

Greek Life brings friendship and family

This is my fourth attempt at writing a response to the "Letter to the Editor" featured in the last edition of the Collegian. I'm sure you know the letter-it was the one that referred to all members of Greek life as "dregs of society."

In my first three letters, I offered defenses to each one of the assertions made in that letter. But, I feel that people have a tendency to believe what they want to believe, and all of the defenses in the world won't change that. So, I decided to discard the others letters.

Instead, I would just like to offer a few thoughts on the matter.

First of all, I'm sure that everyone has heard at one time or another that what you get out of something

depends upon what you put into it. This is true of everything, including Greek life. If, for example, a member of the organization only attends parties, then naturally that particular member knows of nothing but parties. In order to know of other things, the member must attend meetings and other functions.

To experience the fulfillment of promises pertaining to sisterhood or brotherhood, one must first BE a "sister" or "brother". In other words, one must take the time to get to know everyone, and one must act like he or she cares about the people. Let me rephrase that-one must not just act, but *really* care. However, this is impossible if the person is never around. If you're there for your brothers or sisters, they'll be there for you.

Being there when your brothers or sisters need you does not mean that you must give up your own identity. It does not mean that you must give up your morals, old friends, or family. It does not mean that your life revolves around beer, parties, and the clothes you wear. Rather, it means that you have many new friends. It means you have a new family to be there for you when your own is miles away. It means that you retain your individuality, and add to it everyone else's in order to create a unique blend of friendship. It means you have someone to share things with. It means there's always someone there to talk to. It means there's always someone there to care.

Yes, sometimes one does have to "play silly games in the middle of the night outside in the cold". Those "silly games" are called inductions, and that night is one of the most important and memorable nights in a soon-to-be-full-fledged member's life. Anyone who had any concern for their particular Greek organization would be more than willing to suffer the cold in order to see the look on a newly inducted member's face.

There always have been and always will be people who weren't cut out for Greek life. Unfortunately, some of those people join a fraternity or sorority, and later harbor bad feelings toward the particular organization which made the mistake of accepting them. It's just too bad that these people openly show their resentment, because anyone who knows anything about Greek life finds the opinions humorous. And, in reality, the person is only hurting himself.

Fraternalities and sororities are nationwide institutions which have been in existence since the 1800's, and they contain thousands of members. As mentioned, there will always be those who are against Greek life. Fortunately, as proven in the past, Greek life will outlast those few.

Rosanne Grvzier

Rosanne Grvzier
Fourth Semester, Accounting
Sigma Theta Chi sister

Individual development stressed in Alpha Sigma Alpha

In April, the sisters of Alpha Sigma Alpha are looking forward to the installation of our colony to chapter status in the national organization. To achieve this status we must fulfill established goals, while closely following national guidelines. These goals are geared towards the development of our individual members as well as the colony as a whole.

To become a chapter of a national organization, such as ASA, Epsilon Theta colony must meet certain criteria. Alpha Sigma Alpha promotes, reinforces, and recognizes high scholarship. If a member's or pledge's grades fall below a 2.0, then she is excused

from chapter activities and tutored until her grades are back up to standard.

To ensure the girls do not limit their talents or friendships, the Contract for Chartering also requires the sisters to be involved in other campus activities. You will find ASA's involved in Choir, ROTC, as Campus Tour Guides, Cheerleaders, and in Departmental Clubs.

Alpha Sigma Alpha's National Policy Against Hazing is enforced and closely monitored by the National Representatives, the Membership Director, and the Chapter Advisor. Right now our membership consists entirely of

pledges; we do not have.

We are a unified group, consisting of diverse individuals, working toward achieving the same goal of induction to chapter status. We believe national sororities offer students the chance to become part of something bigger than themselves: a chance to develop individual talents while working closely with others who share the same goals. As a national sorority, we stand alone in what we offer and ask the college community to recognize our contributions.

The Sisters of Epsilon Theta Colony

Pledging takes time

Swallowing the basic repugnance I felt regarding Michelle Grasmick's vicious attack on Greek Life in the last issue of the Collegian, I would like to take the opportunity to address some of the charges that she has put forward. Initially, I would like to recognize the obvious fact that Ms. Grasmick may have legitimate complaints stemming from her extremely brief tenure as a sister of Sigma Theta Chi (a local Behrend sorority). Whatever personal difficulties she experienced is irrelevant to the fact that her article was greatly misguided if not libelous.

Ms. Grasmick states that not all rushees will be deemed "worthy" to pledge. This invokes images of elitist groups of students handpicking future members of their exclusive cliques. While it is true that all rushees may not be given a bid to pledge her vision of this process is completely askew. During rush week certain functions such as dinners and socials are held for the purpose of introducing the rushees to the members of the Greek organizations. Rushees are afterwards evaluated on the two criteria of attendance and enthusiasm. I fail to see any malicious intent in this system.

Further charges put forward are those of loss of individuality and a drop in G.P.A. I'll not make the false claim that pledging is not time consuming. It takes a great amount of effort and time. The fraternities and sororities of Behrend recognize this and encourage, if not organize, group study sessions and strongly emphasize sufficient grades; (students with a deficient G.P.A. will not be given a bid to pledge). To the accusation of loss of individuality I can offer only that there are two types of people who join any organization. Those who blend into the background and let the organization dictate their views and those who through their own vitality and personality affect the organization. In order for Greek Life to flourish, we strongly prefer the latter, and the belief that Greek members tend to cut themselves off from other clubs and organizations is wildly inaccurate.

The most critical portion of Ms. Grasmick's article was the accusation of hazing. This is a tender nerve in Greek society. I know personally of no Greek organization which advocates or condones hazing. As a pledge I was assured that no such activity would take place that was dangerous or degrading. During my pledge period I was asked to do no such acts. Greek organizations in existence are certainly the most zealous in the eradication of hazing techniques. The trials that a pledge will endure are not simple. They are designed to find the people who are willing to put 100. of themselves into an

organization and not turn around and attack it due to personal feelings of animosity.

Ms. Grasmick contends that students should avoid rushing a Greek organization if they are looking solely for companionship. I heartily agree. It is much more than a place to find companionship. Joining a fraternity or sorority is an achievement that is earned. It requires more than putting your name on a piece of paper and attending an occasional meeting. It is an experience in which you will learn more about yourself and others, than you ever knew. It is where you'll work for the betterment of something in which you can take pride, and where you'll learn social and leadership skills which in the eyes of a prospective employer can be as integral as a high G.P.A.

One needs only to ride down fraternity row at main campus to realize the awe and prestige that fraternities can inspire. While Behrend is only experiencing Greek life in its humble beginnings, it is important to realize that great strides are being made as the number and membership of Greek organizations begins to grow. The betterment of Behrend depends on the students who have the will to work towards something, to build toward their goals: not on those who pack their bags every Friday afternoon and go home.

Robert E. Boyle

Robert E. Boyle
Sigma Kappa Nu

Criticisms to Sigma Theta Chi only

I would like to express my most sincere apologies to Kappa Delta Rho, Sigma Kappa Nu, Alpha Sigma Alpha, and all the other valid fraternities and sororities on campus. I intended no offense towards them in my previous letter to the Collegian. My main

criticisms were directed towards Sigma Theta Chi; and to them, I make no apology.

When I wrote the letter to the editor, I of course, expected a strong reaction by members of on-campus fraternities and sororities. However, I did not expect to be

called Nazi, have threats made on my life, become a victim of obscene name calling, or discover cut-up photos of my fiance and myself pasted together in compromising positions.

I thought I would have to defend my opinions in this issue, but the

ladies of Sigma Theta Chi have already proven my point.

Michelle Grasmick
Michelle F. Grasmick
Fourth Semester, Psychology

Spiteful attack on sorority

I am writing this letter in response to the article in the last issue of the Collegian, written by Michelle Grasmick. That article was nothing more than a spiteful attack on a "valid" organization, of which she is no longer a member. The organization under fire in her article is Sigma Theta Chi, a local Greek faction which is very active in many areas that Miss Grasmick is completely unaware of.

The only invalid things in the whole issue are her claims made in the aforementioned article. Miss Grasmick claims that Sigma Theta Chi does nothing for the community and revolves solely around beer and parties. She probably used the fact that she only attended parties, not meetings, while she was a member, as the basis for the latter claim. If she had attended any meetings, she might have been aware of Sigma Theta Chi's participation in charity benefits such as the "Toys for Tots" campaign. Of course, Miss Grasmick did not participate in this or in any other activities throughout the semester (including inductions), therefore leading to the termination of her membership. As in any organization, one must participate and meet the requirements in order to remain active in the organization.

As the roommate of the article's author, I can confirm the fact that she did not uphold any of the promises she made when she became a sister. Michelle Grasmick never knew the meaning of sisterhood and therefore has no solid ground of judgement on the matter. Sisters of Sigma Theta Chi respect each other, which she did not. Sisters do not tear each other apart with criticism which she did. Sisters do not hate other sisters, which she admitted to in the privacy of our room. Furthermore, sisters show interest in the sorority, which, again, she did not. Thus, the decision was rendered that we would wear our letters proudly for a long time to come. . . and she would not.

This wise decision naturally caused some resentment on her part. However, anyone who understands the real meaning of Greek life and sisterhood can see that her perceptions were incorrect and could not be tolerated.

In closing, I would like to thank Michelle for the one positive result of her article. The accusations, although directed at Sigma Theta Chi, managed to offend all of the

Greek factions on campus and, in turn, caused us to unite together to fight, and eventually conquer, narrow-minded opinions such as Michelle's.

Crisi Clark
Crisi Clark
Fourth Semester, English

Clearing some misconceptions

I would just like to start by saying that Michelle's letter dated Feb. 12, 1987 and titled "Priorities of Greek Life Under Fire" must have been a personal gripe directed toward Sigma Theta Chi, or else just written to cause discontent among the Greek organizations here at Behrend. Nonetheless, My Grievance is that it wasn't only directed toward Sigma Theta Chi, but also at all Greeks as a whole. I would like to clear up a few of her misconceptions.

First of all, speaking for Kappa Delta Rho and Alpha Sigma Alpha, the two national organizations, are strictly prohibited from hazing. Page twelve of Kappa Delta Rho's Bi-law book states: "Hazing is indicative of weakness in a chapter's organization. If members find it necessary to haze in order to get pledges respect, they ain't doing something right!"

I can't speak for Sigma Theta Chi or Sigma Kappa Nu due to lack of knowledge of their constitutions, but our feeling is that hazing is kid's stuff. I agree, carrying paddles or wearing clothes backwards isn't exactly normal, but it shows

devotedness, not unlike wearing a boy/girl friend's ring on a chain around your neck. What should be considered hazing though? Are athletes who are put through vigorous physical conditioning being hazed? Hazing is anything that causes physical, mental, or sexual abuse. Clearly that is not our intent or policy.

In the paragraph dealing with friendship, dues are not a price for friendship, but for keeping the organization, like any other, running. One doesn't lose identity. One of the greatest feelings of pride in my lifetime was my induction night into Kappa Delta Rho. I felt a sense of accomplishment and lifetime friendship with many others, who before me, joined for a common cause.

Kappa Delta Rho policy is scholarship before fraternity. My G.P.A. rose to 3.06 during pledgeship. It didn't decline.

As a member of the student senate, I know the general consensus of former Dean of Student Affairs Dohn Harshbarger and the current Acting Dean of Student Affairs Art Costantino: The more

Greek organizations, the stronger the campus. We don't only have parties, but also service projects: Valentine's Day Flower Sale, Car-washes, Dances, Bake Sales and numerous other projects.

I'm sure I can speak for Kappa Delta Rho, Sigma Kappa Nu, Alpha Sigma Alpha and Sigma Theta Chi in saying that I'm sorry you, Michelle, felt the way you did about all Greeks, but obviously, if you felt your relationship with Sigma Theta Chi wasn't worth it, you weren't living up to your end of it. You only get out of something, what you put in. No Greek organization makes a pledge rush. An individual himself decides. Fraternities and sororities owe a rush nothing. We want the elite and the best. If one doesn't match up, it's the organization's choice not to take him as a pledge.

Fraternally
Michael J. SHANSHALA
Michael Shanshala, Expansion Secretary, Kappa Delta Rho

Inter Greek Council formed

Unknown to most students, an organization has just this past year been founded which unites all social Greek societies here at Behrend College. This united group is the Inter-Greek Council, comprised of the four Greek social organizations: Sigma Kappa Nu, Kappa Delta Rho, Sigma Theta Chi, and Alpha Sigma Alpha.

The Inter-Greek Council (IGC) meets twice a month with the presidents and two elected representatives from each organization to discuss common problems, inter-Greek relations, promotion of common fund raisers for charity, and the continuation

and betterment of Greek life here at Behrend College.

This letter is in response to the letter to the editor written concerning Greek life here at Behrend in the February 12, 1987 edition of the Behrend Collegian.

The members of the IGC have discussed, in great detail, the accusations made about Greek life in the letter during our February 16, 1987 meeting. Though we are all different organizations with different pledging and membership requirements, we feel that as individual groups our individual policies and practices are just and sound.

Because Greek organizations are made up of such individual policies, we, the IGC, will not answer the accusations directly. We will instead allow the various members of our organizations to speak for us. Though we may be different organization we all share basic, common bonds and goals and we hope the students of this college will be able to see which follow to disprove any accusations made concerning Greek life.

John D. Fronko
John D. Fronko
President, Inter Greek Council

Letters to the Editor intended for publication in the next issue of the - Collegian - must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on March 11, 1987

★ All letters must be ★ TYPED and SIGNED or they will be rejected.