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 to 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 chapter members on the values and symbols of other sororities were suggested.

To promote a communal relationship between all Greek chapters, we have suggested inviting members of IFC and UGC to attend Greek Week and Homecoming events and offering a scholarship for potential new members going through recruitment to make 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.

‘Dedicated’ to a DREAM
Charity event focused on immigration legislation
by Deborah Kim

On Dec. 5, 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 to raise more funds for the national philanthropy, the 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 that by wearing letters, we are responsible and have 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 - $8 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 Transfer students, 2

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 Pitt’s 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.

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Transfer students anxious about transitions

by Rachel Toms

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 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 Malawah High School in Malawah, N.J., his hometown.

The TZ 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 “Zolos-trong” wristbands are being sold for $1.

Colophon

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Advisor: Kerry Thompson

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While each chapter has its own unique traditions and events, all of them participate in similar parts of chapter life. Typically, the majority of recruitment occurs in the spring of each semester, and the fall is spent participating in formal recruitment and welcoming new members.

As an underclassman, you are faced with many decisions as you enter a University setting. Most notably, will you choose to participate in Greek life? Joining 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 Greek Life Council, the United Greek Pan-Hellenic Council, the 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 can be intimidating, so be on the lookout for rush events, 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 have a formal recruitment process, allowing each chapter to do things in their own way. Some do not have rush, but those who do will have new members during the first few weeks of the semester.

Generally, the process is very discrete and secretive, so it is important to accept new members. Wilson said that change.

Wilson wanted to transfer to Maryland because her previous college wasn’t meeting her academic needs, but she wasn’t so quick to transfer 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!”

Advisors work 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 De- partment of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

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

While each chapter and council certainly had its own independent doingsthere was a togetherness and broth erhood at Rutgers that simply wasn’t prevalent at Maryland, he said.

Pitts decided that needed to change.

He has been advis or 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 member- ship and finances. For example, sometimes due to small member- ship a brother or sister will take on multiple executive positions, dif ficulties 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 EDPC318 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.