

WEEKEND

Viewpoints RUSH

Sororities have good, bad points

By KATHY HOPPER
Staff Writer

Editor's note: The real names of the two women interviewed were not used because they are in sororities and cannot discuss Rush while it is going on.

They're waiting in Spencer. The halls of Kenan, Granville and Cobb are silent. Hundreds of women going through Rush await the arrival of their counselors who will bring the fateful news.

Doubts float through the minds of most rushees. "What if I don't get a bid? Will I get my first choice?"

Some women will run ecstatically to their new houses. For others, things won't work out. One woman fidgets nervously when she hears quiet sobbing across the hall. It is a day of frustrating impatience. It is Bid Day at Carolina.

The sorority system is an emotional issue. Some defend it with fierce loyalty; others eye it with contempt.

Two sorority women, Suzanne and Janet, agreed to discuss candidly their opinions of sororities and Rush. Both have decided to go inactive. This means they must sever all ties with the house and act as if they never belonged there.

"I guess the reason I'm going inactive is because I don't believe in the Greek system," Janet said. "It is unnecessarily discriminating and kind of archaic. They're still set up as ways to meet husbands."

Suzanne added that she believes sororities are "great for a lot of girls but they're not for everybody. It's too bad that girls come in thinking, 'Oh my gosh! I've got to join a sorority or else I won't be part of anything.'"

Segregation is the most apparent problem in the Greek system, Janet said. Sororities still have apparent prejudices. She said the informational round this year



Prospective sorority women visit the Chi Omega house for Rush. Today is Bid Day for sororities at UNC, and hundreds of women will get the fateful news from their rush counselors.

really didn't solve anything. No black women visited traditionally white sororities during Formal Rush. "It was a good start though," she added.

You can't change what's imbedded in people's minds, Suzanne said.

"I remember five years ago when some black girls went through," she said. "Some of the sisters were really for them, since they were really nice. But one girl said, 'Look, if a black girl gets in the sorority then my parents won't pay for me any more.' But I don't think that's a valid excuse. It's illegal to cut a girl because she's black."

Of the Formal Rush process in general, the two said they had mixed feelings.

They agreed that there was a lot of pretending and too much importance placed on first impressions.

"It was always fun when they were nervous because you'd say, 'Here's a girl that's very nervous but she is probably really nice once you get past all that stuff,'" Janet said.

Suzanne said she would compare a rushee's interests with those of the house.

"It's hard to tell in the few minutes you talk with them, but at the same time they're doing the same thing. They're looking at the house, and the house is looking at the girls. Both want what is best," she said.

The two agreed that sororities eliminate girls through grades and first impressions. "Low grades are definitely a mark against a girl," Janet said.

"Whether you're pretty or not doesn't have anything to do with it," she added. "I think it's more important to be yourself."

When asked how she would improve Rush, Suzanne said she thought the process should be more open and the rushees should have more say.

Janet suggested the whole system of references be eliminated.

Under the present system, the houses send to sorority alumni the names of rushees from their hometowns. Alumni

find as much information about each rushee as they can and send it back to the houses.

"If they would stop that then all girls would start out on an equal basis and be judged for themselves and not who their great-grandfather was," Janet said.

Both said the sorority system has both its good and bad points but emphasized that no one should feel left out because she's not in a sorority.

"There are a lot of stereotypes about sorority girls, the rich bitch-type thing, and some of them hold true," Janet said. "But they don't need to, because a lot of people act like they're rich because they feel like they have to put on an image of being in a specific class."

"It's really not good for them, and people that don't get in feel they are somehow not as good. That's really not necessary."

Another way of life Greek system provides different experience

By TOM CAMACHO

There are still those unfortunate few who get their ideas about Greek life from National Lampoon's popular movie *Animal House*. These folks believe that people in fraternities and sororities have low grade-point averages, are party mongers and make their pledges do unreasonable things for initiation, break beer bottles over their heads and stick pencils up their noses for laughs.

Although a keg may occasionally be thrown from a second story window, and toga parties where Greeks dance "the gator" do exist, in actuality, most of the ideas about Greek life projected through the movie are unjust.

Greek life is designed to provide interested individuals with a college experience that incorporates scholarship, extracurricular activities and social events, say the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils, the governing bodies of the Greek organizations at UNC.

And despite some misconceptions, all Greeks are not dumb.

In fact, the all-Greek GPA (both men's and women's) is higher than the all-campus average. In most groups, pledges must maintain a 2.0 just to stay in the program.

The Greek system also stresses extracurricular activities. Greeks are involved in many campus activities such as sports, Student Government, clubs and committees.

In addition to this, fraternities and sororities provide a variety of community services, such as holding blood drives, providing transportation service for the elderly and taking up Heart Fund collections.

And the groups also offer the opportunity to meet many new and interesting people.

To become a member of a Greek organization, a brother or a sister, one must first go through a period known as Rush. Rush is a mutual selection process between the fraternity or sorority and the individual. Rushees attend cookouts, parties and other activities in order to find out what each organization is all about.

As far as Rush is concerned, fraternities and sororities are very different. Fraternity Rush is informal and relaxed. Male rushees may look at any house they

choose individually.

Sorority Rush is a structured process during which all rushees go to all the houses.

Women's Rush consists of five rounds on five separate nights when rushees may learn about the people and ideals of each group. After the final round, the rushees' preferences for a sorority are matched with the sororities' preferences for individuals. Then, during Formal Rush, both male and female rushees receive bids, or invitations to pledge.

Pledging is a semester-long initiation period when pledges learn about the Greek system and the members of their organization. Each group has its own initiation procedures and requires special things of their pledges.

In choosing a Greek organization, one should learn as much about as many of the groups as possible. Rushees should choose one which displays ideals, goals and attitudes much like their own.

Tom Camacho, a sophomore journalism major from Raleigh, is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*. He is not in a fraternity.

Merits of fraternities in eyes of the beholder

By JEFF HIDAY

Today — Bid Day — marks the zenith of sorority Rush activities, but for fraternities it is only the beginning of the end. After a flurry of Rush-related activities this weekend, the three-day, coat-and-tie affair called Formal Rush begins. From 7 to 10 p.m. Sunday and Monday, and 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, each fraternity will open its doors to rushees, and a spell of serious let's-get-to-know-each-other ensues. Between now and the end of next week, fraternities will decide who they want, bids will be extended, rushees will decide whether to pledge.

The fraternities have had their doors open for Rush since the beginning of the semester; they were even open all this summer. Actually, those doors are always open, but intense Rush occurs only at the beginning of each semester.

I define Rush as the process by which fraternities select, pursue and offer bids to preferred, prospective brothers. It is a fraternity's bread and butter. Without a fresh crop of pledges each semester, the fraternity would dry up. It is important to the fraternity not only as a matter of survival, but also as a time to improve the fraternity, to introduce quality men.

Before I examine the difficult question of just what constitutes a "quality" man,

it makes more sense to ponder why anyone would want to be in a fraternity in the first place. My freshman-year attitude toward fraternities, and the Greek system as a whole — an attitude of extreme disdain — was typical of many UNC students, and not just freshmen. As a rookie Tar Heel, I spat out my so-called opinion in haughty fashion. Not that I'd ever spent any time around fraternities or their brothers to form an opinion — it was just the cool thing to say. Not really cool, but an easy way to say, "Hey, I'm different," and persuaded others that I wasn't caught up in the sheep syndrome. The Greek system, full of its add-a-beads and penny loafers, loomed almost as a force, a snobbish force, whose main function in life was to exclude. That's what I thought: "Who needs 'em?"

Life goes on, and last year, as a sophomore with perspectives altered, I elected to examine a few of the fraternities. I did not jump into Rush with a pre-ordained mission to pledge anywhere, but in the end I weighed the pros and cons and decided to join a fraternity. I'm happy I did.

Fraternities are not for everyone, though, so the first and most obvious step is to decide whether entering the Greek system is in an individual's best interest. The pros and cons of joining a fraternity are extremely numerous, and a discussion of them could easily fill an issue of *The*

Daily Tar Heel. At least through Rush a person is exposed to fraternities — he may not know what he wants until he sees it. The Greek experience, or only the Rush experience, is a learning experience, of course; it's bound to be an interesting, additional piece to the puzzle of life.

My advice is to follow that of Cervantes in *Don Quixote*: "Make it thy business to know thyself." It is "the most difficult lesson in the world."

For a person committed to joining a fraternity, the toughest dilemma, perhaps is *where* to rush. Every fraternity has a reputation (or stigma) of some sort; a one- or two-word "label," is commonplace for each — however, it is usually a poor excuse for a description, to be taken with a grain of salt.

I mentioned that I consider my fraternity to be unique. Yet each fraternity is unique, and each brother of each fraternity is most willing to convince you just how unique, and thus attractive, his fraternity is. Chances are that his arguments will be very persuasive. That's because the brother feels strongly about his ideas. He's a brother and he believes what he preaches.

That, I suppose, is what it's all about. But he won't talk too much about the fraternity if he's smart. He'll want to get to know you. He'll want to see if he likes

you, if you're a good guy, one he'd like to have around. How does he do it?

Mostly, the fraternities learn about a person by talking to him. They'll want to know about hometowns, majors, hobbies — the usual. They'll find out about wealth, relatives that are fraternity alumni, friends in high places, athletic ability. They'll consider looks, personality, guile, ambition. They'll be very interested in what other fraternities the rushee is considering. (The response to that question is very important to some brothers.) It is difficult to determine which characteristics are most important to a particular fraternity.

But the fraternity faces a dilemma, too, when it fails to uncover perfection in a rushee. Does the fraternity want to pledge only the "ideal" brother? Isn't the fraternity supposed to mold, guide and provide a vehicle for all-around growth?

That question is on a level of difficulty with what makes a "good brother?" And that question is similar to asking someone to define love, beauty or the meaning of life. It is all in the eye of the beholder.

Jeff Hiday, a junior journalism and history major from Charlotte, is associate editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*. He is a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity.



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