



GOING GREEK

An inside look at campus sororities

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TOGA! TOGA! TOGA!

The Greek system is one of the most prevalent and well-known traditions associated with university life. However, even though we've all heard about men's and women's fraternities at the U of A, how much do we really know about our Toga-wearing population? If you're anything like me, when someone says the word "sorority," images of a bunch of beautiful, yet catty, women decked out in the hottest new fashions, secretly plotting to take over the world come to mind. While I admit that this description may be a bit overboard, when most public knowledge about these groups comes from movies like *Animal House*, *Sorority Boys*, *Van Wilder* and pretty much every other movie about college kids to ever find its way onto a DVD, there are bound to be some sensational aspects, typical of any Hollywood blockbuster. I mean, does Chuck Norris really judge dodge ball contests as a hobby? In an effort to uncover the truth behind sororities and truly evaluate the popular ideas portrayed in the movies, I decided to don my best bedsheet to go undercover at Rush 2006—and do some myth-busting of my own.

At the beginning of my journey, I was a bit apprehensive about what to expect from the Greek community. Was I going to be welcomed with open arms, or brutally shot down because I wasn't cool enough? I arrived at 4pm in the appointed Tory lecture room to be greeted by a group of overly friendly, smiling blond girls. At first, I felt I had made a terrible mistake: wearing a pair of jeans and U of A hoodie, I didn't really fit in with the rest of the crowd, mostly primped to perfection in the latest fashions. However, my initial fears that I would be beaten with a paddle were assuaged

when the first item on the list was a lecture about the Panhellenic Council, the governing body of most sororities in North America. According to the Panhellenic representative, this type of meet-and-greet, including all the different sororities, is quite common on all campuses across North America. The next step on my sorority journey was an introduction to my Rho Gammas, or my group leaders for the week. Each girl was a member of one of the different sororities on campus, however, they were careful not to tell us recruits which sororities they were a part of, in an attempt to prevent any biases when choosing a group.

Now the real start of my sorority experience began, as the Rho Gammas took us on a tour of the four houses to spend some time with girls from each of the sororities; experiencing the environment and meeting the members of the house.

PI BETA PHI (πΒΦ)

www.ualberta.ca/~piphi/
The Pi Beta Phi sorority house, or the Pi Phis as they're nicknamed, was the first stop of the night. The Pi Phis, founded in 1867 at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois, is the oldest sorority on campus and is dedicated to a number of service projects like Battle of the Bands and Raise-a-Reader. The Pi Phis greeted us with singing outside the front door and we were led into the house, having snacks thrust our way. I breathed a sigh of relief. So far, so good; with free food and no hazing, things were looking pretty rosy. Then the questions began. I must have been asked about myself, my major, and my hobbies by every single girl in the house—no small feat considering there were about 20 Pi Phis present. By the time the question period ended I felt like a key witness

in a murder trial, forced to recount again and again the details of the case. Luckily, my Pi Phi interrogation was concluded by an announcement that our stay was to end with a tour of the house itself.

The Pi Phi house is an older place but they've fixed it up quite nicely inside. It contains room for seven girls to live and rent is reasonable, falling somewhere between \$325–425 a month for room and utilities, which, considering the current economic boom and high rent rates, isn't bad. There's one drawback to being a Pi Phi though: while they're a group of very friendly and down to earth girls, the cost to be a part of the elite Pi Phi's is the highest among the sororities at a whopping \$605 a year, or roughly one semester's worth of books.

KAPPA ALPHA THETA (ΚΑΘ)

www.kappaalphatheta.ca
The Thetas, founded in 1870 at Indiana Ashbury (now DePauw University) in Greencastle, Indiana, are involved in ABC Headstart and in the Festival of Trees, among other programs. My experience at the Theta house was much the same as my experience at the Pi Phi house; once again we were greeted with singing and more free food. But there was one small difference: this time there were 50 girls asking me questions instead of just 20. Imagine a small room filled with dozens of squawking chickens and you'll have an idea of the noise level. Once again, I was treated to a house tour and found that the Theta house, although older than the Pi Phi house, was actually larger and a lot nicer. The Theta house has room for 13 people to live and the rent fluctuates between \$375–475 a month, depending on the room. However, the spoiled little Theta's have one thing the Pi Phi's don't: