

# THE PHI ALPHA

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## A CHAPTER LOOKS AT SCHOLARSHIP

*This is the report of the Scholarship Committee for the 1965 Phi Alpha Weekend at Ohio Rho, Case Institute of Technology.*

The "Scholarship Problem" is probably the most contemporary and the most pressing problem facing the Ohio Rho Chapter today. Needless to say, the issues involved are packed with emotional content. One of the most basic elements of the "Scholarship Problem" is the conflict of values involved with loyalty to fraternity and/or loyalty to personal friendships. One school of thought maintains that the friendships are fraternity and they should be preserved at all costs. The other view is that the fraternity represents improvement, something higher than friendship alone, and it is the responsibility of individuals to insure their conduct and performance as such to justify and deserve the extension of friendship into brotherhood.

There were, however, areas of general agreement, both ideologically and practically. The most important was that the single most important ingredient for good scholarship was the establishment of the proper house attitude toward studies. This seems to be little problem to the seniors since they have already come to realize the personal gains and satisfactions available through good scholarship. But, by and large, the underclassmen have yet to reach this level of maturity and self-consciousness. The question thus resolves itself into finding practical methods to induce the proper shift in attitude toward good grades.

Although it was suggested that temporary, and perhaps drastic, chapter legislation should be introduced to

- a) pull us out of our immediate problem of facing suspension and
- b) produce the attitude shift within a three-to-four-year period which would presumably carry through to subsequent years, the majority opinion indicated a firm belief that attitude could not be formally legislated. Instead, positive and negative stimuli which could be used to induce the proper scholastic attitude were discussed. The positive incentives are outlined below:

1. The chapter would offer two \$50 scholarships to the members with highest semester point average and greatest semester improvement.
2. An Honors Banquet should be held for those men on the Dean's List.
3. The larger swagger pins should be worn by the scholars of the chapter as a mark of distinction.
4. Rooms should be reassigned immediately to put men with similar curriculums in the same quarters.
5. In conjunction with Number 4, above, the men should begin group study and problem sessions. Men in these groups would work individually but would be available to each other as problems arise.

Two basic axioms for the success of these groups are:

- a) Never provide an answer or explanation unless a meaningful and intelligent question has been asked.
- b) Open sharing of homework with a man who does not participate in the study group is strictly forbidden, regardless of the personal consequences involved.

The negative stimuli to motivate a man away from low grades were also discussed. In this field, the chapter displayed a remarkably mature and progressive attitude. Instead of the notions of "creeping minimum point averages," specific study times at the desks, and other fixed rules and regulations, the men of Ohio Rho seemed ready to begin to realistically re-evaluate their members on the basis of true brotherhood. This means honest and objective scrutiny of a man's scholarship, leadership, service to the chapter, and all the other virtues embodied in the "True Gentleman."

A spirit of progressive change and improvement permeated the chapter during the Phi Alpha Weekend, and if there are those unwilling to improve with the chapter, they no longer deserve the privilege of being brothers of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

## THE IMPETUS FOR FOUNDING - - -

Recently the National Office received a form-letter request from a Dean asking for information concerning the original "impetus" for the Founding of SAE and how these reasons relate to the present and future outlook of the Fraternity. We asked SAE Historian Dr. Joseph W. Walt to reply and present his answer in its entirety.

"I believe I understand fully the sort of thing you are trying to do. I am concerned about this same matter myself, as I believe much damage has been done both to the image and the reality of our Greek-letter organizations as the term "social fraternity" has come to be applied to them.

"Specifically, of course, Sigma Alpha Epsilon is known simply as "The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity". No adjective such as social, general, or any other limiting or explanatory term is applied to the name of the organization.

"As I interpret the history of the founding and the early years of SAE, its scope and function are more or less as follows:

"The fraternity was indeed social in its origin. But it was social in the broadest sense of the term. Its concern, after all, was fundamentally to foster creative and meaningful relationships of individuals with other individuals and of individuals with the group. The aims of the group surely did not exclude good times, organized social events or common social activities, but surely the "party" element was but one small facet of the aims and function of the organization.

"There were other important goals. These included, for example, literary exercises. Meetings of early chapters included the presentation of essays for the edification of the membership. To be sure, this was a conscious imitation of the work of the prevailing literary societies which were so much a feature of mid 19th century campus life. Ultimately the colleges themselves began to develop adequate libraries and literary programs which made the literary societies obsolete. With the demise of the literary societies came the disappearance of the literary exercises as a function of the Greek-letter fraternity.

"Further, ritualistic features were much more prominent in the fraternity in its earliest days than is the case today. Part of the reason for this, I suspect, is the unfortunate ossification of fraternity rituals which speak to their 20th century undergraduates in 19th century language. There may be other reasons for the relative decline in the importance of the ritual in the fraternity, but I am of the opinion that the obsolescence of the ritual is at the root of the problem.

"In the earliest days fraternity chapters were seen as effective only as they included relatively small membership. Throughout the 19th century a fraternity chapter was considered inordinately overgrown if its membership exceeded twenty. The enormous growth of the size of fraternity chapters, not to speak of the correlative growth of the collegiate institutions at which they are domiciled, has altered, and indeed limited, the function of the groups.

"I don't want to bore you with more of my thinking on this matter. Let the few observations I have made above suffice to indicate only a few of the reasons for the contrast we see between the "impetus for founding" of the fraternities and some of the manifestations of a more limited concept of fraternity as we see it today.

"Let me say, lest I be misunderstood, that I am qualifiedly hopeful about the future of some of our more progressive and forward-looking fraternities today. In the growing dehumanization and depersonalization on our campuses throughout the nation, thoughtful fraternity leaders -- and they are regrettably few in number -- see a magnificent opportunity for the college fraternity as a humanizing force, one which will see our Greek-letter groups doing most of the right things for most of the right reasons.

"I shall be more than casually interested in what you come up with in your study of this very important matter. Do let me hear from you."

## Timely Advice

### KEYS IN THE TYPEWRITER

In a recent discussion concerning how some chapters seem to succeed so much better than others, I was reminded of my old typewriter. Actually, it is still a very good typewriter, with the exception of one key. But as you can clearly see, this one key does not make very much difference; after all, it is only one out of 44 keys. This is exactly why I was reminded of my old typewriter - in most groups, be they fraternities, civic groups or clubs, there is always one person who is like the broken key on my typewriter.

Perhaps this Brother does not think that his part in the activities of the chapter is very significant - it is. Rush, scholarship, finances, and all phases of the fraternity are reliant on the participation of each member. So when it seems that your chapter is falling down, or that some member is shirking his responsibility, remember my old typewriter and realize that each chapter is like a key in the national typewriter and each member like a key in the typewriter of his chapter. One key can make a great deal of difference.

### THE MOST PRECIOUS THING

The most precious thing in the world is good will. It is something as fragile as an orchid, and as beautiful. It is more precious than a gold nugget, and as hard to find. It is as powerful as a great turbine, and as hard to build. It is as wonderful as youth, and as hard to keep. It is an intangible something, this good will of others, yet more to be desired than much gold. It is the measure of a chapter's success, and determines its usefulness.

NOTE: The above items are taken from past issues of the Leadership School Hustler.

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Any Brother interested in employment with the Fraternity as a Chapter Supervisor should contact ESR Rex Smith, P.O. Box 1856, Evanston, Illinois. The Supreme Council has authorized the employment of a fifth Supervisor to start in July, 1966, prior to the next Leadership School.

## THE LION'S SNORT



The following are the closing paragraphs of the report of outgoing EA Mike Nordmarken of California Theta:

"A great man once said, 'He who would find his life must first lose it.' Every Brother who has held the office of Eminent Archon has lost his life in the ideals of our Fraternity and has in turn discovered through many lives the meaning and purpose of his own.

"I am both happy and sad to be leaving office. I am happy in that a long and taxing job is over. I am sad in that I will be separated from the close working relationship of my Brothers. I regret more than anything leaving when there is too much left to do and so many Brothers we can put to work doing it.

"I have never been so involved, so full of joy and so full of sorrow; so enthusiastic and so discouraged; so concerned and so full of pride than I have during this period of my life.

"And I have never worked with a group of men with more spirit, more integrity and more dependability. I have never seen a brighter future for a fraternity than I do now for Cal Theta. This semester has been, without a doubt, the most meaningful in my life. For the opportunity to serve you as EA, I thank you with all my heart."

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The dates of the 32d Annual Leadership School are: First Session, August 21 to August 26; Second Session, August 28 to September 2, 1966. Application blanks will be sent to all Chapters from the National Office in mid-April. Already plans are being made to develop a program that will make this a rewarding experience for all who attend.

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The Southeastern Interfraternity Conference will meet in Knoxville, Tennessee, March 31, April 1 and 2, 1966. Bob Calloway, Tennessee Kappa '66, is president of the Conference and Bob Bonitati, assistant dean for fraternities at Tennessee, is its adviser. Assistant to the ESR Housing will attend the meetings representing the National Office.

# Noble Notes



## NOBLE LESLIE DeVOTIE Founder

James Ladd Turner, Alabama Alpha-Mu, '67 (Auburn), of Memphis, Tennessee, lost his life on February 19, 1966, when the wing of the Alabama Alpha-Mu Chapter house at Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin. He was trapped in the blazing frame structure after he had removed some of his possessions, placed them in his auto and then returned to the building. A Chapter roll call on the following day revealed that Turner was missing. He was identified from his dental records by Dr. O. Hilt Tatum, Jr., Opelika, Alabama, Chapter Adviser. James Turner, a junior, was a major in interior design and was initiated into SAE at the Leadership School in Evanston, Illinois, in 1964. Members of the Chapter chartered a bus to attend the funeral service in Memphis.

Richmond Flowers, Alabama Alpha-Mu, '40, Alabama Mu, has declared his intention to seek the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in Alabama. He is currently Attorney General of the State. His son, Richmond, Jr., is a pledge at Tennessee Kappa.

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At Indiana Gamma teams were decided upon and monetary prizes established for the highest grade-point averages. David McLaughlin and his partner had the fourth highest average and they split the \$50 prize. From Dave comes the following: "I do hope I can be a contributor to the Memorial for Bish as I gained much insight into life during the short time that I knew him....I'll always have a deep feeling for SAE, Indiana Gamma and Bish Anderson...You will find a check for \$25 enclosed."

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The "Blizzard of '66" kept Past ESA Howard Falls busy moving tire chains. In the wholesale automotive supply business in Richmond, Virginia, Howard is the main source of chains in the area. With a large inventory, it is either feast or famine, depending on the weather. A good blow brings a gleam to Howard's eye and an ache to his back.

On a recent Chapter visitation, it came to our attention that PHI ALPHA was considered to be a secret publication and was not being made available to the members of the Chapter or to any of the pledges. At the 1965 National Convention in Atlanta the National Laws were changed to make it "private" rather than "secret." We are attempting to make of PHI ALPHA an instrument for informing and unifying the Fraternity and it should be made available to anyone whose interests are the same as ours.

## The Phi Alpha of Sigma Alpha Epsilon

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