

Greek growth

Animal House image a thing of the past

By Michael Duke
Of the Emerald

"Toga party, toga party. Somebody get the beer and don't waste time studying."

"Animal House," the now-classic motion picture, paints a comic view of the greek system in the 1960s with its rushes, parties and lack of academic responsibility.

In the 1960s, the greek system was in its adolescence.

In the 1980s, though, the greek system has had to grow up.

"You can't stereotype us as being an arch-conservative group anymore," says Alan Searce, University interfraternity council president. "The average student classifies us as being different, as elitist or snobs. We are easy to single out because we are a group."

Where the student in "Animal House" may be concerned with this weekend's party, the greek today is more concerned with involvement and personal growth, Searce says.

Marti Chaney, greek advisor at the University since spring, agrees the greek system is a different institution than it has been in the past.

"The greek today is a serious student," Chaney says. "There is still a playful trend across the country. But with the tight employment market, the greek is after practical experience to back up his or her degree."

And the greeks face the same realities as universities. Declining enrollment in college classrooms have admission offices scrambling for students. And to pad memberships, greeks also must scramble, Chaney says.

And like the University, the greek system is a business and must remain solvent, she says.

But the current rise in greek involvement is possible because of a decline during the 1970s. The rise in student activism meant a decline in fraternities and sororities, Searce says.

"Chapters forgot their philosophy," he says. "They were criticized as being organized groups, they became inactive and they left the campus."

In 1970, the University had 19 fraternities on campus. But by 1974, they numbered only nine, according to Searce.

And sororities have lost five chapters since 1970, Chaney says.

Up the road at Oregon State University, which maintains a strong greek system, eight fraternities left campus between 1967 and 1979 according to OSU's fraternity advisor Bill Brennan.

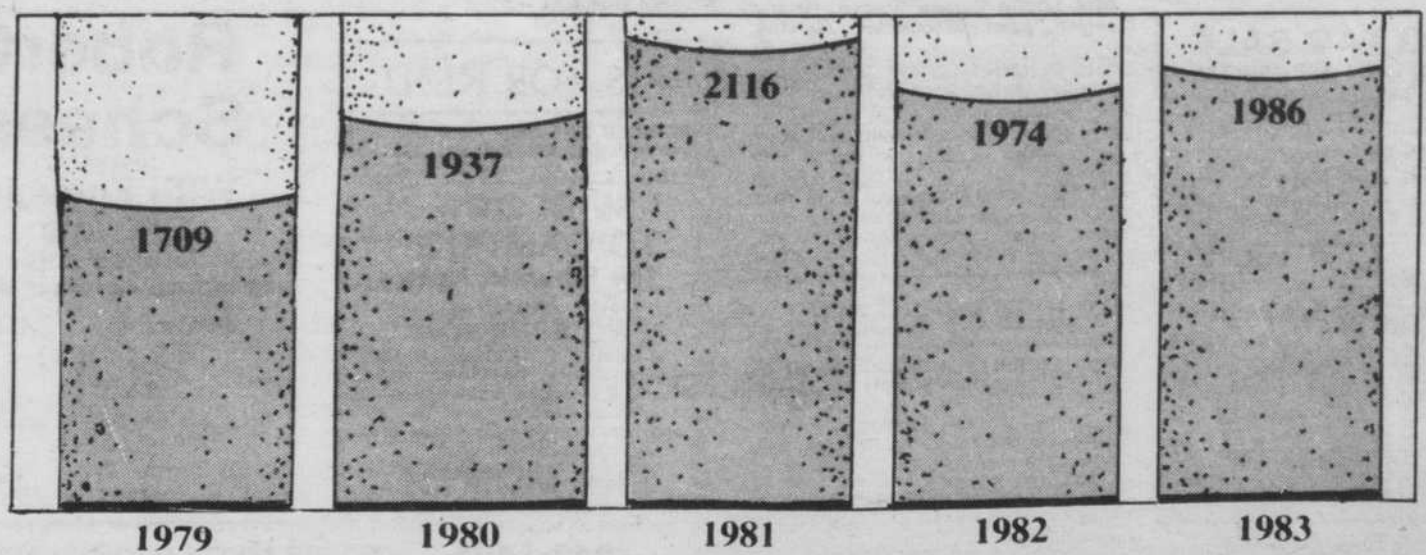
The greek system is again becoming strong on campus, Searce says. Though college enrollments have declined, fraternities at the University are consistently boosting memberships. In 1979, the total fraternal system had 806 members. This year they have 1052.

A new fraternity chapter, Lambda Chi Alpha, and the 21 men who pledged as associates, indicates that the system is growing, Searce says. There are now 15 fraternities at the University.

A total of 216 men have pledged a fraternity this year compared to 183 last year, he says.

Better organization and a new rush system — mainly a resident rush where the rushee lives in a house free for a week — helped increase membership, Searce says.

MEMBERSHIP TOTALS



Graphic by Shawn Bird

Sororities hit a peak membership year in 1980, and had more pledges this year than they did last year at the University, Chaney says. Four more students pledged sororities this year than in 1982. No new sororities have reopened.

Greeks represent 15 percent of all undergraduates at the University, she says.

At OSU, both fraternities and sororities are down in pledges this year, though 20 percent of undergraduates are affiliated with the greek system say Brennan and sorority advisor Nancy Vanderpool.

Nationally, there were 139,838 fraternity members in 1971, according to the National Interfraternity Council. In 1981, 250,000 men belonged to a fraternity.

A 1980 OSU study by Morris LeMay, OSU's director of the counseling and testing center, found that 55 percent of the women who joined sororities as freshmen graduated within seven years. Only 40 percent of non-sorority women who entered the same fall graduated within the same time.

For male freshmen studied over six years, 54 percent of fraternity men graduated compared to 44 percent of the non-fraternal men the study showed.

A University study done three years ago by then Dean of Students Robert Bowlin shows that the greek system aids in keeping students in school. The study compares living situations of students who leave school and showed greeks had the least dissatisfied tenants.

"Developing friendships seems to be a definite part of the pattern of persistence (continued work) in the pursuit of the degree," the LeMay study says.

Houses in the greek system are basically student-run business, Searce says. It takes approximately \$150,000 each year to operate a greek house. This money is supplied, budgeted and spent by students.

To stay in business, membership rosters must be full, Chaney says. Members do become disaffiliated from their chapter if they fail to meet costs or decide not to live in the house when it is not full.

"Living in a house has its obligations, like leasing an apartment," she says.

Chaney says people change over time and if at any time a greek wants to leave the system, "there's the door."

"A house cannot function if it's not full," University Panhellenic President Suzanne Stalick says. "Pledges know this commitment and must live up to it. The greek system just is not for everyone."

Marge Ramey, acting director of housing, says the greeks are right where they should be at the University. On a liberal campus, any group can fit in and do what they want, she says.

Improvements in image and finance are necessary, Ramey says. "And any University official would hope for strong and mature leadership from the greeks."

Another aspect of greeks that "Animal House" parodied is hazing, the once-common practice of harassing prospective fraternity members.

But hazing pledges has become less of an issue in the greek system. Pledges now sign an agreement with greeks stating knowledge of hazing and understand that they do not have to be involved in any harmful activities to become a greek, Searce says.

Hazing was outlawed in Oregon this summer, spurred by an incident that happened nearly three years ago when a pledge, Mark Rosier of Eugene, was struck by a car during hazing activities.

According to the \$1.9 million suit filed against the Kappa Sigma fraternity in January, Rosier and eight other pledges were left at Shotgun Creek Park on Marcola Road in February 1981 at midnight and forced to find their own way back to Eugene.

Another change is the all-campus parties that were common four years ago but which have vanished because of Oregon Liquor Control Commission law. There is a guest list at the door to stop party crashers and alternative drinks are served, he says.

"The purpose of a party is to have a good time," Searce says. "The all-campus parties used to be big money makers, but we are not taverns. And if someone drinks too much, we try to watch out for him."

"There is a high concern for individual well-being. We're conscious of our own dangers but we are responsible for ourselves," Searce says.

Also missing from the greek system is the attitude that it is just a social institution, says ASUO President Mary Hotchkiss.

"It's no longer an 'us-them' feeling with the greeks," Hotchkiss says. "There is a diversity in the system I didn't know existed. There is a great potential of activism that can be tapped."

"You can't generalize about the group."

"The benefits are great being a greek, that's why we're still here," Stalick says. "There's a tremendous opportunity for leadership. You can meet people and get involved. You feel more like you belong."



Performing, on stage

'Dracula' production haunts the Halloween audience

Just when you thought it was safe to trick-or-treat — Dracula is back.

Directors Grant McKernie and Thomas Nadar have resurrected the Count in all his evil splendor. Of course, their timing is perfect; Halloween just wouldn't be the same without the Prince of Darkness.

However, the University Theatre's production of Hamilton Deane and John Balderston's "Dracula" could send chills through an audience in mid-July.

Although Count Dracula does not appear on stage until late in the first act, his presence can be felt from the moment the curtain rises. The elaborate Victorian set, designed by Jerry Williams and constructed under the direction of Jerry Reinhardt, captures the romantic, yet sinister, personality of the Count. Ornamental portals and walls seem to be larger than life, almost overpowering, while every corner holds terrifying shadows. Although a fire burns softly in the fireplace, it cannot warm the room.

As the first act opens, the sun is setting. Castle Carfax can be seen through the library's imposing French doors. Magical lighting feats make the sunset glow, casting eerie rays into the room.

Haunting strains of music add to the mood. Johnathan Mansfield's original piano score is wonderfully spine-tingling.

When Dracula finally enters, pale and grim, his presence fills the stage. Dennis Smith plays the Count with powerful finesse, never allowing his character to fall into the Dracula stereotype. He moves with seductive grace, at once sinister and enticing, subtle and forceful. From his pearly-white fangs to the tip of his black satin cape, Smith's Dracula reeks of the essence of evil.

Likewise, Dracula's nemesis, Professor Van Helsing, is played with a pure strength by Cynthia Blaise. Although the part was originally written for a man, Blaise carries off the switch with style. Her warm, genuine portrayal of the determined and forceful Van Helsing makes the role believable; she never falls into the trap of portraying her character with a masculine edge. As Van Helsing, Blaise convinces us that Dracula is more than a myth. To her, he really exists. Her German accent adds to the performance, completing the image of the stranger who arrives in the nick of time to save Lucy's soul. There was one small

distraction in the portrayal of Van Helsing, however. According to the script, Van Helsing and Dr. Seward, Lucy's father, are old and dear friends. Yet Blaise's Van Helsing appears to be much younger than the portly, greying doctor — perhaps even young enough to be his daughter. Still, Blaise's performance towers over this oversight.

Without a doubt, Blaise and Smith command attention with their intense and captivating performances. Perhaps this is due in part to the nature of their characters in the script as opponents in the struggle between good and evil. While this is splendid in and of itself, their skills, no doubt built on experience, at times tend to overshadow other characters.

Renfield, Seward's crazed, fly-eating patient, was played by Douglas Hout in the Oct. 28 show. (The part is double-cast, and Hout and Michael Callahan will alternate performances.) Hout plays the madman with just a little too much formality. More often than not, he comes across as a trickster instead of a weak, idle lunatic.

Sally Goodwin is lovely as Dracula's most precious victim Lucy. When cowering and alarmed, Goodwin plays Lucy with quaint

innocence and penitence. Yet when supposedly overcome by her "unclean" spirit, Goodwin's Lucy is not quite the wicked wench her lines suggest. These moments in the play are rare, however, and overall Goodwin's performance is commendable.

Likewise, Dennis Dolan and Brian McCarthy as Dr. Seward and Jonathan Harker, Lucy's fiancé, give likeable, fairly consistent performances. There is nice interaction between the two as Lucy's father and lover.

Yet the dynamic forces of the production seem to arise from the confrontations between Smith and Blaise. The war of their wills adds dimension to the old tale, creating delightful stage conflicts. In the end, the audience cheers as Seward and Harker, led by the undaunted Van Helsing, drive the stake through Dracula's sinister heart.

And, in the end, we are left with Van Helsing's all-too-real reminder that such things really do exist, that Dracula and his forces are part of our rational world of proofs and positives.

Remember that tonight.

Brenda Thornton