

BRIEFINGS

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Our Mission:
 To enhance fraternity communications through the exchange of ideas, experiences and information.



Letter from the President

Steven Latour, Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity

Welcome to the first edition of FCA Briefings, the Fraternity Communications Association's quarterly newsletter for member organizations and for those who have partnered with our member organizations. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with a quarterly update on what has recently been achieved within the Association, to highlight some of the best communication projects being done within the fraternal world, and to promote future opportunities for members to participate in Association events, seminars, and conferences.

During our fall retreat this past August, I mentioned to the Association's Board of Directors that I wanted to re-start a quarterly newsletter that would be printed and mailed; many encouraged me to use other communication mediums to communicate to you. I considered their suggestions, but felt strongly that this communications association couldn't use one method of communication to reach its members, but we needed to use any and all mediums. I've long believed that for us to advocate for our member organizations to print a magazine two or three times per year, we also needed to illustrate how print could engage and change our members' experience.

Many of you may have seen the ad shown to the right running in magazines around the country. It really inspired me to move forward with this plan, so I wanted to share it with you.

We find ourselves in a new age of communication — one very different from the one we followed. We call it the communication age, although some people mistakenly call it the Information Age. We've always had plenty of information, and, being the inquisitive species we are, we've always created more of it. What's changed is that we have new, faster, bigger and arguably better ways of moving that information around to deliver it to others.

I believe that FCA stands ready to meet the challenges of this changing environment and to provide you – our members with an experience that is both relevant and replicable. We must not be afraid of what lies ahead, but embrace the change that will help to keep us relevant in a changing world of communications. I hope you enjoy this first issue. I welcome your feedback and hope that you and members of your staff will consider participating in future Association educational opportunities. 



You might think that in these times, we don't read magazines anymore, that with the rise of the online world magazines have fallen out of fashion. But it's not true. From the 1970s through their 1990s, folks are reading more magazines than just a few years ago. Sure, there's a lot of money being spent online. But there's also a lot of money being spent on magazines, with nearly 300 million paid subscriptions.

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The Power of Print

LEADING WITH WISDOM: FCA Honors Kappa Delta's Judy Hare Thorne

By Whitney Parker Scully, Editor of the ANCHORA of Delta Gamma

To the dozens of professionals gathered in New Orleans for the Fraternity Communications Association annual awards banquet in May, it hardly seemed possible for one Greek organization to win so many of the coveted honors. Yet, Judy Hare Thorne, longtime editor for Kappa Delta, could hardly keep her seat - Thorne took home six plaques that night!

Thirty-two Greek organizations—the most ever—were recognized at the 2010 FCA banquet. Kappa Delta received plaques for two of the 10 communications awards and four of the 15 magazine awards.

The question left for the rest of us: What did Thorne do that we didn't?

The answer might be in her approach. Thorne, like everyone working in the world of Greek organization headquarters, tirelessly and creatively seeks to appeal to members of varying ages. After nearly 30 years at the helm of The Angelos of Kappa Delta, Thorne's work seems like second nature.

"I'm always looking for ways to tie a contemporary issue to our readers," she said. "I'm presently gathering information from KDs who are reinventing themselves because of the poor economy, and I hope the story will inspire others who need/want to do the same thing."

Thorne, who is planning her own reinvention—a retiree in July 2011—remains a firm believer in the importance of FCA.

"Having a chance to share our challenges and successes with those who understand our unique publications is invaluable," she said, "without FCA to keep us up to date on what's new, what works and what doesn't, we'd all be floundering."

Of course, along with the unmatched camaraderie and on-trend education, the third key component of FCA is recognition. It means bragging rights. It means confirmation of a year's worth of hard work.

Thorne is first in line to defend the thrill of a win. She's soldiered through her award shut-out years, so she revels in the memory of hearing her name called again and again in May, "It was an incredible high," she said. 



Judy Hare Thorne, Kappa Delta with former FCA President Brandon Weghorst, Sigma Alpha Epsilon at the 2010 Annual Awards Banquet in New Orleans, LA.

Legacies: It's the GREEK tie that binds

By Judy Hare Thorne, Kappa Kappa Delta, Angelos Editor

"Legacies: It's the Greek tie that binds" (spring 2009 Angelos) took the 2010 first-place writing award for Greek Life Article. Rather than focusing solely on the positive, Thorne dove right into the battleground: recruitment efforts that leave legacies cut from their relatives' sorority. The judges loved the final article and applauded Thorne's decision to include quotes from angry mothers' letters. They called it "one of the best [articles] on the subject I have ever read."

Last year, I was taken to task by several mothers who believed that I was giving bad information to Kappa Deltas about legacies and recruitment. In an article in the spring 2008 issue of *The Angelos*, I had urged mothers to make Kappa Delta a part of their daughters' lives from the beginning by talking about the sorority, sharing remembrances and being active alumnae. This, I said, was the way to predispose their daughters to KD and at the same time, let the chapters know that the KD alumna had strong ties to the sorority.

I also pointed out that sororities are more alike than they are different, and that each NPC group offers sisterhood that lasts a lifetime. Mothers, I said, should encourage their daughters to find the sorority that was the best fit for themselves, not Mom.

The women who wrote me said that in spite of doing all the things I suggested, their daughters had been released by the KD chapter on their campus. The mothers were disappointed, yes, but they were hurt and angry and felt betrayed by the sorority.

One said, "I didn't want her to be biased by KD (at least that's what I said). It didn't matter; her heart and the years of hearing 'KD' from me made her ready to pledge and to share a lifelong bond, sister-to-sister, with me. She was released early in the process. The disappointment, hurt and the slap to confidence is a tough pill to swallow for a KD alumna and her daughter."

Another mother wrote: "I understand we must do our part, but where does the national organization stand on doing their part to make sure legacies are given 'serious consideration?' I did all the things you suggested to acquaint the chapter with my daughter. The national designee who gave permission to [release my daughter] did not do her due diligence. Since my daughter was invited back to the maximum number [of chapters] in every round, there was something that the other sororities saw in her that KD did not. Is there a cavalier attitude toward legacies? I will forever regret that I won't be able to call my daughter 'sister.' "

These women are not alone in their disappointment. The whole recruitment process is fraught with the possibility of disappointment, and NPC continues to seek ways to improve it so everyone will have a positive experience.

As well, the subject of legacies is a minefield. Many alumnae such as the ones who wrote make the effort to expose their daughters to KD only to be disappointed. There are also alumnae who assume, just because their daughters are legacies, that they will be pledged.

To answer the comments above, I offer this information:

- > Chapters are expected to make their legacy decisions early on. If that seems unfair, it's not. A KD chapter that carries a legacy they don't plan to bid narrows the chances for the legacy to join another sorority; the other sororities will assume she'll join KD and release her in favor of someone who's more likely to join their group. She could be left with no options.
- > When a legacy is released, the chapter must get permission from a designated national volunteer who has been fully trained in legacy issues. The sorority has a protocol for these women to follow, and it includes gathering information from the chapter and its advisors.
- > The sorority takes the issue of legacies seriously. At the 2008 National Leadership Conference, collegians attended an in-depth session on the importance of legacies and the chapters' responsibilities to the legacy and her KD relative. A Legacy Committee of 17 trained alumnae is an information resource for chapters and national volunteers who make legacy decisions.



As the sorority ages, the number of legacies increases. Whether it's a large chapter with 55 legacies registered for recruitment and only 40 spaces to fill, or a small chapter with six legacies and seven spaces to fill, legacies will continue to be both a blessing and a burden. It's important that we alumnae find that delicate balance between over-promoting KD and under-promoting Greek sisterhood. It's no surprise that happiness can be found even if a KD mom or sister doesn't become a sorority sister with her legacy. Read these letters from a mom and daughter who faced this situation.

Adrienne Brunner Kent, Kappa Alpha-Florida State:

As a mother you want your children to have all that life has to offer. For my daughters, that was a rich college experience that would include the sorority experience, and by that I meant becoming a Kappa Delta sister.

Kappa Delta was such a huge part of my college life that I couldn't imagine my daughters not having the same lifetime of friendships.

When my oldest daughter, Renee, went through recruitment and pledged Kappa Delta, it was just as I had imagined. I was thrilled that I knew exactly what she was experiencing and that she was making bonds with women that she will carry throughout her adult life just as I had. I was so happy for her (and me).

When my youngest daughter, Leslie, went off to college, I assumed she would also enjoy the benefits of Greek life as a Kappa Delta sister. Much to my shock and disappointment, it didn't work out as

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or send to Director of Information Ruth Goodman,
Alpha Xi Delta at ruthgoodman@me.com.

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I had envisioned in that nice tidy picture I had in my mind. I would love to say I was a “big girl” about all of this. But to be honest, I was hurt, disappointed, angry and confused at my sorority. How could KD do this to me?

Leslie decided to try recruitment for a second time. I was wary as I did not want to go through the anguish, disappointment and hurt all over again. This was not to be my decision, but my daughter’s choice. I finally had to give up the me and I in this experience.

It all worked out for the best. Leslie found a wonderful sorority home. She is not a Kappa Delta and I don’t know her handshake or any of her songs, but when I see her with her sisters, I realize that what I had dreamed of has come true. She has found a sisterhood with friends that will be with her all of her life.

Today Leslie and I are not sisters, but she has women that will be by her side when her mother can’t. They will help her in all of life’s ups and downs, just as my Kappa Delta sisters have always been there for me.

Leslie Kent, Pi Beta Phi, University of Central Florida:

For as long as I can remember, stories of college life and sorority were one and the same. It was assumed that I would participate in recruitment freshman year and join a sorority that would guide my four years in college and influence me many years after.

As planned, I participated in recruitment and had my top choices throughout. I had places I loved, but Kappa Delta stood out for me. Not only was it a great sorority, but it was a big part of my mom’s and sister’s lives and if they loved it, I knew I would too. My mom was supportive during the long, stressful week and was really great at being neutral. When I didn’t get Kappa Delta at the end of the week, I was shocked!

I was upset because I thought I was missing out on all these experiences, but I was more upset because I felt I let everyone down, specifically my mom. I knew she was upset, possibly more than I. All the other women in my family managed to find their right fit, why couldn’t I? This bothered me more than anything else; it hurt more because there was always that sense of why didn’t Kappa Delta want me? This is everything they tell you not to think, but I couldn’t help but wonder what was so wrong with me that even as a legacy they didn’t want me?

After a long freshman year and still not finding a fit in other campus activities, I decided that I would try recruitment again. I had friends in other sororities, and I knew a few in Kappa Delta. I was definitely more hesitant this time around, but hopeful. Recruitment the second time made a big difference.

Although I was still impressed with Kappa Delta and even “preffed” there, I took a fresh, new look at other chapters instead of looking at recruitment through the eyes of my family. My mom was as supportive as ever and my sister, who also is a KD, encouraged me and never pressured me. I knew they both just wanted me to be happy and find my place.

This time there was a much better ending. No, I didn’t end up a KD, but I found a sorority that was perfect for me. After almost two years, I still couldn’t be happier. The girls are amazing, and I know my mom wouldn’t have picked anyone one else for me to share my college years. And neither would I. ✍️