

# 'Hazings' can be deadly, mother warns audience

By Dane Claussen  
Of the Emerald

The practice of "hazing" by Greek living organizations just "doesn't make sense," the founder and chairman of an anti-hazing committee told a University audience Wednesday night.

"There's nothing positive about it," said Eileen Stevens, head of the Committee Halting Useless Campus Killings, or CHUCK.

Fraternity hazing — the practice of fraternities and sororities putting pledges through various experiences that include paddlings, alcohol drinking binges, and mental stress — must be stopped before any more college students are killed or seriously injured, she said, emphasizing that she is not against the Greek system.

Stevens' son Chuck Stenzel, died at the age of 20 during fraternity hazing at Alfred University in New York in Feb. 1978.

University and local district attorney's office investigations produced no indictments, Stevens said, and the case was closed as an "isolated accident."

Stenzel, whose death was finally explained by his roommate the day after the funeral, had pledged a fraternity the day he died. His roommate was able to describe the incident only by "breaking an oath of secrecy and vow of silence."

Stevens' son had been locked in a car trunk with two other pledges and told he wouldn't be released until he had consumed a pint of bourbon, a six-pack of beer, and a bottle of wine, the roommate told Stevens.

Her son was never a drinker beyond beers with friends, and his death by "alcohol poisoning and exposure" left her "bewildered, crushed, devastated," she said.

"I couldn't believe that he would consume enough alcohol to kill him," Stevens said, adding that two other students were hospitalized in critical condition. One had a cardiac arrest, the other lapsed into an alcoholic coma, she said.

Determined that investigation closures without action were a "blatant disregard for life" Stevens researched fraternity hazings and founded CHUCK.

"I wanted to make people think . . . I was not anti-fraternity," she said. "I was anti-hazing."



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

Eileen Stevens

"Surely someone should have been held responsible," she said, adding that hazing incidents are not "accidents" or "isolated."

When CHUCK — now consisting of Stevens and 16 other mothers nationwide who have lost sons by fraternity hazing — was formed, five states had anti-hazing laws, Stevens said.

Now 12 do, and three more states have similar bills pending, she said. She said she is encouraged by fraternities that are addressing the problem and "yanking charters" of offending chapters among other things, she said.

During the same time, however, 20 men and two women have died as a result of Greek house hazings, Stevens said.

"I can assure you that mental hazing is not an alternative" since nervous disorders, breakdowns, and suicide attempts resulting from mental hazing can have even longer-lasting effects than physical injury, she said.

In any event, Greek houses must "take a close look at what you're doing" and realize that almost all hazing tragedies are linked to alcohol, secrecy, and peer pressure, Stevens said.

The University does not have a hazing problem, but Sigma Alpha Epsilon showed its concern by inviting her to speak, Stevens said.

## ASUO debate rescheduled

The rescheduling of an Interfraternity Council forum for ASUO presidential candidates will allow all six candidates — instead of two — to appear for the debate.

The forum to decide on a Greek system candidate endorsement is scheduled for 4 p.m. today in Room 101, EMU.

Only two candidates — C.J. Balfe and Debbie Mellow — planned to appear at the original time. Candidate Jeffrey

Houston had cited his observation of Passover with Hillel — the campus Jewish organization — as his reason for not attending while fellow candidates Kevin Kouns, Tom Brannon and Edward Colligan had announced a boycott because of the conflict with Passover.

IFC Pres. Dave Bauer said Tuesday that he had rescheduled the debate three times and could not do so again, but he yielded Wednesday.

"I believe that the credibility of this debate will suffer greatly if it occurs without each and every candidate for ASUO president present," Houston wrote in a letter to the Emerald Tuesday.

"It will have lost its integrity as an honest forum for introducing candidates and discussing issues, and instead become merely a rubber stamp to endorse candidates who are involved in the Greek system," he said.

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