

# Sigma Nu refuses to comment on article about gay member

**FRATERNITY from page 1**

Lutich, a former president of Chi Phi fraternity, did talk to the Daily Nebraskan.

In fact, he said he was glad the Daily Nebraskan story was being written.

"(I came out) because it was the truth," Lutich said. "It's a truth that people haven't recognized in the past. This is something no one can deny anymore."

Lutich said he realized doing the article would draw attention to Chi Phi fraternity, but he said his individuality was important, too.

"The fraternity system is a heterosexual system," Lutich said. "I have nothing but gratitude for the men in my house. If it wasn't for Chi Phi, I probably wouldn't have had the strength to come out."

Lutich said he didn't view Sigma Nu's silence as a lack of support for their fraternity brother, or Grigsby's silence as anything other than supporting the decision of

his house.

"We're not the first people in fraternities to come out, but we're the first to draw attention to it," Lutich said. "It's a new wrinkle to public relations."

Chi Phi President Jason Bottlinger also spoke to the Daily Nebraskan.

Bottlinger said he was proud of Lutich.

"It takes a lot of bravery to do what he's doing," Bottlinger said. "We've tried to be as helpful as we can be. Everyone in the house has been real supportive."

"He's one of our brothers - that's the most important thing."

George Wolf, associate professor of English at UNL and a gay rights activist, compared the gay issue in fraternities now with the 1960s when UNL's Greek system was working to racially desegregate.

Wolf said fraternities and sororities are generally cautious about adjusting to social change, but he thought Sigma Nu would adjust given time.

"It's unfortunate given the national recognition of this article that they don't recognize the human need to be supportive of their brother now," Wolf said. "I

would hope, given a week or two of thoughtfulness, they would come around."

Terrence Batiste, a gay UNL freshman, said Sigma Nu's silence reflects poorly on the house and the Greek system as a whole.

"It shows the Greek system is extremely homophobic," said Batiste, who volunteers for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center. "They're afraid they're going to be seen as the gay fraternity."

In the Rolling Stone article, Willbanks said having a gay member would affect men who wanted to rush.

"I think the guys worried about it getting out because it does kill rush," Willbanks said in the article. "It's a sad state when one brother coming out in the house can kill rush, but it's the truth."

Batiste said he had wanted to rush a fraternity, but didn't because he knew the attitude fraternity members had toward gays. He didn't want to have to hide who he was, he said.

"I'd love to be in a fraternity," Batiste said, "and I think I have a lot to offer campus. But I refuse to waste my resources on a place that doesn't want me."

*"I'm comfortable with the way it portrays the university. We would be dishonest if we didn't say some people in the Greek system would have a problem with a fraternity brother or a sorority sister being gay."*

**James Griesen**  
UNL vice chancellor for student affairs

Batiste, who said he plans to run for a student government seat in the spring, said the Greek system is afraid it will lose its credibility on campus if houses recognize openly gay members.

Sigma Nu's refusal to comment on the Rolling Stone article, and the lack of minorities in fraternities, gives him a bad image of the Greek system, he said.

"Had I known what it was like before I came here, I would've gone to a much more diverse (school)," Batiste said.

Linda Schwartzkopf, director of Greek Affairs, was out of the office for health reasons, and said through her secretary on Wednesday that she wasn't up to making a comment, but felt comfortable with the story running without her opinion.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, said the Rolling Stone article was an accurate portrayal of the Greek system at UNL. "I'm comfortable with the way

it portrays the university," Griesen said. "We would be dishonest if we didn't say some people in the Greek system would have a problem with a fraternity brother or a sorority sister being gay."

Griesen said he saw the article as two stories - students who supported Grigsby and Lutich and those who didn't.

The article didn't cast UNL in an unfavorable light at all, Griesen said. But he wouldn't comment as to why Sigma Nu members won't talk about it.

"I don't know what it means," Griesen said. "I don't want to speculate on that."

Katherine Marsh, the reporter who wrote the Rolling Stone article, said it took her close to a year to get Grigsby to agree to do the story.

"He was unsure if he wanted to do it initially," Marsh said. "He was sensitive about his house and wanted their support, which was wise."

Marsh said once she was let inside the subculture of the UNL Greek system, she was amazed at the hidden number of gays in the system.

"You hear about a whole other community of people who aren't out yet," she said. "You get a sense of the unseen population of it. That was really interesting."

Marsh said Rolling Stone editors were initially interested in the Q, Lincoln's gay bar, and then wondered what gay life was like in Lincoln.

At the Q, Marsh found a UNL student who steered her in the right direction of people who might be willing to talk with her for a story.

"I found a friendly community out there," Marsh said. "But it took time to find people."

Lutich said he welcomed the chance to tell his story to a national magazine.

"It says that we're here," Lutich said. "Even in Nebraska, there are gay people."

But there is more to the story than that, Lutich said.

"To me, this is about a university - maybe we are more accepting than people think we are," he said. "Maybe the idea we are extremely homophobic is only there because no one's challenged it."

Wednesday night, Sindelar, the Sigma Nu president, and Grigsby still refused to comment.

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