

The Weekend Ahead

WHAT MAKES a University great? Immediately, one considers an institution's research programs, its national prestige, distinguished alumni, outstanding professors—the criteria go on and on.

pate in Spring Day and feel a renewed identification with their university and the campus community, and student leaders and scholars relinquish or accept responsibilities which parallel their achievements.

Just Can't Wait ...

R.F.I.C.

... and soon!

College Fraternities; Relic Or Relevant

Associated Press polled 150 campuses across the nation.

By SID MOODY, AP

Few campus characters are more loved and loathed than that endearing Greek-American institution, the college fraternity.

To its foes, the Greek letter fraternity is a relic hopelessly overgrown with ivy, featuring orgies on every floor and supported by snobbery, bigotry and beery-eyed alumni who never quite outgrew the sophomore year.

To its friends, it is an invaluable teacher of self-reliance, the social graces, democracy and scholarship all welded together by that mystical bond called brotherhood.

Last year, Williams College gave the Greeks one of their sharpest setbacks. Williams, a genteel men's school rich in fraternity tradition, liberal arts and conservative alumni, decided its 15 fraternities would have to go by 1966.

Williams' action comes at a time when fraternities (and their sisters, sororities) are present in record numbers on American campuses. There are 262 national collegiate Greek letter societies. They have 16,006 chapters and a membership of grads and undergrads of 6,773,253.

Challenged by Times

Yet while at a numerical and fiscally prosperous peak, fraternities are being increasingly challenged to justify themselves in an age that has seen soldiers marching to integrate a university and in a country sensitive to the egalitarian mood of the world's new nations.

At a time when the nation cries for brains, the hand-wringers see fraternities as anti-intellectual playgrounds where the bonds of brotherhood tie knots of conformity and the climb to the social graces too often stumbles into a trap of hooch, hazing and—well, the Greeks have a word for it.

Is this a valid profile of the Greeks? To find out the

The fraternity emerges as particularly strong in the Midwest and South, under fire in the Northeast but everywhere being reformed in varying degree either from within or without.

On one coast, at Oregon State, they are "welcome, not just tolerated, for their generally wholesome environment and valuable housing." On the other coast, Boston University Dean Stator R. Curtis says, "Time is running out, I fear," citing fraternities' "fiscal mismanagement, low academic achievement and failure to choose a representative membership."

The average fraternity house (they can be worth as much as \$300,000) may have 50 or 60 members, half of whom live in, a drinking room lined with irreverent cartoons of the brothers, a secret meeting or "goat" room, perhaps with a skull or other ceremonial equipment. If the house is lucky enough to have a good cook, living can be easy.

And the living can inspire lyrical praise: "Brotherhood isn't just a 50-50 deal. It's a 60-40. It's that extra 20% that really counts."—Fraternity handbook at Arizona State.

Or scorn: "(Greeks) are colorless, personality-less men who feel confident wearing a pin. The University is paternalistic enough but the Greeks want to go further and find their childhood"—a German exchange student at Michigan State.

Or indifference: "An alumnus owes loyalty first to his college, then to his class and lastly to his fraternity—if he can remember the name of it"—a Dartmouth graduate.

Flame Out?

If the ancient Greeks invented democracy, some say their latter day fraternal namesakes have let the flame go out. "I do not see how a fraternity can be truly democratic. They are selective by nature, but history, by tradition and by necessity," says Dr. J. Earl Moreland, president of Randolph-Macon.

Mrs. Joseph Davis, executive secretary of alumni of Omaha University, sums up succinctly for the contrary mind: "The Greek system is a democratic process under the constitution. Voluntary association is a right."

While the fraternities insist on their right to pick and choose their brethren, the AP survey shows a definite trend to more liberal values in selection.

That's a striking recurrence in the AP survey: That much of the leadership in liberalizing fraternity membership comes from the students themselves.

At Stanford the local Sigma Nu chapter quit the national parent organization last fall because of its discriminatory clauses. Stanford Chapter President Thomas Grey explained, "It is becoming increasingly difficult to find a good pledge class which is willing to accept membership in an organization which denies admittance on purely racial grounds."

But what of fraternity selectivity per se, based not on any racial or religious basis but just on whether or not the brothers like your looks?

On a large Big Ten campus, where rarely more than 30% of the undergraduates are Greeks, the non-Greek can have 4 pleasant, productive years uncaring whatever Hellenic pleasures may have been denied him. But on a small campus, with a high percentage of Greeks, rejection can wound, deeply.

'Bitter Truth'

But adult life, say fraternity supporters, is one long process of rejection and acceptance—in promotion on the job, joining a country club, picking one's friends. Why not begin adjusting to the bitter truth in college?

Because it's wasteful. It distracts the real purpose of a college—to educate. And, anti-Greeks argue, the fraternities by selectivity too often overlook the more retiring blossom, the very one their camaraderie could best nurture.

Aware of these imperfections in varying degrees, a significant number of colleges, fraternities and undergraduates have tried reforms of the system.

On some campuses rushing has been postponed to sophomore year so as not to add to the freshman's burden of academic adjustment. Bowdoin, on the other hand, rushed freshmen before fall classes begin so students can buckle down to class without concerning themselves with the "deceptive



Greek System Esteemed at NU, NWU

Greek systems at the two universities located in Lincoln enjoy friendly relations with the schools' administrations. Dean Robert Ross at the University of Nebraska has this comment: "The University of Nebraska and its Greek system have a long tradition of being concerned about, interested in, and supported by each other."

"The Greek system here has been an expanding program, and we have right now the strongest leadership and best scholarship in several years." Nebraska Wesleyan University's Dean Milton Evans says, "Wesleyan feels that Greeks make a definite contribution to the campus program. They encourage scholarship and they add to the social experience of the students."

Table comparing enrollment and average scores for fraternities at University of Nebraska and Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Nebraska Wesleyan University uses a 1 to 6 point grading scale with 1 being high; University of Nebraska uses a 1 to 9 point scale with 9 being high.

courtship" of prolonged rushing.

University of Maine fraternities have raised the grade requirement for pledges twice in the last 8 years. Many other colleges insist students have a certain scholastic average before they may pledge.

Scholastic Discipline Fraternities hold their own study hours for backsliding brothers. The National Interfraternity Conference eagerly cites studies that show:

1—Fifty per cent of all fraternities are above the over-all average of their campuses. (Ten years ago only 40% were.)

2—The rate of dropout—an alarming development in contemporary higher education—is more than twice as high among men at a non-fraternity campus as among members of national fraternities.

While the Greeks are getting better marks on their report cards, their behavior, too, appears to be improving. There is fierce competition today to get into college, to stay in and to get high enough marks for graduate school. Academic pressures have had their sobering effect on the Olympian highjinks of Greek Row.

"The Mickey Mouse stuff is dying out," comments campus editor Jeff Greenfield of Wisconsin of the decline of fraternity ritual and hazing. "Help Weeks" have replaced most of the barbarities of the old initiation "Hell Weeks."

Some incidents persist. At Texas Christian an electric "hotshot" used to prod cattle at stockyards was turned on pledges during initiation. The president of the Oregon University Interfraternity Council quit in protest of initiation abuses.

Hi Ho Life

Yet some oases still hold out the pleasure of forbidden fruit. Alpha Tau Omega beckons prospective brothers in the Stanford Fraternity handbook with the lure of a "full and varied social program highlighted by the winter Sewer Party and the spring Hog Wallow."

If it is fashionable in intellectual circles to knock fraternities, perhaps the most fashionable thing of all to say against them is that they force conformity.

"They are an extension of the family," said a bearded student at Rutgers. "They tell you how to dress, what to eat, whom to associate with."

"By living with your broth-

ers," says the fraternity handbook at the University of Cincinnati, "you will learn to express your own opinion and when to subordinate yourself to the will of others."

There are those who feel such control of the individual by the group is tragically unfortunate, coming as it does at a time when the student is as free as he will ever be to explore and to learn, to be himself.

Yet their group-centered way of life brings the Greeks their best deserved laurel—campus leadership.

At Ohio State 20% of the students are Greeks, yet of 200 leaders of extracurricular organizations, only 5 or so are non-Greeks. This disproportion is repeated on campus after campus.

They are joiners. "They want involvement," said one educator. In some colleges, however, they are also prodded by fraternity rules that require members to go out for campus organizations and award points for doing so. The house with the most points get a trophy.

Appalls Individualist

This appalls the bearded nonconformist but there are serious educators who think it may be beneficial.

"You might say the fraternity is the training ground in college for the organizational man," says President John Millett of Ohio's Miami University. "I happen to think that this... is useful rather than harmful."

Certainly 7 million Greeks can't all be snobbish, 3-button suit, no-padded-shoulder copies of each other. They are probably as diverse as 7 million plumbers or bank vice presidents. What worries some of their critics is that despite their diversity they too often speak in one voice—or not at all. As a group they seem to have surprisingly little to say publicly on national issues, one way or another.

Yet this silence can sometimes be deceptive. When the University of Georgia integrated two years ago, the fraternities did nothing other than increase study hall hours. This was not, as might be viewed from certain northern points, failure to speak out but an effort to avoid the violence that came later to Oxford, Miss.

Despite the heckling of the anti-Greek chorus, fraternities are not unwanted. On the contrary. A national survey of college deans showed they would like to have 500 more fraternity chapters

added in the next 5 years. A building boom is already under way.

This means desperately needed housing—usually at private expense—for colleges facing the swift swelling of enrollment. And the enrollment itself means more members for the fraternities to help meet their own rising costs.

But new houses will not be the saving of the fraternity system. The growing challenge before them today is to prove they are a desirable adjunct to the educational process, a challenge the Greeks are beginning to respond to.

Social Units "Once the classes are out, we feel we've lost the students," said a Williams professor. "I think there are some Chi Psis who don't ever leave the house except for classes. They're so happy just to be Chi Psis."

It was to break down this insularity, primarily, that Williams decided to replace fraternities with social units of 100 students which will house and feed their residents and provide social fa-

cilities for beer, cheer and culture.

A unit, for instance, might have a chamber music recital after dinner or a professor living in the building or an art exhibition in the commons room.

Bowdoin, still pro-fraternity, nonetheless thinks its seniors would do better to live away from the fraternities in a more academic atmosphere and is building a 14-story univory tower to accommodate them.

These scattered reforms do not indicate the fraternity on the whole hasn't done well. They indicate some educators want it to do better.

They feel the fraternities' potential is great: to expand their philosophy of brother-help-brother from the social to the academic realm, to add lectures by visiting speakers, good library facilities and even resident professors to stimulate thought and conversation in a uniquely relaxed atmosphere.

"We are almost yearning for them to succeed," said an administrator at Michigan. While it is under pressure, the decline and fall of the Greek empire is not yet.

LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS



NOTICE CURRENT EVENTS FORUM

Thursday, April 30, at 4:00 p.m. a Current Events Forum will be held in the small auditorium of the Union.

The purpose of the forum is to bring the students up to date on domestic and international affairs. Too often students do not find the time to read the newspaper thoroughly enough to be well informed on the important issues of the day.

CURRENT EVENTS FORUM



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