

Alpha Chi Omega closes Colorado State chapter after offensive float display

By Allison Sherry
Colorado State University
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FORT COLLINS, Colo. — The sorority that expelled one of its members after discovering she was partially responsible for vandalizing a float that ran in Colorado State University's homecoming parade announced this week that it would be closing the university's chapter because it doesn't want to be "mired in this senseless campus incident."

The beleaguered Alpha Chi Omega sorority expelled one member Saturday after discovering she and other members of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity had vandalized a scarecrow hanging on the float by scrawling the words "I'm Gay" on one side of it and "Up My Ass" on the other. One fraternity member claimed responsibility for his actions and resigned from the organization this week.

The sorority thought it had done enough by expelling the member, but national sorority officials disagreed even though no sorority

members were riding on the offensive float as it made its way down the parade route.

"Our actions today reflect Alpha Chi Omega's intolerance for this kind of behavior," Jan Crandall, national president of the sorority, said in a prepared statement. "We abhor discrimination and any actions that are insensitive to, or disrespectful of, any human being. Our board and membership sends its deepest condolences to the Shepard family."

At the sorority house Wednesday night, members carried boxes to cars and hugged one another. Most members refused to comment about the incident, saying a later release will be issued.

"I'm really at loss for words," said one member who refused to give her name. "It wasn't the organization as a whole by any means. It was one girl who was expelled. We're all very upset."

The woman also said "it's up to the members" when asked if some sorority members will continue living at their house.

"This is horribly traumatic for these women," said Sonia

ImMasche, the university's assistant director of Greek Life. "They are taking full responsibility for the event, meaning that the incident represented all of them. They were looking at the overall situation and instead of dying by inches, they took full responsibility and now they have closure."

ImMasche said the women needed to "get on with their lives," noting that many are excellent students involved in several different activities. Prolonging the sorority's existence, she said, was not in everyone's best interest.

"We were very surprised to hear they were closing," said Tom Milligan, director of media relations at CSU. "But this will not affect the investigation. Next week, the hearings will start and we will proceed as we planned to."

Eleven people are being investigated so far, Milligan said. Despite the sorority's demise, the university expects full cooperation with the members of Alpha Chi Omega as the investigation unfolds, he said.

"People seem very willing to cooperate here," he said.

Re-release of 'Animal House' shows what Belushi started 20 years ago

By Tom Maurstad
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Since it opened in 1978, "National Lampoon's Animal House" has developed a reputation summed up by the typical critic's blurb, "one of the funniest films ever."

In the days before omnipresent media, "Animal House" was a home-grown sensation. A little comedy starring, for the most part, a bunch of nobodies, it came out of nowhere and pulled in more than \$200 million at the box office, making it the highest-grossing comedy in history (topped in 1984 by "Ghostbusters," which featured "Animal House" alums Harold Ramis and Ivan Reitman).

In the days before political correctness, "Animal House" was an outrage, a pre-emptive strike at the public restrictions to come. The film pulls no punches; it burns with the energy of its unapologetically low-ball humor. The first big laugh is frat-snob Doug Neidermeyer slamming the door not just in but on the face of a fat guy who will later become affectionately known as "Flounder."

It's fitting that "Animal House's" 20th-anniversary celebration - centered on Tuesday's release of a commemorative "special edition" video - comes as "There's Something About Mary" plays on in theaters. A little comedy that took Hollywood by surprise this summer to become one of 1998's few big hits, "There's Something About Mary" inspired a few weeks of magazine covers and talk-show segments fretfully exploring the rise in crude culture.

"Animal House" is the contemporary archetype of crude humor. Its popular presence boils down to two essential contributions to crude lore - John Belushi's mashed-potato-spraying impersonation of a zit, and that mantra of decadence, "to-ga, to-ga, to-ga."

But 20 years later, what keeps this film so funny is all the smart humor

laced through the stupid yuks. Establishing a conflict between the "good" fraternity and the "evil" fraternity, the movie is less a story than a series of sketches. The fun-loving, anarchic Delts are the sketches' Road Runner; the fun-scoring, fascist Omegas are the Coyote.

"Animal House" was the revenge of the nerds six years before a movie with that title would come out. The class conflict here is between the privileged stupid people and the slightly less privileged smart people. The film champions the downwardly mobile smart-aleck, the gleefully irresponsible screw-up. It celebrates college as that blissful time between childhood and adulthood to be filled with as much self-indulgent excess as you can manage.

Not exactly radical doctrine. And 20 years later, "Animal House's" insular world and central smugness can wear a little thin. Its all-white world is only occasionally broken by interactions with the Delts' favorite soul band, Otis Day and the Knights. Those interactions are invariably played for lazy, cheap laughs. The entire roadhouse scene, in which the guys and their terrified dates stumble into an all-black club, radiates with an ugly arrogance, encapsulated in the sight-gag when one of the girls shouts over the music that she's majoring in "primitive cultures" and the camera cuts to Day and his Knights onstage.

Likewise, the movie is a brim with wantonly gratuitous nudity. And while a lot of it occurs in the midst of some very funny sequences, the roles open to women in "Animal House's" "boys club are strikingly limited. But unlike so many of the films it inspired and influenced, "Animal House's" loutish excesses are countered and ultimately transcended by its higher achievements.

Topping these is John Belushi's

performance. As Bluto, he is a primal force, and, fittingly, he rarely uses words to communicate. Belushi steals scenes with his eyebrow. His midnight ballet as he dances up the steps to break into the dean's office is a timeless thing of beauty. His walk through the line at the cafeteria, eating anything and everything, is a visual spectacle in which Belushi creates his own special effects.

And then there is Tim Matheson's ice-cool and silky-smooth Otter. His performance is still a wonder of timing and inflection - his wink to the dean at just the right moment, for example. A ruthless seducer (who whistles "Peter and the Wolf" whenever zeroing in on his next conquest) and unflappable con artist, Otter is the flip-side to Bluto. In one classic moment, he picks up a girl by pretending to be the distraught fiancé of her recently deceased roommate. By the film's denouement, when Bluto and Otter call their beleaguered brothers to arms against their evil oppressors, Otter is the dashing Robin Hood and Bluto his faithful Little John.

Twenty years later, "Animal House's" faults may be a bit more glaring, but its crazed spirit and rollicking humor still shine through. More surprising is that so do the occasionally tender moments - freshman Pinto (Tom Hulce) getting all deep and metaphysical after smoking marijuana for the first time, Boon (Peter Riegert) listening to the phone ring and ring as he makes an early-morning call to his estranged girlfriend's house.

With today's continuing conveyor belt of low-ball fare - "There's Something About Mary," "Basketball," "A Night at the Roxbury" - "Animal House's" anniversary has arrived to give us a much-needed reminder. As the King of Crude still proves 20 years later, the two most important body parts in comedy are the brain and the heart.

Police Blotter: A Look At Campus Crime Briefs

By Peter Levine
Campus Correspondent - University of Wisconsin at Madison
College Press Exchange

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (CPX) - Police at Northern Arizona University arrested a student who allegedly tried to light another student's hair on fire.

According to The Lumberjack, police arrested 18-year-old Sean Marshall Magnusen on Sept. 24. He is accused of spraying aerosol air freshener on another man's head and trying to ignite the spray with a cigarette lighter. Police said some of the victim's hair was burned during his struggle with Magnusen.

Magnusen told police he didn't intend to hurt the victim, only scare him.

The Lumberjack also reported that several students living near Magnusen have complained about his disruptive behavior.

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. (CPX) - New Brunswick police arrested four people - including one Rutgers University student - after breaking up a party allegedly filled with prostitution and illegal alcohol sales.

According to the Daily Targum, police charged Rutgers senior Ryan Brown, 22, and his three roommates (not enrolled at the university) with maintaining a nuisance and illegally selling alcohol in their apartment. Police also arrested two women on charges of drug possession and prostitution.

New Brunswick police Lt. Les Levine told the Targum that investigators decided to monitor the three-story building after seeing fliers advertising a pay-at-the-door party with lap dancing, "special VIP rooms," and "very tight security" that would allow patrons to "cum in peace."

Over the course of their three-hour surveillance, police watched nearly 100 people pay for admission to the house, Levine said.

"Several people were milling in and around the area," Levine said. "There were several local residents with whom we were familiar, and, for the most part, what we assumed to be college kids."

The Targum reported that police entered the house, they found between 150-175 people - nearly all of whom were male - and a strong smell of marijuana. Police allege that Brown and his roommates were running a raffle in which the winner would get to have sex with one of the women in the house. Police found two women - half-dressed and lying on beds amid condoms - on the second floor of the house, Levine said.

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (CPX) - Students living near the University of California at Los Angeles are worried that their lingerie will be pilfered by a man who obviously has a thing for

women's underwear.

According to the Daily Bruin, Los Angeles police have followed a string of unusual burglaries since January 1997. In each case, a burglar has entered an apartment, sorted through the victim's belongings and taken lingerie and other personal items, leaving behind no mess and little evidence that he was ever there.

"He seems to like Victoria's Secret, but he is not limited to that," Los Angeles police Det. Charles Dempsey told the Bruin. "He has also taken a cocktail dress; he has taken phone numbers and called the apartment; he takes personal items. I think he's trying to reach out to them (the victims)."

At least two victims have come home to find the suspect in their apartments. He told both women he was looking for a female friend.

The suspect - who is also reported to be a peeping tom - is described as a 28-to-30-year-old white male, approximately 6 feet tall and weighing 165 pounds. He has green eyes and a slender build and tries to blend in with the campus surroundings.

"He acts like a student and he dresses like a student, but all of these people are saying he looks too old to be a student," Dempsey told the Bruin.

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, Ill. (CPX) - The Delta Tau Delta fraternity at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana held an "Animal House" theme party and wound up with police on their doorstep not once, but twice.

Officers first interrupted the Oct. 2 party because of neighboring complaints about excessive noise. They returned only an hour later to find a car and mattress that had been used as decorations for the big event on fire. Also during their second visit, police officers conducting a safety search of the house seized drug paraphernalia and stolen street signs.

Fraternity members say they complied with officers' orders, and that the party was definitely "not out of control." Nevertheless, university officials are looking into the matter.

BOSTON (CPX) - About 40,000 people recently crowded onto Boston Common for the ninth annual Freedom Rally - an event designed to, among other things, support efforts to legalize marijuana.

Despite promises of increased patrols and tough law enforcement, the Free Press reported that police arrested only 62 people. Last year's rally ended with 150 arrests. The drop in arrests, rally-attendees said, was the result of pot smokers being more secretive.

"This year, in order to smoke weed, we had to leave the rally and go all around Boston into alleys, smoke and then come back," Dana Ross of Boston told the Free Press.

Pro-marijuana speeches met the

most enthusiastic response from the crowd, but many at the rally doubted the event would further efforts to legalize the drug.

"Government is government, like it always has been," said Rob Rodden of Boston. "And speaking out about legalization isn't going to change it. I think they're just wasting time and blowing hot air."

Edith Palleria Cox, president of Concerned Citizens for Drug Prevention, criticized the event's efforts to attract young people. "They shouldn't be able to target kids when they're idealistic, and the kids who have bought this message don't know the group's real agenda," she said.

MARYVILLE, Mo. (CPX) - One student at Northwest Missouri State University found the incentive to get the lock on her dorm room door repaired after she found a strange man in her bathroom.

According to the Missourian Daily, the young woman returned home and found her door unlocked. Because the lock hadn't worked properly, she didn't notice anything out of the ordinary until she heard the shower curtain open and saw, through a mirror, a man "pulling himself up out of the tub."

The woman told police she ran to another floor and called campus security for help. Officers found no evidence of forced entry and no sign of the man.

RALEIGH, N.C. (CPX) - Five students at North Carolina State University recently learned that there isn't necessarily safety in numbers when they were held at gunpoint and robbed of about \$150.

According to The Technician, the students were walking back to their dormitory around 3:15 a.m. on Oct. 5 when a man riding in a car pulled up and asked them for directions. The students obliged and kept walking. The car approached a second time, and at least three men - one brandishing a gun - got out.

"You know what this is," the victims said one man told them. "Get on the ground."

According to police reports, the students complied and were ordered to empty their pockets. The men took from them \$150, a wallet, a driver's license and two packs of cigarettes.

One first-year student told The Technician that the robbers were actually polite. He said that when someone took his wallet, he asked if he could keep his license so he wouldn't have to have another made. The robbers left the license intact, he said. And after the incident, the students said the robbers circled around and honked twice as if to say "You can get up now."

Nevertheless, the students agreed that the incident was scary.

"I just keep thinking, 'What if they would have shot?'" one student said

Student accused of threatening professor with gun to get an A

By Christine Tatum
College Press Exchange

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (CPX) - Police have arrested a former student of the University of Maryland at College Park on assault and weapons charges after a math professor reported that the student threatened him with a gun and insisted that he get an A in the class.

Investigators aren't releasing the professor's name, but they said his sharp eye for detail was instrumental in helping police with their investigation of his claims.

Campus police charged 22-year-old Stephen Clancy Hill, an economics major, with first-degree assault, carrying a concealed deadly weapon, carrying that weapon on campus and using a handgun to commit a felony. If convicted on all four charges, he could spend up to 51 years in prison. Hill remained in jail on Tuesday with no bond.

Two college students charged with first-degree murder

By Josh Funk
College Press Exchange
Daily Nebraskan (University of Nebraska at Lincoln)

LINCOLN, Neb. (CPX) - Two college students, along with their companions, are charged with first-degree murder in connection with the stabbing death of a Denver, Colo., man.

Twin brothers David and Kevin Bills, 21, of Iowa; Joshua Wright, 18, of Colorado; and Kevin Snyder, 19, of Nebraska, are accused of killing 34-year-old Patrick Perry - a man whom police say had a lengthy arrest record for charges of domestic violence, carrying a concealed weapon and drug possession.

All four men were being held in a Denver, Colo., jail without bond after being charged Thursday.

Attorneys for the brothers, Phil Cherner and Jim Castle, said David Bills, a senior at the University of

Nebraska at Lincoln, was in Denver visiting his brother, Kevin Bills, who is a senior at Metropolitan State College, when the stabbing occurred on Oct. 4.

The attorneys said the four men were merely Good Samaritans who are being punished for trying to help a woman in distress. They said the foursome tried to stop Perry from attacking a woman who lives near Kevin Bills. Police found nothing wrong when they arrived at the scene but discovered Perry's body when summoned again only two hours later. According to police reports, the four men said Perry had disappeared before police arrived the first time but returned later to cause more trouble.

"This guy comes back to the apartment complex and threatens my client and his friends and brandished something that appeared to be a weapon," Cherner said. "It is dark, he is bigger than they are, he is making verbal threats and coming at

them and actually gets into an altercation with them. And that's when he is stabbed."

Police said the Bills brothers admitted to the Oct. 4 stabbing, claiming that they were only trying to defend themselves after Perry attacked Kevin Bills.

Witnesses at the scene and friends of Perry, disagree with the men's version of the events leading to Perry's death. Witnesses say the Bills brothers jumped on Perry and held him down, while Wright and Snyder kicked him.

The Rev. Patrick Demmer, senior pastor at Graham Memorial Church of God in Christ where Perry was a deacon, said that the Bills' attorneys' attempts to portray the men as heroes are "the worst case of spin-doctoring."

While Perry was black and the four men charged with his death are white, police have not said the attack was racially motivated.