



COLUMNS



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PHA looks beyond letters

Letters Off Days remove labels, eliminate sorority differences

by Sarah Gibbons

It's something every sorority member should experience – the feeling of walking into a room and knowing that every person there is connected by the Greek community. This kind of unity is one of the many goals of Panhellenic Association's new "Letters Off Day" program.

Starting this semester on Oct. 27 and Nov. 17, the first two meetings of the initiative brought together two representatives from each PHA chapter. Members of the Panhellenic Council and the United Greek Council

were also in attendance.

Letters Off Day was created to foster a sense of unity in the sorority community and attempt to remove the negative stereotyping that pulls Greeks apart. The program is the brainchild of Nicole Heylmun, a member of PHA's Administrative Affairs cabinet.

"We all joined our respective chapters for the same reasons, we all have great sisterhoods, and we are all doing some amazing things for our philanthropies and for our communities," Heylmun said.

This sense of common goals made it possible

to promote bonding among our organizations.

The women discussed ideas for promoting inter-sorority bonding, as well as a bonding of the larger Greek community.

To strengthen the relationship between sororities, ideas such as planning sober socials between different chapters and educating chapters on the values and symbols of other sororities were suggested.

To promote a communal relationship between all Greek chapters, some suggested inviting members of PHC and UGC to attend Greek Week and Home-

coming events and offering a scholarship for potential new members going through recruitment so money can be removed as a barrier for joining a sorority.

"Through this sense of community we ultimately aim to disband many of the negative stereotypes that have become associated with many chapters," Heylmun said. "We aim to stop the badmouthing between chapters, and improve overall relationships."

Efforts like these will continue next semester when PHA officially announces three more proposed Letters Off Days.



Photo courtesy of DFSL

Kevin Pitts (far right) works with multicultural sororities and fraternities. Two of his chapters were recognized at the Greek Awards Reception last May.

Advisor Profile: Kevin Pitts

by Lana Marcon

Upon entering Kevin Pitts' office, your eyes are quick to jump to the two massive frames centered neatly on the wall behind his desk. These two diplomas – one from Rutgers and one from the University of Maryland – represent the two schools our United Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council advisor has not only graduated from, but draws much experience from as well.

Hailing from Brooklyn, N. Y., Pitts attended Rutgers University as an undergraduate for his African American literature degree. During his time there, Pitts got his first taste of Greek life.

One fraternity stood out the most to him, Alpha Phi Alpha – a fraternity of men whom have, "long stood on the forefront of African-American community's fight for civil rights," according to Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Since 1906, Alpha Phi Alpha is the first inter-collegiate Greek organization for black students, yielding numerous prominent figures such as Martin Luther King Jr., W.E.B. Dubois, Thurgood Marshall, Duke Ellington, and Reggie Williams – a fact Pitts agrees to believe is no coincidence.

Pitts graduated from Rutgers in 2002, and went on to receive his Masters here in College Park. *Advisor, 2*

'Dedicated' to a DREAM

Charity event focused on immigration legislation

by Deborah Kim

On Dec. 2, the University community had a chance to support Greek life and immigrants at the same time.

Kappa Phi Lambda's 3rd annual "Dedicated" event was a cultural festival of food, prizes and entertainment performed by various student organizations, including both Greek and non-Greek organizations.

Members of the United Greek Council gave step and stroll performances. There was also a silent auction portion for guests to participate in to help raise more funds for the sorority's philanthropy.

The events was dedicated to a current issue relating to Kappa Phi Lambda's national philanthropy, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

(NAPAWF). This year the sorority is focusing on the DREAM Act, which deals with immigration rights. A representative of NAPAWF from Washington, D.C. spoke at the event as the DREAM Act presenter.

The president of Kappa Phi Lambda, Jen Yu, "hopes that this event will bring students from all different backgrounds together and have everyone enjoy each other's company. The 'big picture' that we should aim to understand is that all of us are connected in one way or another, no matter how far apart our choices may seem."

Serena Nguyen, the chapter's event chair, hopes the event showed something about the Greek community: "This event demonstrates that Greeks are interested and involved in real world issues. I believe

Kappa Phi Lambda's "Dedicated" show on Dec. 2 raised money for their national philanthropy, the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum.

that by wearing letters, we have a responsibility and the ability to make a difference in the community."

"Dedicated" has changed tremendously since its inception three

years ago. According to Yu, the event first started out at the Nyumburu Cultural Center. This year it was held in the Grand Ballroom of Stamp for a cost of \$7 - \$10 per person.

Greek transfers embrace change

by Michelle Ruth

When most people head off to college for their freshman year, they think the college they chose is where they're going to be for the next four years.

However, this is not always the case, and in some instances a person could have already joined Greek life before they make the decision to transfer schools.

More students have

gone through this process than one might imagine, however daunting it may seem.

Greek students who've transferred to Maryland have found their transitions to be easier than they expected.

Marisa Beirne, a sophomore psychology major, went through this process quite recently when she transferred from the Alpha Lambda

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'Clear eyes, Full heart, Can't lose'

Daniel Zolotorofe, 1991 - 2011

by Sarah Polus

Daniel "Zolo" Zolotorofe of Tau Kappa Epsilon died Nov. 3 from complications related to diabetes. He was 20 years old.

The TKE brothers held a candlelight vigil Nov. 4 in front of the chapter house at 3 Fraternity Row to celebrate and remember Zolotorofe's life.

The brothers sat on the front steps of the house while the crowd gathered around a memorial for Zolotorofe. It contained item such as a portrait of Zolor and his TKE letters and paddle. Some of Zolo's favorite music played and the brothers spoke about Zolotorofe, telling funny stories, sharing memories and saying goodbyes, according to senior and brother of TKE, Tyler Combs.

In 2001, doctors at Hackensack University Medical Center in Hackensack, N.J., diagnosed Zolotorofe with type 1 juvenile diabetes. At the end of his senior year of high school, Zolotorofe was also diagnosed with Addison's disease -- an autoimmune disease -- and Hashimotos disease -- a thyroid related condition. A car accident during the summer of 2011 fractured his spine, and further complicated his health situation.

Upon returning to UMD in the fall, Zolotorofe was upbeat about his situation but struggled keeping up with his health. On Oct. 31, he went into diabetic ketoacidosis -- when the body has to use fat as fuel instead of sugar and causes a build up of fat byproducts -- and eventually went into cardiac arrest.

He was unconscious



Photo courtesy of www.dzfoundation.com

TKE's Dan Zolotorofe, pictured with his father, died from juvenile diabetes in November.

until he died on Nov. 3.

Zolotorofe was a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon since the spring of 2010.

"He was a very giving and selfless person who put everyone else before himself," said Combs. "If there was ever a favor you needed it wasn't even a question, he would do it at the drop of a hat."

Zolotorofe's friends described him as friendly, outgoing, and a leader. Zolo was on the TKE executive board and was president of the executive student council of Mahwah High School in Mahwah, N.J., his hometown.

The DZ Foundation, was created in Zolotorofe's honor in order to gather support and funds for Juvenile Diabetes. To help raise money for the foundation red "Zolostrong" wristbands are being sold for \$1.

Shirts were also made in commemoration of Zolo. Proceeds will go towards fighting juvenile diabetes.

The motto on the shirts, "clear eyes, full heart, can't lose," was a favorite of Zolo's. The saying was one of the last things he wrote on his Facebook account.

Zolotorofe's funeral was held on Sunday, Nov. 6 at Robert Schoem's Menorah Chapel in Paramus, N.J., according to legacy.com.

Transfer students anxious about transitions

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chapter of AEPi at Arizona to the Alpha Mu chapter here on the Maryland campus.

Beirne chose to transfer to Maryland because of its close proximity to her home state, New Jersey, but at first she was apprehensive and unsure if she was going to fit in with her new sisters.

However, this has

not been the case for Beirne.

"Making new friends has been easier due to having AEPi," she said. "I feel that I fit in more with the girls [here] than I did in Arizona... All of the girls have helped me get to know the school and meet more people and so far the move has been great."

Sophomore Russian major Peyton Wil-

son also transferred to UMD after pledging her sorority, Delta Gamma, in Oklahoma.

Although a large part of the transfer process is secret, Wilson had to send the appropriate forms to her Nationals who then contacted the Maryland chapter before she was allowed to join DG at UMD, she said.

According to Wilson, her sisters welcomed her with open

arms.

Wilson wanted to transfer schools because her previous college wasn't meeting her academic needs, but she ended up staying for more than just school.

"At the end of the day I came here for academics, not because Maryland has a Delta Gamma chapter," she said. "The fact that I fell in love with this chapter is an added bonus!"

Formal recruitment: questions answered

by Rachael Toms

As an underclassmen, you are faced with many decisions as you enter a University setting. Most notably, how will I get involved? Greek life is a huge part of university life, and this is true for the University of Maryland. Though a fraternity or sorority can represent a significant financial and time commitment, most Greeks will agree that Greek life is an opportunity to become part of something bigger than yourself and to make lifelong bonds with your peers.

In other words, it's worth it.

If you are considering rushing, there are a few things to consider. Firstly, you must decide which type of Greek organization works for you. Greek chapters at UMD are recognized by one of four councils, or governing bodies: the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Association,

Pan-Hellenic Council and the United Greek Council. You must also decide which chapter, or group within a council, is your best fit.

This process is called recruitment, or rushing, during which time Greeks hold events and provide opportunities for you to meet the members.

If you're ready to rush, you probably have a few questions:

1. How do I know when it's time for recruitment? Where do I begin?

This process varies a little between each council. UGC and PHC are organizations with a multicultural focus and do not have a formal recruitment, allowing each chapter to do things in their own way. Some do not have rush, but those that do take new members during the first few weeks of the semester. Generally, the process is very discrete and secretive, so it is important to

attend Meet the Greeks -- a First Look Fair for Greeks -- and other events during the year that highlight these organizations and provide more information.

PHA sororities participate in Informal (fall) and Formal (spring) Recruitment. To participate in recruitment in the spring, you must register on the PHA website, www.MarylandPHA.com, after which you will receive information about dates and scheduling.

IFC fraternities also accept new members during the beginning of fall and spring semesters, so be on the lookout for open houses and other events.

2. How do I find the right house for me?

The easiest way to find your perfect fit is to go into the process with an open mind. Try to attend as many open houses and rush events as possible so that you can get a good idea of each

house for yourself. PHA Formal Recruitment has a mutual selection process that is especially helpful in narrowing down your top picks, as well as Rho Gammas -- recruitment advisers -- who help guide girls through the process and offer unbiased advice.

Also, don't be afraid to put yourself out there! The members are just as excited to meet you as you are them.

3. What is the most important advice for a potential new member?

Be yourself and have fun! As cliché as it sounds, showing your true colors is the only way to end up in a fraternity or sorority that fits you best. Though it can be tough to decide on a favorite chapter, you'll be surprised how easily it "just happens" if you stay positive and open minded. Ultimately, you are in control of your decision and should make it for yourself.

Advisor works to bring UGC, PHA together

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Park.

Pitts worked as a Residential Director in Easton Hall before becoming a part of the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Compared to his own undergraduate experience, Pitts saw a disunity within Greek life at College Park that didn't compare with his own.

While each chapter and council certainly

had its own independent doings, there was a togetherness and brotherhood at Rutgers that simply wasn't prevalent at Maryland, he said.

Pitts decided that needed to change.

He has been advisor to both the United Greek Council and National Pan-hellenic Council for one year.

According to Pitts, there is a desire among Greek chapters to connect, but unity is skewed

largely because of internal issues such as membership and finances. For example, sometimes due to small membership a brother or sister will take on multiple executive positions, difficulties chapters in IFC and PHA don't often face.

Since his time here, Pitts has seen improvement within Greek life and hopes to continue that change.

Among the many

improvements, the M-PACT Retreat held in October and the class EDCP318 he co-teaches with PHA advisor Liz Brown, have been the most successful.

Pitts has continued the Alpha Phi Alpha tradition of leadership during his time on campus. His work, in combination with help from other advisors and student-led efforts, Pitts is transforming Greek culture at Maryland.