100 Years of Greek Life at UMD

By Christina Germano

This year, the Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life is celebrating the 100th anniversary of Greek Life on the Maryland’s campus. To kickoff the centennial celebrations, DFSL held a “Welcome Back BBQ” on Fraternity Row Field on Friday, September 6th.

Fraternity and Sorority members alike attended the event to enjoy a beautiful summer evening and delicious local barbeque fare. For dessert, DFSL arranged red, yellow and white cupcakes in the shape of 100 to show both its pride for Greek life and for Maryland.

To many members, one of the most important aspects of Greek life is the sense of community that comes from joining a network of philanthropic colleagues, bound by sisterhood and brotherhood. Jake Cummings, a junior in Zeta Psi, thinks that the centennial anniversary is a perfect reason to for Greeks to come together as a community. According to Cummings, “Greek unity is important for a sense of community across a wide range of people”. He appreciated this opportunity to spend time with his friends involved in other Greek chapters. Sarah Wigmore, a sophomore in Delta Delta Delta, loved the friendly and fun atmosphere of the barbeque. Wigmore asserts, “Everyone was mingling; it wasn’t segregated by different chapters”.

One hundred years on Maryland’s campus is certainly something to celebrate. In the past century, Greek Life at Maryland has grown from a few small chapters to a network of thousands of students, including 15 PHA sororities, 24 IFC fraternities, five NPHC chapters, and 10 UGC chapters encompassing nearly 20 percent of Maryland’s student body. Each year, these chapters foster lifelong friendships and raise thousands of dollars for a variety of philanthropic efforts.

Wigmore agrees that the 100th anniversary of Greek life is an event worth celebrating. Wigmore said, “It’s awesome to be a part of traditions and a community that you know so many students were a part of before you”.

PHA President Spotlight

By Natalie Koltun

This coming semester is quite a busy one for Panhellenic. We have spent all summer working hard to make this school year the best one yet!

First, we are very excited to be working with our new Panhellenic Advisor, Kahlin McKeown. She is very excited to be working with our community, and we are very excited to see what she can help us achieve in the future.

Next, we have made a lot of changes to current programs, and we have added to many of our already existing programs. This semester, we are really focusing on the accomplishment of the community members. We have many events in place to recognize those members in our community and to celebrate them. We are also focusing a lot on ways to make this community stronger.

We are very proud to have won the National Panhellenic Conference Achievement Award, however we are working towards receiving the Excellence Award. All in all, there is a lot in store this semester!

Habing Good Scholarship; How to Start the School Year Off Right

By Natalie Koltun

At the school year begins, many of us tell ourselves that this semester will be different: no more putting off assignments, cramming just an hour before a big test, and certainly no more Red Bull fueled all-nighters in attempt to tackle a mountain of work.

We say we’ll go to office hours and study sessions, yet, many of us fail to do just that, opting for “Grey’s Anatomy” reruns on Netflix instead.

But what if we actually did these things? What if we actually decided to hold ourselves accountable for a change? The secret to academic success is really no secret at all, and starting off the year right will make life easier as the semester wears on. A few tips can be summarized with the letters CPR.

C stands for calendar, which is a great tool to keep on top of deadlines. PHA’s VP of Academics Kristin Dziędzic has found that keeping a calendar has significantly helped her stay organized. The next letter, R, stands for resources.

On campus, there are many resources for you to utilize such as the writing center, free tutors through the Honors College, or your chapter’s academic chair. You could even form a study group with members of your chapter! The second letter, P, is for relaxation.

This does not only mean the literal form of the term, but also the need for an adequate amount of sleep each night as well as stress less. One way to decrease stress is through exercise. According to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education, a little exercise goes a long way to relieve stress due to the release of feel-good hormones that pump up your mood.

Dziędzic feels that it is more important to be enthusiastic about scholarship, and “focus on studying. By doing this, we wouldn’t have to worry about a certain GPA number because inadvertently we’ll see improvement as individuals and as a community, to the individual as well as the entire Greek community to gain enthusiasm for scholarship and focus more on improvement.”
Scholarship

For those looking to balance Greek life with schoolwork better, head over to the Career Networking Reception on September 25th. More information can be found at careers.umd.edu for a chance to learn about networking, résumé and internships.

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After One Year Being Back, Alpha Xi Delta is Happy to Be Home

By Nicole Blahut

After one after being reinstated at the university, the Beta Eta chapter of Alpha Xi Delta is making great strides. These young women of the Beta Eta chapter haven’t just made a home on Knox Road but they have also gained a home in the Panhellenic community. The process of becoming a new chapter and developing a foundation for future sisters can be challenging. But with the help of the entire community, Alpha Xi Delta found the support they needed.

“It was truly a wonderful experience because it brought us all so close together and taught us the invaluable meaning of sisterhood,” says Chrissy Bartlett, chapter president, describing her first year experiences.

Chrisissy also explains that immediately following their chapter’s first bid day last fall, the Greek community opened their arms to their sisters. The Greek community “showered” the chapter with welcome gifts, fraternity praises and guidance. Through these actions, the women in Alpha Xi Delta were able to gain a positive and heart-warming first impression of what it means to be Greeks.

Beta Eta was originally founded at Maryland in 1934 and was closed down in 1994. In December of 2012, the Beta Eta chapter of Alpha Xi Delta was reinstated, yet in that short time these women have made notable accomplishments.

In their first year, Alpha Xi Delta took second place in Sigma Chi’s Derby Days philanthropy event, raised $13,000 for Autism Speaks, and came in second in their first Greek Week competition.

The chapter hopes to create a bigger presence in the Greek community as well as bigger philanthropy initiatives surrounding Autism Speaks.

Book Review: Pledged: The Secret Life of Sororities

By Rachel Greenwald

When becoming a member of Greek Life at any big university, you are simultaneously joining multiple stereotypes. Where do these stereotypes come from, and why do they exist?

In the book Pledged: The Secret Life of Sororities, undercover journalist Alexandra Robbins researches these labels by observing four sorority women, and her findings can be described as nothing less than troubling. Sadly, the stereotypes that plague Greek life are often all too true at some universities.

From 2002-2003 Robbins became a fly on the wall, and her experiences back up every generalization there ever was about Greek Life.

Between eating disorders, hazing rituals, and date rape, the four girls she shadowed went through it all. After reading the book, I was proud to attend a university where such atrocities were not nearly as widespread or tolerated.

Most disturbingly, girls were objectified in the worst ways possible, being forced to sleep with fraternity men as a part of initiation, or being told to hide the fact that they were raped.

Reading this book was nothing less than shocking and thought provoking, however it did not depict the Greek Life I have grown to know and love.

Although Pledged was a good read, it contains a very one-sided argument regarding Greek Life. Drug and alcohol abuse exists within sororities, but it also exists within the student population that is affiliated with any Greek organization.

The problems Robbins highlights are just as much a part of the culture of college in general, we would learn nothing positive about what joining a sorority has to offer. Books like this keep the stereotypes living on, and while some of them may be true at some universities, that does not mean they are true at all universities.

Pledged was also published in 2004, therefore it is not the most up to date source on Greek Life. Every year, Panhellenic Associations around the country create reforms that make hazing and other rituals obsolete.

Nevertheless, I would still recommend reading Pledged. The arguments Robbins makes are eye opening, and many of her suggestions for the improvement of sororities should not be taken lightly. Hopefully after reading this book, you will also be motivated to being the change that is needed to make these stereotypes history. Though we all wear different letters, we are still a part of something bigger, and it will take everyone to change common attitudes about Greek Life.
Third Annual Derby Days to be the Best One Yet

By Chloe Gershenson

The end of the summer humidity and changing of leaves is a mark of September meaning, Sigma Chi’s philanthropy event “Derby Days” is right around the corner.

From September 29th to October 3rd, sorority women compete in “Greek Week Olympic” style competitions. The proceeds raised goes to the Children’s Miracle Network. Now in its third year since Sigma Chi’s return to campus, Derby Days is becoming a familiar fall tradition among Maryland’s sorority women.

Putting on Derby Days takes a year of planning by the event’s chairperson. “We begin with bi-weekly meetings in the spring and hold conference calls throughout the summer to make sure that everything is prepared by the time the semester begins in the fall,” says chairperson Skyler Harris. The Derby Days committee works all year long to gain sponsors. To do this, the committee creates a sponsor packet and approaching local businesses.

Sigma Chi hopes to make Derby Days a memorable and recognizable experience in the Greek community. Events such as Penny Wars between the competing teams, auction and the cookout, where the winners will be announced, are designed to be fun and friendly competition.

Something new to Derby Days this year is Sigma Chi’s partnership with local restaurants such as Lime and Garbanzo to hold fundraising nights where a portion of proceeds will go to the Children’s Miracle Network.

Women take part in making Derby Days a memorable and recognizable experience in the Greek community.

Fall Sorority Style Trends

By Julie Guacci

As the leaves change colors and tan lines fade, sorority women wait in anticipation to see which trends will survive and which ones will become obsolete this fall. This past year, we fell for versatile pullovers, printed racer-back tank tops, and anything and everything customizable. Still, we can never get enough of enduring trends like Lilly Pulitzer accessories, the ever-popular Sperry Top-Siders, and chino shorts of varying colors and patterns which can be spotted all over campus. The classic preppy look, the unofficial hallmark of sorority fashion, will be more open to mixing and matching pieces and personalization.

Additionally, this year we saw the rise and subsequent domination of the spirit jersey, a comfortable, casual piece, available in a plethora of colors. Spirit jerseys were paired with track shorts or bathing suit bottoms throughout the summer and in the fall, the jerseys can be spotted with leggings and flip-flops. Another huge trend was the monogram, from phone cases to over-the-shoulder bags, and even shoes. For those who strive for maximum personalization, monograms are the perfect accessory.

During this fall semester we will see the continuation of these trends as well as the addition of bright-colored baseball caps and 1/4-zip sweaters, both at the top of Vineyard Vines’ “Campus Favorites.” The signature Vineyard Vines whale, bluefish, and classic bowtie will continue to be seen on t-shirts and accessories. Summer favorites like Lilly Pulitzer print dresses may have a last hurrah before they are replaced with skinny ankle-cut jeans and Toms, but never put away your pearls; a classic to wear with either.

Meet the Greeks. As for the Alpha Delta Phi colonization process, they will be an affiliate chapter, or colony, here for a while, until they gain experience and can run on their own.

With two additional fraternities added this year, that will bring the total number of chapters in IFC to 24. These additions will definitely help the Maryland Greek Community continue to grow and thrive.

IFC Colonizes Alpha Delta Phi; Zeta Beta Tau Recolonizes This Spring

By Courtney Hoff

This school year, two fraternities will be colonizing on campus. Alpha Delta Phi is currently colonizing, while Zeta Beta Tau will begin re-colonizing after five years off campus, in Spring 2014.

Alpha Delta Phi was founded in 1832 at Hamilton College in New York. After almost 180 years as a fraternity, Alpha Delta Phi began their colonization process two years ago. According to William Reid, a member of Alpha Delta Phi, the process began after the swim team was cut and former team members decided they wanted to get involved in some other thing.

They came together with others when they heard that Alpha Delta Phi wanted to start a chapter on Maryland’s campus and decided to get involved. After this process began, it took a year for the Interfraternity Council (IFC) to approve the addition of Alpha Delta Phi to the Greek community. Now that they have officially become a member of IFC, they will be a part of the Greek community, and will be able to participate in events such as Homecoming and Greek Week. Along with these events, IFC has helped them by providing organizational tips and giving them a table at weekly meetings in the spring and In the fall, the jerseys can be spotted with leggings and flip-flops. Another huge trend was the monogram, from phone cases to over-the-shoulder bags, and even shoes. For those who strive for maximum personalization, monograms are the perfect accessory.

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Committee member James Hunter is excited for the events because “the committee has been working really hard on promoting Derby Days through social media.” He also wants all the effort they put into it to make Derby Days something “people will look forward to every fall.” So mark your calendars and get ready for Derby Days!