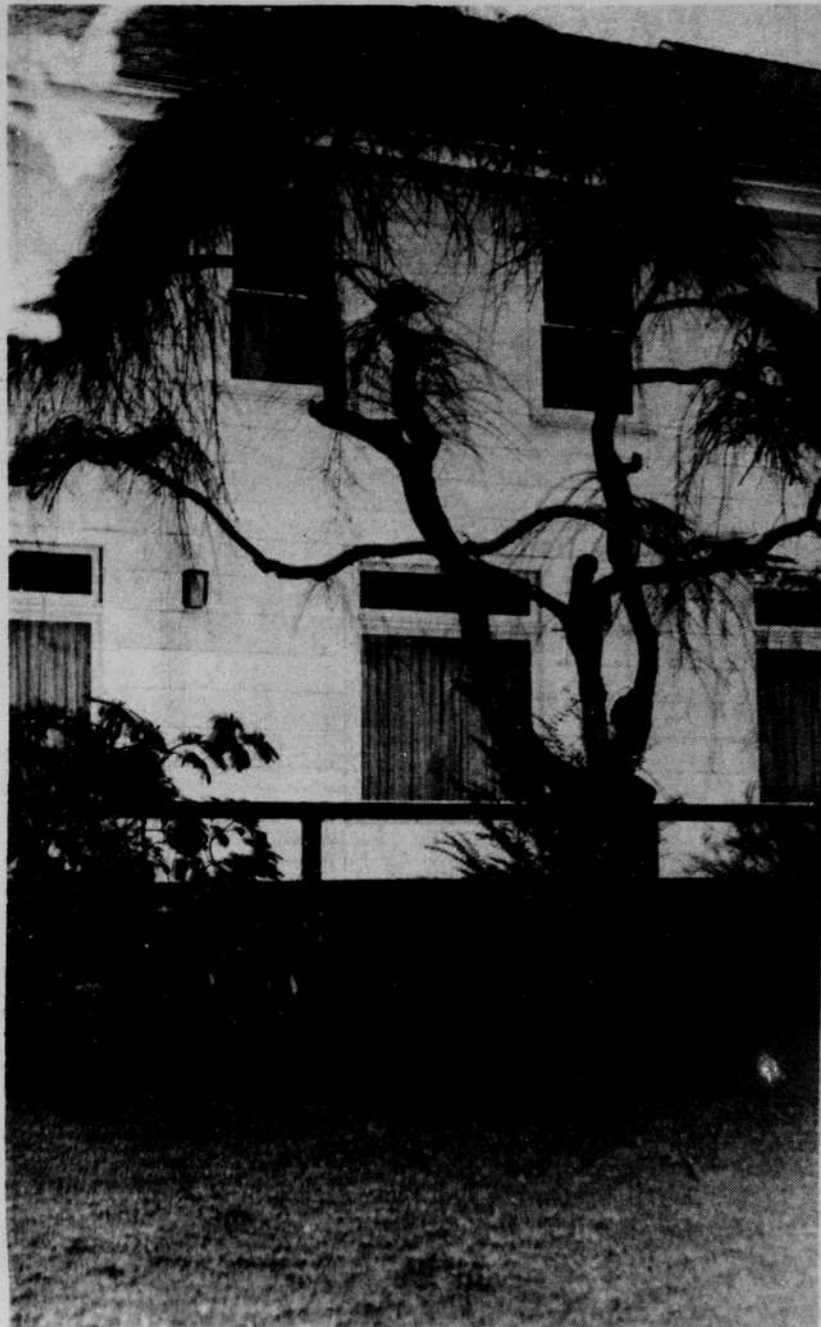


# A living alternative: the Greek system



## TKE closes: Can a house adjust as society changes?

By WANDALYN RICE  
Of the Emerald

Nationally Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) claims the largest membership of any Greek letter fraternity.

But last term, at the end of finals week, the Beta Kappa chapter of TKE closed at the University.

The chapter had been formed in the late 1940's and had experienced both moments of great strength (a pledge class in the late 1950's had 40 members) and of great weakness—including financial trouble and intra-house disputes.

"What happened to TKE is not unique. It's happening all over," Mike Merrell, the last president of the house, said.

The chapter, Merrell added, succumbed to a combination of the attraction of apartment living and a new desire for personal freedom on the part of University students.

"There is a natural contempt for the Establishment today," he said, "and a growing tendency to tell people to go to hell if they interfere with you."

"Everyone is concerned with personal freedom and doesn't want restrictions, but people are confusing freedom with the abuse of freedom."

In the TKE house, he said, the abuse of freedom resulted in excessive noise by some when others were studying and a disregard for the authority of the house officers.

Mike Hartwig, a senior who pledged TKE as a freshman, agrees partly with this analysis. "Doing your thing is often interpreted as doing something against a group instead of with a group," he said.

Before it closed, TKE made many innovations in old fraternity traditions, such as the pledge's hell week. The more rigid rules governing pledges and junior members were relaxed.

Although both of them agreed with the changes, they today point to many problems they created.

"If the work is going to get done, either everyone is going to have to pitch in, or someone is going to have to tell someone else what to do," Merrell said.

"It is ideal if everyone in the house is equal, but if you have a lot of equal guys sitting around and the house dog makes a mess on the floor, what happens if no one wants to clean it up?"

"Permissiveness doesn't seem to work when people abuse it, and I think they inevitably will, but the non-permissive attitude doesn't work either, because no one will take it—pledges de-pledge and members quit. I don't see what balance you can strike."

Hartwig agreed that the old-fashioned pledge discipline and hell-week are no longer viable. "My hell-week (in 1967) was a turning point in our house because there was a lot of hell raised by the pledges about it."

As discipline broke down in the house, Merrell said, many of the standards of quiet hours disintegrated. "It reached the point where guys couldn't sleep in the house, they couldn't study in the house, and so they started to ask why were they living in the house."

As a result, the house split 50-50 and "everyone was at each other's throats."

"Many a night, I had to get up and tell people to shut up when they were shouting in the halls."

One result of the division in the house, was an acute shortage of money.

"When you get down to where it looks like you are going to have ten guys living in a house, you've got a problem," Merrell said.

On the other hand, the problem does not only stem from money because "if it was such a sharp place to live, money would not be a problem."

But money was a problem for TKE. Saddled with debts of nearly \$80,000, many of them stemming from a fire which destroyed the building TKE owned in 1959, the house had to be full in order to break even.

One solution to the problem was to take in boarders—men who did not pledge, but lived in the house and paid room and board. This, according to Hartwig, was a mistake. The boarders had little commitment to the house, and caused trouble, he said.

"But, if you look at the real cause, it was lack of pledges. If we had had pledges we wouldn't have needed boarders."

The problem extended to members. When some men started talking about moving out last term, Merrell said, he was going to talk them out of it. "Then I asked myself, why do I want these particular guys to stay, and the only answer I could come up with was \$105 a month."

At that point, Merrell said, he decided it wasn't worth it.

With more and more members announcing their departure, a small group of men decided to try to save the house. The plan was to sell the large house at 19th and University and, after paying the debts, buy a small house which could have about ten live-in members and many members living out. The new house could serve as a center for parties.

"When I look back on it," Hartwig said, "it was a bad idea, because we didn't know a lot of things we know now, but for a while it looked like we had a pretty good core of guys to live in."

"But when we looked at it, most of the guys are juniors and seniors."

Merrell agreed that the idea sounded good, but "by the time anyone got around to setting it up, everyone was just sick of it and wanted out."

Both Merrell and Hartwig now look at the more general plight of the Greek system in light of the experience of TKE. Until a "live-out" house can be formed, the houses will face the problem of attracting and holding pledges.

The major problem, according to Hartwig, is rushing practice. The Inter-Fraternity Council took over management of rush many years ago when almost everyone on campus rushed, but now the system works against the houses, he said.

"Suppose you want to sell color television sets," he explained, "and so you tell everyone who wants a set to sign up and pay \$8. Then you tell each person they have to go to six companies that sell sets and list their preferences. Then, the company will decide if it wants to sell you a set or not—that's what we do in rush."

The result, Hartwig said, is that members too seldom try to work for pledges. "There is an idea if we go to the dorms to rush people might think we're hard up. We are supposed to wait for them to come to us, but they don't."

As far as Hartwig can see, solving the pledge problem will solve most of the other problems of fraternities. "There are things wrong with fraternities, but they can be changed."

"If you start with the premise that fraternal living is good, then you can change them."

One of the best changes, he said, was for the houses to get out from under the current rule of IFC. "IFC perpetuates many of the stereotypes that now exist."

However, Merrell sees more problems than just the one of rushing. Group living, he said, is becoming less important to people.

"If the Greek system could do something to get its feet on the ground, it could be better, but I can't think of anything that will work."

"The old thing wasn't working when I joined the TKE house, but the permissiveness didn't work either."

Hartwig agrees that attitudes are changing. "Today it is not acceptable to identify with tradition."

However, he added, "I don't believe the fraternity system is going to die, but I don't think of fraternities as the Joe College petty bourgeoisie image. I really believe in TKE being a fraternity for life."

As a result, Hartwig is now helping to form an alumni chapter in Eugene. "Maybe in a few years when this all blows over, we'll have a strong chapter again."

## 'Greeks must change or die'

By JOHN LANIER  
Of the Emerald

A change in Attica?

"For years and years Greeks were of course a symbol of the status quo and . . . a symbol of a bastion of conservatism. I think it's pretty well established that these are things of the past."

"I think that the survival of the Greek system on an activist campus of the 70's will be made a more definite fact as the Greeks rise from their traditional apathy and become more and more involved in the moral and ethical issues of the day."

That's the opinion of Steve Neal, president of the Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC), which serves as central coordinating body for the University's fraternity system.

Neal, who is critical of the conservatism and apathy of the fraternity past, pointed to involvement of fraternity men in the October anti-war Moratorium, the grape boycott movement, a changing racial attitude, and the 1968 political campaigns as evidence of a changing reality in University fraternities.

Racial discrimination in fraternities, Neal said, has "for many, many years been a black-eye in my opinion . . . and after years of discriminatory practice we owe a debt to minority groups."

Neal added that fraternities are and should be moving toward "a more heterogeneous system," and that bridging the gap between the races in this country "is a significant service that the Greek system might do."



Greek systems on most of the nation's campuses, according to Neal, "haven't made adequate steps to become involved in the day's leading issues . . . if they fail to conform to these changes," he added, "then they deserve to die."

This failure to change is particularly strong in the South, Neal said, and he compared a fraternity that won't change to a "dinosaur" heading for "extinction."

Neal said that television, old movies and novels maintain the dying Greek image of "hazing, discrimination, and the Puritan ethic," making this image "an even more difficult thing to erase after the many years that these things did exist."

"There is a different type of student in the fraternity than there was five years ago," Neal commented. "The beer-drinking anti-intellectual image I think isn't altogether fair."

Neal is optimistic about the fraternity system despite the closing of three fraternities within the

past two years. He blamed the closings on a variety of "internal problems," pointing out that during the same period a new fraternity, Sigma Alpha Mu, was organized, and added:

"It is our hope that within the near future there will be enough interest generated so that at least one of these houses will be back on campus."

Pointing out that the cost of living in a dorm is already nearly as high as a fraternity, Neal said the IFC feels that freshmen should be allowed to live in fraternities if they so desire. "It is our position that the University should not have the right to tell a student where he is to live."

Students, Neal feels, should visit a fraternity before forming an opinion about it. "I think that the big things about a fraternity are the life-long friendships that result from living and working together on a day-to-day basis, and the autonomy, self-government and individualism you have in a fraternity."

## Members rap about house living

Sororities on campus have recently been revising rules and social observances.

Dress codes and closing hours have been liberalized, while the trend shows fewer seniors living in. Several girls living in the houses explained that recent changes have taken place. They asked that only their house and first name be identified:

**Susan, Kappa Kappa Gamma:** "The Greek system constitutes a silent minority on campus. We are stereotyped, but actually can't help but be diversified. Wherever one lives, he becomes involved in the setting around him—interested in the people. But unlike the dorms, everyone who lives here has the desire to do so—we work together as a cohesive group."

**Gall, Alpha Chi Omega:** "The main trouble sororities have is bucking the past. Students come up here with their parents' ideas on the Greek system, and have nothing to do with it."

**Susan:** "The frosh pledges may give the wrong impression of sororities at times. While living in the dorms, they seem wrapped up with another association—the house. The antagonism may be lessened if all pledges live together in the dorms, or if they are allowed to live at their houses."

One of the changes that have recently taken place concern dress codes and liberalized closing hours.

**Sandi, Zeta Tau Alpha:** "Our dress code has recently been changed. We wear nice slacks or campus dress to classes. Campus dress to dinner, but no curlers are allowed on the first floor."

**Gall:** "Levis are acceptable dress to class at our house."

**Susan:** "Many students believe the alums dictate rules to us, but this is untrue. Girls have card keys and come and go any time. Generally, they sign out telling where they are going in case of any emergency."

**Anonymous, Gamma Phi Beta:** "Our house has too much alumnae intervention, and this slows down much progress toward liberalizing archaic convention. However, two years ago we had closing hours, and now we come in anytime we want."

Social life in sororities has also seen some changes:

**Susan:** "None of our social events are mandatory, and we tend to date fewer frat men than formerly. The traditional events are getting less attention. For instance, our Friday at Four's are getting little participation."

**Sandi:** About one-third of the house is engaged and most of us don't date Greeks. We have a house dance every term and the White Violet Ball

is coming up. Functions are mandatory, but we never have any problems getting a date for someone."

**Mary, Alpha Chi Omega:** "We usually have two house dances, a formal and informal. Other activities include wake up breakfasts with frats, a recent Christmas party for children and carving pumpkins for Good Samaritan Nursing Home."

**Anonymous:** "About the only thing our sorority is good for is getting to know people—I have to admit I have made a lot of close friends. But the social life—drinking—is what is stressed."

**Sandi:** "When I feel happy, or in a serious mood, there is always someone to go to. Also, privacy isn't a problem. I just tell them to leave my room, I've got studying to do."

**Sandi:** "The cost of living in a sorority is generally misunderstood. With the rising cost of dorms, room and board in a house is cheaper, but the cost averages out with dues. Most of our seniors stay until they graduate or get married."

**Mary:** "I'd like to get rid of the so-called stereotype sorority girl. Although life does center around the house, each person lives her separate life. We have everyone from the jogger to the singer—the sitter to the exerciser."

## 'Sororities will go in five years'

"I think sororities will be definitely gone in the next five years, although maybe some will hang around for the pendulum to swing back."

So says Laurel Walker, junior in English and member of Gamma Phi Beta.

Laurel is not the typical sorority girl. After "compound" problems, including intra-house difficulties, she decided not to move in the house fall term. Now she is living in again.

The former house manager moved into an apartment with three other girls. There were problems there too—a noisy apartment complex and an incompatible roommate. "After apartment living I now think Greek living is much better. In an apartment it's too easy to be a loner."

"When my sister graduated seven years ago from the University no one lived off campus," Laurel said. "Now apartment living has the same reputation with freshmen as sorority living did then."

Laurel also added she thinks Gamma Phi Beta is one of the more liberal houses on campus.

## Theta Chi: success story

By CLAY EALS  
Of the Emerald

Theta Chi is encountering many of the problems that plague all fraternities and sororities on campus today, but it seems to be succeeding.

This is the opinion of Fred Buller, recently elected president of Theta Chi.

"The main key," he said, is diversification. "The fraternity system is going downhill," Buller said. "We are definitely competing with the apartments."

The apartments attract men that would otherwise join a house because of the absence of the "so-called structured life," according to Buller said. "We are definitely competing with somewhere where it is cheaper and where they

could keep their own visiting and drinking hours."

Apparently, the idea of brotherhood is dwindling, Buller says, and "the guys just don't go for it any more . . . it seems to be more so in the last three to four years than in the last 25."

However, Buller says, "I think brotherhood has a lot to offer."

In Theta Chi the brotherhood theme remains fairly strong, he feels. It is a "life with a diversified kind of people."

Buller admits that much of the success of his fraternity lies in its monetary strength, but the factors of "strong leadership, the diversity of membership and the constant rushing" are important also.



Theta Chi has 65 members, 45 of whom live in the house. According to Buller, "people in every field" belong to Theta Chi and the membership includes students who are involved in athletics, student government, and various other aspects of school life.

Theta Chi's pledge program is a year-long procedure, Buller said. New members are pledged mostly on the basis of contracts with present members of the house.

According to Paul Moeen, one of Theta Chi's 16 freshmen pledges, the house's pledge program is excellent. Moeen said, "They don't hassle you; they don't do anything to freshmen; they are really easy-going about the whole thing."

Buller said many of Theta Chi's pledges also come from high school visitations.

According to Buller, Theta Chi is respected in the community for the public service activities it performs. It hosted the "College Life" program and is presently initiating this year's March of Dimes fund drive in the area.

At Christmas they helped disadvantaged children in the Eugene area to a good time by buying gifts for them and taking the children to Duck basketball games.

Buller also said the fraternity is held together by the enjoyable activities it has for its members. Theta Chi holds house dances, exchange dinners with sororities and "Friday at Fours."

Once in a while there will be special functions held, such as "The Red Ox" and champagne functions, characteristic only of Theta Chi.

What about Theta Chi's future?

No large changes are planned for Theta Chi, Buller said. However, Buller thinks the house will continue to maintain its high membership.

If the housing office allows freshmen to live outside of dorms in the near future, Buller states the houses would initiate a "freshman line-in" program whereby a limited number of freshman men could live in the house for the first year.

Buller, in conclusion, predicts the future role of the fraternity in University life by saying, "The frats are changing—everything's more relaxed. We have to change with the pace of the people."

## Ottoman says attitudes changed



By JOANNE HASEGAWA  
Of the Emerald

In the past three years three sorority houses have "folded."

The number of girls going through formal rush each fall has declined from about 600 in 1966 to 300 last term. Of the 300 who rushed, 180 have pledged one of 13 sororities. Why the rapid decline?

Basically, the sororities sense a change in attitudes, especially on this campus. Kristi Ottoman, president of the Panhellenic Council, an organization of representatives from all houses, said, "On this campus I think it used to be that sororities were prestigious. When you came to college you had to belong or you just weren't with it. You had to dress well."

"People aren't interested in that anymore and for them that's good and I'm glad. The girls in the sororities realize this. But people have the wrong idea of the sorority girl."

"We have the same goals as any other college student. We just happen to live together in the same house," she said.

To explore the declining trend of sororities, representatives from Panhellenic councils, college alumni, and sorority members from several western states will meet at the University in February.

The stereotype of the socially oriented sorority girl, not really interested in the community or politics, may have applied 10 or 20 years ago, according to Miss Ottoman, "but not anymore."

She said in the past the house sponsored activities where attendance was mandatory, but not today. Now more girls are doing things on their own.

"I know some girls who tutor and several are involved in community service projects. Activities are more on an individual or small-group basis," she added.

Miss Ottoman also suggested that perhaps fraternity and sorority life may be "too structured" for some people.

"They like to be independent and that's good. I felt that way when I was a freshman," she said. In spring of her freshman year, Miss Ottoman decided that the sorority life was the best situation for her as opposed to apartment or dorm living. It provided the amount of contact she liked with other girls, not too close as in an apartment and yet had unity with many girls, unlike in a dorm.

"The thing about the dorm is that you make close friends but it's kind of transient. You don't feel you belong," she said.

She added that living in a sorority house afforded opportunities to get to know people and meet their friends. In studying, freshmen especially were helped by the upperclassmen. They were also informed of and urged to take interests in campus activities. Personal problems can also be taken to the housemother. Freshmen are assured that everyone will be there for the next three years, Miss Ottoman said, unlike in the dorm.

She estimated that living in a house costs from \$100 to \$150 more than living in the dorm. Expenses basically cover room and board, rush fee, and social fees. Freshmen pledges pay about \$10 a month for meals at the house (freshmen are required to live in dorms). For some houses a building fund fee is included to help pay off the mortgage on the house.

For those girls who find that sorority life is not to their liking, they simply de-pledge. No formal procedure is involved. Miss Ottoman said a girl usually visits the house manager and returns her pin. She said "very few" girls de-pledge and "most times there are no bad feelings."

"Some people just can't live like that. It's just normal."