

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A GAMMA PHI MEMBER - 1971 - 1973

I have been asked to reflect upon what I consider to be the "Golden Years" of the Gamma Phi Chapter of Beta Theta Phi - 1971 to 1973. Of course, it is impossible to re-create here all of the wonderful moments and memories of that special time at 800 Chautauqua. Others have been asked to compile a history of their particular era. The ones that I have reviewed have been both informative and entertaining. But I thought I might take a different approach in my attempt to capture the ambience of being a Gamma Phi member in the early 70's. It would be easy simply to list the accomplishments of the various members during this time and because I don't want to downplay those accomplishments I am listing them at the conclusion of this article. But like any band of brothers, a mere listing of the accomplishments of its members doesn't do justice to what life was like in the house on a typical day.

So the following is a representative "day in the life" of a Gamma Phi member during the years of 1971 through 1973. It does not represent any particular day but rather is an amalgam of memories, recollections and remembrances of a fictional Gamma Phi member. We'll call him Joe, although he is not "Joe College" as no Gamma Phi member was ever merely "Joe College". The names of the members are accurate although the scenarios described, while fictional, have as their bases, actual occurrences during the "Golden Years".

With the foregoing in mind, let's travel back to the a fall Friday where we find Joe stirring as his clock radio shows 7:00 a.m. Unlike most members of Gamma Phi, who have structured their class schedules to avoid education on Fridays, Joe rolls out of his bunk bed in Suite C to head off to Chem Lab. After a quick shower and drying of hair (utilizing the hand-dryer in the third floor head) Joe heads down to the kitchen for breakfast reviewing the morning paper.

The Vietnam War was raging and those members who had high lottery numbers worried about their latest parlay cards. Those with low lottery numbers worried about their 2-S exemption.

Sweaty Betty has been in the kitchen for hours carefully preparing bacon and eggs. Brother Bill Doughty, Kitchen Manager, has beaten Joe to the kitchen and is in the process of completing the brewing of a large urn of coffee. Mom Greer, an early riser, is in the kitchen talking over certain issues with House Manager, Marc Nuttle. The discussion revolves around details concerning the building of a barn in the front yard by the pledges in anticipation of Barn Dance. Mom Greer has been requesting that Brother Nuttle make sure that no live ammunition is fired from the house while "defending" the barn from would-be intruders from the lesser Greek associations.

Joe snarfs back the offering and heads off to class. He runs into a couple of pledges who are also on their way in through the pledge door. They have been requested to appear at the house at this early hour to assist one of their pledge brothers who has been the dubious nominee of a week dedicated to his name.

A "McGovern for President" banner hangs from the third floor as does one announcing Skip Stephens for Student Council President.

As he walks to class Joe notices a painted notice on the sidewalk that streaking on the South Oval will begin at 9:00 Wednesday night.

Joe glances at the headlines in the Oklahoma Daily - "Wendy Berlowitz burns her bra at the Town Tavern".

After plodding through Chem Lab, Joe heads back to the "post office" and heads to his room. By this time music is blaring from each room as he ascends the double set of stairs. Walking past each room provides Joe with an eclectic cacophony of both the latest tunes as well as blasts from the past. Wafting from Tom Hamlin's room is Chicago's "Questions 67 and 68". Brother Chris Pierce, on the other hand, is spinning Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water".

Other musical contributions from various rooms include "Déjà Vu" from Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young coming from John Herlihy's room, "Sometimes in Winter" by Blood, Sweat and Tears cannot be traced to a particular room; Rod Stewart's "Maggie May" blasts out of Rick Gibbon's room while the James Gang's "Midnight Man" subtly evolves from the room of Lou Stewart and Larry Houchin.

Joe recalls that he has yet to buy the latest musical offering from Rod Stewart. Joe is temporarily financially embarrassed so that a trip to Friends Records on Campus Corner is not in the offing. No problem, Joe decides, as any member in the house knows that if you don't own the latest album, there is no reason to buy it as long as you find Carl Holliday's door unlocked. There wasn't an album or eight track tape that Carl either didn't have or would eventually own. If Carl didn't have it, it was not worth "kai-ing" for the purpose of recording.

The second floor bulletin board boasts that this is the "Year of the Dragon" as well as posting a statement from the Luxury Inn of Moore, Oklahoma naming as recent overnighters a brother and his girlfriend identified only as "Mr. and Mrs. Jones".

A 3 X 5 index card announces that the Rush apartment will again be at the Yorkshire Apartments.

A posted page torn out of a spiral notebook reflects that the "Button Cruncher" has destroyed another one of Zane Fleming's rainbow shirts. A memo from Party Chairman Harbour Whitaker states that Dallas weekend will be held at the Tom Penny Inn in Irving, Texas with a post-game victory party at the Studio Club. Brother John Waldo immediately dusts off his radio flask upon reading the news.

Brother Whitaker also announces that the yearbook picture will be taken at the Ford Distributing Warehouse on a berm of beer. He recommends that all members wear their flight jackets to the photo session.

Joe heads to the basement to knock out a couple of pinball games on the Student Prince and Wagons West. Compiling a score of 10 conestogas before he tilts, Joe then moves on to a game of pool leaving another \$5.00 in quarters in the table for the benefit of Brother Frank Thompson, the proprietor thereof. While lining up his bank shots, Joe is careful not to disturb Brother Steve Van Aken who is watching re-runs of Industry on Parade ("If it is to be, it is on TV")

Joe returns to Suite C where his roommate Tom West is busy watching St. Louis Cardinal football replays. The other roomie is Mark "Skunkman" Harris.

After a short nap, Joe heads down to lunch.

Michael Dean Dobson walks in the front door in his Air Force ROTC uniform as does Bob Klabzuba. Hamburgers are a lunch staple on Fridays. Joe's nap has placed him at the tail end of the lunch hour. As he sits down Brother John Coker sticks his head out the swinging door from the kitchen and announces that the serving of lunch will end in "two minutes". Brother Coker holds up the appropriate number of fingers in doing so. The baby in the box makes his/her (?) appearance at lunch.

Joe has twenty minutes before he needs to be at his 1:30 Greek Mythology Class with Professor Philip Nolen, so he parks himself in the living room and listens to Brother Dave Schimmel knock out a perfect cover of Elton John's "Burn Down the Mission."

Treasurer Andy Bishop drops by to ask Joe to "post-date" a check for his house bill.

As he leaves through the front door of the house, "Death of a Tube" is unfolding from Room 27. It looks as though the occupants waited until an Alan Merrill commercial was on before launching.

After nodding off through Professor Nolen's lecture on the Harpies and the Sirens, Joe is free for some Friday afternoon adult beverages. He starts out at the Jockey Strap. Brothers Rick Sampson and John Klabzuba are starting out the afternoon on stage with some "wooden music". Acoustical versions of "LA Freeway" by Jerry Jeff Walker and "Painted Lady" by Willis Alan Ramsey are included in their set.

Joe plays a couple of rounds of "pong" thinking to himself that this new video game takes electronic entertainment to its probable zenith.

After a couple of pints Joe moves on to a non-descript building on South Classen. The neon sign out front announces that this is the "Wagon Wheel" but no one has called it that for years. This is Louie's. As Joe enters he espies Brother Scott Rayburn working the crowd, sporting a plastic parrot on top of his Panama hat. This is foreshadowing, no doubt, as Louie's is not long for this world and is soon to be resurrected as Donovan's Reef - an establishment operated by members of a lesser Greek association but still a favorite watering hole.

Quaffs completed, Joe heads to the Theta house for his nightly houseboy duties. Brother Steve Barghols has already arrived in his capacity as head houseboy. Brother Lou Stewart has dropped by to call on Sharon Word. Joe makes a mental note to request that Chapter President Rich Taylor schedule either a serenade or function with the Thetas next week.

Houseboy duties completed, Joe heads back to the house but is momentarily coaxed into a pickup basketball game which has been going on for some time on the side court. Joe Glasser and Levoy Ellsworth are putting the wood to Jim Gotwals and Paul Carlile. "Gots" needs a blow so Joe fills in.

Dinner time follows and the traditional Friday night fare of steaks, cut very thin and small, is ready to be consumed.

During dinner a brother who was recently pinned to his sweetheart earns the honor of walking back from the Duck Pond in his underwear. A pledge attempts to sing "Froggie".

Some of the better heeled members take their dates to the Cross Timbers restaurant.

Joe enjoys his steak and fries while listening to Brother Fenton Rood pontificate about the intricacies of the lotus position. Later, Brother Hamlin heads out the front door on his way to Stillwater to see Barbie.

Joe next pokes his head into the Chapter Room. Brother Jim Townsend is cramming for a Zoology final with pipe in hand. Brothers Bob Dow and Chuck Begin have also fired up. Brother Begin has his trusty elephant's foot glowing while Brother Dow sports a model which appears to be a knockoff of Hef's as seen on Playboy Late Night. Meanwhile, Scott Lucas is cramming for med school. Andy Vogt appears briefly in the Chapter Room but appears to have wandered in by mistake.

Joe grabs Mark Callahan and Richard Bates and heads to the Blue Onion to catch Zanex. Brother Ron Bowden declines to tag along as he says he is busy boning up on his astronomy class assignment - studying the Kappa Constellation.

No Friday evening would be complete without a ride on the Denco train. After several hours at the Onion, Joe , Mark and Richard find themselves at the intersection of Main Street and the Santa Fe tracks. Each is ready to drink in the Denco experience. Brother Skip Stephens has just arrived from the library. Brothers Dan Sadberry and Mike Clothier have already been asked to leave by Pat as having deposited pats of butter on the ceiling. Three Denco Darlins, with two lookin' at you, together with a round of chips and green goddess dressing are quickly consumed.

It is no longer Friday night but early Saturday morning. Joe and the others head back to the house where he finds the pledges jovially straightening up the house with verbal encouragement from upper class mentors.

Brother Beau Cantrell barely avoids three water bombs as he returns from a late night pair of chukkers.

Brother Jackie Hoops is once again mistaken for a pledge.

"It's a great life" Joe concludes as he fades into the arms of Morpheus. A few hours later, the pledges re-affirm that notion in a boisterous confirmation from the front yard.

----kai---

Jerry Kelley ('74)

Campus Leadership Positions and Honors:

Gold Medal Letsieser Award (top senior man):

Richard Taylor

Sooner Yearbook Man of Distinction:

Mike Synar

Pe-et (senior men's honorary society):

Chris Brown
Vaughn Clark
Scott Martin
Doug Pereboom
Richard Taylor

Gamma Gamma (Greek honorary society):

R.D. Folsom
Marc Nuttle
David Schimmel
Richard Taylor

Rita Lottinville Award (outstanding freshmen):

Jim Bailey

Phi Beta Kappa:

Paul Carlile
Steve Barghols
Jerry Kelley

Top-Ten Freshmen:

Paul Carlile
Chuck Chesnut
Brian Chrz
Fenton Rood
Doug Pereboom
Scott Martin
Mike Nairn
Skip Stephens
Mike Synar
Bill Tims
Jim Townsend

Sooner Scandals Director:

Doug Pereboom
Harbour Whitaker (Director of Chapter's Act--1972)

Chair, O.U. Student Congress:

Mike Synar
Skip Stephens

Treasurer, O.U. Student Association:

Mark Harris

**Director of O.U Student Entertainers,
emcee for Miss O.U. and Sooner Scandals (twice),
and director/participant in numerous campus musical productions
(including University Sing):**

Richard Taylor

Principal accompanist for O.U. musical productions:

David Schimmel

Academics:

Four-Point (straight "A") Academic Performances (for single semesters):

Steve Barghols
Ken Beard
Andy Bishop
Stan Defehr
Jeff Harbour
Bill Herlihy
John Herlihy
David Hicks
Jerry Kelley
Jeff Mabry
Scott Martin
Alan Newman
Bruce Remy
Curtis Wade

O.U. Law Review:

John Burriss
Len Cason
James Elder
Jerry Kelley

O.U. Varsity Athletes:

Sam Allen: Wrestling
Kim Cook: Baseball
Glenn "Jeep" Dewberry: Football
Gary Fleming: Baseball
Zane Fleming: Baseball
Jack Hughes: Tennis
Mike Lynch: Basketball
Ron Lynch: Basketball
Jeff Mabry: Football
Scott Martin: Basketball and tennis
(and Scholastic All-American)
Kent Massey: Track
Pat Parkhurst: Baseball
Steve Shotts: Football
Scott Tarleton: Football
Frank Thompson: Tennis
Mike Vick: Wrestling

Chapter Presidents:

Marc Nuttle: Spring 1971
Richard Taylor: Fall 1971
Fred Turner: Spring 1972
Levoy Ellsworth: Fall 1972
Steve Barghols: Spring 1973
Gary Brown: Fall 1973

Social Events and Traditions:

Victory Party
Dallas Party (OU-Texas Weekend) (and OU-TX party with SAEs)
Reno-Vino
Barn Dance
(including 1971 Chicken Massacre)
Fabulous Fifties Party
Casino Party
Swamp Stomp
Spring Rush Party
Senior Dinner
Numerous sorority "functions" Summer rush parties