

Go Greek

The numbers remain the same in fraternities and sororities

by Mary Voboril

So who wants a pin?

That question set the tone for the Greek section of the 1968 *Cornhusker*, UNL's defunct student yearbook.

In the '60s, sororities and fraternities on a national level were headed for trouble. At least that was the popular notion. It was the decade of hippies, of do your own thing, be your own man.

"I am an Island," Simon and Garfunkel sang.

But real trouble for the Greek system never accrued for Greeks nationwide or at UNL. In fact, the call to go Greek, seems to be getting stronger, according to Jayne Anderson, UNL coordinator of Greek/cooperative organizations.

Anderson said the number of UNL Greeks vacillates, but estimates about 2,000 men belong to 27 fraternities and 1,400 women to 15 sororities. The number is rarely constant, she said, because students either are joining or leaving the Greek houses at almost any given time.

Anderson, who assumed her position of responsibility for fraternities and co-ops only last summer, has been Panhellenic adviser since 1962. Despite the fact that two sororities have closed during the last three years because of insufficient membership, Anderson said the number of women in sororities has not decreased in the last six or seven years.

The number of women rushees (prospective members) also has remained stable at between 525 and 550 each fall, she said. Of this number, between 475 and 500 usually pledge.

Why don't the others join sororities? Anderson offered several explanations:

- Some women go through rush week only to meet other women already on campus.
- Some decide they can't afford it.



--Family emergencies arise during rush week, causing women to drop out.

But this year, the figures don't seem to jive.

Anderson said that of 570 women who applied for Rush Week last summer, 378 pledged. Eight dropped out before rush began; 13 decided to participate in open rush; 42 did not pay the registration fee (\$10 for Lincoln girls; \$35 for girls living in the Rush Week dormitory); nine had no intention of pledging in the first place; four decided to attend another university; 33 chose not to pledge a particular house or were unsure about the Greek system.

Other women could not participate because they did not graduate in the upper half of their high school class, a requirement for women who go through rush.

Two years ago, the Panhellenic Council voted to lower the number of women who could live in a sorority from 90 to 85.

"But there is nothing magical about the number 85 or 90," Anderson said. "However, we feel that it is very difficult to have any kind of close feeling in a group much larger than 90."

"We talk to almost every girl who decides not to pledge during Rush Week," said Anderson. "Almost all tell us they had a great time during Rush Week, but just aren't ready to pledge."

Anderson said that any year between 60 and 80 women participate in informal (open) rush. However, she could cite no figures on how many women actually joined a sorority during open rush.

She also said her office kept no running tally of how many girls depledge or deactivate from sororities, but there were many reasons for such a decision. Among them:

-A girl may feel she made too hasty a decision about the house she joined.

-She finds her academic load heavier than anticipated.

-A family setback may necessitate a cutback on funds, dropping out of school or living with relatives.

Anderson said UNL fraternities pledged 412 men in summer rush and 112 during their Rush Week.

Neither Anderson or Interfraternity Council president Dave McBride could cite other figures concerning fraternities. However, there is no restriction of members in a fraternity, and criteria for pledging or initiation are much more relaxed.

For example, it doesn't matter where a prospective male pledge stands in his high school graduating class. To be initiated into most sororities, Anderson said, a woman must have attained at least a 2.2 average. Some fraternities have no such restriction.

Anderson said the Greek membership at UNL compares favorably or a little better to Greeks nationwide. She said she could not estimate the number of Greeks nationally.

However, she said that in the past few years, the number of Greeks nationwide has been on the upswing.

"On campuses you'd least expect—Berkeley, Ohio State, Michigan State—students are going back to the fraternities and sororities," she said.

She admitted that the number of Greeks nationally declined in the mid-60s.

"There was great confusion on the campus scene. People were not concerned with the living-learning situation a Greek house has to offer. People then were more concerned with state, national and international issues. It was not an 'in' thing at that time to belong to an organized group," she said.

But Anderson indicated that, for many, the answer to "So who want a pin?" might well continue to be, "I do," now and in years to come at UNL.