

Official Exoteric Publication of Alpha Rho Chi Fraternity

MEMBER OF PROFESSIONAL INTERFRATERNITY CONFERENCE

Alpha Rho Chi fraternity was founded at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan on April 11, 1914. It is a social undergraduate fraternity limiting its membership to students of architecture, architectural engineering, landscape architecture, or the allied arts, enrolled in the departments leading to a bachelor's degree. The name Alpha Rho Chi is derived from the first five letters in Architecture. The title of the magazine is derived from the same source.

EFFLO E. EGGERT, A.I.A., Managing Editor

To Our Alumni

WE ARE trying to put a copy of this sheet in the hands of every one of our alumni. We are bound to miss a good many because of the lack of proper addresses, so will you not, as you see other alumni or by means of alumni meetings, bring this matter to their attention so that they can take a part in the discussion? If you have recent addresses, please send them to the ARCHI Editor so that we can forward copies to the new addresses.

We want each alumnus to know how the Fraternity is faring and we want to know from each alumnus, if possible, what he thinks of the situation and what he suggests should be done. We do not need to tell you that the times have been hard and that the Fraternity has suffered with everything else; the Grand Council has tried to do everything possible to hold the Fraternity together and is still doing so and some of the results are encouraging; nevertheless the Grand Council cannot be held responsible for the entire Fraternity, and unless the alumni in particular give the Fraternity their support, we do not hesitate to say that it is on its way out.

PRESENT SITUATION

As things stand now we have seven active chapters—Anthemios, Iktinos, Demetrios, Mnesicles, Andronicus, Dinocrates and Polyklitos. Some of these chapters are in excellent condition and some are just struggling to get back onto their feet. The present indications are, however, that at least six, and perhaps all seven, of these chapters will survive the depression. We think this is a good nucleus to build on, and as a matter of fact there seem to be one or more opportunities for new chapters. As in the past, petitions will be accepted only where we think there is a good chance for a successful Archi chapter.

In the case of several of the chapters just mentioned, their revival can be directly traced to activity of the alumni in supporting, encouraging and advising a weakened active chapter. In the

case of several other chapters, however, there is the complaint that the alumni have left them to sink or swim.

SUGGESTIONS

It is the opinion of the Grand Council that the next year or two years should be given over to a reorganization of the Fraternity providing we can obtain the support of our entire membership. We think that this reorganization should be done along the following lines.

1. A re-statement of our **standards**.
2. What exactly is the purpose of the Fraternity in its relation to architectural **education**?
3. What place can the Fraternity take in the **profession and practice** of architecture?
4. New and younger **leaders** are needed in the national offices.
5. A reorganization of our **machinery of operation** seems advisable.

YOUR PART

We are not in this letter telling you what your part should be in this movement but are asking you.

The Grand Council is the trustee for the Fraternity; it is not the Fraternity itself and should reflect in its management the opinion and desires of the members. If the members are indifferent as to the success of the Fraternity, why should the Grand Council worry? If on the other hand there is a demand for aggressive leadership from the members, then the Grand Council should provide that leadership.

In the last analysis, however, the Grand Council is only a matter of two or three individuals and we need aggressive leadership all over the country if we are to maintain a fraternity with the standards to which we have always aspired.

We are sending out 1400 of these sheets and we should like to

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have 1400 answers. If the reader who receives this copy does not answer, that means one less in the total of answers received.

Please let us hear from you whether your remarks are complimentary or uncomplimentary, pleasant or unpleasant.

Yours fraternally,
D. P. ELY, W.G.A.
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Dixon Ryan Fox, Union College President, Gives Views on Fraternities

Reprint *The Shield* of Phi Kappa Psi

THE circumstance that each of us lives but seventy years or so and that the period of our philosophical understanding and full productive power is considerably less, may give to each generation an over-quickened sense of the importance of its own half-century.

To the actors, playing their brief parts on this immemorial stage, the drama seems always at a bewildering crisis.

In the American colleges, where active membership for most is but four years, the sense of crisis is at once more constant and more poignant. Just at this moment, for example, it seems as though the foundations of old and solid college custom were

crumbling and that collapse were imminent. We are apt to forget that in the long view of time our present modes are not very venerable. Our present fraternity system, with its stately residences, its formal officialdom, its disciplinary rules, and its diplomatic agreements, is but a little over a century old. There is no assurance that an institution which has seemed to fit American needs in the past will fit changed needs in the future.

But it would be inhuman folly to throw over an institution with millions of members and \$75,000,000 worth of property simply because the undergraduates in a few colleges felt no need of it in its present form. There is a sharp challenge here and there, and it may be that fraternities are not adapted to all places and conditions, but we need to guard against contagious

To Our Alumni

D. P. Ely, W.G.A.
802 Buckeye Bldg.
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Brother Ely:

I have received the Alumni copy of THE ARCHI and wish to make the following comments and suggestions along the lines mentioned.

Yours fraternally,

Name Address

Chapter

If more space is needed attach extra sheets, plain paper

panic. We need calmly to assess the human worth of fraternities in fundamental values before we consider anywhere their deliberate abandonment. And if abandoned in the special circumstances of one place, it does not follow at all that general abandonment is good national policy. Because one generation of inexperienced undergraduates does not recognize the spiritual nourishment of fraternities, it does not follow that educational leaders in college and fraternity staffs should throw up their hands in despair and close them out. By modifying surface adjustments can we not save a basic good to whose existence a century's experience may properly be assumed to give some testimony? Prudence indicates a patient and unhurried study rather than an hysterical spasm of destruction either by students or by faculties.

The artificial family, bound by a common but peculiar lore, is a very ancient institution. It exists in most primitive societies. It may be worthy or guilty according to its purposes, or it may be merely innocent in having no purpose at all. Secrecy suggests a power that cannot be estimated by outsiders and which therefore they may fear as potentially dangerous. The anti-Masonic hysteria, which overtook this country just after college fraternities were born, was kindled by this fear. College presidents, doubting that lads from fourteen to eighteen years of age could be trusted with secrets, tried to stamp out what might be smoldering rebellion to good government. President Hitchcock of Amherst collected the opinion of his contemporaries in 1846.

Coming as I do from the college which mothered fraternities, I am especially interested in the witness of good Dr. Nott, its president and, in his time, the foremost college executive in the country: "We once discountenanced and endeavored to suppress them, and they were visibly suppressed, but existed in a still worse form. . . . So far as I have seen, all direct opposition here only aggravated the evil, and latterly my efforts have been directed to the modification and direction, rather than to the extermination, of these societies which I have always regarded as an evil, latterly as an evil inseparable from an assembly of young men."

Up to the time of the Civil War few, if any, college presidents were fraternity men.

* * * *

It was only in the later decades of the Nineteenth Century, when college executives could many of them look back with understanding gratitude upon their own active membership, that fraternities were accepted as desirable adjuncts of the college enterprise.

But at this time, with plenty of alumni to finance them, came substantial houses. While college presidents welcomed them as aids in meeting dormitory costs, they suspected them as loafing parlors. With larger and finer houses came the imputation of luxury and snobbery. With these survived the old arraignment of fraternities as tending to break up the student body into cliques. With the pressing cost of maintaining large establishments there was a need of constancy in membership, and with pledges representing indispensable economic assets critics plausibly alleged that fraternities became mere travesties upon their names; that boys were hurried into life allegiances, theoretically sacred, with men they did not know and who did not know them, oftentimes with most unhappy consequences; that the theory of similarity in view and purpose became a farce; that from the college point of view the cliques were largely artificial. In recent years has come the further charge that national fraternities, scattered over the country, tend to standardize a type and impose a tyranny of conformity in dress, manner and social outlook, stul-

tifying individuality and useful variation. Certain college executives are wondering if their students are not exploited by the national fraternity organization and if they do not pay heavy national dues for which they get no commensurate return. How far all this is true and how whatever is wrong can be corrected constitute the fraternity problem.

Attacks on fraternities can proceed from three sources; the outside world, the student bodies, and the college administrations. Attack from without comes through adverse legislation, especially affecting state-supported institutions. This has flared and flickered from time to time, but does not at present, I think, loom as a real danger to fraternities. The attitude of student bodies is by far the most important. If students conclude that they are noxious and useless and do not want to join them, they will speedily die of starvation. This, like all other possible menaces, must be met by the demonstration of genuine value. It is the attitude of college administrations which particularly concerns us here. Few college administrators will set out suddenly to crush fraternities by direct methods. Few could comfortably lodge and feed all the fraternity students if the houses were abolished. Few could provide with college resources so rich a social life as members of the better fraternities now enjoy. Most executives realize, I think, that fraternities have high potentialities of excellence if they and the college work well together. The fruitful course is clearly to mark these possible excellencies and encourage them, rather than to worry about defects.

The first essential for coöperation and, I think, the first necessity for fraternities if they are to continue to live, is the fundamental agreement on all sides that the fraternity is a subordinate part of the college, and that its members are primarily members of the college. The multiplication of loyalties will disintegrate personality if one's loyalties compete and conflict. The college fraternity obviously cannot exist without the college, whereas the college must precede and envelop the fraternity. This would be as fundamentally true if every college student in America were a fraternity man. Loyalty to the college is the natural price the fraternity pays for existence and the member's loyalty is federalized, as it were through the chapter to the college community; in a vaguer and more general way his loyalty to the national organization is federalized to the American college idea.

All this logic, building on the axiom that the whole is greater than the part, does not deny that the fraternity is not in some cases the most important part of the college experience. Nearly all fraternities are known to have high and positive ideals and college executives could wish for little more than that each member should be wholly true to them. These ideals stabilize character firmly and finely, oftentimes, and every president and every dean should be glad indeed that they are operating in his college. The only objection that one can find in the history of college education is that these ideals were an inferior substitute for the principles of the Christian church. Doubtless this still persists in certain quarters, but it does not figure prominently in the "fraternity problem."

The wise executive, as we have intimated, esteems the fraternities as giving their members wholesome values that they could not get otherwise. The well-conducted chapter is a moral gymnasium where is prescribed the daily exercise of the virtues of helpfulness which, well developed, the graduate will take with him and apply in the relations of the larger life outside. The fraternity is not a mere mutual benefit society, but a training school in the technique of benefit, a training school in the finest citizenship. As part of its work it is a training school in manners, in urbanity—

the dramatization of good will. I have no fear of national standardization in manners if the standardization is upward. If out of competitive pride a house seeks to be distinguished for good manners it is wholly fortunate for the college; the gesture tends to produce an appropriate sentiment behind it as well as the sentiment to produce the gesture.

Not only does good tradition in character and its fine expression work more potently in fraternity houses than elsewhere, but that tradition is, or at least should be stimulated by the national organization.

* * * *

Every college executive well knows that fraternities can and do help in the general conduct of the institution. The heads of houses are virtually student deans and in at least one college enjoys that honorific title. In many instances they lay upon underclassmen a régime of stated study hours which in the interest of the fraternity's good name they willingly accept. The academic grades of all in the chapter, in some places at least, are periodically reported to the house, and the scholarship committee is ready with personal help as well as admonition. A word from the dean's office to the national organization as to the persistently low rating of a chapter usually brings persuasive pressure that college administrators could scarcely bring to bear. Problems of individual discipline often disappear after a quiet talk between the dean and the head of a house. Suggestions as to student custom discreetly given to fraternity leaders produce wholesome changes.

It is because of all this educational worth that colleges and universities place at the disposal of fraternities plots of ground upon their campuses and loan money on their building projects.

Probably fraternities help scholarship as much as they hinder it. Naturally, fraternity men take a large part in the public affairs of the college. They are more socially minded. If, then, they keep above the average of the college, as they usually do, they are doing well, for they are also getting much from their campus contacts. There is much to learn in the students' college as well to learn in the professor's college. There is, however, nothing in fraternity life that prevents high distinction in academic studies.

At Union College, for example, we have just elected eight men to Phi Beta Kappa out of a class of 163. Seven of the eight men are fraternity men.

Snobbery is a serious charge against fraternities and is, unhappily, often justified. Snobs are those who wish for themselves privileges denied to others of equal intrinsic merit, calculate the value of friendships on the basis of their aid in gaining such privileges and seek to magnify their own importance by public disdain of those they think they are helping to exclude.

A fraternity of snobs is likely to become ridiculous on any American campus, as it should be, and college executives, within the bounds of good taste, may very properly help along the ridicule in hope of therapeutic effect.

But the maintenance of standards is not necessarily snobbish. Most of us like to have about us men of cultivated sense and, other things being equal, men who use good English, dress with some esthetic propriety, and who observe the reasonable rules of courteous deportment. At the same time it needs to be pointed out to college men by their teachers and others that some of their richest friendships may possibly develop with fellow-students who lack these graces. "A man's a man for a' that," and yet it may be remembered that "a' that" is much more easily gained now than

it was in Burns's day and that its absence is somewhat less excusable.

There are some who object to fraternities, it seems, because not all students enjoy their advantages. This sentiment is not quite so illogical as it sounds. It implies that the non-fraternity man is oppressed with a sense of denial. It may be assumed that there are many men who are not fashioned for coöperation and do not care to get or give it. Geniuses, for example, are not generally gregarious. Many men are too busy with necessary outside work. Many men are too poor. Many think fraternity engagements would limit their sphere of friendship. To this last I may say that any fraternity man who confines his friendships to his chapter or to fraternity men in general is exceedingly foolish. If, however, the non-fraternity men—"neutrals" is a cruel word; "independents" is a much better name—if these men are really under-privileged, the college should do something about it.

If a fraternity house is the only place on the campus where a man may draw up an easy chair beside a fire and talk with other men, the only place in the college where he can eat an inexpensive meal with dignity, then it is the college that is at fault and not the fraternities. If there is no seemly place where all college men may gather, and, indeed, want to gather from time to time, the college is scarcely doing its part.

On the other hand, neither the college nor the fraternity can do much for the social experience of the man who has to make a day school of the college, the man who has to hurry from a distant home in the morning, satchel and lunch box in hand, and hurry home in the afternoon. He may be getting a rich benefit from the classroom and he may enjoy a rich cultural life at home, but he is not a full member of the college community as we know it. It is the business of the administration to bring its student body into as large a measure of social life as it can. I do not think it will find fraternities a serious obstacle.

Next to the training in getting on with other people at close quarters and the moral improvement that comes from fraternity ideals, the advantage most widely and justly claimed for fraternities is training in self-government. Part of this training comes in solving problems of finance. On this, however, let me offer several observations.

First, chapter houses are generally too costly and too heavily mortgaged for the health of the chapter graduate and undergraduate, the trouble coming from the competition for display.

Second, chapter houses should be endowed for part of their running expenses, just as a college is endowed, and as national fraternity organizations should be endowed.

Third, chapters who are long unwilling or unable to pay their bills should be closed out. There could be no training more demoralizing for a young man or a company of young men than four years of dodging butchers and grocers and plumbers. Such a school of dead beats is a curse to any college and particularly to its own men, and the college and the national organization, if it cannot assist this vicious state, should coöperate in persuading such a failure into a demise as swift and graceful as possible.

Gentlemen, I have come to a college presidency after fifteen years as a national fraternity officer and I have come as a believer in fraternities. But I am convinced that if wise leadership falters they may degenerate into uselessness and death, like any other human institution. But the wise leadership must come from the colleges and the national fraternities and in coöperation. And in authority the colleges come first.