers are:

Line 1: 437-1043 Line 2: 437-7563 Line 3: 437-9608 Line 4: 437-7825

8.2 The Doorbell

The traditional doorbell system, added in August 2000, has a simple "push the button, stupid" interface. It goes "ding-dong" for the front, and "ding" for the back, just like any good American doorbell should do.

9 Paper Communication (Just Send E-mail Instead)

9.1 The Housebook

There is a book in the living room for all house members to write or ramble in as they please. It is intended as a kind of informal journal of Fenway House; artistic expression, commentary, discussion, and random ramblings are all encouraged. Be aware that everyone else in the house is reading it, too; it's all right to express opinions on policy or conditions, or suggest alternative ways of doing things, but personal attacks in the housebook are not appropriate. If you have an issue with any of the other house members, it's best to talk it out with that person directly and non-confrontationally.

9.2 Snail Mail

Mail is left on our front doorstep in a large bundle. If you are going out and see a bundle of mail, please at least throw it inside. If you want your mail, you must sort everybody's mail; please do not just sort through the mail bundle for yours and leave the rest. Bills and the like go in the Accountant's box; anything from MIT or the City of Boston goes in the House Manager's box, and Sysco-related mail goes in the Steward's box. Mail addressed to Tom Wethern or the Alumni Corporation goes in the appropriate box. Bills for the phone and newspaper subscriptions may be mistakenly addressed to Jessica Wong, and David Alt, respectively. Mail for current house residents and recent alums goes in their boxes; mail for more ancient alums is filed alphabetically at the bottom of the mailboxes.

The U.S. Postal Service will forward first or second-class mail, free of charge, if the bad address (and any bar codes visible) is thoroughly crossed out, and the new address scribbled on. Bulk and

non-profit mail, as well as mail for "Current Resident" may be filed in the recycling bin, unless it is addressed to a (real) current resident.

Robert C. Pace and Zelda Theodore are the Generic FenFolk. Their names are used when dealing with entities (like newspapers) that refuse to deal with a group entity such as Fenway House. Mail to them (or to the President) is for the amusement of the house; feel free to open it and read it. Feel free to impersonate these FenBeings when dealing with unpleasant entities, such as forms that request your name and address for the sole purpose of receiving junk mail.

9.3 Newspapers

Fenway House subscribes to two newspapers: The New York Times, and The Boston Globe. They live in the breakfast room. When they arrive, they should be brought there. No part of a newspaper should leave the breakfast room until midnight of its publication date. After that point, the newspaper is fair game for those who would like to take clippings or take part of the paper away. When you bring the newspaper downstairs, please take a minute to collect the previous day's newspapers and drop them in the recycling box in the breakfast room. It is a lot easier to discard the old newspapers before they become mixed up with the new ones.

10 Security and Safety (Two Things We Want You to Have)

Fenway House is located near the heart of a large American city. This means that we need to be especially security-conscious. The house has not had a break-in for several years now (since we installed extra security hardware such as the wrought-iron fence and burglar bars), and we hope to keep it that way. This means:

- Do not leave the front or back door or back gate propped open, even for a few seconds, if you are not actively watching it.
- Do not leave the roof exit unlocked unless you are watching it. Make sure these doors and gates are fully closed and latched when you leave through them. The padlock on the roof door opens with your smaller housekey.
- Do not unlatch the burglar bars on ground-level windows unless you are actively using that window for a fire escape.
- If you answer the doorbell to a stranger trying to gain entry, only let them in if the person they are looking for is actually in the house. If they seem to not know who they are looking for, or if the person they are looking for is not in the house, tell them they will have to come back later. Similarly, if someone rings the doorbell claiming to be here to do work on the house, either the House Manager or someone delegated to do the job should be there to meet them. If you see a stranger in the house, ask them who they are. Most likely, they will be someone's guest; feel free to be polite about it and introduce yourself, but it is important that you are comfortable with anyone who might be in the house.

10.1 Omitted

An important section has been omitted here for security reasons. The full text is available in the Fenway locker to authorized persons. Consult a clueful Fenbeing.

10.2 Fire Alarms

Private rooms are equipped with smoke detectors; these will not trigger the fire alarm, and cannot be disabled. (They are not battery powered.) If your smoke alarm is making noise and there is no sign of smoke, please notify the House Manager. Smoke alarms in public areas do trigger the central fire alarm. Please don't let smoke from cooking or candles set off the alarm, as it costs the house about \$200 each time this happens.

When the alarm is triggered, the sirens will blare, lights will flash, and the fire doors will close. You must evacuate the house immediately, even if you know it is a false alarm. In Boston, anyone remaining in a building with the fire alarm sounding is subject to several-hundred-dollar fines. The meeting place for the house is out front, across the Fenway if necessary. If you evacuate the house from the rear, at least one person should be sent around the block to the front so that everyone can be accounted for. Everyone has to stay out of the house until the Boston Fire Department gives the all-clear. If there is a false alarm, someone should explain the cause to them when they arrive; they will want to investigate first-hand.

The House Manager may then silence the alarm by pressing "Bell Silence" and "Trouble Silence" but should not reset the system (even though it's really easy). American Alarm will dispatch someone to reset the system professionally, and bill us a disproportionate sum.

10.3 Egress

Familiarize yourself with the fire exits in the house. The Past (B-1), Office, and 1-1 have burglar bars on the windows with escape buttons. If you live in one of these rooms, you should locate this button and practice using it. The Chah-Min, and Front-4 have floor-mounted fire ladders, and the Front-3 and Rick Greene share a mobile ladder. If you live in one of these rooms, you should familiarize yourself with the operation of these ladders, and make sure they are visible and accessible at all times. The rest of the private rooms, the bathrooms, and the Music Room, have windows that access the fire escape and/or back alley. In particular, the 3-2 and 4-2 are fire exits for other rooms, and can never be locked. Also, the connecting doors between the Chah-Min and Front-4, and the 3-2 and Front-3 should not be locked, at the direction of the Boston Fire Department.

You are responsible for keeping clear paths to and from all egress paths in your room. The house is inspected annually, and there are also surprise inspections performed by the City. If your room causes the house to fail inspection, you will incur the wrath of the House Manager, who has the unfortunate duty of appeasing the bureaucrats and inspectors.

You are also responsible for keeping egress paths clear in any public rooms you maintain for your house chore. Fire doors on electromagnets must close freely when the alarm sounds. This includes interior doors to the kitchen and back basement hallway, and the first-floor doors to the backstairs. The tool room door and all other entrances to the Back Stairs are also considered fire doors, and these doors must remain closed unless someone is actively using them – please do not prop them open and walk away.

10.4 House Keys

Your (larger) house key works on the front door, the bike shed, the back gate, the kitchen door, the Library, and the French door in the back of the Living Room. These locks are changed at least once a year, usually at the end of the Summer. Only the House Manager should ever give out house keys. Please do not copy your house key for friends. If you have a friend who visits

often and is known by the entire house, who you would like to receive a house key, bring it up at a house meeting. Giving out a key to a guest is subject to the usual consensus system. A list of all non-residents who have keys is available in the housebook. Certain members of the Fenway House/Xi-SAM Alumni Corporation have keys because the Corp. is the legal owner of the house.

10.5 Rooms and Privacy

Fenway House, as a co-op, operates on a principle of trust. It is requested, as a matter of courtesy, that you stay out of peoples' private rooms unless specifically invited in. Respect signs with directives such as "Please knock before entering." If there is a situation in which someone else must enter a room (i.e. if there is a cat trapped inside), try to get the House Manager to go and take care of the problem.

There are several rooms, notably the 3-2 and the 4-2, which cannot be locked at any time, as they are fire escape routes. If they are locked, we are in violation of the fire code, and the House Manager may have nastiness to deal with. Please be especially considerate of the privacy of the people in these rooms. Also, the occupant of the Rick Greene must obviously pass through the Front-3, so this room is seldom locked. In practice, most FenBeings don't lock their rooms. The House Manager must have a key to all locks, for various practical and legal reasons.

11 Heating and Cooling (Turn it up, turn it down...)

Here we present an informative list of Frequently Asked Questions about the house's heating system and cooling devices.

Q: Can I put an air conditioner in my room?

A: Yes, as long as you are not blocking a fire exit. The 3-2 and 4-2 may thus never have native A/C. See also the note on electrical circuits below, under the question on space heaters.

Q: Is the heat on?

A: The boiler is only on during the winter and parts of the fall and spring that the HM deems cool enough. If the outside temperature approaches 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the boiler should be turned on to avoid frozen (and thus bursting) pipes and unhealthy exposure for humans and other organisms.

Q: How does the heat work?

A: There's a thermostat just outside the library. When the temperature of the Ping Pong room drops below its threshold temperature, the boiler turns on. This heats the house for some period via forced steam piped to radiators all over the house. When the thermostat feels warm again, the boiler turns off.

Q: How does the heat really work?

A: The temperature of the house is a complicated function of time, location, and thermostat temperature. Since there is a significant lag time inherent in the action of the boiler, even the area of the house immediately surrounding the thermostat undergoes a variation in temperature of at least 10 degrees above the threshold temperature. The house also has temperature variations due to altitude. Hot air rises; therefore, upper floors are generally much warmer than lower floors. Local variations may also be caused by things like doors or windows being open or closed, solar heating, leaks, computers, appliances, lights, etc. Our new windows have added significant weirdness to the thermal dynamics of our humble abode.

Q: Who gets to set the thermostat?

A: The House Manager is the only person in the house who should play with the thermostat. If this were not the case, the house would experience wildly unstable oscillations in temperature as various parties adjusted it based on the unreliable feedback mechanism of their personal environment (unreliable because of the local variations explained above).

Q: What algorithm does the House Manager use to set the thermostat?

A: The HM receives frequent complaints about the temperature of the house. If the thermostat is properly set, half these complaints should be that the house is too cold, and half that the house is too warm. The HM also takes into consideration the variations in time and location, and tries to find a happy medium. Past HMs have been of the belief that no rooms should be "downright nippy," but neither should any part of the house be "steaming." They have also believed in reducing heating costs and energy use as much as possible; however, the happiness and comfort of the house residents generally take greater priority. It should be possible to engineer heating solutions which satisfy these constraints.

Q: Should I feel bad about bugging the House Manager about being too cold or too hot?

A: No. On the other hand, be prepared to be told that you will just have to deal with your uncomfortableness (see recommendations below). For the reasons outlined above, it is simply not possible to make everyone perfectly happy, though the HM tries. Really.

Q: I'm too cold. What can I do?

A:

- Make sure your radiator is turned on. The "nipple" should be pointing upward. (See the House Manager's Book for helpful diagrams.) In the Chah-Min, turn the dial up. In the Present, operate the yellow handle.
- Close windows, outside doors, and seal leaks.
- Ask neighbors to close windows, doors.
- If the hall is warmer than your room, open your door.
- Make sure your radiator is on all the way (see HM Book).
- Wear more clothing (the HM will have little or no sympathy if you are wearing shorts).
- Install a nice, warm computer, like an IBM-RT or a SunServer3.
- If, after taking reasonable measures, it's still rather chilly, bother the HM about turning up the heat.

Q: Can I get a space heater?

A: Because these devices consume massive amounts of power, and because they are a fire hazard if used improperly, the house officially discourages their use. However, if you feel that, dammit, it's too cold in your room, and you have not received satisfactory redress from the HM and radiator tuning, it's OK to buy a space heater for your personal use. However, you should consult with the HM first. Because our electrical system was massively upgraded in 1998, the use of space heaters should not cause any power outages. For additional safety and convenience, private rooms on floors 2 through 4 have special high-capacity circuits especially designed for such high-power appliances.

These are all marked as "20 AMP" and generally appear near windows (so they may be used with air conditioners). If you use them instead of the general room circuit, you will enjoy an even greater degree of protection for sensitive electronics and general continuity of power. The house should have ample electrical outlets now. Do not use extension cords to power space heaters! If you feel you absolutely must do this, please consult with the HM. Also, if you feel a public room needs a space heater, you may use your personal equipment to that end. However, please don't heat public rooms to excessive temperatures, and please be aware that your fellow housemates will feel free to adjust this equipment as they see fit. If you want the house to pay for a space heater, you will need at least a FenMind. It is also highly recommended that you consult with the HM before altering the Brownian landscape of the house.

Q: I'm too hot. What do I do?

A:

- Turn off your radiator. Turn the nipple all the way down. (See House Manager's Book for helpful diagrams.) Do not turn off the screw-valves. In the Chah-Min, turn down the dial. In the Present, operate the yellow handle.
- Shed some clothing.
- Open your door if the hall is cooler.
- Consider using a fan.
- Turn off unneeded electronic equipment (esp. monitors) and lights.
- Ask the HM to turn down the heat.
- If informed by the HM that the heat cannot go any lower, then consider cracking a window and closing your door. (See next question.)
- Please do not run air conditioners to cool down rooms while the heat is on. (Running them in "fan" mode as air filters is OK, though.) This is rather wasteful, and simply opening a window is a much more efficient engineering solution. If you feel it is absolutely necessary to run your A/C during the heating season, please discuss the problem with the HM first, to identify any more efficient alternatives.

Q: Why should I close my door if I open a window?

A: Our current thinking: If you were to open both a window and a door in a room on say, the fourth floor, this would probably not solve your heat problem, and would, in fact, cause heating problems elsewhere in the house. Opening both devices at once creates a channel from the main stairwell to the outside of the house. This causes all of the hot air at the top of the stairs to go rushing through your room and out the window. As a result, cold air is drawn in through the lower regions of the house (making basement and first floor rooms colder). At some point, when the cool air reaches the thermostat, the boiler will turn on, providing a continuous supply of hot air to warm your room and raising our heating costs significantly. However, if you merely close your door but open your window, you can allow the cold outside air to mix with the hot air in your room, without contributing to the "chimney" effect.

Q: Is it OK to adjust my radiator?

A: Yes. However, there is a Right Way and a Wrong Way to do so. The Right Way involves inverting the Nipple. Consult the House Manager's Book or the House Manager for clue. Improperly deactivating a radiator or adjusting certain values other than the Right One can cause the system to spew steam and hot water from the basement radiators, and do other really nasty things.

Q: Fuck! Water is spewing from the radiators! What do I do?

A: Turn off the boiler. Consult the House Manager or House Manager's book for clue about what valves to open/close. Do not let the temperature anywhere in the house get below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, or else our pipes will be in serious danger of bursting, causing serious nastiness. Notify the house manager. The House Manager is charged with purging the boiler once a week and occasionally inspecting the boiler's water lever to prevent such disasters. (This spewage effect can be caused by drainage valves in the basement radiators being closed, thereby causing "cold-return" water to accumulate in the system. In this case, someone needs to open these valves and making sure the boiler drains until its nominal balance is restored. The effect can also be caused by a malfunctioning regulator valve. In this case, the system needs to be manually drained, and someone needs to contact Hughes Oil, as listed in the HM Book. The water level in the boiler should be checked every work week.)

Q: Fuck! The boiler is exploding! What do I do?

A: The emergency cutoff switch is located just outside the kitchen. Do not use the thermostat to deactivate the boiler either for maintenance or emergencies. Immediately contact Hughes Oil at the number in the HM Book, and then the House Manager.

Q: Can I paint my radiator?

A: You should Read the Can. You shouldn't use paint unless it explicitly says it's OK to put on objects (like radiators) that heat up to about the boiling point of water. Do not paint over the pinhole on radiator nipples – this hole lets the air (but not steam) out, which lets the incoming steam have room to fill the radiator and heat it. Paint on nipples (on radiators or otherwise) renders them useless. Under no circumstances should you paint a radiator with lead paint. Lead fumes are deadly. (This is also why you should not heat any painted surfaces in the house without verifying that they are lead free. See the report from Covino Environmental in the House Manager's care, or get a lead testing kit from Economy Hardware.)

12 Miscellany (etc.)

12.1 Guests

If you want to have a friend or overnight guest over, this is fine. Ideally, you will inform the other house members (such as by leaving a message on the bulletin board or by sending e-mail) if the guest is staying for more than a random afternoon visit. Do not assume that you can just co-opt a public room for the guest to sleep in; ask permission of the rest of the house first. As a general policy, nonresidents should not be allowed to wander around the house without a house member with them. If house resident A answers the door, and the person outside says that they are here to visit house member B, house member A is responsible for keeping tabs on the visitor until resident B appears, at which point house member B is responsible for the visitor. If you are intending to have a guest over, you must either be in the house to answer the door or make arrangements to have someone else do the same. (See section on Security.) Do not assume that other house residents will admit someone who is to them a complete stranger.

12.2 Smoking

Smoking is not permitted inside the house; some of our house members are violently allergic to tobacco smoke. Smokers should do so only outside, and place the butts in a butt can designated for that purpose. Incense and candles are acceptable, as long as they don't bother the rest of the house and as long as reasonable precautions are taken concerning fire safety.

12.3 Chair Mats

If you are in a room with a wooden floor (especially a newly refinished one) you must use a plastic mat (or other protection) under all movable chairs in use (like in front of desks). Otherwise, the movement of the chair causes the soft wood of our beautiful floors to splinter very badly. If you need one of these mats, please see the House Manager.

12.4 Smartwaiter

If the Smartwaiter goes past the top sensor, hit both UP and DOWN at the same time, and it should reverse direction. If it seems to have stopped working, try resetting the circuit by pressing RESET on the outlet in the Sanitizer Room.

12.5 B.I.T.C.H.

The Bathroom Information Technology ClearingHouse, added in August 2000, is the system of LEDs that light up to show which bathrooms are currently occupied, and whether or not the washer and dryer are in use. It is currently under construction.

12.6 SAMmy Door

The SAMmy Door is currently non-functional, and needs to be re-wired.

12.7 Transportation

SafeRide, the MIT shuttle van to campus, runs every night at half-hour intervals, and (supposedly) stops outside our front door. A schedule is available from the MIT Parking and Transportation Office. (We're on the Boston East route.) This office also distributes partially subsidized MBTA passes to MIT-affiliates, if paid well in advance. The Green Line and Number 1/CT1 bus stop are a three-minute walk away on Massachusetts Ave., in front of Virgin Records.

Saferide: <http://web.mit.edu/saferide/www/>

MBTA: <http://www.mbta.com>

12.8 The Virtual Fenway

The house mailing list is fenwayhouse@mit.edu (fenway-summer@mit.edu during the summer) The alumni/current resident mailing list is fen-ALL@mit.edu. The house also has an Athena/AFS locker (fenway) which houses some interesting files, and also our web page. Check in our locker for lots of useful information about the house, particularly relevant to house officers. We also have a zephyr class of the same name. Some residents may, out of the kindness of their hearts, make their computers available for you to log in on or access remotely. The best policy is to ask first; please

respect others' property and data, and refrain from powering down equipment without explicit permission. We have a house printer; see the Network Mangler for configuration help. The printer is stocked with house paper and toner; please do not abuse this convenience. See the Network Mangler with questions or for more information about various computing services from MIT and Fenway House.

Fenweb House: <http://web.mit.edu/fenway/www/>

Subscribe to Zephyr Class (on Athena): `zctl add fenway * *`

Write to Zephyr Class (on Athena): `zwrite -c fenway`

12.9 The banister is not structural. We kid you not.

The banister on the spiral staircase is very fragile. It has been here since the house was built in the early 1900's, and is irreplaceable. It's best not to touch it and to pretend that it isn't there at all.

13 In Closing (Finally!)

This document is almost certainly incomplete. If (when) you have questions, please feel free to bring them to any of the other house residents. In general, exercising common sense and courtesy towards the rest of the house will go a long way. Fenway House is a really fun place to live. It has historically attracted a houseful of people with wide ranges of interests and talents, and is supportive of diverse philosophies and lifestyles. There's always something to do and someone to talk with. We've loved living here, and hope that you will, too.