

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Steven Asbury
MANAGING EDITOR:
Thom Schoenborn
NIGHT EDITOR:
Sarah Kichler
EDITORIAL EDITORS:
Ashley Bach & Brian Diamond

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

NEWSROOM:
(541) 346-5511
DISPLAY ADVERTISING:
(541) 346-3712
BUSINESS OFFICE:
(541) 346-5512
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:
(541) 346-4343

Lack of alcohol may dry out fraternities

OUR OPINION:
Two houses' new alcohol-free policy won't work in the current system, but it has some hope for the future

Deep inside the University fraternity system, there lies a stark reality: Something is wrong.

Houses are trashed. Grades are down, and membership isn't exactly booming. And the University community has become disenchanted with the greek system as a whole. The antics of "Animal House" have ceased to be entertaining and are now just tiresome.

This all puts fraternities up against a widespread image and identity crisis. Many people disapprove of the houses' activities and current incarnation, but what do they become in the future?

Two chapters, Sigma Nu and Phi Delta, have recognized the problem on a national level and created a solution: Make all their houses go dry. The national chapters have instructed all their houses, including those at the University, to eliminate all house alcohol by the year 2000. This is a good idea.

But there's another reality in the fraternity system. Men who join fraternities join for one reason — social aspects. And these aspects usually involve alcohol. Because of this connection, most men pledge expecting to drink, and drink a lot.

This is where the dry fraternity idea becomes problematic.

Imagine a fraternity party without alcohol. Music blaring, people standing around talking, laughing and drinking...Pepsi? For a Campus Crusade meeting, it might work. But for a fraternity, no. At least not now.

In light of this reality, the dry fraternity idea seems more impractical than impressive. To fight the new restrictions, it seems likely that many of the members of the so-named houses will either drink outside of their houses or break

the new rule entirely. In a system that revolves primarily around alcohol, this may be the only way to socially survive.

Drinking should not be difficult, however, for fraternities. Members want to be able to consume alcohol and consume it freely. Because of this, any house with alcohol restrictions will no

doubt see a decline in membership.

Expect Sigma Nu and Phi Delta to either be pushed out of the greater greek scene or go to great pains to bypass the new law. No matter what, their two houses will be socially dead themselves. It's just reality.

Reality, however, can be changed. We acknowledge there is hope for dry fraternities. Their potential benefits include increased safety, cleanliness, academic performance and lower insurance rates. The absence of alcohol could also shed more light on fraternities' other benefits like brotherhood, tradition and community service.

But can it all work? Success is possible. And at the very least, Sigma Nu and Phi Delta should be commended for trying something. But execution of the new rule may take a miracle.

First, a large number of people presently in the greek system must make a stand against drinking. This will give the dry houses a consistent membership, a foundation for the future and support from within the greek system. Second, a large number of future pledges must be willing to enter the greek system not to drink, but to take advantage of its other aspects.

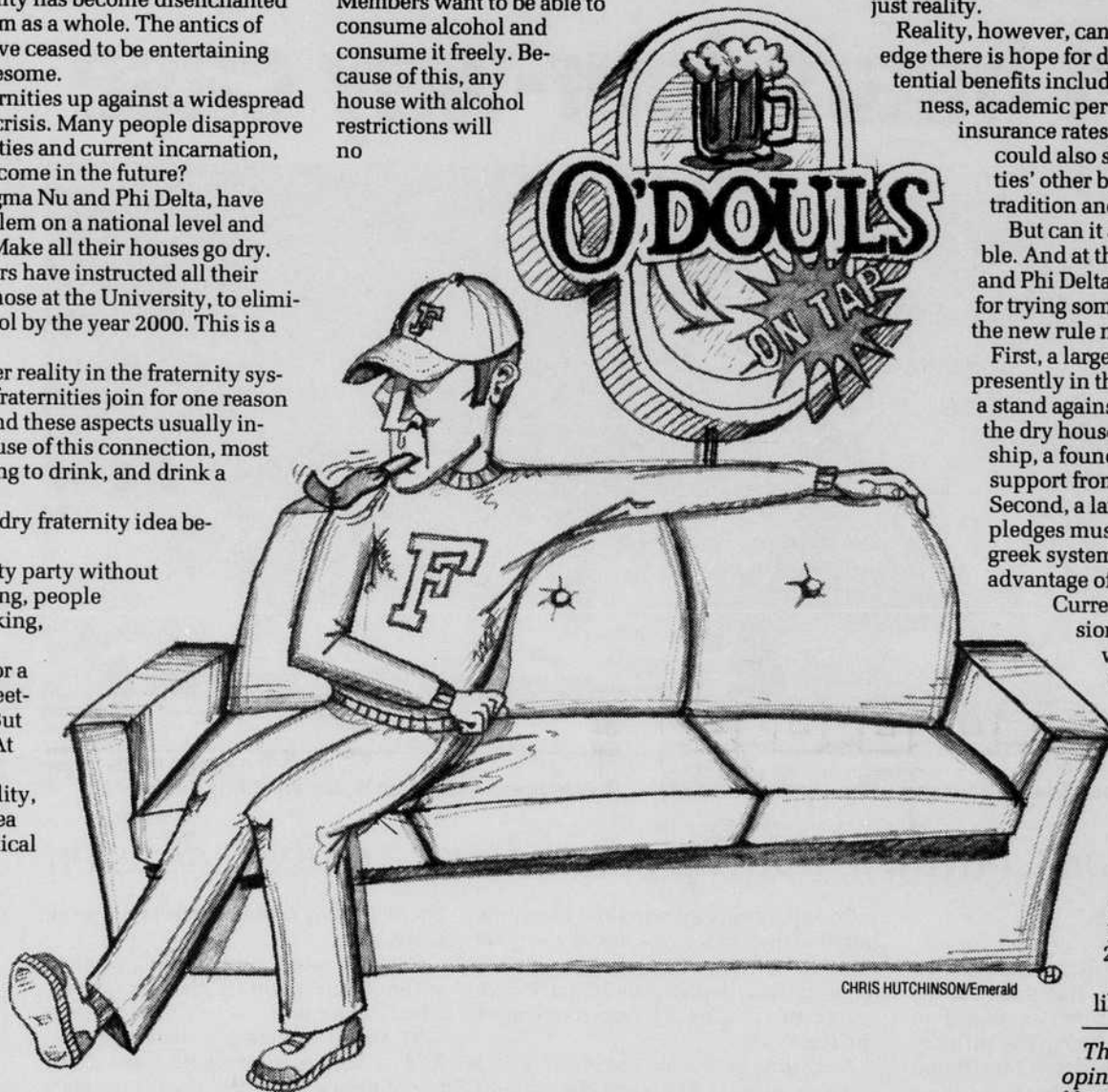
Currently, we don't see this vision being realized. But we'll wait and see. If conditions change drastically, the two houses' bold move could be the beginning of a larger movement. The University and Intrafraternity Council are even discussing the possibility of making all fraternities and sororities alcohol-free, as part of a program called Select 2000.

Now that's a sight we'd like to see.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

CONTACT US

What do you think? Write us a letter expressing your opinion or E-mail us at ode@oregon.uoregon.edu. Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Diseases, not animals, are targets of research

During the last 100 years, scientists have successfully contained or discovered cures for a vast array of deadly diseases that once ravaged humanity. These remarkable advances — mostly developed in teaching hospitals and research universities — could not have been achieved without laboratory animals.

There are those who protest, sometimes violently, against the use of animals for this purpose, but the benefits to humanity from such research are unquestionable, profound and deserving of broad-based public support.

It is easy to forget the primitive state of medicine and health care that existed just a few decades ago. A review of 20th-century Nobel Prizes awarded for advances in medicine highlights just how far we've come in a relatively short span of time.

Researchers have won the Nobel for investigating, developing treatments for and preventing tuberculosis, typhus, anemia, diabetes, diphtheria, malaria, yellow fever and polio. Significantly, each breakthrough, treatment or cure was based on research using laboratory animals.

Such achievements give hope to today's researchers who are focusing their efforts on developing treatments and cures for devastating human diseases that continue

COMMENTARY

Steadman Upham

to disable and kill millions each year. The list is long and touches every family.

It includes cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) and diseases of the heart, lung, liver, kidney, eye, blood and bone.

While the University does not have a medical school and is not directly involved in applied medical research, University scientists are at the forefront of basic research efforts from which treatments and cures are developed. Laboratory animals play a key role in each of the scores of investigations University scientists are conducting.

Regardless of the pressing importance of this work, there are some who are against the use of any animals in biomedical research. In a free and open society, we value such difference of opinion. But in the push and pull of open debate, it is vital that we are cognizant of the facts.

For decades, scientists have been replacing higher-order organisms with lower-order ones in research. Today, about 90 per-

cent of laboratory research animals used nationwide are rodents — mostly mice and rats. Cats and dogs account for less than one percent of research specimens. At the University, for example, 97 percent of laboratory animals are zebrafish used to study genetic and developmental abnormalities.

Finally, every research specimen at the University is cared for according to rigorous federal, state and institutional standards that ensure humane treatment. The American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care also has reviewed and accredited our animal care and use program.

Someday, we may inhabit a world free of sickness and disease, a world where all the mysteries of the body are understood. But until that time, we must respond to the world as it is.

University scientists will continue exploring and adding to our knowledge of the biological mechanisms that underlie human health and disease. Animal research is a small but vital part of this exploration.

Steadman Upham, a guest columnist for the Emerald, is vice provost for research and dean of the University Graduate School. His views do not necessarily reflect those of the paper.

Top 10

Top ten signs it's time to switch majors

10. When you ask your advisor what your job prospects are, he bursts out laughing.
9. You discover the homeless lady on the corner graduated from your field with high honors.
8. Your professors constantly stress that what you are learning is "purely theoretical and has no real use."
7. Graduation requirements for your major include classes in "High impact pain resistance."
6. Due to lack of funding, half of your classes are taught by GTF dropouts.
5. Instead of a senior thesis, you have to submit a paper on your summer vacation.
4. It's veterinary science, and you don't live in Corvallis.
3. You get class credits interning at McDonalds.
2. At the bookstore your class books are in the "joke major" section.
1. Three words: Theoretical abstract astrology.