

Angry at "Frats"

To the editor:

It is after midnight towards the end of a party hosted by your fraternity. You, a slightly inebriated shepherd-to-be, are starting to think about moving on when in walks an attractive girl with large, eye-catching earrings. You are intrigued; why would an innocent bystander walk in off the street so late? Was it the obnoxious red banner screaming ELECTRIC JELLO, the loud brain-damaging music, maybe she was an undercover reporter looking to put together a story in the weekly tabloid tradition? Welcome to Ratland.

You are out on the porch; she is waiting for X to arrive. "Your boyfriend?" you assume.

"No," she replies. Of course, it must be her accomplice, her Jimmy Olsen, secret agent number two.

A violently sobbing girl runs out of the house and onto the street. Lois Lane looks at you bewildered. "What's wrong with her?"

Assuming that Lois might actually be concerned, you attempt to make light of the situation by making a wisecrack. But wait! Does Lois have a tape recorder in her purse or was she taking notes when you blinked? There in the paper are your very own words from the distant, foggy, almost surreal past. They seem distorted, unreal; it is no longer a party, but a parody.

The people are real: Abraham, Zelda, the slightly overweight Asian, the sobbing girl, and nocturnal Dork. While no real names were used, the descriptions were

accurate enough to make it clear who these people were, at least among those who might be acquainted with them.

It is not that difficult to write a humorous article criticising people, making fun of all their negative virtues. The real indication of a good story would be one that is equally amusing, yet highlighting the positive aspects. They may sometimes be harder to find, but they are usually there if you know how to look.

ABRAHAM THE SHEPHERD

More angry

To the editor:

I read with some irritation and more than a little amusement Ashley Abbott's article about fraternities in today's Gazette. I can only speak for my own brothers and not those of my fellow fraternities, but I would like a chance to respond to her article.

I'm glad that Ms. Abbott took the time to thoroughly research her subject. One Zeta Psi party and one Phi Delta Theta boat cruise definitely give her a firm grounding in fraternities.

Actually, I'm rather curious as to how many of my fraternity brothers she actually talked to, or for that matter how many fraternity members, period. I met Ms. Abbott on the evening of our boat cruise and I know she did not speak to any of my brothers that were on board the Polaris. (I'm sure she doesn't remember me. I was sober and polite. From her descriptions of fraternity parties it sounds like you can't meet such people in fraternities.) Since a lot of our parties are open to other university students, it is inevitable that a wide cross-section of the university public will attend. Just because you walk into a fraternity during a party, it doesn't mean that every guy you meet is a fraternity brother.

I was amused by her description of some of the brothers' rooms. That she was in the room without the permission of the

brother who owned the room is not important. It is true that one of our brothers is a very talented artist who happens to enjoy listening to Pink Floyd. I'm sure he would feel complimented by Ms. Abbott's comparison of his work with that of such a noted artistic luminary as Salvador Dali.

I tend to think that Ms. Abbott, and X, went to these events with several stereotypes of fraternity life in mind. Maybe I'm wrong. In either case, I wonder if she had any interest in finding out what fraternities mean to the people who belong to them. Did she ask any of my brothers about our anti-drunk driving campaign that we have worked on with the support of Attorney-General Ron Giffin? We recognize that alcohol is a part of university life. Perhaps this is wrong.

I realize this letter is rather long but I feel strongly about some of the things in Ms. Abbott's article and I hope you give me a chance to reply to her.

Sincerely,

John McKiggan

President,

Phi Delta Theta Fraternity

(P.S. If Ms. Abbott ever feels like attending another one of our parties to write a sequel, I hope she feels welcome. I'll even waive the cover charge. The next one's on me, Ashley.)

Still angry

To the editor:

Would a woman feel comfortable reading a truly biased report of fraternity life? This woman is disappointed that "Ashley Abbott" (real name?) obviously visited the fraternity parties *looking* for something negative to report. Does Ashley feel that drinking and "other" activities are limited to fraternity parties? What about Student Union-sponsored Super SUBs? Also, has Ashley ever looked for the altruistic side of fraternity life? Never has this woman read an article about the Hallowe'en "party" for

handicapped children sponsored by Phi Kappa Phi and Alpha Gamma Delta. Anyone can go to a party and see things that they want to see. But it takes a truly skilled journalist to see the **whole** picture.

Yours truly,
Lori Cruddas
Alpha Gamma Delta

Ditto

To the editor:

I am writing concerning the "expose" on fraternities that was written in the last issue. This article was obviously written by people who "took the time to look at the cover, but never bothered to read the book."

It is absolutely ludicrous that an institution such as a fraternity could be judged by its parties! Yes, hundreds of people go to these parties and some of them do

smoke drugs — but the fraternity members themselves are not endorsing drugs or drinking. They are having parties to raise money for the upkeep of the fraternity houses and other expenses that may arise throughout the year.

When I go to the lounges downtown, I see drug and alcohol abuse. I've seen it in private homes, university SUBs, and even in the university washrooms! Deviant behaviour is everywhere but no one forces anyone to indulge in it. Fraternities do not represent deviance!

Also, initiation is not exclusive to fraternities; it takes place in sport teams, nursing, engineering and many clubs. As long as no one's health is at stake, initiation is the first step in commitment, and is common among all members. Temporary humility is not detrimental here; it's proof that you respect a certain institution and are willing to struggle a little to become part of it.

When last week's article was written, no one looked at Phi Delta Theta's crusade against drunk drivers; no mention was made of the moral, academic and sometimes financial help that all

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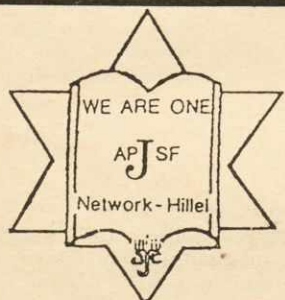
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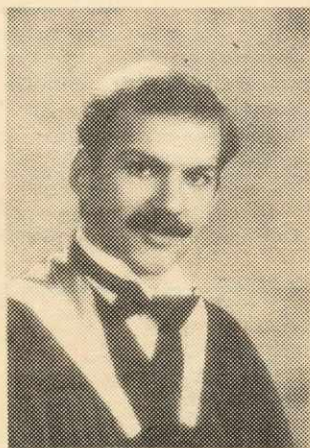
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