

Phi

hilings

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY & SUNY-ESF

apophi.org

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INITIATIONS SPRING 2008

Pledge/NIB Point of View

By Kelsie Bouchard

Up until Mafia Family Barbeque, my favorite APO moment was inductions. I'd only experienced such a rush of nervousness, adrenaline, and excitement a few times in my life. When I told people how much I had enjoyed being inducted, all they could do was tell me to wait for initiations. And since I'm really into being blindfolded and led around by a bunch of random strangers, I knew that initiations would be far better than inductions because the strangers would no longer be strange (in a mysterious way, anyway); they would be my friends.

I can only tell this tale from a Mafia point of view, but I can imagine that the other pledges have a relatively similar story. Pledges from my family were told to meet outside Schine Student Center at 4:15, dressed fashionably in our best red and black. By 4:45, there was still no sign of Mafia brothers, and we began to contemplate hiding so that when they actually did show up, the joke would actually be on them. Fear of the wrath



STAFF

PR Chairs:

Sarina Fiero

Melanie English

Staff Writers:

Kelsie Bouchard

Kelly Huth

Brad Wood

Katherine Pease

Carly Fox

Yana Tovpeko

Jana Barnello

FINAL ISSUE OF SPRING 2008!

LEADERSHIP

of family head Lauren Smith deterred such a plan, and we were more than relieved when, at 5 o'clock, we noticed four vehicles, streaked in red and black window paint, barreling down University Place from Comstock.

We arrived at family dinner (supper) amidst loud cheers and welcoming cries from our soon-to-be brothers who waited for us on the porch. After a delicious meal, a few sprinkles of rain, multiple catcalls at our incredible good-looking-ness from passerby, and a few family pictures, we headed to Nifkin for the initiations ceremony.

In what I now consider to be typical Alpha Phi Omega fashion, we pledges were secluded in a classroom and told to wait. I'm not going to lie, you could feel the anxiety and excitement within the air, and you could finally tell who belonged to which family. Mafia, naturally, was dressed in red and black, SAL looked incredibly classy in black and white, HE wore their ties, and BL showed up in a relatively large green contingent. Finally, Pledgemaster Erin Murphy called us to order and asked us to line up (alphabetical order by our big's last name). Lucky to be sandwiched between two fellow Mafia men, Amanda Slaybaugh and Corenia White, the process seemed quite similar to one that had taken place barely ten weeks before. Like professionals, we donned our blindfolds and blindly made our way into the initiations ceremony.

The actual initiation ceremony was calming and provided great opportunity to reflect on our inner selves, our commitment to each other, and our commitment to our community. It reminded me to be humble and to appreciate everything that I have and at the same time, to recognize that I have so much that I may give.

As the ceremony came to a close, it was time to recognize a few individuals who had made our pledge process both memorable and

amazing. Andy DiMezza was recognized as Super Pledge, for both his entertaining and friendly personality as well as commitment to the pledge class fundraiser. Jana Barnello and Sara Covino shared the Super Brother Award and were dually surprised when they realized they were the recipients. Both shed tears and later humbly confessed their utter astonishment and pride for being recognized for all they have contributed to both the chapter and our pledge class. Sarah Leahy, Kristy Blakely, and Nick Huertas were respectively recognized for their outstanding devotion to leadership, friendship, and service. Yana Tovpeko was distinguished by Christopher Robin for her outstanding service achievement this semester. Sara Covino presented two President's Awards to Sarah DiGiulio and Kate DeSisto. The awards ceremony was capped off with the biggest secret of the night: Sara Covino's Distinguished Key of Service. It was amazing to see this award presented to an individual who really does, in every aspect of her life and with every fiber of her being, exemplify our three core principles. She is an example of how I want to live my life and I am so, so glad that she was visibly recognized for everything she has done for our community, our chapter, and our brotherhood. As pledges donned their new letters and bigs admired their new paddles/comparable gifts, the brotherhood, the pledges, families, and family lines came together to freeze such amazing moments via Diana Hernandez's camera.

Once again, the now fully complete brotherhood parted ways and headed off to respective family traditions. We learned where our families and lines developed from, why certain things are respective to our individual families, the traditions we keep, and why we keep them. All I can say now is that "I LOVE MAFIA."

For one last time, the Spring 2008 Phi Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega converged in Nifkin Lounge for an event that had been kept pretty well under wraps. With DJ Jana Barnello spinning the hits, we spent the next few hours dancing in both appropriate and inappropriate fashions. Thanks to VPF Mike Ressler, and the work of Jeremy Eldredge and Scott Mastin, the night went incredibly smoothly and was memorable for all. After some reflection, I realize that everyone was right. Initiations were amazing and they really cannot compare to inductions. As a pledge and on behalf of the rest of the pledge class, a very, very sincere thank you goes out to everyone who was involved in making both my pledge experience and my initiations night something I know I'll never forget.



FRIENDSHIP



Retreat **By: Kelly Huth**

This semester, Phi made their way back to Ithaca for a spring retreat. With a group of about 25, we drove to Taughannock Falls for a hiking expedition. After a late start due to a certain group making an unscheduled stop to see Matt Luciano's parents and go to CollegeTown Bagel (which I know nothing about...); we started off on a trail that wound through the park and took us to the waterfalls. Sadly, the trip was cut a little short due to freezing temperatures, but not before Erin Murphy jumped in the water to splash on the rocks.

I give her a lot of credit, because I was wearing five layers and still freezing. Anyway...after our short hike, the group drove to Ithaca Commons to spend a lazy afternoon in coffee shops, vintage clothing stores and old bookstores that you'd swear had been there for centuries.

Later the group trekked to a local Ithaca diner for lunch and to meet up with Gamma chapter. It was a great way for pledges to get some last-minute interviews and meet other pledges from another chapter.

It was a fun day for all, and I hope next year we can have another fun Ithaca adventure!



A Year Later: An alumni's perspective on graduating **By Brad Wood**

2,800 miles. For those of you cartography enthusiasts, that distance roughly comprises ten trips from Albany to a place I still consider home in a lot of ways. Now that we have reached the end of yet another academic year, I thought it would be interesting to reflect back on how being a year removed from my undergraduate experience has changed my perspective on sunny Syracuse.

The best, scariest and most intriguing part of graduating after four (or five in some cases) years at SU/ESF is the prospect of going someplace new. Yes, I came back to visit way more often than I had originally planned. Yes, my new 'home' is Albany (specifically a windowless lab on the ground floor of the CESTM building on campus). But I still feel a kinship to the brotherhood and I still feel like I am home when I am walking across the SU campus, a feeling I hope I will always have. This is something you can take with you as you go off on your new adventure, as you turn the page and start writing that new chapter in your life story.

For those of worried that somehow SU will vanish if you're not there to watch over it, don't worry so much. It is not going anywhere, I promise. Like I said, I visited ten times over the course of the academic year. It is still there. The thing that you will notice when you return for visits is the distinct difference in population. There will be a new crop of freshman trying to figure out what it means to be in college. And all of those people who graduated? Well, they graduated. They may be back to visit, but they may be at a new school, a new job or off doing public service in some way. Certain parties that are moving to California, Louisiana and NYC spring to mind. Oh yeah, and there are those people that have yet to graduate but decided that this coming semester or year would be a great time to go abroad. So, with all of that in mind, I ventured back to visit Syracuse all the way back in early September. The thoughts of seeing my old roommates (McDade, A Spence and Curthoys for those of you who remember the 900 guys) sort of drifted in and out of my mind as I remembered that we no longer lived at 900 Ackerman. To make it even more pointed, McDade is off working for GE, Spence is down in NYC and Curthoys is down in Kansas working at KU. So brothers that I had called friends for my entire college career would not be around. Sad as this was to realize, I also knew that the purpose of my visit was not to see them but to see the brothers that were back from being abroad, those that had yet to graduate.

Something I had to keep in mind was that though my best friends and pledge classmates had graduated and moved on, my family was still here, my generations of decedents were still here and, over the course of the year, I was permitted the awesome experience of meeting new pledges and brothers. And there is still the promise of homecoming and alumni weekends to bring back the old folks I remember. Better still, Lynne and Father Lang were still around for their always sage advice. That brotherhood

that you spent many, or perhaps one, years cultivating friendships and relationships with is still there, waiting to welcome you back with open arms.

So make the most of the time you have left with your friends. Life becomes a bit different after May 11. Remember that technology is a great communication tool and that those brothers and roommates you shared crazy times with are a phone call, a text message, an IM, an email away (as well as us fossils who like to keep in touch too).

In Leadership, Friendship, Service and excessive gas bills,
BWood





SENIOR Send-Off

This semester, graduating seniors were given the opportunity to briefly write about what APO has meant to them. Three chose to do so:



It was four years ago that I pledged APO. I have so many different memories, and I have seen myself both grow and change for the better. I find myself valuing many of my experiences greatly, especially during my beginning years in APO. I have met some great friends, done some amazing service projects, and further developed my leadership skills. Of course everything in life is not all fun and games, but I learned that you have to take the unexpected as something to learn from. I wish the brotherhood the best, and the seniors all the luck in their future endeavors.

-Kristen Adams



When I am interviewed, I always respond that my friends forced me to join APO, but that it was the best decision I made. Whether I was running around London, doing a project, laughing or crying, my brothers were there for me and for that I cannot thank everyone enough. I am so proud of Phi and can't wait to see what else is to come.

-Sarah "I love my little, SAL and all of APO" Leahy



Joining APO is one of the best decisions I have ever made. I made life-long friends whom I will never forget. I know it's trite, but it's true. Thank you to all of my friends, old and new, who have stuck by me. I will miss laughing with you and seeing you every day, but I will always carry a piece of Phi with me wherever I go.

-Jana Barnello

YOUR UPDATE ON RECENT PAST,
PRESENT, & FUTURE PROJECTS

apophi.org/phiserv

A Different Kind of Senior Experience By Katherine Pease

On April 19, 2008 a group of Alpha Phi Omega Phi chapter students went to the Van Duyn Home and Hospital in Syracuse to spend an hour chatting, eating, and dancing with the residents.

Called the Spring Swing, the students really enjoyed the experience. Some small decorations combined with a dining center transformed the space into a social scene. Through interactions with the Van Duyn residents students heard stories from the Greatest Generation and learned some new dance moves.

“My favorite person was the old lady [who] danced with Jason, she could get down pretty well for an old lady,” says Michael Ressler. Some other students heard stories and danced with other member of the home. Overall, this experience was a good use of time on a Saturday afternoon. Not only was this an enjoyable fellowship experience but also a great service to the Van Duyn community.

This was the second in hopefully a series of this event. Everyone that attended the Spring Swing seemed to enjoy themselves and look forward to going again. With each event like this, Phi is helping to build ties to the Syracuse community. With each step in hearing someone’s story Phi helped to raise the spirits of the Van Duyn patients.



The Big Event By Carly Fox

For the past three years, the members of OrangeSeeds, a first-year student leadership empowerment and community service program, have organized the Big Event – a full day of community service projects at different cities throughout Syracuse. This year was no different. On Saturday, April 12, many SU students, including several APO brothers, woke up at 8am and participated in community service projects around the city of Syracuse. The brothers of APO were assigned to do clean up work at the MOST (Museum of Science and Technology). During the first part of the time, they cleaned outside of the museum, as well as moved and organized storage items. With over 20 brothers involved, the work was done quickly, and everyone had a great time helping. Once everything was cleaned, with a few hours to spare, the brothers spent the rest of the time exploring the museum. The Big Event was a huge success. With a total of about 300 volunteers at 22 sites, SU students really made a difference in the Syracuse community.

Merit Badge Day **By Yana Tovpeko**

It is 8:00 A.M. on a Saturday morning, and most of the campus is still sleeping, but not the brothers of Alpha Phi Omega. It is April 12th, and they are running around the ESF campus, preparing for our ninth annual Merit Badge Day. The day would prove to be great fun and a great success for both our brothers and the boy scouts.

Registration for the scouts began at 8:00 A.M. and a total of 158 scouts attended the event, their ages ranging from 10 to 17. Marshall Hall and ESF campus was teeming with the boy scouts as they attended classes to receive their badges. There were three different sessions in which the badges were taught, a boxed lunch for the scouts and their troop leaders was served after the second session at noon.

There was a diverse assortment of badges offered, the 19 of them were mostly taught by brothers. Some of the badges required previous preparation while others required work outside of the sessions they attended at SU/ESF. However, the sessions offered were very integral to the ability of the scouts receiving their badges. Some of the badges taught included chemistry, taught by the brothers of Alpha Chi Sigma Chemistry Fraternity, orienteering, and fingerprinting.

The organizers of Merit Badge Day were Jeremy Eldredge, Christopher Luczkowiak, and Scott Mastin. Scott Mastin stated that 'the registration overall was much improved, however, other parts of the day had room to improve and we are actively developing solutions.' The co-organizers overall felt that the day was a success and hope that next year's Merit Badge Day will only be better. The co-organizers would like to thank Aaron Knight, Alpha Chi Sigma, Peri Nelson, Beth Rawling, and Lorie Kline.

Mr. and Mrs. APO: A Fundraiser to Behold **By Jana Barnello**

"I'd like to keep Mr. and Mrs. APO going because, ya know, it's always great to see people making fools out of themselves." - Mike Ressler, Phi Chapter Elections Treasurer speech, Wednesday, April 30, 2008

As the reigning Mrs. APO, I was slightly offended when I first heard Mr. Ressler's remarks regarding Phi's most esteemed beauty pageant and successful fundraiser. Then, however, I came down off my high horse/cloud/pedestal and realized that Mr. and Mrs. APO is ALL about making a fool out of yourself. When I actually remembered what I did on stage that fateful Friday night of April 18, 2008—flashes of shameless self-promotion, lap dances, off-key renditions of sappy songs all keep coming back to me—Mr. Ressler's comments really hit home. A fool was made, and Jana was her name.

It wasn't all foolishness, though. Our reigning Mr. APO, Justin Cole sang a lovely rendition of "In the Still of the Night" and gave a heartfelt shout-out to his big, Christopher Robin during the question portions of the pageant. His sincerity really hit home with judge Sara Covino.

"His voice made me melt into a million little pieces of love and devotion," said Covino. "I could barely keep my clothes on. I became a total Justin Cole groupie."

Didn't we all?

Roshni Bhambwani, Ashley Kessler, Kristy Blakely, Matt Martino, and Tim Devlin joined Justin and me as contestants in this year's pageant. We went through a series of mental and physical challenges. First evening wear then talent. Roshni hoola-hooped her way towards a world record, Kristy and Kessler dressed in drag (might I add, one of the best moments ever was helping Kristy put her

bandana on), Matt serenaded the crowd with his guitar and abdominals, and—oh yeah—Tim lived Britney Spears’ life via musical interpretation.

During the question and answer portion, judge Lynne Mowers really cracked down on contestants. She didn’t ask questions like “What is your idea of a perfect date?” (The answer of course is April 23rd. Not too warm or too cold, and all you need is a light jacket). No, these were not easy questions from our advisor. Mowers wanted real questions with real answers. I was asked where I’d go to get away from a stalker. The question difficult to some, but the answer was easy for me: San Diego to be with the Action Phi News Team.

Once we thought the competition couldn’t get any hotter, a head-to-head dance-off sent the room into a frenzy. Highlights include Tim v. Justin in the “Big Butts” dance-off the century. It was truly a night to behold.

As per “Celebrity Jeopardy,” each contestant played for a charity. The winners got their portion of the money raised donated to his/her sponsored organization I chose the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and Justin donated his portion to Habitat for Humanity.

Many thanks to Kate DeSisto and Arika Moody for setting up the event!





"We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere."



Congratulations Graduates!

