**02-12-21**

**NOTES AND ANECDOTES**

If you’ve ever done any kind of recruiting, you will appreciate the difficulty the guys had in bringing on a new member (aka “pledge”) class under the restriction imposed by Covid. The University decreed that there would be no House visits, just an online presentation (which had several technical difficulties) followed by meetings outside the House. Imagine deciding where you want to live without a visit? Fortunately, our guys took advantage of a number of little brothers and their friends to fully fill our new class with a good group… now we are in the middle of the process to have them become full members.

New Member Education (or NME as the Frat office calls it) is a fascinating process. When most people think of “pledging”, the worst thoughts come to mind… hazing, forced drinking, physical abuse, etc. While I hear stories of such stupidity around campus even now, I’m proud to say that our focus is on education. The guys take quizzes on Frat and House History, we organize study tables, and events are focused on team building. As part of our published (and university approved) program, we do include cleaning the House, but that is in keeping with our commitment to investment and continuous improvement. It’s not that tough… I lead the Sunday cleaning and we are done in an hour at most.

And this year we added a new wrinkle… literally. I do a weekly Zoom call with the new members and starting this week we will add another Alumni. In our first session we covered much of House history including a reading from one of our Founder’s speeches, the fact that we were the first Frat at Miami (and west of the Alleghenies), and the Great Snowball Rebellion of 1848 when our Chapter and Beta Theta Pi were thrown off campus for barricading Harrison Hall. When we got to Q&A, it was interesting… they asked about my pledge experience which was now 50 years ago. I assured them that theirs was easier… and that the paddles in my room were, in fact, utilized.

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I have to say a word about the House Leadership, both in the recruiting process and in dealing with the intense scrutiny brought on by Covid. Oxford passed an ordinance that says that you cannot have an indoor gathering with 10 people from 2 different addresses in the same place… imagine how that impacts a Frat with 35 live in members. Even though they later clarified to allow up to 10 “guests” in a house of 20, it really put a “target” on all the Frats… one is already thrown off campus and several are facing disciplinary issues. Our guys have been great, adjusting social events and being as cautious and conscientious as 20-somethings can be… proud of them!

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If you’ve been reading my Journal at all, you know that Pickleball has become part of my routine and the best exercise I get (other than multiple trips up and down stairs every day!). The Rec Center requires masks for all, the locker room is closed (for showers at least), and as of this writing they are debating whether there will be Intramural basketball. Humbly, ADPhi leapt into the breach! Along with Kappa Alpha Theta sorority we are sponsoring a Pickleball Tournament with 4 brackets of 8 Teams each for undergrads and the community. Our share will go to the St. Mary’s Backpack program, a local unit of Feeding America that sends weekend meals home for kids and families needing assistance. This is the program where our guys help unload the truck every 3rd Tuesday of the month. We’re still over a month away from the event… really interested in how it goes, but a great group effort! Stay tuned!

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I often reflect on “generational differences”… this is not an “indictment” of the younger generation, but a recognition of how their experiences are so much different than ours. I was raised by children of the Great Depression. My Dad spent most of his youth in an orphanage before being thrown out (literally) at 16 and going to work on the Great Lakes ships. My Mom was raised on a farm with an outhouse… during the Depression, there would be a stranger at the door almost every day looking for work or a handout. My Grandparents always found them something to do and fed them well before sending them on their way. Its no surprise that the members of this greatest generation who survived this, World War II and the “baby boom” had a credo that said “waste not, want not”. That focus was extended to my generation… I often tease that I was a charter member of Captain Penny’s Clean Plate Club… old Clevelanders will understand that one.

Contrast that with current Miami students… they are primarily “suburbanites” who have never known “want”. It’s not that they don’t know how to work or to take care of things, but they have grown up in relative security that has created some inability to see value. Part of this is also “commoditization” and the “disposable” society.… they are used to throwing things away when they are done with them (although there are mornings downstairs where you think they don’t know what a trash can is for… sorry but it’s true.) The perfect example is beverages… on any weekend morning I will find half the cups, cans and bottles in the dining room half full. Another example is meals… we throw away way too much food because some of them take too much and waste it… thank goodness Jackie does such a good job in preparation.

As I said, this is an observation, not an indictment… they simply don’t see the value or the cost of things and some of them (like some portion of all people) have trouble seeing outside their own needs. At the same time. I am grateful that our guys are pretty socially advanced compared to some of the stories I hear from other Frats and the people who repair damages… we have issues, but we are far ahead of most… and we’re getting better.

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