



The Three Deadly Nights

by Dave Westol, CEO, Theta Chi Fraternity

There are three, just three. And no matter what the length of the new member or pledge program may be, these three deadly nights are always included if the chapter involved uses hazing practices.

First of the Deadly Three

The first night, of course, is the evening that the new members or pledges receive their bids. Although the bids may be presented during the day, the activities always occur at night. In the Greek community, we have a lot of different names for the simple process of inviting someone to join, don't we? "Bid Night," "Presents"(sic), "Call out," "Pass out"(men are passed along over a crowd on the hands of members), "Jump" (men leap into a crowd).

But those are just the preliminaries. The main event comes later and involves alcohol, usually a lot of alcohol. And yes, we've heard all of the excuses and tortured rationalizations about new members or pledges consuming alcohol within the context of bid night. They come in many different forms, from many different people. "They didn't have to drink." "We drank with them." "No one forced them to drink." "It was their choice." "Some guys didn't drink at all."

All of those excuses have one thing in common. They will not hold up in court, much less during a university judicial hearing. The fact is that new members or pledges do not have a choice...not if they want to be accepted...not if they want to be part of the brotherhood...not if they want to demonstrate that they truly belong.

An ever-increasing number of young men—most of them 18 or 19 years old—have made the choice to drink alcohol during bid night, and their lives ended between six and 48 hours later. Sometimes they were clinically dead (irreversible loss of brain stem function), and other times they were simply

dead. Nonetheless they died. Again and again, the same sad facts surface—drinking a bottle or bottles of liquor as a new member or pledge class until the alcohol was gone...matching members,



drink for drink...drinking in competition, drinking to demonstrate manhood... heavy and high risk drinking.

Standing for Brotherhood?

The second deadly night: "Bigs" or "Big Brother Night" an evening for the members to bond with the new members.

In a hazing chapter, Big Brother Night often involves an exchange of "gifts," a bottle of liquor for another bottle of liquor. Sometimes the type of liquor is determined by the "family" that the new member or pledge is joining. Regardless, the focus is not upon the gift aspect. It is upon consuming the liquor as a means of bonding with your big or little brother.

Fight for acceptance or a fight for life

Finally, the last of the three deadly nights, pre-initiation. The third deadly night is often the fraternal equivalent of a floating holiday. At some point during pre-initiation, the new members or pledges must consume alcohol...often an excessive amount of alcohol. Sometimes it is an act of mercy, if you 10-4 the hazers. "These guys need a break—we're actually helping them out". Sometimes it is planned or a hidebound tradition—"This is the night that they must drink a keg." Regardless, consumption of alcohol and senseless deaths occur.

Moving Forward

Each situation of the three deadly nights involves a violation of FIPG or fraternity risk management policy. The use of alcohol at any event involving or focused upon new members or pledges is a violation, pure and simple. Moreover, these activities often violate the most basic federal, state, and local laws. All in the name of brotherhood.

Many, many people have written articles far more eloquent than this piece about hazing and the use of alcohol in hazing. Some of those people have been parents of young men who died in the process of joining a fraternity. Some have been friends of the young men. Some are administrators at colleges or universities. Some have been professional staff members or volunteers of fraternities. Some simply see a cause to write.

Regardless of the point of view, we know one thing for certain. If a chapter allows alcohol into a bid night event, big brother night, or pre-initiation, that chapter has set the stage for a tragedy. Men's international fraternity chapters are a most regrettable example of that ancient adage that, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Perhaps this fall, we can demonstrate that we have learned two very important lessons.

1. Hazing and brotherhood are polar opposites. We cannot have one and rightfully have the other.

2. Alcohol and hazing are a deadly combination, especially on the three deadly nights.

We have so much to give to the young men joining our fraternal and interfraternal brotherhood...and they have so much to give to us. Let us commit ourselves to making these three nights examples of brotherhood, and brotherhood the example for fraternities.

Promoting Health and Reducing Harm

by Alan D. Berkowitz, PhD - Independent Consultant

Most members of fraternities and sororities would probably agree that the majority of their brothers and sisters are responsible, hard working students and that their houses contribute positively to their campuses and communities. At the same time they would also probably tell you that Greeks have an undeservedly bad reputation and that much of the good they do is overlooked. If this is true, what can we do about it? How much of our reputation is deserved and to what extent do we control over how others see us?

My own experience with Greeks on hundreds of college and university campuses confirms my belief that the overwhelming



majority of brothers and sisters are good students who care about their peers, and act in responsible and healthy ways - a belief confirmed by data from national and individual campus studies. Why then the bad reputation? It is

based on the very public and very problematic behavior of a small minority of Greeks, leading others to judge us in a way that is unfair to the larger, silent majority. Can we do anything about this? The answer is yes - we can improve our reputations and also make our houses safer places for our members and guests.

To illustrate this point consider the following scenario:

When Tom has had too much to drink he is extremely obnoxious to women. This usually happens when he and his friends go out to a bar. While they all disapprove of his behavior and talk about it, nothing is done to stop it, and often it is seen as humorous. What is overlooked is what the women involved say about the house as a result of Tom's actions and how this contributes to a negative reputation.

If you ask most brothers if they have anyone like Tom in their house, they will smile and you can almost see the names appearing in front of their minds-eye. If you ask brothers who in their house is most likely to take advantage of women sexually, or cause damage

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to house property, one or more brothers immediately come to mind. We could think of similar examples for sorority sisters – someone with an eating problem, a sister who behaves seductively and wild when drunk, or who engages in malicious gossip, etc.

Let's take sexual assault as another case in point. Sexual assaults bring much unwanted publicity to fraternities and cause much harm to sorority sisters. They can be reduced by teaching members the specific conditions of consent – i.e. how to know and be sure that you have permission from the other person for what you are doing. (Guidelines for consent are on my website.) House members can also be taught to intervene to prevent a sexual assault when one or both of the parties are drunk to the point of not being able to consent or give signals that they are not fully consenting.



I believe that 90% of our bad reputation could be eliminated if we were willing to censor the problem behavior of members by expressing concern in a caring and loving way, noting its effect on the house, and by intervening when these situations occur. This would help others see us as caring and constructive community members.

A similar argument could be made about negative publicity from t-shirts that objectify women, promote beer-drinking, or joke about "beer-goggles," for example.

Acting on our concerns about the behavior of our members is difficult. There are many personal and group barriers that inhibit expressing concern. But with discussion and appropriate training it can be done. In this way we can increase safety in our houses and help others see us as we really are.

Alan David Berkowitz is an independent consultant who helps colleges, universities, and communities design programs that address health and social justice issues. He frequently conducts workshops for Greeks on risk-reduction, culture change and bystander behavior. He can be reached at alan@fltg.net and his articles and workshop lists can be downloaded from www.alanberkowitz.com

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All in the Name of Brotherhood

by Todd Mattox, HRH/Kirklin Education Consultant and initiate of Beta Theta Pi Fraternity

Founded in a pursuit of brotherhood and a desire to reinforce excellence, fraternities have long committed themselves to the simplistic task of developing friendships and promoting the well being of members. Why then do we choose to act irresponsible and place our brothers and those who truly wish to enter into our organizations in dangerous and life threatening situations? It occurs time and again on campuses throughout North America, chapters young and old, at private and public institutions, in urban and rural settings.

Reinforcement of values

An event in a significant number of chapters which has quickly drifted from its sole purpose to reinforce and promote the development and enhancement of all members is the "big brother night," often the first form of acceptance from the initiated members to the pledges, associate or new members in the chapter.

Unfortunately, an evening devoted to fidelity and reinforcement of fraternal values through friendship and brotherly love

has transformed into a cause for excessive high risk drinking, physical injury, and on some occasions, death.

One need look no further than the high profile deaths of Gordie Bailey at the University of Colorado and Blake Hammtree at the University of Oklahoma in the fall of 2004 to recognize the persistent problem of involving alcohol with the customs and ceremonies of our membership continues.

True, there have been great advancements for the culture of fraternities in the past decade; initiatives to transform organization focus, targeted education on alcohol and risk management, statements of expectation, and an overall willingness to change. However, the painful reminder exists that the culture of the Greek

community is influenced greatly by alcohol and the irresponsible actions of our members, nearly one decade following the death of Scott Krueger at MIT.

What can be done to curb such dangerous and destructive behavior?

There may not be one clear procedure or method to remedy negative actions associated with current "big brother" programs. However, chapter leadership can follow a few simple guidelines as they work to present a positive "big brother" program.

1. Remove alcohol from all new member/brotherhood events
2. Involve key support groups in the activities of the chapter
3. Reinforce organizational values through action
4. Transition framework towards a mentoring program
5. Secure commitment from "big brothers" to serve as positive role models

Certainly, a main emphasis should be placed on the recruitment of positive members supporting the core purpose of the fraternity in addition to a well-structured and constituent core of alumni, advisors, parents, university administrators, and community members to support the efforts of the chapter.

If a chapter wishes to provide a "big brother" program it should simply be what it is; a framework for mentoring and personal assistance from the initiated members to those wishing to seek admittance into the fraternity, void of alcohol or measures of servitude. Stemming to the early beginnings of fraternity, members *earn* their place within the organization when they accept a bid for membership.

Clearly, the program should be a stronger commitment from the initiated brothers as they are responsible for the development and mentoring of the younger members and teaching of the fraternal ritual and values through actions and meaning. Multiplied throughout the chapter membership, a positive program can quickly

influence a chapter and shape an environment providing ample support to all members and enhancing the fraternal experience.

Changing the chapter culture

Without these critical elements and support groups, the membership will remain rudderless and left to the devices found within the culture, which promises to be vastly different than the true intentions of the organizations' founders. Moreover, all entities of each fraternity and the bodies which support it must hold expectations high and maintain accountability of all members, communicating that forced consumption of alcohol and hazing are not the norm and will not be accepted.

Undoubtedly, it will take great effort and foresight from an undergraduate leader to place such thoughts into motion and execute a proper program. Therefore, it is imperative that a solid core of chapter leaders, alumni and advisors voice concern for current practices and detail the faults or shortcomings of the current program: "it's dangerous, not in line with values of the organization, and does not support the development of members."

Needless death and irresponsible behavior can be avoided. We need to be willing to challenge the status quo, identify why we have strayed from where we originated, and provide a framework to assure new efforts will provide the desired results.

FRMT Welcomes Its Newest Member, Delta Kappa Epsilon!

Delta Kappa Epsilon was founded in 1844 at Yale University by 15 men determined to create an organization more advancing than those previously established.



Over 70,000 men have joined the membership of Delta Kappa Epsilon on more than 65 campuses across North America, among them are educators, athletes, scientists, artists, businessmen and politicians, including five US Presidents.



Seventh Annual FRMT Risk Management College Held

On June 30th, the seventh annual FRMT Risk Management College was hosted in Indianapolis, Indiana. Over 140 professional staff members from a wide spectrum of fraternal organizations attended. The college provided presentations on the core subjects of fire safety, sexual assault, hazing, crisis management as well as risk management prevention and control.

Special thanks to the following sponsors whose contributions helped make the event possible:

FEA – Fraternity Executives Association, promoting values of the fraternal movement. www.fea-inc.org

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The 2006 FRMT Risk Management College is scheduled for June 27th in Indianapolis, Indiana to be held at the Hyatt Regency. For information, please visit www.kirklin.com.

ALCOHOL INTOXICATION: AWARENESS AND ACTION

No one wants to experience a tragic death or injury and know it could have been prevented. In general, many college students are responsible with their drinking habits and social conduct, however, the awareness and education of acute alcohol intoxication remains a key focus due in large part to its devastating effects which continue on college campuses. Signs of acute alcohol intoxication can be confused with “an inexperienced drinker who cannot handle their liquor and simply needs to sleep it off.”

What are the symptoms of acute alcohol intoxication?

- ✓ Unconscious or semiconscious
- ✓ Slow respiration (breaths of eight or less per minute or lapses between breaths of more than 10 seconds)
- ✓ Cold, clammy, pale or bluish skin
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Confusion and/or Seizures

If these symptoms are noticed, what action should be taken?

- ✓ **Remain calm:** maintain composure, and be prepared for the unexpected circumstances. If you have been drinking, locate a sober person to assist. The only thing that can sober an intoxicated person is time.
- ✓ **Try to wake the person:** call their name and pinch their skin.

- ✓ **Turn and keep them on their side:** do not leave them alone, maintain their position by placing pillows in the small of their back to help avoid choking if they should vomit. If the victim is vomiting, help to sit them up; do not provide them food as this may lead to choking.
- ✓ **Check skin color and temperature:** a clear sign for help will be pale or bluish skin or if the skin is cold and clammy.
- ✓ **Check the person's breathing rhythm:** if it is irregular or too shallow (less than 8 breaths per minute) seek immediate help.
- ✓ **If you discover any of the above symptoms, stay with the person, call 911 and seek additional assistance.**

Even if the victim lives, an alcohol overdose may lead to irreversible trauma to the brain. High risk drinking is especially dangerous as the victim may ingest a lethal dose before becoming unconscious or displaying clear symptoms of acute intoxication.



Don't hesitate to take action and call 911. Your life or that of your friend may be at risk!

Sources: Bacchus & Gamma Peer Education Network, The Gordon Bailey Foundation, and The Sam Spady Foundation