Meditating Beneath the Arch

ON THE following pages will be found many replies to a questionnaire sent out by the Grand Council giving the exact status of the fraternity as it was last spring, and also asking for suggestions for the good of the national and local chapters of Alpha Rho Chi. Among the many suggestions we find:

EMPLOYMENT BUREAU

Many fraternities have established a national employment bureau, clearing all jobs and job seekers through the office of secretary or editor of that fraternity's magazine. We find no fault with having a local employment bureau sponsored by the fraternity in the larger cities of the country, which could be used not only for fraternity members but all men engaged in architectural work in that particular city, as the latter feature would certainly spread good will for the fraternity at large. In good times there are always more jobs than men, and in adverse times there are practically no jobs for anyone.

To establish an employment bureau on a national scale is not feasible, in our opinion, because distances are too great, the mail takes time, and local conditions vary in almost every section of the country.

Then, too, have you ever had the experience, when seeking your first job after leaving college, of being led through the inner office door and being introduced to an architect by a fraternity brother of yours? How many times have you been given a tip on a new job, especially when you needed one, by a fraternity brother? We do not intend to say that to join our fraternity will insure a job. It will not. The Alpha Rho Chi fraternity may be able, through some of its fifteen hundred members who have selected architecture as a profession, to tip you off to a new job or introduce you to a new boss. Here the fraternity's use ends. After that it is entirely up to you. It's your responsibility to hold your own.

LET'S FORGET EXPANSION

Our fraternity is limited in membership in direct proportion to the number of architectural schools in the United States and the number of students enrolled at these various institutions. There are approximately fifty schools in the country today giving graduate courses in architecture or the allied arts. The second largest school in enrollment last year (one chapter of Alpha Rho Chi is located on this campus) had a total of 260 students. The number of schools teaching architecture is not large, and the total enrollment in the majority of these schools is small numerically. For years we have been talking expansion. Why not forget expansion for the next ten years and spend the time and energy in enlarging and strengthening the five chapters we have now? All of these chapters are located in good schools of architecture where the enrollment is usually large. Let's have five strong chapters that cause prospective students to enroll at certain universities not because of the school but rather because there is a strong chapter of Alpha Rho Chi located there!

Attention Life Subscribers

OUR attention has been called to the fact that many life subscribers to the Archi do not receive their copies. Whenever we find a subscription is being sent to an active chapter house where the said member no longer dwells we immediately cut this copy off our printing and mailing list thus saving Archi funds. You are entitled to receive each copy for life but you must keep us informed as to your correct address. Upon receipt of this information we will gladly restore your name to the regular mailing list. Send corrected addresses to either the Archi staff or Grand Council members.
"Your Part" Replies

ONE YEAR ago an esoteric issue of the Archi was published and copies sent to every member of the fraternity whose correct address was in the mailing files. In that issue, the Grand Council requested each member to send direct to that body his written suggestions and comments concerning the welfare of the fraternity. The following comments were received by the Grand Council from fraternity members, some old, some new.

"Your suggestions are excellent. The Mnesicles chapter is valiantly coming back." Mnesicles '34.

"The only active connection I have with the fraternity at present is in attending alumni meetings and dinners held in New York. I think that if all alumni had a deeper interest in the fraternity and its activities, they could help Alpha Rho Chi very much." Polydiklos '26.

"It seems to me that the principal reason for an alumnum taking an active interest in his fraternity must be a feeling that during his college career, the fraternity contributed something which the alumnum wishes to see passed on to others. Personally, I feel that we'll survive. The depression has, of course, made many changes, but with slight adjustments, the fraternity with any real justification will likewise survive." Iktinos '21.

"A definite program for the good of the fraternity, whereby individual willingness to work can be directed into proper channels, should be the objective of an alumni group. We have found that our monthly scandal sheet, the Andronicus Astonisher, which relates news of the alumni and announces meetings, is well liked, and serves to keep the interest of the alumni alive, in particular the out-of-town fellows who seldom get to the house. The expense involved is very small." Andronicus '27.

KEEP THE ALUMNI INFORMED

"Possibly stronger chapters could be built if the alumni were more active. The undergraduates should keep the alumni informed by mailing invitations to house functions and general financial statements of house accounts." Andronicus '27.

"For the betterment of Alpha Rho Chi, I would suggest: first, fraternity-wide insurance plan to insure payment of building fund; second, continued formation of new chapters wherever advisable. As to sentiments and benefits derived from the fraternity, both are to me a source of constructive interest as well as pleasure." Mnesicles '12.

"I have been out of touch with the architectural profession since graduation. My work has been almost entirely in the field of research, so I am afraid I do not have anything very constructive to offer. I appreciate that you have a problem to work out and I know that you will solve it." Anthemos '14.

"Your suggestion on reorganization sounds practical. All alumni should be ready to help in any way possible if their chapter has meant anything to them. Count me in on any plan or work in which I may assist." Anthemos '28.

"Wish to make the following comment and suggestion along the lines mentioned in the February Archi. First, because of its ideals and possibilities, Alpha Rho Chi should be a leader among fraternities. Second, to make the fraternity strong and vital, it must expand as well as strengthen its present chapters. Perhaps we have been too conservative and slow in granting new chapters. Third, the younger men demand action. Fourth, potential leadership must be founded among the younger men. The weight of the responsibility for the fraternity will weary even the most able soul. The load must be shifted." Andronicus '33.

ENROLLMENT AND ARCHITECTURAL SCHOOLS LIMITED

"I realize that I do not know enough about present day conditions in school to talk as I am going to, but this is no time to spill a lot of 'do or die' stuff. The Illinois group that later joined with the group in Michigan to organize Alpha Rho Chi held its first meeting in my room. Our hope was to form an organization of picked students composed of fraternity and non-fraternity men to build up and improve the spirit of the Department. Such an organization did not require an expensive house, the dues were small, and the financial qualifications of a candidate had no bearing on his election or rejection. The present setup in Alpha Rho Chi is a long way from the original idea, and as to which is the better, I leave with you to judge. As it appears to me there are few architectural schools with a large enrollment to support the present setup. You will always have other fraternities that will attract many good men, and I am not so sure but that the broadening influence of house association with students of other departments is a good and much needed one. I know it is an unpleasant task to reorganize and that it is unpopular to suggest such a thing, but the longer we practice architecture, the more we realize the wisdom of changing a beautiful plan to a more practical one." Anthemos '13.

"Like thousands of other brothers, it appears I have crawled into my shell, so to speak. My first two years out of college, I kept up my interest in the fraternity because I was fortunate enough to return there various weekends and actually associate with the fellows, but my work since has carried me far enough away that visits back there have become impossible. My conception of fraternity organization is that the brothers can be grouped into three distinct classifications: first, those who took little or no interest around the chapter house and loafed through school; second, there is the group that was pretty serious with its school work, but let someone take the lead in all chapter problems; and third, the old wheel horses that carried the burden of the chapter while in school and usually carry on after they get out. Of the groups mentioned above, which can soon be classified by the various chapters themselves, the first two are the ones that need attention, and should be brought back into the organization by some method of direct contact." Anthemos '28.

ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY REUNION

"We are making plans for a big alumni reunion each spring. The date generally selected is nearest to Founder's Day and which does not conflict with a lot of other campus happenings which might attract attention away from the reunion." Anthemos '35.

"The Mnesicles house problem has not been completely solved as yet, however, as the fraternity renting the house (spring, 1936) is decamping, and as yet we have no co-tenant in the house with us. Our doubling up has been our only salvation this past year, as we have through this source collected enough to carry the house. Mnesicles is very much on the map and, believe me, coming through a plenty tough stretch. However, they are all a fine bunch and true blue." Grand Council Deputy '14.
“I am a charter member of the Polykliitos chapter and follow the activities of the fraternity very carefully through the Archi, and would like to see a word now and then from the various members especially those of my chapter, as to what they are doing, where located, families, etc.” Polykliitos ’26.

**EXPLAIN EXPENSES TO PLEDGES**

“Here are a few specific things the local chapters can do to strengthen themselves. First, enlist additional alumni aid in a concentrated drive to relieve financial pressure on the chapter. Second, pledge quality, not quantity, even though the prospects be few. Third, be sure that the prospective pledges fully understand the extra expense involved in becoming a member of Alpha Rho Chi. Remember, if a pledge cannot pay his pledge dues or his initiation fee, he cannot pay his active dues. Do not hesitate to break his pledge. Otherwise you do both him and the chapter an injustice by trying to carry him into something he cannot afford. Fourth, pledges should not be made unless there is some reasonable assurance from the pledge that he can go through initiation within three months after pledging or as soon as university regulations will allow. Fifth, pledges should be taught more fraternity and less menial labor. Sixth, let the members of Alpha Rho Chi be the criterion in gentlemanly manners on their respective campuses. Seventh, active members set the example of conduct for their pledges. Few would endanger the reputation of a family. Why should we not consider our fraternity likewise? Eighth, active groups should try to introduce a more homelike note in the chapter house. Ninth, meetings should be held regularly each week, and should be conducted with dignity. Tenth, the chapter should make every effort to mimeograph a single news sheet for the alumni, say three times a year.

**EXPAND**

“Some of the things the fraternity might do as a national organization would possibly include the following: First, expand into more colleges and universities. Second, a system of national alumni news should be put into practice. Third, each chapter should have its own alumni association and continue the alumni chapters in cities where they are needed. Fourth, each chapter should have its own official delegate to the national convention with expenses paid by the national organization. Fifth, the fraternity should insist upon the requirement set down by the fraternity by-laws, which states that each active member shall wear the official badge. Sixth, include the building fund fee in the initiation fee. Also advise active chapters to increase gradually the initiation fees until these items are within 15 per cent of the average of all the fraternities in their respective camps. Seventh, inaugurate a professional directory and employment bureau. Eighth, inaugurate a system of alumni certification membership cards, by which each alumnus in good standing would receive a membership card each year. Ninth, offer cooperation at all times with the American Institute of Architects. Tenth, more spirit of competition should be instilled in the chapters by: offering a cup to the chapter sending in best Archi reports; offering a plaque to the active member contributing most to the chapter during the year; offering a certificate of honor to the three alumni who have done most for the profession during the year, and likewise to the three alumni who have done most for the fraternity during the year. Eleventh, the renewal of traveling exhibits.

“As for the alumni, perhaps they could help by doing a few of the following: pay all back accounts owed the local chapter; pay building fund notes before they are due; in larger cities, organize an alumni rushing group; keep the active chapter informed as to correct alumni addresses.” Dinocrates ’35.

**TRAVELING SECRETARY**

“No doubt the fraternity does reflect the weakness of the architectural profession at this time. But I believe we shall have a new deal, same as the architectural profession is enjoying. Newer and younger blood is needed in the national organization. We suggest a traveling secretary who should be able to travel to the different chapters, the actives as well as alumni.” Dinocrates ’34.

“The profession of architecture is so highly competitive and individualistic that the brothers in the field seem to find it difficult to get together even in a fraternity meeting. That is not a joke, but it is a basic fact upon which we must work. I am convinced that if we could put a man in the field to contact weak chapters and to visit colleges where prospective chapters might be located, that the fraternity could be strengthened. However I know the cost prohibits the plan unless we could find a person who could do it at his own expense. I am not in favor of any radical changes in the general organization. Actually as recovery takes place in the economic world, the old time strength will return to the fraternity.” Andronicus ’33.

**ANNUAL DIRECTORY WANTED**

“The depression, as you know, has materially affected the architectural profession, which is reflected in the fraternity itself. To stimulate new interest in the fraternity, it would seem desirable that alumni reunions be held at the various chapters, at the same time making it clear to the alumni that the purpose of the reunions is not to collect funds. An increased effort should be made to publish an annual directory of the membership.” Anthemios ’33.

**NO REVISION WANTED**

“Architecture, like law or medicine, is too old a profession to be suddenly submerged or obliterated. I am glad that some years ago the membership was widened to include landscape architects and artists. I do not believe that 1937 is the time for any attempt at expansion. I think we should simply hold our own and within a few years there will be better opportunity in the better schools. Some agitation in the New York A. I. A. chapter which was largely instigated in our alumni group was the basis for discussion and action at the last national A. I. A. convention. Rightly or wrongly, the New York chapter of the Institute pretty much dominates the Institute nationally, and some of the most active members of the New York chapter know enough of our group to know that we are wide-awake but not too radical a group, which can be depended upon to provide the leadership in the Institute in the next two decades. I have no revision, radical or otherwise, to suggest, in the national setup of the fraternity. I think we have an important role to play both in the schools and in the profession.” Demetrios ’21.

**Chapter Directories**

**WATCH** for the Directory of the Mnesicles and Anthemios chapters in the April issue of THE ARCHI.

If other chapter members are interested in a directory of their entire chapter membership drop a note at once to your Active chapter.
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