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“An Eye-Opening Performance of Students”

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Note: This article is a reprint from the July, 1965 issue of BANTA'S GREEK EXCHANGE, and refers to Sigma Alpha Epsilon's 109th Anniversary National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, June 20-23, 1965.

Fraternity conventions have been a part of the total fraternity program for many years. Every two or three years the officers, active chapter representatives, alumni, and past officers gather at some central, pleasant place, meet, convene, socialize, brag, commiserate, consider, compare, act, reconsider, act some more, debate mildly, debate angrily, bury the hatchet, and adjourn. I have been attending fraternity conventions for nearly forty years and, in general, the pattern has been pretty much the same. Oh, there are minor differences, of course. And for some reason, usually intangible, some conventions seem to be better than others. But, why some are better than others is not always easy to define.

Within the week of this writing I have attended a fraternity convention that was different and the difference can be specifically designated. In the past, the conventions of this organization have been planned by officers and alumni, conducted by officers and alumni, and while active chapter representatives have always controlled the majority of voting delegates, the conventions have been pretty well directed by alumni.

But those who planned this convention adopted a new operating procedure. Convention operations have always had to depend on convention committees to consider most matters, screen them, study them, then make recommendations to the entire convention for action. Previously, while student delegates were always placed on various committees, they were always chaired by officers, past officers, and alumni. This convention, with 201 accredited voting delegates, 61 officers and alumni, and 140 active chapter representatives, was organized with seventeen convention committees, every committee with a student and an alumnus as co-chairman. The student co-chairman directed the committee work in most instances, or shared it equally with the alumnus co-chairman. Every committee report to the entire convention was made by the student chairman. Since convention actions required a two-thirds majority on important issues, the 140 student delegates needed to rally only 134 votes to pass or reject any proposal; the controlling factor was clearly defined.

How did it work?

Perhaps some of the student chairmen were not quite as smooth as alumni might have been; perhaps they did not always use technical language alumni might have used; perhaps the student chairmen were blunt and direct in their comments.

But it worked, and it worked well.

I was impressed, particularly, with the work and reports of the student chairmen of the committee on Credentials, Rules and Order, Finance, Extension, and National Laws.

"AN EYE-OPENING PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS" (continued)

The credentials committee reported that at the outset the credentials of nearly forty delegates were being questioned, and that all efforts would be made to accredit all delegates if possible. This committee worked very hard at its task, and in the final report stated that it had been able to seat all but two of the delegates questioned at the outset. The student chairman explained by fact and by fraternity law why these two could not be seated. There was no disagreement with the reports of the student co-chairman.

The student co-chairman of the committee on rules and order reported early that his committee had outlined some rather severe regulations dealing with the need for steady hard effort if the work of the convention was to be accomplished. Also, some rather severe regulations in regard to the conduct of delegates during the assembly. His report was adopted promptly, and more importantly, the strictures imposed were observed. There is no doubt that there was a share of fun during the convention—but there was not one complaint of misconduct which could have marred the image of the convening group—the students made the rules—they observed them.

The committee on finance examined all reports in a meticulous fashion, which would have been a credit to an accountant. The student chairman, in his report, brought out the fact that since the student delegates represented the source of most income, that his committee was particularly interested in determining that "their money" had been, and would be, spent wisely, and in accord with good accounting and specified practice. He was questioned at some length by the convention, and either answered directly or referred the question to a member of his committee to reply. Every question was answered satisfactorily.

The committee on extension considered several applications for new charters. It spent forty-eight hours of steady interviewing and consideration before reporting to the convention. When the student chairman finally made his report and recommendations, he presented complete facts as to the institution and the petitioning local fraternity. He called on students from the geographical area of the petitioning group for supporting opinions. When he completed his statements and gave the recommendations to the convention, he left the convention with practically no unanswered questions. Result? The recommendations of the student co-chairman were adopted in every case.

I have observed the work of the chairman of the committee on national laws in many conventions. Usually a lawyer or a congressman or business executive make such reports. This student chairman considered and presented thirty-three proposals for changes in various national laws. In each case, he presented the proposal then stated "this is what this means" and "this is what it will change or accomplish." He then summarized objections to the proposal and facts favoring the proposal. Not as smoothly perhaps as a lawyer or a senator, but just as effectively. In almost every instance of the thirty-three proposals, the recommendations of the student co-chairman and his committee were adopted by the convention.

Literally, it was an eye-opening performance of students and active chapter representatives running their convention, and running it well.

As I watched the activities, I had the comforting feeling that in these student co-chairmen, that I could see a good many future district and perhaps national officers of my fraternity.

The installation of Delta Phi Beta at Northern Illinois University, as Illinois Gamma of SAE, will take place on January 28-29-30, 1966. This will be the 152d active chapter of SAE and the eighth and final installation resulting from action of the Atlanta Convention last June.

Letters and telegrams should be addressed to Mr. William Pederson, Illinois Gamma of SAE, 919 Greenbrier Road, DeKalb, Illinois. Telegrams should read "Please deliver, do not phone."

an SAE essay, from the ESA

In Memoriam

A fraternity the size and scope of Sigma Alpha Epsilon must, of necessity, depend upon regional gatherings to maintain communications and provide an adequate sense of unity.

The general Fraternity gathers at a National Convention once in two years. That meeting is discussed elsewhere in this issue of PHI ALPHA by Past ESA Fred Turner. The Province Conventions are held in the alternate years and the importance of these meetings is the subject of this essay.

In an article entitled "Decentralization: the Watchword for the Next Hundred Years," John O. Moseley suggested that the years ahead would be devoted to strengthening the Province. An adequate central structure had been created and was functioning well. Development of strong regional structures was the next logical move.

In 1953, 20 provinces were created from the then existing 12 provinces and additional province officers became involved in the voluntary work of the Fraternity. Distances between chapters were reduced and the number of chapters in each Province decreased so that more attention could be given and a closer feeling generated. Additional divisions may be made soon as a result of action at the 1965 National Convention.

Other than that of the Chapter Adviser, no work in SAE is as rewarding as that of a Province officer; closer to the undergraduate leadership of our chapters, he is responsible for the well-being of a small and compact segment of the Fraternity. He is directly "on the firing line," so to speak, with all the satisfaction that this type of relationship provides.

This spring each of the 20 provinces will hold a Convention. Officers will be elected, chapter problems will be discussed, extension in the province will be considered, workshops will be held and attention will be given to making certain that the standing of SAE in that area is maintained at a high level. The determination with which the officers and delegates at each of these Conventions undertake their responsibilities will, in a very real sense, determine the future pattern of SAE.

We leave to the February issue of the RECORD a full account of the tragic loss our Fraternity has suffered by the sudden death of Dr. Gary R. "Bish" Anderson, and of the mark that he has made on SAE since his initiation. The PHI ALPHA is received by the "official family" who knew him so well. It seems fitting, therefore, that we should express ourselves here in a very personal way.

Each of us who served with him on the Leadership School faculty, or in his position as Scholarship Commissioner, or just as a "friend" whenever a sympathetic ear was needed, will require some additional time to realize fully that he has gone from us. However, to ease our sorrow each of us will have the memory of his warm personality, of his generous heart and, most important, of the little ways in which he has helped us to better serve the objectives of our beloved Fraternity.

We pay tribute then, in this brief way, and close with a "Leader's Prayer" that was one of Bish's favorites:

*"Dear God, help me to be the man other fellows think I am
Help me in all I do or say, to ever
seek to find Thy way,
That some young lad who's watching me
may through my life be drawn to
Thee.
If, when my task on earth is done, I
may have guided only one,
Then may that one, whoever he be,
guide other fellows close to Thee;
And in their turn may they, too, show
some other chaps the way to go.
Onward, Dear Father, help me plod,
along the path that Jesus trod.
Give me the strength to meet, each day
whatever tasks may come my way.
And, Father, when I reach the end may
someone say, "He was my FRIEND."*

Noble Notes



NOBLE LESLIE DeVOTIE
Founder

Ensign Dennis Bowman, Texas Epsilon, '62, was one of the team dropped from a helicopter to assist in the recovery of the astronauts from Gemini Six during the recovery of the capsule.

The Assistant to the ESR, while vacationing in Florida, attended an organizational meeting of the Fort Lauderdale Alumni Association planned by H. Keith (Bud) Eisaman, former Chairman of the Pennsylvania Zeta Alumni Commission and Province Beta Council member who recently moved to Florida. A-

mong the many SAE alumni in attendance were: the President of the new Nova University; the former roommate of William R. Lovelace, NASA doctor recently killed in a plane crash in Colorado; the owner of a luxury hotel on the Fort Lauderdale beach; and the long-time president and guiding spirit of the Pennsylvania Alpha-Zeta House Corporation. The enthusiastic response to this meeting is only an indication of the SAE strength that is lying dormant in so many other communities.

From Mrs. Ralph Maddy, mother of Chapter Supervisor Ron Maddy, comes a clipping from an 1893 issue of WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION containing a description of "fraternity" which is as relevant today as it was then:

"Fraternity is the biggest word in the dictionary. It spells charity, love, duty, discipline, self-denial, life and death. It is the mantle that covers all that is best in man or woman. It serves to put all men on a common footing, and to make the whole world kin."

We reprint here a letter from Max Bennett, EA of New Mexico Alpha, addressed to SAE's everywhere:

"Bish Anderson was truly loved and cherished by SAE's all over the nation. Anyone who had met him at Leadership School or at any other Fraternity function went away just a little bit better man.

"When New Mexico Alpha decided to establish a Founder Membership for Bish in the Levere Memorial Foundation, we decided it would be only fitting for all SAE's to have an opportunity to contribute.

"We ask that any SAE who would like to share in this memorial send his contribution to ESR Rex A. Smith, P.O. Box 1856, Evanston, Illinois. *CHECKS MAY BE MADE OUT TO SIGMA ALPHA EPSILON OR THE LEVERE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION.*

"The first \$1,000 received will be used for the Founder Membership, and the remainder will go toward the purchase of a suitable marker for his grave in Evanston.

"For so great a man this is indeed a small tribute!"

The Phi Alpha of Sigma Alpha Epsilon

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