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For each generation of college students, the question of fraternities poses a problem. It was not too many decades ago when some writers painted college fraternities as dens of iniquity in which wine, women, and song corrupted the morals of our youth. The pro-fraternity writers, on the other hand, presented the fraternity as the one social organization where students could learn the true meaning of camaraderie, where a man could make contacts that would serve him for his lifetime.

But in each generation, the questions about fraternities change. Today's college student is "a different critter." For the most part he tends to be anti-organization — unless it's an *ad hoc* organization. He is likely to ask whether fraternities deserve to live. In this issue, you will find a variety of views about fraternities — opinions from students and from faculty, from old-timers and from those who have just graduated. We believe that you'll find these opinions interesting, particularly when you look back to "your day."



On the cover: The artist depicts the quandary in which every Washington and Lee freshman finds himself. Which fraternity should he join? Or should he remain an independent? When you are forty or fifty years old, this may not seem like a major decision, but at age 18 — when you are still relatively new to the campus and want desperately to savor every part of campus life — it is a question of great import.

fraternities at the crossroads

by
LEWIS G. JOHN
Dean of Students

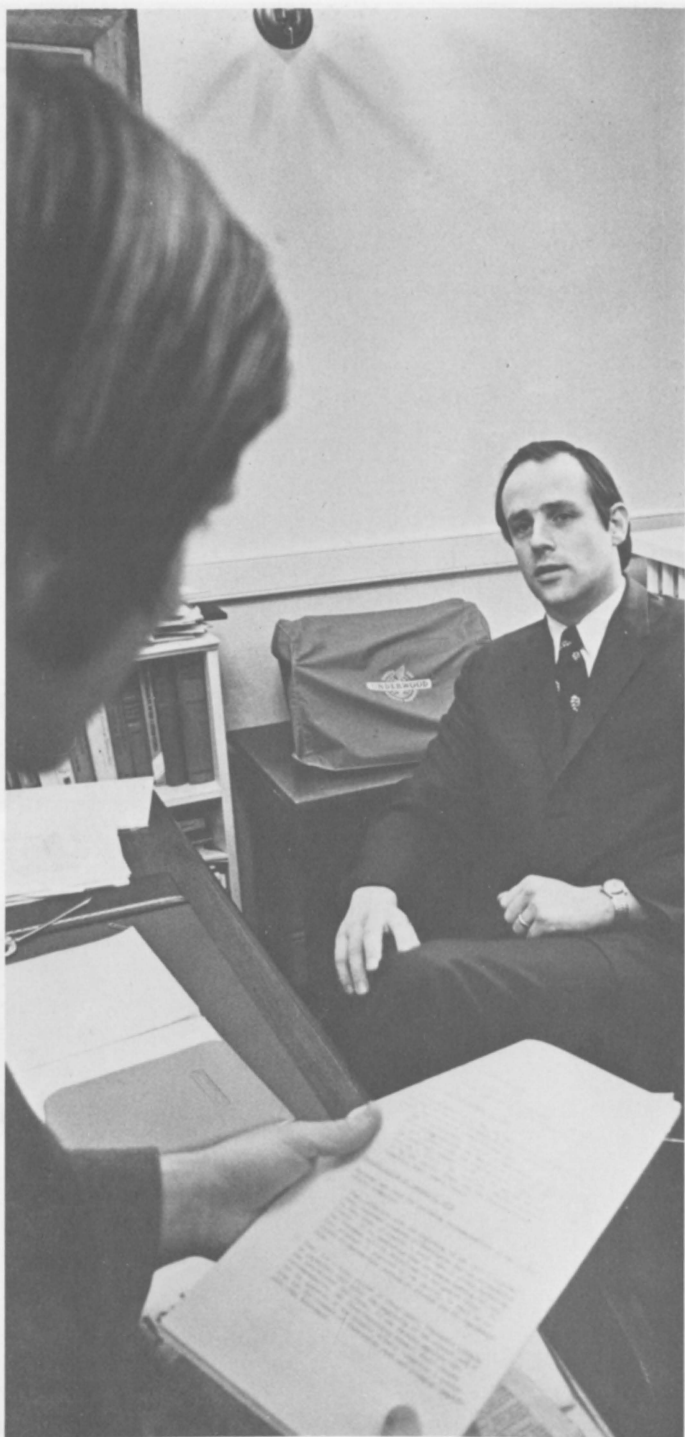
As the Washington and Lee administrator most directly responsible for student activities outside the classroom, Dean John is intimately acquainted with fraternity affairs. In this article he discusses the difficulties fraternities at W&L are encountering, the University's policy towards fraternities, and offers some opinions about their future. He is a 1958 graduate of Washington and Lee and has been Dean of Students since July, 1969.

Fraternities on the Washington and Lee campus, as on many college campuses across the country, have reached a crossroads during this first academic year of the new decade of the 1970's. Not only will the fate of our individual fraternity chapters be decided during the next few years, but so also will that of the fraternity system as a whole. The direction that they take can be determined only by the response of the individual fraternities and, through the Interfraternity Council, the fraternity system as a whole, to the changing conditions and student needs on the campus today.

Last spring it appeared for a time that the entire fraternity system was on the brink of collapse. In short order, Kappa Sigma and Kappa Alpha folded, and Sigma Phi Epsilon was forced to move from the chapter house because of reduced membership and financial problems. Several other houses were plagued by poor financial management and substantial budgetary deficits. Rumors spread like wildfire on the campus about the imminent collapse of various other fraternities, and the outlook for extended fall rush was bleak.

The new academic year has brought a considerably brighter outlook, however, and the situation has stabilized somewhat. Extended rush over the first six weeks of the fall term was not the disaster that many had predicted. Approximately 65 per cent of the freshman class pledged fraternities in late October, down only 10 per cent from 1969. The Interfraternity Council and its Judicial Board have demonstrated that they are indeed responsible bodies, and they are working cooperatively to overcome some of the problems common to all of the fraternities.

Beyond these hopeful signs, however, major challenges loom, and the long-range outlook for fraternities remains somewhat clouded. Some of today's more liberal students, in their search for greater individuality and with their anti-organization bias, tend to reject fraternities as over-structured and discredited fossils of the past. As a lower



percentage of freshmen pledge fraternities — and then as some upperclass as well as freshman students deactivate and leave fraternities — memberships decline. The University Center, in many students' views, makes fraternities less necessary than in the past.

One basic problem of individual fraternities is financial. As the chapters attempt to maintain 15 separate kitchens, each serving a relatively small number of members, budgetary entries for food and kitchen help have become the major items, usually over 50 per cent and in some cases approaching 70 per cent, of a fraternity's total budget. Salaries must be kept competitive if suitable help is to be hired. The impact of inflation in all areas of fraternity life, together with a reduced number of members, results in a growing financial squeeze.

A second basic problem is that of meeting the changing and varied needs of today's students. The total range of student needs — not just social — must be provided for. In the final analysis, the survival of fraternities may depend, first, on their finding ways to overcome the growing financial problems, and second, on their willingness to alter their basic philosophy, as well as their activities, to justify their survival by meeting these varied needs of today's students.

University Policy

Current University policy toward fraternities is one of positive support and active encouragement. Contrary to the opinion that some observers have expressed, the University is not "out to get fraternities," and the position of the University is certainly *not* anti-fraternity. Through a variety of means, the University attempts to promote fraternity welfare as an important part of the overall life of the University.

At the same time, the University cannot guarantee fraternity survival and will not promise to bail out fraternities whenever they get into trouble. University loans, for example, are never made for repayment of current fraternity indebtedness. Washington and Lee will not attempt to isolate fraternities from the economic and social pressures that all in higher education and elsewhere feel. There is great danger, I think, in looking upon a fraternity as a snug ivory tower to which one can retreat from the problems of the campus and from the problems of society in general. A

The Interfraternity Council faces the problems of declining membership, rush regulations, centralized food purchasing, and the quality of fraternity life.



balanced approach is necessary so as not to relieve individuals and campus groups from feeling a sense of responsibility for their actions.

Washington and Lee in its overall policy is attempting to provide for its students a diversity of facilities and opportunities, with viable alternatives for living accommodations and social life. Through the University Center, automobile regulations, and hopefully through the construction of additional upperclass dormitory facilities within the next few years, Washington and Lee has and can provide such viable alternatives. This University has not always fulfilled its obligations in this area. For many years, responsibility for the housing and feeding of students, as well as providing for their social life, was abdicated to the fraternities. The construction of the University Center was not an anti-fraternity action, but rather was viewed within the total perspective of an obligation to provide a place for all elements of the University community to gather together, as well as to provide for the social life of those students who chose not to belong to fraternities.

Washington and Lee support and encouragement of fraternities is demonstrated most concretely in its current policies regarding University loans to fraternities. Mortgages on most fraternity houses are held by the University at the extremely favorable interest rate of 4 per cent. Given today's market conditions, this rate entails a substantial subsidy of fraternities by the University.

In 1966, the Board of Trustees approved a policy to provide loans for needed renovation of existing fraternity houses, or in extraordinary circumstances, for additions or replacement. Such a mortgage loan is granted at an interest rate of 4 per cent, amortized over a 25-year period, and secured by a first mortgage on the fraternity house.

Each borrowing fraternity is also required to pay 3 per cent per year of the appraised replacement value of the house into a maintenance fund. The University will make semi-annual inspections of each house to determine the need for maintenance work and report this need to the chapter. The accumulated funds will be released only when both the University and the chapter agree that the expenditure is warranted, except that the University may operate unilaterally if the condition of the house endangers the University's investment. These funds can be used only for major maintenance of the houses, and specifically excluded

are expenditures on such things as furnishings and breakage.

When only a small number of fraternities applied for loans under this policy, it became apparent that an additional policy for smaller loans was necessary because of the uncertain financial future of many of the chapters. Upon recommendation of the University Fraternity Loan Committee, therefore, the Board of Trustees at its meeting of October 10, 1970, adopted a new policy under which a fraternity may borrow a maximum of \$20,000 at an interest rate of 7 per cent, to be amortized over a 10-year period. Loans under this program will be approved only where the University holds the first mortgage on the property and only for renovation which is essential to allow the fraternity to continue to accommodate and feed the same approximate number of students accommodated in the past. As also provided in the earlier policy, University officials will inspect the existing structure and review the planned renovation to insure that the proposed expenditure is a reasonable one, and the financial capacity of the chapter will be a determining criterion for the granting of a loan. It is hoped that this new policy will meet the needs of additional fraternities for renovations in their existing structures.

Washington and Lee recognizes the attractions that apartment living holds for upperclass students, with the greater freedom, privacy, and opportunity for those students to create their own environment without restrictions. It is because of these advantages associated with apartment living that many members have left the fraternity houses. As a consequence of these and other considerations of student responsibility, parietal regulations (visitation of women in the houses in particular) have been liberalized considerably during the past few years. The faculty at its November meeting delegated responsibility for the establishment of fraternity parietal regulations to the Interfraternity Council's Judicial Board and the University's Student Affairs Committee, composed of five students and five members of the faculty and administration. In this way, an official University committee retains general responsibility and review powers, but the initiative for drawing up such regulations and responsibility for their enforcement rest with the individual fraternity and the Judicial Board.

In regard to fraternity rush, the faculty has as its sole regulation that fraternity pledging is permitted only after the beginning of the seventh week of the 12-week fall term.

Within this framework, the Interfraternity Council has determined, with the approval of the Student Affairs Committee, its own rush regulations. The IFC is now conducting an evaluation of the procedures and regulations of this past fall, with the intention of making needed improvements for next year.

What of the Future?

In attempting to project the future of individual fraternities, as well as the fraternity system as a whole at Washington and Lee, it is important to remember that fraternities are no longer the social necessity on the Washington and Lee campus that they once were. Fraternities must fulfill the total range of student needs, rather than serve only as Saturday night party houses, to justify their continued existence here.

There will always be a need for student small-group association, and whether fraternities will continue to fill this need will depend in large part on the fraternities themselves. It is certain that the fraternities of the 1970's will be very different from those of the 1950's and even the 1960's. The question is whether they will still be around in the mid-and-late 1970's. The answer will have to come from the freshman students each year. The University administration cannot save them, and the alumni certainly will not. In the next few years, fraternities must make a strong case for their survival to the entering classes. Fraternities have contributed greatly to the Washington and Lee community and way of life in the past, and they can certainly continue to do so in the future — *if* they are adaptable and willing to make the necessary changes and improvements.

As the IFC Study Committee Report of last spring observed, students are now looking at fraternity membership as an investment and are evaluating it according to the quantity and quality of services provided. Rather than existing here solely on the basis of being necessary for an adequate social life, many are beginning to call for a new operating principle for the fraternity. In the Committee's words, "It must be able to provide the wide-range of choice for the satisfaction of individual interests; and the more varied the choice, the greater number of people who will be satisfied with their investment and who will be willing to continue membership."

The once wild scramble by fraternity men to make rush dates with freshmen has been made more leisurely by a new regulation that defers pledging until the seventh week of the Fall Term.

In this view, then, the fraternity must provide (1) a satisfactory, inexpensive eating arrangement, (2) a diverse, imaginative social program, and (3) a satisfactory intellectual environment.

Also, with a continuing need for small group association, we may well witness a return to "first causes" in fraternity life, with emphasis on the ideals of "brotherhood" and "fraternity" in the original meanings of those words. Fraternities have great potential for providing an environment in which the members sincerely care about and help each other and in which all members promote the maximum development and welfare of each individual brother.

As for the future status of fraternities on this campus, one can only speculate, but there are several possible alternatives. We might, of course, witness the total demise of fraternities as we know them now, although I do not consider this possibility very likely. Davidson, for one, has made the decision to



maintain small groups which would function as fraternities now function, but for which the basis of selection would be random assignment similar to the way in which room assignments are now made. This change, of course, would alter the basic self-selective nature of the fraternity system. At the other extreme, one might project the revival of interest in fraternities on this campus to the previous high of 18 chapters, with fraternity membership which would include over 80 per cent of the student body. This, also, I believe is an unlikely occurrence. Even if it were to come about, it is my personal opinion that it probably would not be in the best interests of the University because competition is essential to maintain needed diversity. Neither would it necessarily be in the best interests of the fraternity system itself because competition also provides the stimulus necessary for quality.

Two other, more likely possibilities remain. One is that the fraternity system might stabilize at the current level of partic-

ipation and that most of the fraternities we now have would remain. Much will depend upon the level of student interest, as well as upon the actions of the fraternities themselves. One significant problem would continue to be the financial squeeze, but this problem might be overcome to some extent by a centralization of kitchen facilities. A smaller number of centralized dining facilities might allow the current number of fraternities to become economically viable units. A final, and perhaps most likely, alternative is that the fraternity system might become stabilized at some lesser number of chapters. For financial and other reasons cited above, some additional fraternities could be forced to leave campus, and the system might then stabilize at this lower number. It could well be the case that the remaining houses would become stronger individual units, although a lower percentage of the student body would be members, and that the fraternity system itself would respond in creative and imaginative ways in furthering the overall educational development of the members.

The exact course that will be charted by the fraternities on this campus in the future is not yet clear. The policy of the University will remain one of tangible support and positive encouragement to fraternities as they make the changes necessary to remain viable and contributing parts of the University community.

A subcommittee of the University Self-Study Committee in 1965 stated the following:

"If after trying the proposed approaches to reform and improvement, the fraternity situation does not become more satisfactory, it seems probable that Washington and Lee would have to face up to the problem by the abolition of fraternities and the substitution of something else in their places."

Significant progress has been made during the past five years, and hopefully Washington and Lee will never be confronted with this possibility.

It has been, and shall continue to be, the policy of the Student Affairs Committee and the Office of the Dean of Students to provide positive support and affirmative guidelines as to the ideals, standards, and attitudes expected of Washington and Lee fraternities. It is my personal conviction and hope that the fraternity system will respond to the challenges facing it and will remain an important part of the educational process at Washington and Lee.



fraternities in question

Director of Public Information

by ROBERT S. KEEFE

Bob Keefe graduated from Washington and Lee in 1968 and returned to the campus last spring as Director of Public Information. He is a close observer of the W&L scene and in this article gives his impressions of the fraternity situation here. He is a former editor of the Ring-tum Phi and was a member of the Interfraternity Council.

What has happened to fraternities at Washington and Lee? Who is behind it? And why?



Robert S. Keefe stands in the front yard of the vacated Kappa Sigma house, now up for sale. The University is housing freshmen in two other vacated fraternity houses — Sigma Phi Epsilon and Kappa Alpha.

Sad to say, there is no easy answer. As a matter of fact, there is no pat, all-inclusive answer at all.

Two of Washington and Lee's 18 fraternities "folded" last year — two that seemed, as recently as 1965 or even 1968, to be as secure as any. Another narrowly managed to escape the same fate, and exists now only as a little lodge.

Almost every fraternity has had to adjust its lifestyle substantially this year, cutting and trimming and paring; and even so, a good many of them are still nervous about the future.

In the past three or four years, students have been depledging or deactivating at a severely damaging pace. That precipitated the immediate crisis last spring that did Kappa Alpha in. It forced Sigma Phi Epsilon to abandon its red-doored chapter house and move to less impressive quarters where its scope of operations could be narrowed. It was the final blow for Kappa Sigma, too, already severely hurt by its remote location, internal personnel and personality conflicts, and an unusually acute case of financial problems as well. Two years ago it threw Delta Upsilon into the gravest individual fraternity crisis of the 1960's. Not a house at Washington and Lee has escaped the dropout problem.

The economic consequences of mass disaffiliation are obvious. Operating costs don't go down proportionately, and everybody else's housebill sky-rockets. The members who had trouble meeting those bills *before* are, in effect, forced out now. And on the cycle goes.

But why those dropouts in the first place?

Here, too, there is no obvious place to point a finger. Evidence is that it's not

simply a reflection of the "liberal" and "conservative" split. (There are too many exceptions to that notion.)

It's hardly a conspiracy. A few people, most of them physically far removed from campus, hold the idea that faculty and administration are anti-fraternity down the line and are out, by God, to "get" the whole system. But there is a problem with the plot theory: even if the academic policy-makers were anti-fraternity — and they are not — they simply do not possess the power, much less the authority, to put external social institutions to death. Nor, perhaps lamentably, can they bring them back to life. Perhaps they could make life more difficult, but not impossible. The fact is, judging by what they say in public and — more significantly — in private, Washington and Lee's administrators and the overwhelming majority of its professors want very badly to see the fraternity system adapt itself so it can prosper, not die.

Certainly changing student values and attitudes have much to do with the crisis. There is undeniably less emphasis on hard-core partying, less on doing almost anything as a group — and so to the extent that Washington and Lee's fraternities choose to continue providing no opportunities beyond those, they are bound to remain in trouble. In this circumstance, of course, Washington and Lee provides nothing more than a case-study example of a national student phenomenon.

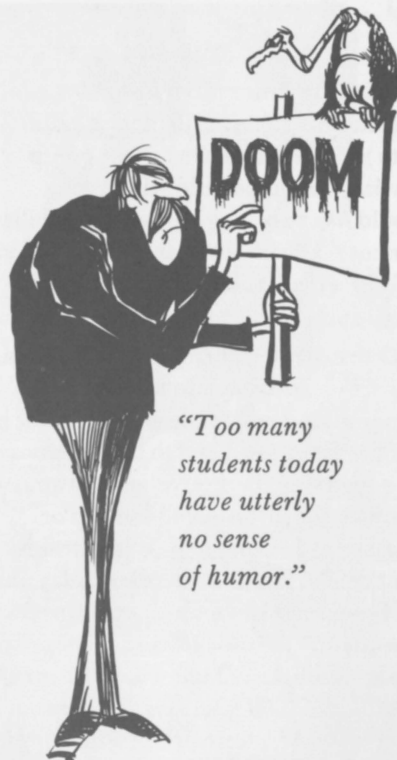
It is interesting and indicative that Washington and Lee men seldom any longer identify one another by fraternity affiliation. Whether it is good or bad that membership no longer serves sufficiently to characterize a student, the

change in descriptive style accurately mirrors the more basic change in both students and houses.

In the final analysis, there are as many reasons for the situation in which fraternities find themselves as there are members — and non-members. But if one insists on uncovering a sort of common denominator, it would almost have to be a version of the trite-but-true "New Mood of Youth" theory.

Bluntly put, many students are unwilling to be socially institutionalized.

Curiously enough, they feel — in direct opposition to what most students at Washington and Lee felt until perhaps the middle 1960's — that fraternities restrict their opportunities rather than expand them.



Independence to these students means association with whomever they choose, not with whomever the brothers voted to bid. It means coming and going when they please, not being required, for instance, to eat supper at 6 p.m. or forfeit it altogether. They see little of what they call "relevance" in house meetings, secret rituals, and national charters. They strongly and sincerely hold personal ideals and goals; a century-old set of fraternity ideals and goals, however acceptable in an abstract sense, is to these students either redundant or superfluous.

Washington and Lee's students are hardly unique in that sort of philosophical independence. Unless they had been brought up in utter isolation, they couldn't have avoided being exposed to it all their lives.

And they are hardly unique, either, in having been exposed to a peculiar new specific attitude held by numbers of their peers, an attitude that demeans those values commonly defined as the "fraternity spirit."

To the Woodstock generation, fraternities are an anachronism, a relic from the 1950's — an era which, to them, is long ago indeed. The values of the '50's are practically the polar opposite of the values of the '70's — panty raids versus political rallies (that contrast was widely commented on in the national press last spring); house parties and football games and bridge versus introspection and transcendental meditation and student-power rhetoric; pure fun and frivolity versus a dead serious, consuming fear for mankind and the world. Honestly, if perhaps wrongly, these students fail to see "fraternity" as meaning anything more than

blind hedonism and to hell with the "real world."

Too many students today have utterly no sense of humor, social commentators almost unanimously agree — and that, too, hurts fraternities. To survive in a house made up of dozens of different personalities, there are no two ways about it: you have to laugh easily and love to do it.

You have to tolerate and give in as often as not. Fraternity houses are hardly the place for adamants. Yet today's is a generation of students who have been taught that they know more of the answers than anybody else ever knew, that it is a sign of weakness to give in, that nothing is nobler than to do one's own thing. (And for that ingredient in the problem, it is their parents — not their peers — who are mostly accountable.)

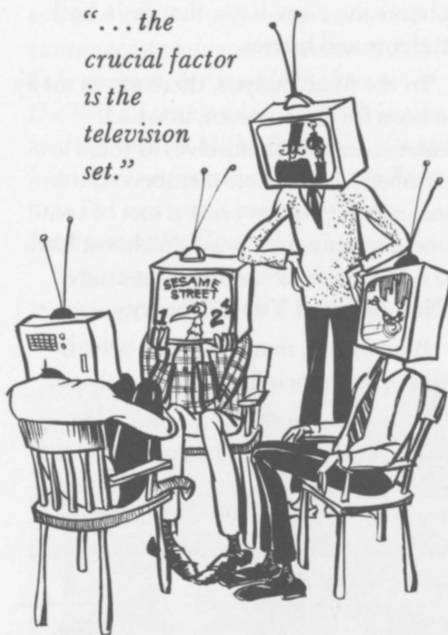
Not every student, of course, subscribes to the New Mood — certainly not the majority at Washington and Lee. But enough do, and the University not exempt, to have forced drastic changes in the fraternity system.

More practical matters are important in the situation, too.

The cost of going to college is a crucial factor, and it intensifies every day. With fixed operating expenses skyrocketing (never mind what it costs to *improve* college programs), and with contributions from alumni and friends going up not nearly in proportion, there is no alternative: increase tuition, and increase it to a greater degree than parents' incomes increase. In families where that means something has to give, it's often the son's fraternity membership.

So with a substantial proportion of

"... the crucial factor is the television set."



men leaving fraternities for philosophical reasons (or never joining to begin with), there is a distinct other group leaving simultaneously: those who would *like* to belong, but whose families cannot reasonably be asked or expected to bear a major additional expense for an essentially recreational purpose.

One ex-fraternity man wryly offers a novel theory to explain the decline of fraternities. He says the crucial factor is the television set. Used to be, he reasons, that men went to their fraternity houses as much for diversion of one sort or another as for anything. With the advent of TV, it quickly replaced play and bull sessions (which were becoming less fun anyway as students turned more and more to politics). That was fine through the middle 1960's, he says. TV sets, and later color TV, were prime selling points during rush and were the center of day-

to-day social life the whole rest of the year. But then parents began buying new TV sets back home, and giving the old ones to their sons in college. The result? According to our young friend, students can stay in their apartments to enjoy their primary diversion, not even having to argue over which channel to watch. And all for free.

Ridiculous? On its face, perhaps so. But somehow, that seems to be a not-entirely-absurd example of the new student attitude toward the old-time fraternity function.

The most difficult question and, of course, the most significant in the situation is: What has happened to the concepts of brotherhood, friendship, camaraderie?

There are a few students who scoff at those notions altogether or dismiss them as pure corn. More important, though, are the students who simply do not associate the two, fraternity and friendship. It is *no* easier to form friendships inside fraternities than out. (It is only more expensive). For whatever reasons — unprecedented diversity among students and therefore in houses probably the most important — fraternities are no longer the catalyst they once were for forming close and enduring friendships. Whether fraternities stopped providing that particular "service" first, or whether it began with students themselves who chose individually not to take advantage of the opportunities in the house, is probably unanswerable; it is certainly moot now anyway.

The only answer is a non-answer: That function, at least as much as any single other, is one that fraternities must begin fulfilling again — if they can, if they are to survive in recognizable form.

In this interview with the editors of W&L, Richard R. Fletcher discusses how fraternities are faring across the country—their problems, their strengths, their opportunities. Dick Fletcher has been executive secretary of Sigma Nu Fraternity, one of the largest, for the past 14 years, and last year was president of the College Fraternity Secretaries Association. Sigma Nu was founded at V.M.I. in 1869, and its national headquarters are in Lexington.

W & L: Fraternities are undergoing stress and strain on campuses across the nation. Is that a fair appraisal?

Fletcher: Very fair, I think. There have always been pressures, but they seem to be greater now.

W & L: Won't you discuss some of those pressures?

Fletcher: The biggest squeeze is on membership. Fraternities simply aren't appealing to as many students as in years past, and it isn't too hard to understand why.

The entering student today is a new breed of cat. Admissions officers know this, and so do many others. But the rank and file of fraternity chapters are either unwilling or unable to adjust their operation in order to appeal to him.

It's probably a waste of time to list the attributes of the new breed. They've been around more, seen more, done more, had more. They ask more questions . . . and they want more and better answers.

They're more likely to ask "Why Fraternity?" . . . but unfortunately less likely to get clear and persuasive answers.

Richard Fletcher, Sigma Nu national executive secretary, with The Rock, a Sigma Nu landmark.

only the programmers will have a tomorrow



They want the facts, evidence that fraternities are in fact doing what they've claimed to be doing for more than a century.

W & L: Why are they so suspicious?

Fletcher: It's part of a general attitude towards organizations. They are sick and tired of being "organized."

Ever since their prekindergarten days they've been involved in organized activities of one sort or another, in and out of school . . . dancing classes, music classes, sports classes, Cub Scouting, summer camping, Little League, Boy Scouts, Hi-Y . . . name it and they've been through it. They've been organized ever since they've been able to walk.

By the time they've reached their late teens they've had it. So they tend to feel that all organizations are suspect, posing threats to the individual liberty and freedom they seem to prize so highly.

Entering college provides a welcome opportunity to break with the past, especially now that parietal rules have been relaxed or abandoned. Increasingly college men of all classes may live where they choose. These entering men aren't stupid — far from it. They've interpreted the scene accurately . . . and they know that the day when college students could be treated as second-class citizens is gone forever.

What better way to insure privacy than to live like any other private citizen . . . in an apartment, or house? How better to avoid the conformities, limitations, and restrictions of organized group living?

So . . . it's independent living, in private apartments or homes, which seems to be the major threat to the fraternity system. It is making serious

inroads on the number of availables, and without men there are inevitably money problems and ultimately bankruptcy.

W & L: How do the fraternities propose to meet this threat?

Fletcher: It seems to me that our best bet is to do a far better job of programming than we've done in the past. It isn't enough just to talk about brotherhood and let the 3-B syndrome — beer, band, and broads — take over. There'll have to be *substance* to the program, clear evidence that fraternities are in fact contributing what their members want.

We'll have to be careful to avoid programming which threatens independence of thought or limits outside interests or friends. It will have to be pointed towards the development of larger loyalties — concerns beyond the level of the chapter. And very definitely the program will have to be varied, diversified . . . geared to the interests of those on the scene, the "now" members, rather than bogged in the ruts of the past.

But there is something new which is comforting.

W & L: What's that?

Fletcher: We're getting more help from our host colleges and universities. Many of them are in the same boat. They're having trouble filling their dorms . . . for precisely the same reasons. So we begin to hear more about the advantages and benefits of group living, be it dorm or fraternity house . . . and both are shaping up.

Not too long ago many members regarded their fraternity house as a refuge from the university. Now the apartment is the student refuge . . . and the fraternity house is becoming more

like the oasis within the university which has been urged for so many years. It is the place where the student goes to be refreshed and recharged by the encouragement of his peers.

So it isn't too surprising that the universities are often making common cause with the fraternities. Both are pushing group living; both must base their appeal on program. When they provide programs which challenge without limiting or restricting the individuality of the man, they have no manpower problems. They're off and running.

W & L: Are fraternities having financial difficulty as we are led to believe, and if so, what is causing the trouble?

Fletcher: Chiefly it is the decline in manpower, but there are other factors. Costs of going to school are spiraling. There just isn't as much margin for most students as there once was.

Then there's the perennial reluctance of this age group to pressure each other to collect. Receivables won't pay the rent or the groceryman, and when they pile up there is sure trouble ahead.

Unrealistic charges are another problem. Chapters often don't keep pace with inflation . . . and it's hard to get a solid vote in favor of increases.

And the competition . . . dorms and apartments . . . is tough, very tough. Most colleges and universities can borrow at a far lower rate than can a fraternity, and can build student accommodations which are luxurious in comparison to the average chapter house.

If the mortgage is at eight or nine per cent you can bet the chapter will have to keep a full house to pay the rent its house corporation must have to keep the operation afloat, and a full house

isn't easy these days.

W & L: What's the way out?

Fletcher: If top management will concentrate on top programming in areas where the action is, it can pull in the members and produce a successful chapter. If the chapter really develops its men, there are plenty of parents and friends who will pass the word along and there will be plenty of takers . . . even if it involves some sacrificing.

W & L: Has the integration movement in fraternities caused any particular problems?

Fletcher: Yes, but not the ones that were originally expected. It took a lot of time and effort to get the decks cleared of *de jure* desegregation, and when that had been done a new set of conditions had arisen. The blacks themselves were responsible.

Many administrations insisted on *de facto* desegregation, but chapters trying in good faith to add blacks to their membership rolls ran head on into black power dictates. The blacks they pledged or tried to pledge were pressured by others into depledging or staying away; so they don't have many. They are still looking and trying.

W & L: Do fraternities have any value on campus other than the special benefits they provide students?

Fletcher: That probably depends on what you mean by "special," but I think the answer is definitely "yes."

They can and often do provide a kind of motivation to accomplish worthwhile things which goes far beyond any stimulus the parent or teacher can provide.

The current cry for "relevancy" isn't exactly new. Fraternities have been struggling for it ever since World War

II, some successfully. It has been a battle against superficiality.

I'm revealing no state secret by admitting that many chapters on many campuses customarily met on Monday night primarily to decide what partying to do Friday and Saturday nights. But that sort of thing is dying — in part because not enough men are willing to buy it, and in part because the chapters themselves want their fraternity experience to mean something.

Make no mistake about it, fraternities have a unique opportunity. They can set their members in orbit by challenging them to develop their capacities and abilities to the fullest. It's called peer group motivation, and it works. Group approval and disapproval have a powerful influence on the members of the group, particularly in a chapter where the men are close friends — "brothers," if you like. A chapter can really help

shape a young member in positive directions.

W & L: Fraternity ritualism seems to be irrelevant, according to some students. If so, does it need to be eliminated?

Fletcher: No. Modified, perhaps, but not eliminated. Even substantial changes are hard to make. Some fraternities have tried, only to have their proposals rejected by an overwhelming undergraduate vote.

Admittedly some of the "now" generation have limited verbal capacities, and to them the nineteenth century style of fraternity rituals appears to be just too much . . . verbose, grandiloquent, outmoded.

But there are valid ideas in that rhetoric, including the basic idea which led to the establishment of each fraternity. To discard them entirely would be to abandon the heart of the organization,

for fraternity is shared commitment to commonly held ideas and ideals.

But there can be ritualistic reforms, of course. Several are in progress right now. The idea is to try to satisfy today's needs by combining the best of the old with the wisdom of the new.

For example, if psychology holds that the maximum span of effective human attention on one subject is around twenty-three minutes, why are ritualistic services any longer? Or class lectures, for that matter? But when somebody proposes to delete a section of highblown oratory of minor consequence from a fraternity ritual to shorten it, who do you think objects? You guessed it — the collegians! If it was good enough for pappy . . .

So ritual is here to stay, and substantial modifications will come slowly.

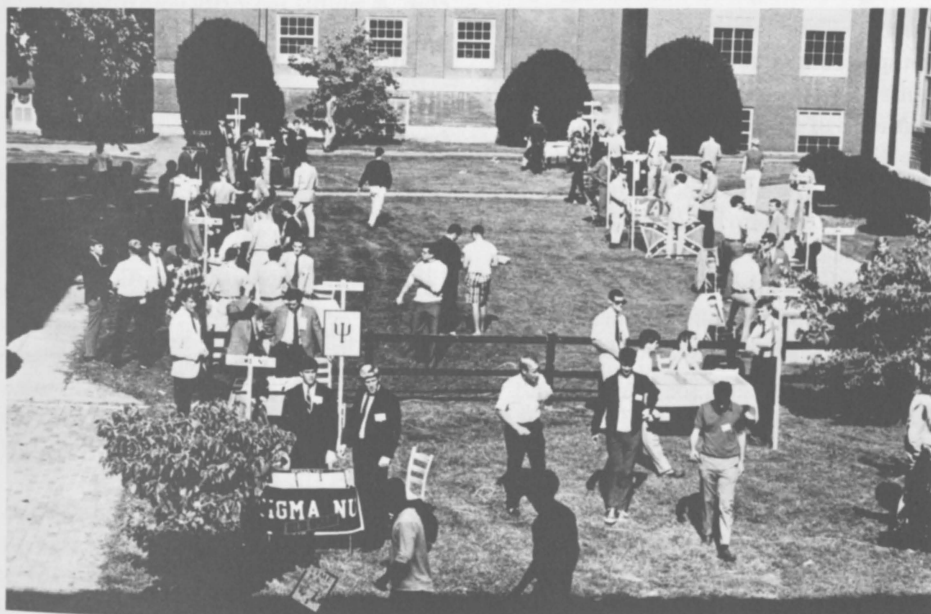
W & L: If fraternities are to continue to exist, do they have to change, and if so, in what direction?

Fletcher: Fraternities will continue to exist, if only because nobody has yet come up with a better alternative, and I certainly don't want to challenge the inevitability of change.

They *are* changing, and substantially. It has been a case of change or die. But much remains to be done. Chapters find it so easy to let tradition do their thinking for them. It takes real effort to get a consensus behind rechanneling and redirecting operations towards programming to meet individual developmental needs.

But those who turn the corner make it, and make it big. My fraternity can point to a number of outstanding examples, and I am sure others can too . . . chapters which have been rebuilt in

Rushes also make dates at tables set up just off the freshman dormitory quadrangle.



today's pattern. At Northwestern, Kentucky, Southern California it's the same story . . . full house, membership up, top scholarship, challenging program, campus leadership.

These chapters and others like them know what they're supposed to do and are busy doing it. They are getting the job done, and they changed to do it. And these are not just isolated exceptions, either. There are many others.

Changes from within have included more emphasis on a measurable aspect of brotherhood, retention. The Commission on Fraternity Research has just concluded a three-year study of fraternity holding power. Significantly, it reveals that 60 per cent of the members of national fraternity chapters persist to graduation, whereas only 33 per cent of the undergraduate men on campuses without fraternities earn degrees on schedule.

So fraternities are helping solve the dropout problem by applying the brotherhood cure. It's simple. The men like each other, want to stay together, and so help and encourage each other to hang in there and get the academic job done. That's individual development, and it is one of the most important changes on the fraternity scene. Of course, there are many others. Perhaps community involvement and service deserves special mention too.

W & L: What would you consider to be the ideal fraternity chapter?

Fletcher: That is a toughie, but I'll give it a try.

I think an ideal chapter would live by two great traditions, a tradition of constancy to purpose and a tradition of change to achieve that purpose. With a

clear view of what it is supposed to do, according to basic precepts set forth in the creed and ritual, the ideal chapter would be one which is striving constantly for better methods of realizing those objectives.

It would be a chapter which chooses its programs on the basis of the interests and needs of the men on the scene then, rather than on what was done last year or the year before. It might operate like the football coach of years gone by, who devised a system to capitalize on the abilities of the men who reported for the squad, rather than hire men to fit his system.

I think an ideal chapter would be a chapter of applied principles, focusing on individual development and respecting and encouraging individual choice.

W & L: From your vantage point here at Sigma Nu headquarters do you discern across the country a growing hostility or indifference toward fraternities among the college administrations?

Fletcher: No, quite the contrary. Recent campus confrontations have revealed quite clearly to administrations which segments of the student body run with the dissidents . . . with the sit-in crowds, the rioters, the arsonists. Fraternities and fraternity men generally have been on the side of law and order. By staying on the sidelines they have appeared to be friends of administration . . . but the sideline role is not a comfortable one.

I'm hopeful they'll soon drop it, and move in on the student scene as defenders of order on campus, committed to campus stability. One great midwestern university has just appealed to national fraternities to help save the institution from destruction at the hands of militant student groups. Proper response from

fraternity systems throughout the country will earn from administrations added regard and respect.

When fraternities are producing as they should, there is little administration or faculty hostility. Indifference, perhaps . . . but not hostility . . . and the indifference might well stem from preoccupation with more important things.

W & L: Do you believe in an open membership policy or do you think there is still merit in the blackball system?

Fletcher: I dislike the term "blackball system," but I am for the idea of unanimous acceptance. I think it means a lot to the new man to know that not a single man in the chapter is against him when he is pledged. He starts out with a clean slate, as he tackles his first job in the chapter . . . demonstrating to those who accepted him that he is in fact the man they thought he was when they pledged him.

Fraternity is more like family than club. A simple majority vote may be okay for a club, but it seems to me families should be more scrupulous.

W & L: What about numbers? Are fraternity chapters diminishing or increasing?

Fletcher: Net gains over chapter losses each year have been averaging around 125, and that is healthy growth of around three or four per cent. Chiefly the growth has been at developing institutions, rather than at venerable prestige schools.

W & L: Do you foresee the demise of fraternities any time soon?

Fletcher: No, I do not . . . although substantial changes are inevitable. Fraternities won't die because it is the nature of man, a social animal, to get together in



Left: Crowning of a Homecoming Queen, chosen from contestants sponsored by each fraternity, is still a cherished part of the Washington and Lee scene. Right: A Sigma Chi and his date behind the Sigma Chi house.



groups of his own choosing. In our free society I can't imagine an entirely unstructured and unorganized student body. There may be inroads on national fraternity organizations as such, but even this I doubt. The trend has always been to identify with something larger.

So far as I've been able to discover, no reputable college president has ever maintained that you can treat a student body as a unit. It will break into groups of its own choosing, no matter what . . . and that's when the idea of fraternities emerges. My guess is we'll always have them in one form or another, under one name or another, but . . . fraternities basically.

W & L: If you have one paramount thought that you would want to convey to Washington and Lee alumni concerning fraternities, what would it be?

Fletcher: I would ask them to get involved. Fraternities say they help develop top men. Where is the evidence? Only in the record of their alumni. I realize they are scattered all over the face of the globe, and that Lexington isn't the most accessible metropolis, but it's still possible to communicate, to express interest in what's going on, to give to the chapter a dimension — depth — which it cannot achieve on its own.

At Washington and Lee it is far too easy to conclude that a fraternity is chiefly a hotel-cafe-club convenience for the newcomer who needs to learn how to get around. Alumni are a part of the family. They can and should help their chapters by becoming visible once in a while . . . a sort of proof of the pudding, so to speak.

W&L: How do you think fraternities at Washington and Lee might change?

Fletcher: They are changing . . . fewer operating, for one thing. And that might be all for the best.

I believe that fraternities are strongest and healthiest when their members are less than a majority of the undergraduate men. Quite frankly, I think it is unhealthy to have up to 85 per cent of the men on fraternity rolls, as Washington and Lee had not so long ago.

Inevitably the time comes . . . as it has on many such campuses, such as Williams, Bowdoin, and Davidson . . . when official concern will focus on those who aren't members, regardless of whether or not they had a choice.

Fraternities are then criticized for exclusiveness and are pressured into doing something for the unaffiliated. This usually calls for changes in national or local procedures, hard feelings develop, and nothing much is accomplished.

Here the membership rate is declining, and I understand that two or three chapters have already folded and that several others are in trouble. I interpret this as an overdue technical adjustment. Perhaps still others will have to go before the survivors, facing possible extinction themselves, decide to be a *creative* minority by programming to meet the needs and interests of the men they want to attract.

Perhaps this isn't the sort of change you'd expect me to report, but in the light of what's happening, I think it is realistic. Chapters that genuinely want to survive can make it . . . all of them can, really. But there is no longer magic appeal in Greek letters and a mystic badge. Only the programmers will have a tomorrow.

a weeding out, yes - a disaster, no

by ROBERT S. KEEFE

To determine what members of the faculty and the administration think of fraternities at Washington and Lee, Robert S. Keefe, Director of Public Information, questioned a number of them. Their responses make it clear that they are not out to "get" the fraternity system.

There seem to be three major points, at least, on which members of the faculty and the administration agree regarding the future of fraternities at Washington and Lee:

— That they probably will not recapture their old numerical importance and, in fact, might even decline *numerically* a bit further;

— That whatever a person's abstract emotional attachments toward fraternities, in a practical sense, it is probably unavoidable and perhaps even good that a *leveling-off* is taking place;

— And that fraternities offer a uniquely useful service to students and to the University, and for that they ought to be preserved.

There are a number of faculty and administrators who — like a number of students — mourn for the old-time fraternity spirit. But these men too — all of them close observers and participants — recognize the limits of existing circumstances and generally direct their comments to what *is*, not to what they would *like to be*.

Men from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities are almost unanimous: the gradual reduction in the proportion of students who join fraternities will not be reversed in the near future and may well continue for a time longer. The men who are willing to predict the eventual stabilization point seemed generally to agree on the 40-to-50 per cent range. (In the middle of the 1970-71 academic year, about 60 per cent of Washington and Lee's men were fraternity members, a drop from the 70-to-75 per cent levels of the past.)

And none of them, not even the most conservative, sees that trend as disastrous either for the University or for the fraternity system itself.

A widespread sentiment seems to be that the attrition process, this "weeding out," will leave fraternities in the hands of the members who can and *are willing* to contribute the most to them, the men who will most appreciate what the fraternity provides for them.

This "survey" we made was not strictly scientific. (Rather

than try for true randomness, we deliberately sought out a diversity in academic orientation as well as in social and political leanings.) It was not a huge sample; we covered only about a tenth of the faculty and a quarter of the administration, asking questions in depth rather than firing a lot of less important questions that would demand more superficial answers to the whole question of educational leadership.

One conservative drew a parallel between fraternities and the free-market system. Fraternities are voluntary association groups, this professor in the humanities reasons, and the more freedom to choose one's associates a man has, the more effective the group. If fraternities must become fewer in number or smaller in size, at least a major consequence will be that those who join are likely to have stronger bonds among themselves.

"If an unavoidable decline in fraternities leaves behind those who are properly motivated toward their proper function," he says, "then this can be a beneficial development."

Other representative faculty and administration opinions on the prospect of a continuing downward trend in fraternity membership:

From a social scientist — "Fraternities certainly perform a valuable service, even in their traditional form. In the past, however, they have also tended to bring out qualities in men of a sort that are not particularly admirable. It is *this* tendency, I think, that may be diminishing. In this sense, then, a reduction in the numbers and a diminishing of their influence is healthy. But to the extent that fraternities remain useful to students, they are *ipso facto* useful to the University."

From a professor in the humanities — "A primary function of fraternities is to instill a sense of academic rivalry among men. Probably no other institution on this campus, on any campus, could do this. Certainly the Glee Club or the Young Republicans are not going to become agencies of academic competition. Fraternities which orient themselves to include this among their various purposes — and there are several which do — will prosper and should prosper."

From a science teacher — "Fraternities are a valuable academic device. In the past, some have been more so than others, and there are constant shifts in the extent to which each individual house meets this goal. But the fact remains that a group of men sharing a common bond of interests and goals is the most efficient kind of academic community."

The idea of material advantages is not ignored by Washington and Lee's faculty and administration, either. One administrator, who like almost all is also a teacher, notes that fraternities provide a useful social service, aiding freshmen in their assimilation as part of the Washington and Lee community, together with such functions as feeding large numbers of students and serving as social centers—functions which both Washington and Lee and Lexington would be hard-pressed indeed to fulfill without fraternities.

"But," this administrator/professor says, "fraternities must be *more* than simply social centers to survive." He notes optimistically that they *are* becoming aware of that. "They are recognizing their additional obligations."

*"... a primary function
of fraternities
is to instill academic
rivalry..."*



dean gilliam finds confidence amid change



Perhaps one of the most valuable overviews of the fraternity situation at Washington and Lee is that of Dean Emeritus Frank J. Gilliam. He entered the University as a student in 1913, and as he put it, returned in 1926 “for a three-week assignment and I’ve been here 44 years since.”

An SAE, Dean Gilliam recollects “the old way” fondly — when, for instance, fraternities used to have their weekly house meetings at 11 on Saturday nights. He recalls the cohesiveness of those earlier years, when there were “18 or 20 boys in a house, and they had a chance to know each other much better than they can today with twice or three times as many members.”

But his personal affection for that old sort of esprit notwithstanding, Dean Gilliam regards Washington and Lee’s current direction, and the motivations of its students, with nearly boundless enthusiasm.

“We used to be thrown back on our own resources,” he comments. “That almost always meant fraternity. Now our students are not content merely to lead a broadly ‘social’ life.

“The great accomplishment Washington and Lee can strive for is to force students to use their minds to the fullest, that after four years their minds’ capacity has been infinitely expanded. This is precisely what we do far, far more effectively and successfully today than we have ever been able to do before. We demand so much more from our students, and in turn they respond.

“We are so far superior to what we have ever been before, so much stronger in our ability to meet our primary goals, our educational objectives, that I cannot help but be immensely pleased with the developments I’ve seen.

“It is no tribute to an institution to demand that it retain the *status quo ante* regardless of changing external circumstances. No man would do that in his business, and no college — least of all a college as vital as Washington and Lee — should choose to disregard new opportunities and new attitudes either.”

Dean Gilliam hardly suggests abandoning the sort of social functions traditionally associated with fraternities; they remain an integral adjunct to a good education. A residential campus is one solution Dean Gilliam looks to: it might well lead to a naturally strengthened sense of community, of old-style “cohesiveness.”

“The change we have seen in fraternities,” Dean Gilliam says, “is not in their framework. Rather, it is in the specific desires and needs, and in broader attitudes.

“Personally, I miss the emphases of the past. But in their emphases for the present, Washington and Lee’s students today more than ever fill me with confidence.”

KA'S demise

by LARRY HONIG



Larry Honig of Houston, Texas, graduated from Washington and Lee last June with two bachelor's degrees, a B. A. in history and a B. S. in commerce. He was winner of the 1970 Frank J. Gilliam Award for outstanding contributions to the University. He was editor of the Ring-tum Phi, chairman of CONTACT, the student-sponsored educational symposium, and president of Kappa Alpha. He is now a graduate student at the University of Texas.

The conventional wisdom these days — and note that wisdom makes up half of this expression, not undeservedly — is that fraternities are not what they used to be, behind the times, dying. It is difficult to disagree.

I came to Washington and Lee when Jerry Rubin's hair made him ROTC material — if anyone cared about Jerry Rubin's hair in 1966. The smell of the Kappa Alpha house will not soon leave me, the smell I inhaled richly at my first rush party: fresh paint, cigarettes, after-shave.

When I left the KA house in 1970 it smelled of mildew and bare wood floors and stale kitchen grease. The house was locked, its members gone, its existence ended. But the death knell for Kappa Alpha Order's mother chapter was not sounded by its members, rather by its own failure to justify its existence.

Much has been said and written about why fraternities are so much out of vogue and why the future appears dim at best. Most of the answers sound something like, "They don't fulfill a need anymore." True.

But misunderstood. They refuse to fulfill a need.

"1966 . . . fresh paint, cigarettes, after-shave."



"1970 . . . mildew, bare wood floors, stale kitchen grease."



A fraternity, like any other organization, must lay claim to a priority of existence by satisfying its members. And that satisfaction must be tendered in such a way that alternate sources are either impractical or inadequate. Examples?

The football team gives satisfaction. It and other sports activities satisfy the desire or need or whatever it is to release physical energy in a competitive environment. There are few alternatives to intercollegiate athletics, none of which offers an organized program's availability and social acceptance.

Campus political organizations give satisfaction. They furnish outlets for non-athletic, non-academic energy directed toward the achievement of goals: electing a candidate, implementing changes, serving the less fortunate.

In the past, fraternities gave satisfaction. Fraternities supplied that for which members were willing to pay: food, lodging, entertainment, and a place to gather. It has become abruptly obvious at W&L that these services are available elsewhere — at significantly lower prices.

Students are able to feed themselves, and at the odd times

many prefer, for less than the campus fraternity average of \$80 a month. Exposed to apartment living, students rate fraternity rooms just slightly above Bowery flats in desirability. And places to meet with friends range from apartments to the University Center, no charge.

This is the situation the KAs faced last spring. Members no longer wished to purchase what was offered, even though some of it was desirable and some of it was reasonably priced. Package deal, take it all or leave it all. To keep going, we had to meet massive payments for all the services we provided; mortgages, housemothers, and servants are not smorgasbord commodities.

But fraternities' problems, in the general case, are not without solution. The solution lies in offering satisfaction without seeking to define what that satisfaction will be on an institutional basis. By that I mean that fraternities cannot decide what its members want — the members themselves must decide that. All the programs concocted by the Interfraternity Council — the Greek Weeks, the cultural exchange, the blood drives — will do nothing for fraternities if the members don't want these things.

Greek Week, which often featured a pie-eating contest, seems to have disappeared along with the practice it was intended to replace — hazing. Greek Week raised money for worthy community causes, combining student antics with "doing good."



A dying fraternity, and KA was no exception in this, desperately falls back on the sloganistic yelp of "brotherhood," implying that the death of a fraternity is the death of that brotherhood. Nonsense. By advancing that supercilious claim, fraternities are snubbing the key to their survival.

That key is brotherhood. Maybe the word needs to be cast aside for another, less Boy-Scoutish, more stylish. Togetherness, perhaps. This is what fraternities are all about — this is what fraternity *means*. It doesn't mean a stone house with 20 rooms, 21 meals a week, 12 parties a year. Kappa Alpha Order did not realize that.

From conversations with former members of Kappa Sigma and Sigma Phi Epsilon, which round out the troubled trio of 1970, one idea emerges uncontested. Fraternities should *base* their existence, not hypocritically *defend* it, on the grounds of togetherness.

If fraternities can discover what their members desire and fit it within the framework of togetherness, they can survive.

What will it take? A great deal.

Fraternities will have to take a tough, critical look at the services they offer to decide whether to continue them. This

isn't easy to do; certainly the KAs didn't make such decisions.

We served meals which fewer and fewer people ate; we bought entertainment which, no matter of what type, only half the members enjoyed; we forced some members to live in accommodations which were competitive with Doremus Gym's locker rooms — and we charged members for facilities in which to conduct these misdirected operations.

Wherever there are men, there will be togetherness, brotherhood, the bonds of friendship. Fraternities at W&L have traditionally provided a relaxing atmosphere for the enjoyment of brotherhood. But as people and circumstances change, so fraternities must change also.

Personally, I am optimistic about the future for some fraternities at W&L, after those with irreversible financial and other troubles have removed themselves. The closeness of the academic — not to mention physical — community is beautifully tailored for fraternities.

Fraternities have a chance to become vital organizations once again. But every vital organization which exists today exists because members receive satisfaction, not stagnation.

In the old days fraternity life was considered to be the focal point of a student's college experience.



are fraternities the bunk?

two voices from the '30's

Even in their heyday during the 1930's, fraternities did not enjoy unchallenged status on the Washington and Lee campus. Witness the following debate reprinted from the Autumn 1933 issue of the Southern Collegian. The articles were written anonymously.

A Non-Fraternity Man Thinks They Are:

Many people who read the title to this article will say that I have never been invited to join a fraternity. Such is not the case. I have been bid, and by more than one fraternity. I have had my own reasons for not accepting the proffered bids, and would turn down other bids if they were to be forthcoming.

What is there that a fraternity would have to offer me? One fraternity man has suggested the membership in a group of men who have sworn the oath of brotherhood. These brothers would stand by me for life; and any stranger wearing the pin of Alpha Beta Gamma, shall we say, is my brother. These brothers of the bond will never take advantage of me; they will always be scrupulously honest in all transactions. But if a man will be dishonest, would an oath prevent him? I have always rated such ideas of brotherhood on a par with Masonry, the Ku Klux Klan, and membership in the Communist Party of the United States. The friends I have, do I need a social club to make them any the closer to me?

Another inducement to join a fraternity is the joy of living in the midst of one's friends. But how could I be sure that the other members of a fraternity would be my friends? Of course, if I should be forced to live in a fraternity house, I should try to maintain friendly

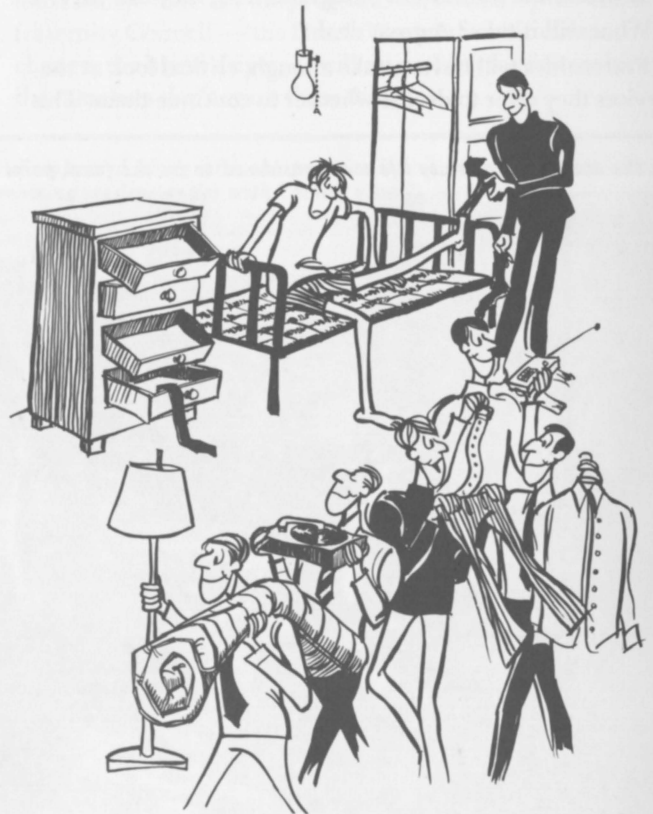
relations with the other brothers in the bond merely to satisfy my own selfish desires for peace and harmony. But would a group of twenty or more boys gathered together more or less haphazardly be my real friends? Naturally, I would borrow and lend cigarettes, use other students' books and let mine be used in turn, join in conversations on favorite movie actresses, God and religion, football, and sex. But would these fraternity brothers be the lads to whom I would give my real trust and devotion? Would I avow to my fraternity brothers my cherished ambitions, my faint hopes, and my disappointments? I doubt it.

And yet another suggestion as to why I should join a fraternity: it would be a

place of social intercourse. I admit that a non-fraternity man is handicapped during dances for a place to take his date when he is bored with her, and she with him. The fraternity lounge makes an excellent place to stop and hope that another couple, equally bored, will suggest a game of bridge.

These, then, are the inducements to join a fraternity. It has been said by over-zealous fraternity men that a stigma is attached to the man who is not a member of a fraternity. It makes no difference which one; the worst fraternity is better than not being a member of any. This missionary to the barbarians said that he who is not a fraternity man bears a mark that can be noticed by the

“Naturally, I could borrow and lend cigarettes, use other students' books...”



most unobservant at least the length of the dance floor away. As far as I am concerned, that is not so. On several occasions I have been forced to reveal a proudly virgin vest to convince a stranger that I was not a member of some Greek letter social fraternity. Evidently it is hard to tell sheep from goats.

In my freshman year there was a boy who became a friend to me. We were interested in the same things, but we had enough differences of opinion always to ensure a lively conversation. His sense of humor agreed with mine; and we looked at the world and laughed together. But he joined a fraternity, and I was bid by another and declined. At first it looked like a parting of ways. He must be at the House for meals three times a day; and after dinner at night there was bridge or the like; and for the honor of the House he must go out for some sport. One night he came into my room and slumped down on the bed without a word. I turned around from my desk and asked what was up. At first reluctantly, and then more completely, he told me how the boys in the House did not see anywhere near eye to eye with him on any subject. How any attempt at originality on his part was frowned upon as shining. He ended up with the blurted out statement, "You know, there isn't a single fellow at the House that I would pick for a friend." When I asked him why he ever accepted the pledge, he said that when he was being rushed all the men had been so friendly. How was he to know that the oil of their tongues would turn to venom, or their advice about professors to demands that he change his entire mode of living to their way of thinking. I thought to myself that night, how do I know that Delta Epsilon Zeta

would not turn out the same way for me? That night I resolved to wait a long time and decide finally and for all before I should accept a bid.

Another detraction to me is the cost of a fraternity. I would pay as much there as almost anywhere else for food that would be distinctly inferior to many of the boarding houses or restaurants in town. Suppose I should be dissatisfied, could I change? No. Then the dues. Would I get out of a fraternity an enjoyment equal in return to the money I would be forced to invest? The initiation fee: I would be invited to help pay for a mortgage that another group had made and keep another group following me from being forced to pay it.

Being a rather anti-social individual I have gone thus far in my college career with a few good friends and any number of acquaintances. At moments it has seemed to me that a fraternity is a fairly desirable thing; but many more moments have proven to me that a fraternity is not for me simply because I am the type that just would not fit. I would be galled to the extreme by the daily life in a fraternity. Here a reader will say that if I would not fit, I should not join. Right; but remember that at times several fraternities have considered me eligible despite my idiosyncracies. The fact that I have never joined a fraternity is because I, not the members of the brotherhoods, willed it so.

*"...at moments
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fraternity
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A Fraternity Man Takes The Defense:

It is extremely hard for a fraternity member to discuss fraternities without bias. But I would like to explain how I happen to be wearing a pin with Greek letters on it, and why I continue wearing it.

The first thing a freshman investigates, when he enrolls at Washington and Lee, is the fraternity situation. He discovers that there are twenty national fraternities represented on this campus; that a great majority of the students are fraternity men. Immediately the force of mass opinion begins to work on him: if most of the other fellows join fraternities, why shouldn't he? Numbers prove something; it must be worth while to pledge one of the clubs. Fifty Million Freshmen can't be wrong.

Now let us suppose this freshman has at his command complete information concerning every phase of school life in Lexington.

He examines the list of officers of the student body and finds that every office, save one, is held by a fraternity man. He finds that the one non-fraternity office is that of secretary-treasurer.

Our freshman turns to the athletic council, and he discovers that it is made up of Greek letter men entirely.

Next the publications. Every editorship and every business managership is held by a fraternity man.

This is indication enough that it is the fraternity group which dictates, for better or worse, the policies of these

publications which air the "public opinion" of the student body.

How about the honorary fraternities, the ribbon clubs? Omicron Delta Kappa is made up of a staggering majority of Greeks. So with the organizations: The Cotillion Club, White Friar, Pi Alpha Nu, "11" Club, "13" Club, and others. The Vigilance Committee. Completely membered by fraternity men. Then, our new man decides, it is the fraternity man (one of his prospective brothers, perhaps) who passes judgment on the erring freshman.

And the team managers? Not a single non-fraternity man holds down any of these jobs.

Then in what activities can a non-fraternity man get anywhere? What major honors can he achieve? . . . Athletics, for one. Phi Beta Kappa. And perhaps Omicron Delta Kappa. But the drawback to hoping for the latter is the emphasis it places for membership in offices and activities with other organizations. And the fraternity angle comes up again. He may, to be sure, manage a minor editorship on one of the publications; he may be allowed to drive nails for the Troubadours, or turn fancy vocal effects for the Glee Club. . . .

The freshman, of course, has to think the thing over from a financial point of view. He can determine that it costs a man about four hundred dollars extra to belong to the average fraternity over a period of four years. That's a big item to most of the new men. And is it worth it? Well, perhaps he decides on a lonely room in town for three years. Perhaps he prefers to eat in restaurants during his period here. It will cost him less money. For myself, I like the companionship of a fraternity house; I prefer the home-

like meals I get at mine.

Most of us, however, aren't practical when it comes to pledging a fraternity. Not in the ordinary sense of the word, anyway. We pledge because we like the fellows, because we like the house, or, most of all, because we like the idea of being fraternity men.

I like companionship and I think it's a natural normal thing to want friends to live with, to know, to understand, to appreciate. When I found the fraternity with the men in it whom I could get to like and admire, I pledged. That's all. And I've not regretted it since. I want people to call me by name; I don't want to be one of the unknown minority. I want to know association and comradeship. I want to have friends who will help me and whom I may be able to help in some small ways. I want to lend and borrow; give and take; argue and defend.

Of course, these things aren't impossible for the non-fraternity man. He can be a part of a group, if he likes. But it's so much better in a fraternity! The non-fraternity man may argue that he doesn't want friends anyway, that he is anti-social. I have seen this sort of man taken under the wing of a fraternity, have seen all his good qualities brought out, have watched him grow into a tolerant, human, companionable sort — without the loss of his individuality in the bargain.

If I were coming to Washington and Lee again as a freshman, I'd pledge a fraternity without hesitation. Between my brothers and myself, in three years, there has grown a bond which I could not afford to miss. I may be wrong, of course. But that's my argument, and it sounds like a good one to me.

two voices from today



Today — as in the '30's — there is a difference of opinion concerning the value of fraternities. In these responses, Cy Dillon, a senior from Boones Mill, Virginia, explains why he chose not to join a fraternity. Cy is editor this year of Ariel, the student literary magazine. The pro-fraternity viewpoint is expressed by John Robinson, a junior from Atlanta, Georgia, who is a member of Pi Kappa Alpha and news editor of this year's Ring-tum Phi.

He Didn't Join and Has No Regrets

Suppose, for a moment, that everyone in the Washington and Lee community conducted himself in perfect accord with the ideas of a university which we were forced to articulate last spring during the period of unrest over the invasion of Cambodia.

We would be a group of people who are both open-minded and objective — in short, ideological efficiency experts. If this were the case, the University would have little trouble finding a workable mode of operation for fraternities. Our academic credentials assert our ability to do this, but the sociologists among us are without the power necessary to effect change.

We cannot be expected to be as objective toward our own life-style as we are when we study the ideas of others. Few would turn Washington and Lee into Walden II. Still, we need some distance and objectivity where the problem of fraternities is concerned.

Fraternities, as social institutions, are valuable only through their effect upon and service to their members and to the community in which their members live. The attitude many fraternity men ex-

hibited this year concerning deferred rush suggests that they have forgotten that fraternities should never be allowed to be more important than the individual welfare of the people in the University community.

Rush was a success this year in this way: fewer students who would not be served by membership in a fraternity were cajoled into the financial outlay involved in pledging.

As for the attitude of the Interfraternity Council on this and other matters, we must remember that the IFC functions in the interest of fraternities, not in the interests of students in general. This has constantly been evident in the actions of that body as well as in its philosophy of making a show of control over fraternities so that the administration will continue to grant a shoddy sort of independence to the various houses.

Fraternities have the potential to make the life of their members richer while functioning constructively as parts of the community. We have some good examples of this potential and will probably continue to have.

We must remember, however, that fraternities deserve existence only if their service remains worthwhile. The University has shown many upperclassmen — and, apparently, about half the freshmen — that it can provide a satisfying environment without fraternity membership.

I have certainly never felt that I lacked anything in my life that fraternity men had. But many students are served by fraternities, as I have said. I see no reason why fraternities cannot function in our community so long as they do not lose the ability for self-examination.

Cy Dillon's opinions about fraternities are typical of many of today's students.

He Joined, Stuck, and Is Glad

For me, my fraternity has been a basic part of the educational process at Washington and Lee, and that is the primary reason I have remained active in my house.

My fraternity has been educational for a number of reasons. Undoubtedly, the principal reason is that it has enabled me to learn a great deal about myself. I asked myself before joining a fraternity, "Is this the right thing for me?" After going through rush, I answered, "Yes." I would still say, "Yes." A fraternity usually makes certain demands on a person, and this often leads to sacrifices of some kind. These demands and sacrifices caused me to re-evaluate my goals at W&L and to re-examine the methods of attaining those goals. This exercise alone has made fraternity life worthwhile for me.

Having 60 fraternity brothers has also taught me one thing for sure. I have learned to get along with people. Getting along with people is a key to happiness and probably the cornerstone upon which a good education is built.

My involvement is another factor which helped me stay active in my fraternity. I have been treasurer the past year, and I really learned how a fraternity works. I have enjoyed the responsibility and work required of an officer. Being involved in the operation of a fraternity has increased my interest in its welfare as a whole and in the welfare of the brothers individually.

My fraternity has also been an invaluable base from which to expand personally. Through my fraternity brothers, I became interested and involved in several campus activities and organiza-

tions. These older brothers helped me with needed encouragement and advice. Instead of limiting me to a narrow circle, my fraternity, I truly believe, has enabled me to meet many more people and to have wider interests at Washington and Lee than I would have had outside a fraternity.

But, unfortunately, fraternities mean little to many students. Thus the fraternity system is being weakened at W&L. During my freshman year, about 80 per cent of the student body belonged to a fraternity. Currently this percentage of membership is down to about 65 per cent, and the figure may continue to drop annually.

Why are houses in trouble? Today's freshman is more knowledgeable than ever before. Still many fraternities maintain an aura no more inspiring than a Mickey Mouse club. Freshmen are too independent and too self-confident to be attracted by houses featuring only beer and Pepsodent smiles. The new men at W&L rightfully expect more than the traditional fraternity has offered.

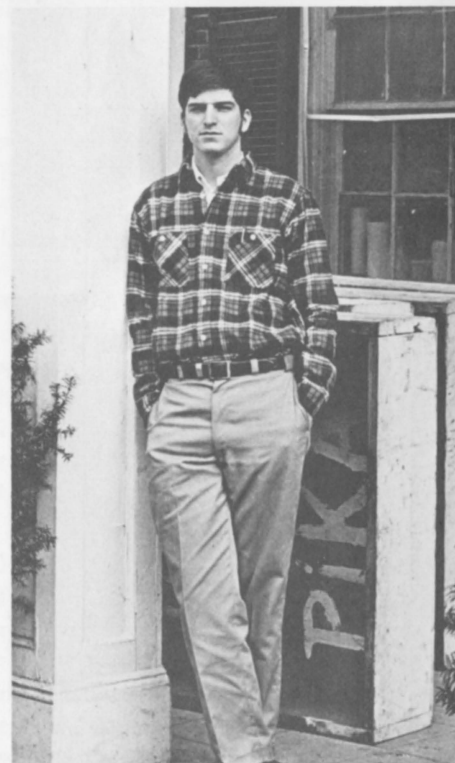
Deferred rush has, of course, hurt the Greek system and is partly responsible for the drop in pledging percentages. The time lag between rush and pledging and the expenses of rush have increased significantly. Thus for some houses deferred rush is a death knell.

Fraternities face an identity crisis. In years past, houses were a means of filling three great needs of freshmen: dates, cars, and liquor. These needs have largely evaporated with the changes in rules governing freshmen. They may now have cars of their own, and they can entertain girls in the freshman dormitories. Fraternities are challenged to redefine their role in the University

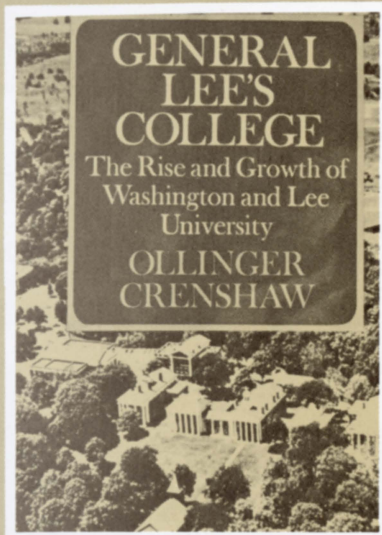
community; they must develop a role having more impact than simply providing parties and good times.

I believe fraternities can redefine their roles and goals. Otherwise, I would not have remained active. Already fraternities are performing the valuable function of feeding and sleeping a large part of the student body. This is surely a significant service. Beyond that, as I have explained, fraternities serve as helpful peer groups. I hope that fraternities can develop broader, more positive functions because my house has been a rewarding experience for me. It would be sad if W&L students of the future are denied an opportunity for this kind of experience.

Junior John Robinson, Pi Kappa Alpha, stands in back of his house.



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