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THE RETURN OF THE TOPOI

Historically the topoi are symbolic of the intellectual direction taken by the early chapters of SAE. Each member of the chapter would select his topos, or essay, and the topic would be submitted to the Grand Chapter. National Convention action was required to change a topic and early minutes reveal that a very strong case, indeed, was needed on the part of the member for Convention approval of such a change. The topoi were very important.

As the major thrust of the Fraternity changed from academic to social, the topoi gradually disappeared, just as did the National Convention essay contests and presentation of oratorical medals. Indicative of yet another change of direction is the growing concern for a replacement of the label "social" fraternity for one of "general--academic" fraternity. Many chapters require their pledges to prepare a topos on a fraternal topic necessitating considerable thought and preparation.

An honor pledge class is selected for initiation at each session of the Leadership School. A comprehensive pledge education program is conducted by a pledge education committee selected from students and under the supervision of Chapter Supervisor John Baugh. Each of the pledges is asked to prepare a topos on a subject of his own choosing. Rick Olney of Oklahoma Kappa attended the first session and, prior to his initiation at the close of the week, submitted the following topos:

"To list everything that SAE has done for me and everything that SAE means to me would be an impossible task, but there is one thing that stands out in my mind which SAE has meant to me. SAE means a way to understand life in the way God intended it to be understood.

"Our democratic society is based on competition. Whether in the business world or in campus life there is always a striving to outdo all others. A businessman must offer better services than his competition; to make an "A," a student must out-perform his classmates. In short, success usually means the ability to dominate your peers. In a society such as this, in which one learns to dominate rather than to love his peers, it is difficult to grasp the meaning of life and its purpose. Through the brotherhood of SAE, though, I have been able to see myself as a cell in the body of the human race. No man can be any better or any worse than the race as a whole.

"Each man should take from life only what he needs and should give to others everything he can. I have been able to learn this only through SAE--there is love for one another. SAE is a miniature world of the nature that God intended the whole world to be. As a result, SAE means to me the ability to understand life."

As Rick Olney describes his view of the role of Sigma Alpha Epsilon in terms of the fast-moving and impersonal world in which we live, so too does Ray Johnston of Texas Alpha have his special definition of the "True Gentleman," which also has meaning for this society which surrounds us all. His topos was presented to the second session of the Leadership School and is reprinted in total below:

"The word 'gentleman' is difficult to define. This might possibly be because 'gentleman' implies the traits, qualities and characteristics which men have admired in each other in a variety of civilizations and over a period of thousands of years. If we examine our SAE 'True Gentleman,' which all of us have learned, we find it to be a series of broad criteria setting up an ideal toward which we might strive to better ourselves.

"When I think of what a man should try to make of himself or when I hear the 'True Gentleman,' three things immediately stand out in my mind. These are good will, propriety and sincerity.

THE RETURN OF THE TOPOI - Continued

"We ask ourselves, why good will? Mark Twain once remarked that it is better to have the good will of a cur dog in the street than his ill will. Now that makes sense when you stop to consider it--so why not people? I think that one of the rarest virtues a man can possess is to treat everyone with whom he comes in contact exactly the same. If you think of the person you have most admired in your life, or even someone whom you have admired greatly, I think you might possibly remember something of this trait within his personality. I claim certainly to be no psychologist or philosopher, but it seems very much to be the case that the things we seek to criticize and to tear down others for, are the faults which we are most afraid of in ourselves. Finding the good in all people gains for us, then, not only the respect of others, but also makes it easier and more enjoyable to live with those around us.

"And why propriety? Benjamin Franklin once wrote in 'Poor Richard's Almanac' that bullets, like people, go farthest when polished. Indeed our manners and sense of propriety are something of a vehicle which carries us through life in our relations with others. When each of us pledged, without possibly specifically thinking about it at the time, we professed a deep social interest. Gaining a sense of propriety is by no means a pre-natal experience. Our propriety comes from watching others with a sincere desire to learn what is correct. Observing correct conduct around others is one of the most sincere compliments we are able to pay. It shows that we care enough to be on our best behavior.

"And finally, why sincerity? Above all else in Sigma Alpha Epsilon, sincerity is most important to me. Sincerity is the granite foundation upon which our life-long friendships must be erected. The fellowship we have in common gives us a base from which we can conduct the affairs of our everyday lives knowing that while we do there are those standing behind us who care, and whose well-being to some extent depends upon our concern. On our respective campuses, we live in a crowded world. We wake up each morning, look in the mirror and say, 'Well, I wonder what kind of a person I'll be today.' Our sincerity, then, is something which can help us to make true gentlemen of each other.

"Gentlemen, you and I are, from across the United States of America, the men of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. We are the hope and our organization is the dream of the men to whose graves we paid tribute only a few hours ago. May our fingers be pressed down hard on the burning grail of this lofty ideal of which we have made ourselves a part in trying to make of ourselves 'true gentlemen.' May we keep this foremost in our minds while we are in college, after we graduate and so long as we shall live."

Each of the pledges prepared a topos. These two were selected merely as being representative of the serious thought that goes into their preparation. This type of awareness of the meaning of fraternity is particularly striking when it is remembered that the authors are on the very threshold of their SAE experience. Should not every chapter pause occasionally to reflect, as these pledges have done, on the true meaning and purpose of the fraternal association.

Recently we received a copy of the Province Alpha Bulletin, a four-page summary of recent activities and plans for the future on the part of the chapters and Province officers in the New England area. Of particular significance were the two opening paragraphs which are certainly a challenge to all alumni and Province officers. Here is what was said:

"After several years of meeting crisis in Province Alpha, the Province Council is at last able to cast a view toward the future and the bright opportunities which lie on the horizon. Action by the Supreme Council re-opens, for the first time in years, prospects of extension in New England. New plans by the Province Council for a Chapter Archons' Meeting and a Province Alpha Workshop provide potential for beneficial contact among brothers in the Province. New alumni associations are manpower reservoirs to increase frequency of visitation to the chapters.

"What does all this mean? It means a vigorous new attempt by alumni to work with undergraduate chapters to make Sigma Alpha Epsilon a valuable part of each educational institution and an irreplaceable influence of excellence in each brother's life. And how better can we justify our existence than that?"

THE LION'S SNORT



At the 32d Leadership School the John O. Moseley Award for Fraternity Zeal was presented to Tennessee Zeta at Southwestern in Memphis. This fine old chapter had been the recipient of a runner-up award on two previous occasions and moved into the winner's circle with an outstanding history of excellence. Runner-up awards were presented to Idaho Alpha at the University of Idaho and to Georgia Epsilon at Emory University.

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A special scholarship award is also presented at the Leadership School to honor that chapter which excels all others during the one-year period between Conventions. At the last National Convention the Washington, D.C., Alumni Award for highest scholarship went to Oregon Gamma at Willamette University. Again at the 32d Leadership School this same high-performing chapter received the award for the highest ranking during the years 1964-65, with a chapter average of 2.982 on a 4.0 system. This is a record of which Oregon Gamma should be justly proud.

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Two new manuals were distributed this fall for the first time. One is a Chapter Advisers Manual prepared by a special committee under the direction of Bob Bonitati, Adviser to Fraternities at the University of Tennessee. It was sent to each chapter adviser last month. The other is an Eminent Archons Manual which incorporates many of the operational techniques developed at Leadership Schools and contains a special section to be used at chapter meetings. These two, plus the Pledge Trainers Manual and the Housemothers Manual, should prove to be valuable to chapter officers.

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ESDA Roy L. Miller, Province Zeta Archon Ray Davis, and many others attended the dedication ceremony for the newly rebuilt chapter house at the University of Missouri on Sunday, September 18. It was an excellent ceremony and the new house is one of the finest in the realm.

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We also have reports that the newly completed Tennessee Omega lodge is the most beautiful on the Mountain, and that Michigan Iota-Beta's re-

modeled house, with a suite arrangement replacing the old dormitory system, will serve the chapter extremely well.

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Attendance at the Leadership School this year broke all previous records. There were 257 brothers and pledges at the first session and 291 at the second for a total of 548. This brings to 9600 the grand total for the thirty-two years that the school has operated.

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The past decade of school improvements undoubtedly has led to greater literacy among high school graduates. But those who are afraid that the reform movement may be running out of work may want to reconsider after reading the responses to a question by researchers of the American Council on Education which was sent to entering freshmen at 61 colleges and universities last fall.

Asked to list their career choices, the students' choice replies included the following: "Sicology, denestry, metalergest, mathamatics, archetict and psyciartrist."

Among the less scholarly goals were those of the "hosale sailsman, augriculter, stowerdes, busse-nius, airanatics and piolet." One of the scholars admitted to being "undesided." (From the N.Y. Times)

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Dave LaVine, Past Province Rho Archon and general chairman of the 111th Anniversary National Convention next June in Minneapolis, informs us that over 80 brothers have joined the "111 Club of SAE." This Club is a means of raising money to support the alumni association sponsorship of the Convention and they are seeking 111 alumni in the Minneapolis area who will contribute \$11 each.

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Mississippi Gamma at the University of Mississippi will celebrate their 100th Anniversary on December 2 and 3, 1966. Founded in 1866, the chapter slumbered from 1869 to 1882, because of a Trustee regulation which caused the charter to be suspended, but it has been in continuous existence since that time. According to our most recent records, Mississippi Gamma has initiated 1097 since its founding.

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The Library Committee of the Levere Memorial Foundation has developed the new listing of books so that Chapters who did not avail themselves of the original Chapter Library Program may do so now. An announcement is going out next week to all who qualify.

Noble Notes



NOBLE LESLIE DeVOTIE
Founder

An SAE "Man of the Year" reception and dinner was held in Los Angeles on September 10, honoring Tommy Prothro, North Carolina Nu '42 (Duke), football coach at UCLA. Over 200 persons attended and saw Brother Prothro receive four separate awards, viewed an 8-minute motion picture of his life, and were entertained by the UCLA "Pom-Pom Girls."

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We are pleased to announce the appointment of two new chapter supervisors who have already begun their chapter visiting. From Pennsylvania Delta at Gettysburg comes Robert R. (Bob) Strong who will be traveling in Provinces Alpha, Beta and Gamma. Richard L. (Skip) Moore was initiated by Texas Gamma at Texas Western and transferred to New Mexico Alpha at Eastern New Mexico University, where he also worked as Adviser to Fraternities. He will cover Provinces Theta, Mu, Pi and Psi. Both have had wide fraternity experience and they round out the excellent visitation staff, joining John Baugh, Ron Maddy and John Wicklund.

Virginia Becker, National Office employee responsible for all multilith printing and maintenance of the addressograph files, was vacationing in Montana with her husband and son when, on Sunday, September 18, their car was struck broadside by a large gravel truck. Her husband, George, was killed instantly, son John suffered broken ribs, and Virginia had both legs broken. She will be in Room 3406 at Evanston Hospital, 2650 Ridge Avenue, for some time.

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In a press release just received from Adrain College, we learn that a new men's residence hall has been named for Edward C. Pellowe, Archon of Province Pi. Ed has been director of Financial Development for Adrain since 1955, and this honor is in recognition of his untiring efforts in behalf of campus growth. He is currently recovering at home following an arterial aneurysm suffered in late July.

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Vern Swain, Wyoming Alpha '63 (Wyoming), from all reports is making rapid progress in the entertainment world as a folk singer. We should be hearing more of him in the future.

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Founder Member No. 213 is John N. Moseley, '46, Tennessee Kappa (Tennessee), California Alpha (Stanford), son of the late John O. Moseley, Past ESA, Past ESR and originator of the Leadership School. Recently Mrs. John O. Moseley presented a portrait of her husband to the Temple and at the same time completed her son's Founder Membership. The Moseley interest in SAE continues strong.

The Phi Alpha of Sigma Alpha Epsilon

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