

# Value of 'little sister's' challenged and defended

By Sue Brown

Posters line residence hall walls and sorority foyers inviting women to "be a little sis," as many UNL fraternities announce the start of their little sister rush programs.

According to various fraternities which have little sister programs, the organizations are of both a service and social nature. Little sister programs are open to women from sororities, residence halls and off-campus housing.

Although 16 fraternities have little sister organizations, Jayne Wade Anderson, coordinator of sororities, fraternities and cooperatives said there is no recognition of little sister affiliations by national sororities. According to Anderson, this is an agreement made at the National Panhellenic conference.

Anderson said she feels that "these auxiliary groups are not legally sound." She said she is concerned that a woman might someday ask for actual membership in the fraternity.

### Own members capable

"I guess that I have a lack of understanding why it is imperative for an organization to have assistance when it has members who are perfectly capable of providing it."

Panhellenic vice-president Kelley Bowen said "Nationally, sororities do not look upon little sister organizations as a legitimate activity." This refers to an activities resume, sent to an individual's national sorority headquarters, in which case, little sister affiliations would not be accepted.

Bowen also suggested that little sister organizations might split the pledge class because several pledges may be little sisters to different fraternities. Bowen said it is especially important for freshmen to initially "channel their energy and efforts towards the sorority or university."

According to the members of little sister organizations, rush consists typically of three parties, the first of which is held at the fraternity in an effort to get acquainted with fraternity members and other little sisters. Additional parties range from picnics to wine and cheese tasting parties to scavenger hunts.

### Size varies

Little sisters from the fraternities interviewed said the number of women a fraternity will elect to have as new little sisters depends on the amount of women going through rush, how many little sisters are active in the house, and the size of the fraternity.

Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity on east campus traditionally has kept its little sister program small; membership is currently at 24 members, said Teresa Vance, little sister rush chairman.

"Everybody knows everybody else," she said. "They develop real brother-sister relationships."

According to Vance, the "Rho-mates," as they are called, help the fraternity members decorate for parties, participate in charity drives such as Honey Sunday, and frequently come to visit at the house. Such activities are common among other little sister programs on both campuses.

### Taste of Greek life

Vance, a Burr-Fedde resident, said she believes she has had a taste of both Greek life and dorm life. "Of course there's the social activities," she said, but added she also feels the security of a home.

An Alpha Tau Omega little sister, who

did not wish to be identified, said she feels that little sister programs have "all the advantages of a sorority without the time and money commitment." She was able to meet women from every sorority house as well as other independents. She also said it is one of the best ways to promote interaction between the sororities.

"We are really sisters to the guys," said a little sister of a city campus fraternity. "They can talk to us about girlfriend problems or even ask us to help them pick out a gift for their mom - to get the female point of view," she added.

Eight UNL fraternities do not sponsor a little sister program.

### Bylaws conflict

According to Bill Singer, secretary of Phi Delta Theta, a little sister program would be impossible at this time because of the national by-laws of their fraternity. There would be a possibility of starting a little sister program if the laws were changed at national convention, but it is not often discussed because of the existing rule, he added.

It is the preference of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity not to have a little sister program according to fraternity president, Jeff Williamson.

"We believe it takes a lot of work to have a good one," said Williamson, "not that we wouldn't be willing to do the work."

He said his main concern is whether women really feel a little sister program is worthwhile after their freshmen year.

Although apathy after freshmen year was the reason several women interviewed quit their organization, the problem of too little time seemed to be a common factor.

"I just didn't have the time to go to all the functions, let alone go over to the house to visit. I felt like I was letting the guys down, so I got out," said one woman who quite in her sophomore year. She did admit she was happy as a little sister and still considers some of the fraternity members as close friends.

Another said that no matter what any one else thinks she believes little sisters are in essence "a dating pool for the guys." She added that although some women may have enjoyed such social advantages, she did not have time for such an organization when there are other activities to get involved in on campus.

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