

Epsilon Rush: Insights into Lifeblood

by Sam Frey, C'17 sff29@cornell.edu

There is one week out of every year that is dedicated to reestablishing our house's direction and defining what it means to be a Sig. That week brings our brothers closer together more than any other week of the year, and offers an opportunity to share the wonders of Sigma Phi all throughout campus. I'm talking about Rush Week, and I love this week because it's a continuation of the daily life of the brothers at One Forest Lane extended to those underclassmen who we get the honor of meeting. Rush week is a natural process that has been critical to the development of Sigma Phi, but it has also been instrumental to my development as a person.

The Cornell rush process consists of several rounds of "smokers" and "contacts" and concludes with a final bid extension to the individuals the house selects democratically. The smokers are times during the day for freshmen to walk from house to house and meet the brothers of every fraternity in an open house setting while enjoying meals at each stop. Contacts then occur during the evening and consist of brothers visiting the dorms of freshmen and having an open discussion with them about their fit within their fraternity. While smokers and contacts are great opportunities to reflect on Sigma Phi to the freshman, the defining time during rush is the house meeting between smokers and contacts where we are forced to critically analyze our values as a house and compare them to the characteristics we see in the potential new members. These conversations can last upward of 4 to 5 hours. They always represent intense and stressful times, but it's within these house meetings where we truly examine what it means to be a member of Sigma Phi. In that important process, we also learn more about ourselves.

There is only one rule we have during these house meetings that I believe represents the essence of rush week: "No comps!" This is what is yelled when one brother begins to compare a potential new members to a current or past brother of the house. The no comparisons rule aims to eliminate biases, and has taught me to approach every situation with a fresh mind and open attitude. If our criteria for new members was to look for the characteristics and personalities of current brothers in Sigma Phi, then we would develop very little as a brotherhood. But by reestablishing our own definition of Sigma Phi every rush week, we are able construct extraordinary and unique member classes while learning how imperative diversity is to the success of this Society along the way.

At its mechanical core, the rush process of the Epsilon and Sigma Phi



Sam Frey, C'17

chapters around the country represents necessary recruitment. Just as important, I believe, it offers a perfect and unvarnished opportunity to reflect on what makes this Society so special. The diverse array of values, backgrounds, and experiences that we choose to bring into our houses are what set Sigs apart from the rest...and suggests a wise, sustainable future.



Found on eBay!

This copyrighted, circa-1928 sheet music appears to praise the proverbial "Sigma Phi Girl." It sold on eBay for \$12 earlier this fall, and was written by one Zelma Teague Johnson. Wouldn't it be interesting to learn the songwriter's connection to the Thrice Illustrious?