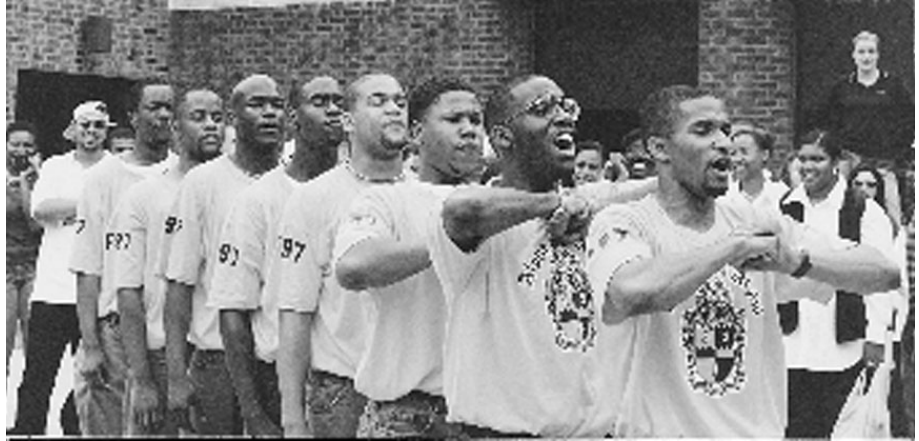


# It's all Greek to Them!

## A Gallery of Art Graduates

By Michael Shute '93 &  
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*Mike Shute '93 works part-time in the sports department of the Courier-Post in Cherry Hill and does a variety of freelance work for several other outlets.*



*Rowan's Nu Iota Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha performs its traditional neophyte show on the Student Center patio.*

Despite frigid temperatures and a bone-chilling wind, there was a special warmth on the field where Delta Chi fraternity held its annual Super Bowl the day before the real Super Bowl. Every year, the fraternity's active members play against its alumni in a football game that's more than just a game. To these fraternity brothers it's an annual event, a tradition of Super Bowl proportions—not because of the competition, but because of the long-lasting friendships. Plenty of hugs, smiles, laughs and memories were exchanged. It's the type of unmatched camaraderie that is shared by those who have worn Greek letters.

"The big thing about it is that everybody is staying together," said Delta Chi alumnus Phil Roura '93, who manages Total Mailing System in Bellmawr. "We see almost all of our close friends every week, or at least every month for a different wedding. We still have a pretty good social life and professional life, too. A lot of us either work in closely related fields or a couple of people even work in office buildings together."

Pat Fry '89 is a teacher at Garden State

Correctional Facility in Yardville. His arrival to the game was greeted with lots of noise from those already gathered on the field. He was the oldest brother to participate, which naturally was accompanied by a few good-hearted old-man jokes. "I just like coming back because it's fun to show the young guys that even though you've graduated, you should always be involved and contribute, even if it's just by hanging out with them and talking about the past and making sure that they understand the history of what the fraternity is all about," said Fry, who lives in Maple Shade.

One of the four Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity founders, Derek Ali '81, who now lives in Dayton, Ohio, and works as a reporter for the Dayton Daily News, felt fulfilled when he returned to the campus in 1997 for his organization's 20th anniversary. "It was amazing to see something grow to this point and to come back 20 years later and see that the organization has exceeded what I ever thought it could be," said Ali, who majored in communications. "We used to make up flyers and use paste-on letters to make

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them look as professional as possible. Now the chapter has a web site that's truly one of the best I've seen on the net.

"These guys do strategic planning where they go on a retreat and plan out all of their activities for the entire year. It's very business-like now. We used to go week-to-week and month-to-month. They've built up campus programs into regional events, like the annual step show. It draws people from all over the east coast. And they've had that level of professionalism rise without sacrificing the close-knit brotherhood."

Professionalism in a frat house may be the last characteristic most people imagine when they think of Greek students. But Shannon Killeen '91, '93, Rowan's coordinator of Greek life and new student programs, says it's unfair to believe Greek students fit the Animal House stereotype. To join a Greek organization, students must complete all basic skills courses. Freshmen must have a minimum 2.5 GPA and 12 credits, and upperclassmen a minimum 2.0 GPA and 24 credits.

Although only about 12 percent of full-time students at the University participate in the school's 25 Greek organizations, not including the academic or honors fraternities, they are highly visible, which can be good or bad. "Sometimes the Greeks feel lumped into a whole group when a few students

make mistakes, even if it's not something that happens here on campus," said Killeen. "When something bad makes the news about Greeks, no matter where it happens, they all look bad."

Sigma Pi vice-president Chris Bennett '00, from Wayne, wishes more attention was paid to their charitable activities. "We do a lot of things to help people and if some of those things were more publicized, it might help change the bad rap that we get."

The amount of service that Greek organizations provide on campus and in the community is often overlooked. According to Killeen, each Greek organization is required by the SGA to do two service projects per year. They range from community work like mentoring at area schools to campus activities like preparing educational workshops about eating disorders or drug awareness. Many Greek organizations with a national affiliation also have a national philanthropy to which they're required to provide service. Most organizations, Killeen says, go above and beyond the minimum requirements.

"Our organization's creed is, 'Extend a helping hand to all who seek it,'" said Dan Hoover '00, a junior from Gloucester who is president of Theta Chi fraternity. On Fridays, members of Hoover's organization travel to a Glassboro grammar school and read to the children. "Whenever there is an opportunity to help others, every fraternity and sorority always jumps to it," he said.

Christine Nardone '00, a communications major from Secaucus who is president of Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority, has seen her group participate in a number of service projects for AIDS, breast cancer and the American Cancer Society. Alpha Sigma Alpha's national philanthropy is Special Olympics and the women assisted with that organization's bowling events in February. "We don't just donate money," Nardone said. "Anyone can donate money but we actually get involved in projects and go out and volunteer."



*The Newman Center organizes community service projects that give Greek organizations opportunity to provide meals for the needy as in this Sigma Pi casserole assembly line.*

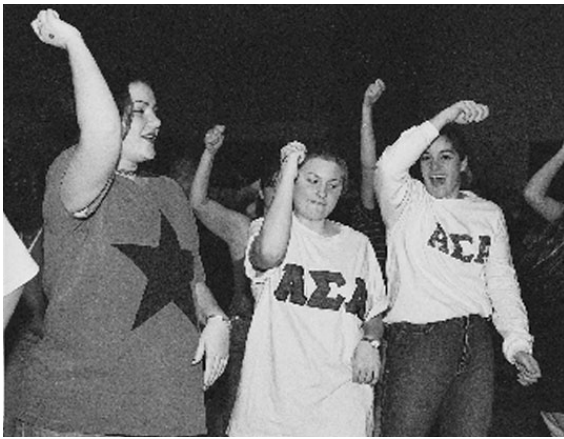
Among the other various notable service activities done by Rowan Greeks, Alpha Phi Alpha has two year-round mentoring programs, the W.E.B. Dubois program and Gentlemen by Choice, in which its members visit Delsea High School and Glassboro Middle School respectively and teach students various things about preparing for college and high school as well as life skills like dinner etiquette.

"We're not just trying to be average college students," said Marcus Glanton '99, president of Alpha Phi Alpha, the frat Ali helped originate over 21 years ago. "We're trying to be role models to the entire community. We're seen on campus and we try to be out there so people notice us. We expect our members to carry themselves in a professional manner."

But why join a Greek organization? The reasons are endless, but most who join start out with social intentions. With hindsight, alumni will tell you that Greek life offers much more. "Joining the sorority gives me a support system while in college," said Alpha Epsilon Phi president Jennifer Pauls '00, a special education major from Mays Landing. "There are 45 other girls who, if I ever need anything, I know they'll be there for me. No matter what you do, you automatically have a bond, even when we go to different chapters at other



*At right: Delta Kappa Epsilon brothers wore their colors proudly outside the North Halls in May 1988. While other Greeks rent off-campus residences, they're the only fraternity to own their own house.*



*Left: The Inter-Greek Council held its annual Dance Marathon to benefit the Multiple Sclerosis Society this spring, and raised \$5000 in pledges—double the amount of last year's pledges. Right; Alpha Phi Omega participated in the spring 1999 rush with its information table in the Student Center. Below: the traditional Greek billboard is a painted sheet.*



schools. There's so much that you share—the traditions, the rituals, the secret handshakes—that anyone who was ever part of the same organization can easily relate to you."

The president of Delta Chi, Jon Cooke '99, started out looking for something to do in his spare time. "I can see it being tough for some first-semester freshmen to get involved, especially guys," said Cooke, a senior communications major from Little Falls. "A bunch of my friends would get together and play sports and this frat seemed to win all of the intramural activities, so we thought we'd join. But then, we started to look at the fraternity as a way to network and expand our horizons on campus and beyond. A lot of us are heavily involved in other activities on campus as a result of our Greek life."

Like Cooke, Alpha Sigma Alpha's Nardone feels that Greek life is a stepping stone to other activities on campus that might otherwise be overlooked such as SGA, the PROS, and a relatively new organization called IMPACT—a leadership program for incoming freshmen. "Getting involved with the sorority opened my eyes to many different things that are available on campus and it was my first step toward getting involved in other areas," Nardone said.

Aside from the social advantages, there are personal benefits to Greek life. "I think it makes you more of a people person," said Sigma Pi's Bennett. "My brothers for example, we're so diverse. We come from all ethnic

backgrounds and sometimes it takes a little work to interact with everyone but it's a little tougher to get this kind of interaction when you don't belong to an organization like this."

Ali, one of the four original members of Alpha Phi Alpha found that there are practical benefits to Greek life. "By not getting involved in Greek life, people might have missed out on an important aspect of college life," he said. "You can treat Greek life like a lab situation. If you're a business major, you can apply principles from your coursework in the daily operation of the fraternity. For me, a communications major, I was able to expand into the fraternity the skills I acquired in class."

According to Jean Marie Malzone Day '83, besides the social interaction, Greek life is an integral part of the campus community. "When I was there, the Greeks were always instrumental in fundraisers and volunteer work, such as dance marathons to raise money for



*Fraternities and sororities have served and socialized on campus for more than 20 years.*

charity, Project Santa, and others," said Day, who was founding vice president of Kappa Lambda Psi, a local sorority that is no longer on campus.

"It's like an instant family," added Day, who has her own company called Day-by-Day Communications in Highland Park. "There's always someone to talk to, party with, or study with. I am not saying you will always love every member of your sorority or fraternity, but you learn how to get along and work together. Also, if you hold an office it's good experience as far as management skills, budgeting and interpersonal relationships."

Back on the football field, the Delta Chi alumni summed up the benefits of Greek life. "It keeps you involved and focused on an objective," said Roura, who also met his wife, Sigma Sigma Sigma alumna Christine Fabinski '94, through Greek life. "It helped me become a bit more organized and that transferred into school life and even now into my professional life. My grades actually went up after I joined because I developed a regimen in my life."

According to Fry, the game's elder statesman, joining a fraternity and meeting its alumni helped him determine a direction for his life, but that wasn't the best part. "Greek life can offer a lot in terms of improving your life skills and management skills," he said. "But I really appreciate the friendships I've kept over the past 10 years. It's friendship forever, and that's why I really like it." ■