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A STEP TOWARD BETTER UNDERSTANDING

The following account of a very special weekend for the Alabama Mu Chapter at the University of Alabama presents conclusive evidence of their desire to improve understanding of the Greeks on that campus. It is presented here as a guide to all chapters as they attempt to improve their public image. It is interesting to note that Alabama Mu consistently ranks very well in scholastic achievement and takes seriously its obligations to maintain the high standards of Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

It is becoming an ever-increasing fact that the fraternity system draws much of its criticism because of lack of understanding by those persons who are not invited behind their often "locked" front doors. This criticism comes not only from the general public but, even more disturbingly, from the parents of both pledges and active members of a chapter. Alabama Mu took a step forward to show more than just the front door of their house on Sunday, October 15, by combining in one day a formal pledging ceremony, a Minerva Club meeting, a fathers meeting and an open house.

The parents of the pledges were invited to attend an open, formal pledging of 22 men to Sigma Alpha Epsilon. This event was held at 10:00 A.M., in the Memorial Room. The traditional wearing of robes by officers taking part in the ceremony added both dignity and meaning. All attended church together and luncheon was served to over 250 parents, guests and brothers after the church service.

The members of the Minerva Club met in the Memorial Room after the luncheon. At this time a plaque was presented to Mrs. Eloise Tarwater, a member of long standing, in recognition of her service and noting her honor as the recipient of a special award for 1966-67. This was the first meeting of the year for the Alabama Mu Minerva Club, and as is the custom, its primary function was to welcome the mothers of the new pledges, to explain the Club's relation to the Fraternity, and to decide upon a project for the coming year. Mothers of pledges were encouraged to ask questions during the very informal meeting, questions about anything concerning their sons' activities in the Fraternity or about the Minerva Club. This question-and-answer period usually solves for the mothers many of their queries about the roles their sons have as members of SAE.

While the mothers were holding their meeting, the fathers also met in an upstairs room. Here several practical aspects of the pledge program were explained. The program for the fathers was designed to show what fraternity membership can offer their sons. The first point covered was chapter finances. The treasurer gave a detailed, up-to-date report concerning the annual budget, how house bill amounts are derived, and how this money is allocated toward expenses. Then the Deputy Archon spoke on pledge education in an effort to bring about better understanding of this program. All aspects of the pledge education program were covered with detailed explanations of the "How's" and "Why's" of each activity. The chapter felt that the meeting provided answers to many questions that needed clarification; they have received numerous letters of appreciation from the fathers for the opportunity to learn about the operation of the fraternity provided by such a meeting.

Scholarship, perhaps the most prevalent point of interest, was given special attention. The scholarship chairman explained his program fully and discussed our present scholarship ranking on campus. Detailed information was given to each pledge and his participation in the program. Then the scholarship chairman presented each father with a folder containing his son's class schedule, names of teachers with office numbers, and a record of his tests scores to date. The fathers were encouraged to write to the scholarship chairman if any one of them felt that his son's performance was not at the level of his best ability.

Alabama Mu was honored to have Eminent Supreme Deputy Archon Paul Jacob present for this occasion. He spoke to the fathers and gave them additional enlightenment about the National Laws.

Following the meetings of the mothers and of the fathers, the chapter house was opened to all alumni, faculty members and friends who desired to see the newly remodeled house. The dormitory portion of the house was also open for inspection by the parents. The brothers took the greatest pride in showing their new study room. This room, complete with new curtains, wall-to-wall carpeting, new lighting and new desks and tables, provides an excellent atmosphere for study and improved scholarship.

The chapter feels that everyone — pledges, parents and active brothers, benefited from this memorable occasion.

NEW YORK DELTA CHARTER SUSPENDED

Sigma Alpha Epsilon, during its long history, has chartered 184 chapters and, adding Alabama Mu, brings its total to 185. Of this number, 154 remain active and in good standing. It is interesting to note that of the thirty-one chapters no longer in operation, twenty ceased activity prior to the turn of the century and most of these were casualties of the Civil War. Four more were the result of administrative action banning all fraternities on a given campus, one was a casualty of World War I, and three were casualties of World War II. The remaining three occurred more recently and were caused by a complete breakdown of chapter operation. Every effort was made by the Fraternity to restructure attitudes and activities by the appointment of Alumni Commissions, but to no avail. New York Delta is one of these three.

The charter of New York Delta at Syracuse University was officially suspended, by unanimous vote of the Supreme Council on October 17, 1967. The Dean of Students and Dean of Men were notified of this decision at once and concurred with it, offering any assistance possible in the relocation of undergraduate members and expressing the strong desire that SAE would once more be at Syracuse under conditions acceptable to them and to us.

Suspension of a charter is a serious matter and is not acted upon without full knowledge of all the facts, nor without sufficient evidence pointing to the conclusion that a satisfactory restoration of sound chapter operation is impossible. A look at the history of this chapter since 1960 might be enlightening.

In 1960, concern about the status of New York Delta became evident and, at the request of the Province Beta Archon, an Alumni Commission was formed in January of 1961. At that time the Commission was seriously needed, and at no time since then have conditions improved to any appreciable degree. In January of 1963, the Supreme Council met in Buffalo, New York; and part of the agenda was a special visit with the Council from the Dean of Men of Syracuse University, his assistant and two undergraduate members of the chapter, the principal reason being to show good cause why the charter should not be suspended. Prior to this time the Alumni Commission had been reorganized twice. As a result of this meeting it was again reorganized. The chapter record had been plagued by one incident of misconduct after another followed by a series of probations.

Because of the interest and support of the Deans, the charter was not suspended at that time. Rather, a series of requirements was imposed for continued operation; none of which, incidentally, was ever met. Following this, review meetings were held periodically and all were very unsatisfactory. Finally, in June of 1963, after a meeting with University officials, the charter was suspended for a two-year period. The hope was that if the Fra-

ternity took action, the chapter could continue to operate as a local and receive the support and assistance of the University in order to qualify for reinstatement. Again, regular review meetings were held and the chapter, operating as Phi Alpha, was successful in remaining off probation. However, our files contain enough information during this two-year period to indicate that the re-establishment of the charter in May of 1965 was colored by the fact of our strong desire to remain at Syracuse, and also the expectation that the period of suspension would serve as an incentive for greater improvement. The simple fact was that, if we didn't reinstate at the end of the two-year period, it would mean the immediate end of New York Delta.

In June of 1966, ESR Rex Smith was called to Syracuse by the Dean's office. They intended to call for the revocation of the charter at that time because of a series of incidents and conduct situations that could no longer be tolerated, together with a continuous low scholastic ranking. A one-year grace period was granted at that time because of new pledges of alumni support and the assumption of strong leadership for a new Alumni Commission. Scholarship improved but conduct and attitude did not. The senior class, at the close of school last spring, did damage to the house amounting to \$2,000, and assumed no responsibility for its repair. The attitude of the chapter this fall, as expressed to us by the Dean's office, had become one of hostility toward the National Fraternity and toward the alumni. It appeared that a number of the members of the chapter were interested in nothing more than a private social club with little sense of service or ties to the past or future.

At the 1967 National Convention, the Ideals and Practices Committee recommended to the Supreme Council that the charter be suspended. This information was transmitted to the delegates from the chapter at the Leadership School by ESA Roy Miller, and an extension was granted to them on the basis of continuing alumni support. Shortly thereafter came the resignation of the chairman of the Alumni Commission. Then, during a visit of the chapter supervisor, interviews were held with each member of the chapter. Two alumni were present, and with great sadness, the three of them called ESR Smith and suggested to him that he should poll the Supreme Council and ask for a suspension of the charter. There just was not enough interest on the part of the members of the chapter to continue in the way that would insure any degree of success.

Thus we close the books of New York Delta. Perhaps in four or five years there will be an opportunity to once again be a part of the Syracuse University campus. Only time will tell whether or not there will emerge on that campus and in that community a desire strong enough to bring into existence again a chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon that would be a credit to the Fraternity and to the University.

The following letter, written by Don R. Almy in 1926, apparently is a rebuttal to an editorial about fraternities which appeared in the SATURDAY EVENING POST. Brother Almy, '95, New York Alpha (Cornell), was ESA from 1914 to 1919, and was also chairman of the National Interfraternity Conference in 1921: The date of September 1, 1926, appears on this letter, and it opens:

"Dear Brother:"

"I find your letter, enclosing the editorial on 'Club Measles' from the SATURDAY EVENING POST of August 14, 1926, on my desk on my return from a summer holiday.

"I have read it twice to see if I could see some application to the college fraternity situation. I have concluded that perhaps my failure has been due to my point of view.

"In the first place I have never conceived of the college fraternity as a 'club.' It is just that characteristic that sometimes creeps into some chapters of some fraternities which enables our opponents to claim that fraternities are loafing places and that they establish habits and social conceptions which are handicaps to the average youth and ought to have no place in the vital years of his life — supposed to be given over to higher education.

"In my point of view, unless the college fraternity is in fact an instrumentality of service to mankind, unless in fact it can and does render a vital service to the cause of education, it is an educational fungus — and ought to be and doubtless will be broken off and destroyed.

"In the second place, I have never been charmed with the idea that I belonged to an 'exclusive' organization. On the contrary, given the choice, between an old, well-established northern fraternity priding itself on the fact that it was small and always would be and therefore exclusive, and an organization practically unknown in the north but determined to follow the principle written into the ritual by the Founder and become a nation-wide influence for good in the American college, I chose the latter. I have never conceived of my membership in SAE as a great honor: I have regarded it as a great privilege. I have no desire to limit the benefits that I have been privileged to enjoy by excluding therefrom any youth worthy thereof. The sort of 'exclusiveness' suggested by the editorial in question has always seemed to me to be better described as 'snobbishness' — so eloquently described by Brother Levere in the 'filth of Kings.' I simply can't find any place for it in my conception of the American College Fraternity.

"In the third place, the college fraternity is not growing as a result of 'commercial' promotion. Its growth is the natural result of two things; first: the extraordinary growth of the student body in the American colleges, and second: the fact that the institution has in fact realized the standard of its high calling and is, in fact, in constantly increasing measure rendering a real and a unique service to the youth of our land and to the cause of education in America.

"None of the methods suggested in the editorial are ever resorted to. If the college fraternity harbors a mistaken policy with respect to its growth, it lies, in my judgment, in the fact that it does not stimulate growth in the institutions where its growth is most needed and where it most needs to grow. The policy is too general in all the fraternities and in our fraternity in particular, to await the accident of selection of a local group, giving out a general 'hands off' atmosphere in the meantime. This policy limits growth to these accidents. A wiser policy, in my judgment, would be to make a comprehensive study of the institutions of learning in this country and in Canada, and select those in which we best could serve the student body and chapters in which we would best strengthen and round out our organization. Having selected such institutions we should organize, foster and develop locals, stimulate them to attain our standards and when so attained we should welcome them into our fraternity.

"I do not fear the 'measles' in our organization. What I fear is 'dry-rot.' The only social college organizations that, in my judgment, can survive the searching analysis and independent idealism of this and the coming generation of American college students are those that have at least these essential characteristics; a real service in a unique field, a democratic spirit, and an intense struggle to attain high ideals.

"I fully believe that in a large measure, our fraternity is headed the right way. I pin my faith on those splendid men who have given, are giving and will give so much of their lives to the service of man, through the instrumentality of our fraternity and the conviction that their judgment and advice will prevail, to the end that our fraternity ship may be kept on its course. I fully expect that our fraternity will lead the whole movement to the attainment of the college fraternity's ultimate destiny.

"With kindest regards and best wishes, I am,

Fraternally yours,
Don R. Almy"

Noble Notes



NOBLE LESLIE DeVOTIE
Founder

The following newspaper article was sent to us by Mrs. Louise Pattie Kreamer, a niece of Lucy Pattie's. It appeared in the October 26, 1967, issue of the MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL, in a section of "News of Bygone Days":

"October 26, 1892. (Seventy-five years ago) Gen. Stephen D. Lee, president of the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Starkville, Mississippi, has let it be known that fourteen boys of the best families, and who were good students, have been expelled. They were members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternal organization which has had a chapter at the school for six years unbeknownst to officials. The school has a rule forbidding such societies and the boys chose expulsion rather than disbanding their chapter."

Announcement was made recently to all chapters of the establishment of an award entitled "The Sigma Alpha Epsilon Leadership Award for Excellence in Community Relations." The award consists of two \$1,000 gifts, one to be awarded to an SAE chapter and one to the college at which the chapter is domiciled. The award is made on the basis of the development of a plan which carries out the broadest and most effective program of community action and service to others. The an-

nouncement was also sent to college and university presidents and deans of all institutions where we have chapters.

Indiana Zeta at Ball State University was installed on Saturday, October 28, with forty-three initiates and eighteen pledges. The next two installations, only a week apart, will be in Ashland, Virginia, and in Mankato, Minnesota, for Virginia Alpha at Randolph-Macon College on November 11; and for Minnesota Beta at Mankato State College on November 18, 1967.

The National Interfraternity Conference will be held this year in New York City at the Statler Hilton Hotel, on November 30, December 1 and 2. SAE's in attendance will include ESA Miller, ESDA Jacob, ESCh Heuer, ESR Smith, Assistant to the ESR Hotaling, Past ESA's Fred Turner and Glen Nygreen, and Scholarship Commissioner Berte, together with many deans, fraternity administrators, and undergraduate IFC leaders. A special luncheon is being arranged for Friday noon, December 1, for all SAE's in attendance at the Conference. The luncheon will be an occasion to honor Past ESA Fred H. Turner, who is president of NIC. ESR Smith, as president of the College Fraternity Secretaries Association, will chair a meeting of that association on Wednesday, November 29.

Ivan E. (Doc) Lake, '23, Ohio Kappa (Bowling Green) of San Diego, California, passed to the Chapter Eternal on October 27, 1967. Brother Lake was Archon of Province Delta from 1952 to 1954, when the Province included Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Doc Lake was the force behind the formation of our chapter at Bowling Green University, Ohio Kappa, which was installed in 1945.

The Phi Alpha of Sigma Alpha Epsilon

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