Fraternity Decline: Penn State Greeks Seek To Recover Lost 'Image'

By JOHN R. THOMPSON
Editor
(First in a Series)

College fraternities are in serious trouble.

The "rah-rah" days of collegiate life, when fraternities were king, are gone. As Sputnik I spun into the heavens eight years ago, and colleges and universities became "multiversities" with student bodies in the thousands, fraternities failed to adequately adjust and lost their favorable public image.

National publicity since the 1950's had emphasized the changing role of fraternities. Unfortunately, the plight of fraternities adjusting to modern educational settings has left the public with a decided ill feeling against the Greek system.

Presidents of Penn State's 56 fraternities, the second largest fraternity system in the nation, clearly recognize the problem. A survey by The Daily Collegian uncovered surprisingly frank remarks about the present status of fraternities at the University. Thirty-one presidents, representing more than 55 per cent of the houses, pointed out six problems fraternities must face head on in the immediate future:

- Public relations, to recoup the damage and adverse publicity.
- Removal of discriminatory clauses in their constitutions in accordance with the June University deadline.
- Revamping of social activities, to remove the image of Friday and Saturday night "beer blasts."
- Attraction of more qualified members, to reverse the downward trend of fraternity academic averages.
- Recovery of influence in student affairs.
- Systematized plans for future fraternity growth.

These are the focal points of fraternity transition. While some critics say the Greek system is already "dead," others say it has what it takes to weather the crisis.

The Slipping Greek Image

The sharpest critics of fraternities are often fraternity presidents themselves. Nearly every president told Collegian the fraternity "image" is falling. When asked if they thought fraternities at Penn State are slipping downward," they almost unanimously said "No," agreeing, however, that the fraternity image is not what it once was.

Christopher Kimmel, of Delta Theta Sigma, was the most outspoken. "In my opinion," he said, "some the the fraternities are slipping downward. Fraternities no longer fulfill the need they formerly used to fill."

Kimmel attributed this decline to fraternity men themselves. "I feel that many fraternities are being hurt greatly by many of the fraternity men in the way they dress and act in public. Many of the fraternities do not present a good image. Fraternity men can no longer say that they are the best-dressed men on campus. Their public behavior is also degrading. Drunken parties, beer blasts and the like are certainly not the most impressive images."

Alan Miller, representing Pi Lambda Phi, agreed. "Fraternities are slipping definitely because more and more of the fraternity activities are being taken over by campus or private activities. Fraternities need something more to offer the new college student."

Other presidents said fraternities are only stagnating. Thomas Natale of Theta Chi put it this way, "I feel that fraternities are not slipping downward but have reached a plateau. They have finally leveled off after many years and will soon begin to expand again."

John Grillo of Alpha Chi Rho said, "Fraternities are not slipping downward but they can no longer hope to remain stationary."

Others refused to believe that anything more than public relations is wrong with the Greek system. Bert Volinski of Beta Theta Pi believes "We have, and will continue to have, one of the strongest fraternity systems in the country."

A large portion of the fraternity problem centers around two areas: alcohol and academics. In the past 13 months, three fraternities have gone "wet" to accommodate growing pressure and the number of completely "dry" houses has fallen to four. Alpha Kappa Lambda, one of these holdouts, now has intentions of changing its ban on alcohol in the future, according to president James Hulsinger.

Most fraternities feel they can justify programs of modified drinking in their houses, but they cannot contend with the adverse publicity that results. Alpha Gamma Rho, which dropped its alcohol ban in February, 1964, encountered stiff opposition from its alumni, but survived the storm.

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Letters to the Editor

Students Asked To 'Reflect' During Lent

TO THE EDITOR: As we enter a period which is meaningful and sacred to the three major religious faiths, we should pause and reflect on the meaning of this to ourselves.

If we are Jewish, we will soon be celebrating Passover, following the command of Moses to "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for by the strength of hand the Lord brought you from this place . . ." (Exodus 13:3)

If we are Christians, it is now the Lenten season and it will soon be Easter. Following the example of Jesus in the wilderness, some of us will be fasting until Easter.

In an effort to make this season more meaningful and to demonstrate our love in a more tangible way, the Student Ecumenical Council, Newman Club, and Hillel Foundation chose to sponsor a Food for Freedom project during the week of April 4-9.

At this time each of the separate religious organizations will sponsor something within their own organization to raise money to provide food for very needy Negro families in Mississippi.

Although this is perhaps only a token, we feel it is our way of showing concern for a less fortunate brother. We urge the members of our respective faiths to reflect at this period on the situation which is an abomination on this country and pray that Martin Luther King's dream of a nation where one day his children will be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character will be realized.

We further urge all of our members to take part in the program at their respective organizations at this time.

—Barbara E. Deibler
President, Student Ecumenical Council
—Frank A. Hollick
External Affairs chairman
Newman Club
—Stephen M. Mallinger
Interfaith director,
Hillel Foundation

LETTER POLICY

Letters to the editor must carry the full name of the author and identification of the author will be verified before any letter is published.

In most cases letters over 400 words will not be published. The Daily Collegian reserves the right to edit or condense any letter. The decision to publish or reject a letter lies solely with the editor; letters containing obvious misstatements or lacking good taste or fair play will be rejected.

Open Letter To Red Leaders

TO THE EDITOR: An open letter to Mao Tse Tung and Ho Chi Minh:

Gentlemen: We would like to commend you for the wisdom you have shown in the face of pressures from a backward, warlike nation. Since you have demonstrated your desire to keep the peace in the face of extreme provocation, we feel it only fitting that the seat of the United Nations be re-located in Peking.

We hope that you will make better use of the resources of this body than the western nations have and that you will continue to uphold the cause of humanity, that is, the right to live.

—John Downey,
Graduate student
James Grant,
Graduate student

A Student-Operated Newspaper
60 Years of Editorial Freedom

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Quote of the Day

"American life is a powerful solvent. It seems to neutralize every intellectual element, however tough and alien it may be, and to fuse it in the native goodwill, complacency, thoughtlessness, and optimism."

—George Santayana

HILLEL EVENTS

Friday, March 5th . . . . . 8:00 p.m.
Friday Evening Services
Speaker: Dr. Henry Finch (Phil.)
"Dimensions of Commitment"
Sponsor: Phi Epsilon Pi

Saturday, March 6th . . . . . 8:00 p.m.
PURIM CARNIVAL
FUN! GAMES! FOOD!

Sunday, March 7th 11:30
Lox & Bagel Brunch
Sponsor: Phi Epsilon Pi

Hear . . . 8:00 P.M.
DR. LAURENCE LATTMAN
"GEOLOGY & ISRAEL'S FUTURE"

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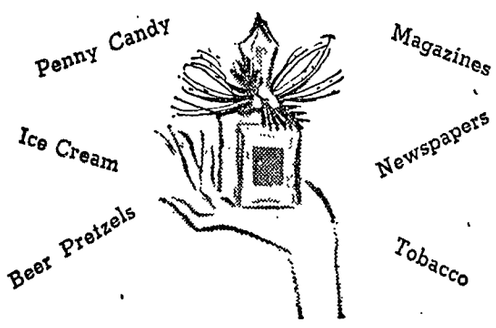

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Artists Series reception, 9 p.m., Helzel Union main lounge.
Biophysics seminar, 11:10 a.m., 105 Walker Lab.
Bridge Club, 7 p.m., HUB cardroom.
Episcopal evening prayer and stations of the cross, 3 p.m., Helen Eakin Eisenhower Chapel.
Interlandia, 7:30 p.m., HUB ballroom.
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, 12:30 p.m., 218 HUB.
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, 7:30 p.m., 111 Boucke.
Jawbone, 8 p.m. - 12 p.m., 415 E. Foster Ave.
Nickelodeon Night, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45 p.m., HUB assembly hall.
Placement, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., 212-13, 203 HUB.

WDFM Schedule

4:15 The Philadelphia (John Abele)
5:00 Classical Cameos
5:55 News (Stan Lathan)
6:00 This Week in Science
6:15 Evening Moods (Jerry Geist)
7:25 News (Tony Scrvarto)
7:30 Showcase "15"
7:45 Spotlight on Sports
8:00 The Sound of Folk Music
8:55 Sports
9:00 Sendoff
12:00 Night Sound
2:00 News

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  8:45 p.m. - 11 p.m. — new lanes
- **WEDNESDAY**
  Same as Tuesday
- **THURSDAY**
  6:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. — new lanes
- **FRIDAY**
  6:30 p.m. - 11 p.m. — old lanes
  8:45 p.m. - 12 p.m. — new lanes
- **SATURDAY**
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- **SUNDAY**
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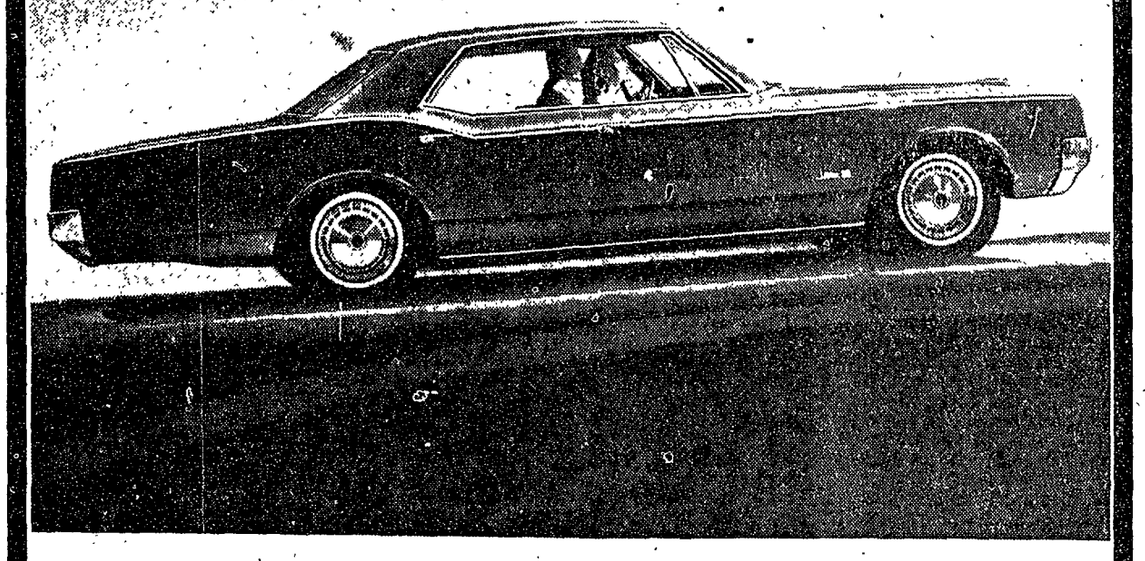

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