

# Joe Student on fraternities



## From the Editor's Desk:

Sometimes, a simple reminder is the most effective.

For some reason, we seem to lean toward the harsher, more extravagant messages in order to jolt ourselves, or others, into a certain frame of mind.

Is it our human nature to wish the worst possible punishment upon one who has "broken the rules?"

Every once in a while, someone tries a new, simpler approach. And every once in a while, it works.

I am thinking of a compelling story in which a young man was found guilty of manslaughter in the drunken driving death of an 18 year old girl. He had been ordered, at the time of his trial, to make compensatory payments to the girl's parents. The payments were simple and small. \$1 a week.

"We just wanted a reminder," the mother said, "We felt if he did this for 18 years, he wouldn't forget (our daughter) Susan Herzog.

But to make a long story short, he kept forgetting.

So Susan's parents brought the driver, Kevin Tunell, back into court.

Tunell told the judge he wasn't purposefully neglecting to mail the money. Nor was he openly defying the court order to send the money.

He said, "I just don't feel

good. It hurts."

Apparently, it did more than hurt. Tunell was going off the deep end.

"I sometimes think when I lie in bed and hear the house settling that Susan is coming to visit me," he said. As he spoke, he cried.

His story really got to the judge, who told the Herzogs he took no joy in enforcing the order. He reminded the parents that "to err is human; but to forgive is divine."

To this, Susan's mother replied, "We don't want his tears. We don't want his regrets. We want his checks every week, pure and simple."

She went on to say, "It isn't for us to forgive. To forgive you have to understand and we will never understand how he got drunk and killed our daughter."

Asking a weekly thought from Tunell seems barely appropriate when looking at all he stole from the Herzogs.

And yet, this simple act has been the most effective. The parents will undoubtedly think of Susan Herzog each day for the rest of their lives. Asking him for \$1 a week is more than fair.

The simplest reminder carried the most weight after all.

*Donna Tucker*

In case you're wondering what all those booths are in front of Moyer Student Union, they are booths set up for fraternities to try and recruit members. This week and next are "rush" weeks.

I'm going to be sexist here and talk in terms of fraternities, but many of my statements apply to sororities as well.

There are ten fraternities at UNLV, and all you have to do to participate in rush is fill out the form you pick up in the Student Government office, pay your \$10 fee and you're registered. The particulars after that I'll leave to them to explain.

Now, the issue of whether or not you should join a fraternity. To achieve that end, I will endeavor to cover some of the pros and cons of each side of the argument.

First, the cons.

What is perceived to be the biggest con is that the members of fraternities are all elitist snob types who think that they are better than anyone who is not in a fraternity. Although there are some examples that prove this point, I must state that overall this is a myth. Obnoxious snobs can be found in fraternities, just as everywhere else in the world. The only reason they seem more prevalent is that they are often among the first, and loudest people to meet you when you're meeting the members, so they give the effect of being everywhere.

The second con is that fraternities take a lot of your time. This con can be very true. You should not join a fraternity without the intention of participating fully in it. A fraternity is an organization that a person must get in-

so I won't waste any more print here. It requires a devotion of time in order to achieve this.

The third con is that if you join a fraternity you will not have any other friends. This one is strictly up to you. I have known at least 100 people who joined fraternities at the school I transferred from and even though they lived in the fraternity house, those who chose to maintain outside contacts, did. This situation is entirely in your control.

The final con is the fear of hazing. In case you don't know what hazing is, it is when a fraternity requires its new members to participate in activities that are either immoral or illegal as part of initiation. Hazing is forbidden by IFC rules, but does it take place anyway?

While there are exceptions to the rule, by and large, fraternities adhere to the rules about hazing. The greek system is in its infancy here at UNLV, and an incident involving hazing would give the system a black eye that could seriously hurt its development. Remember, if you are requested to do something at initiation that you are unwilling to do, just don't do it. Leave if you feel strongly enough about it.

Now, let's get into the pros of joining. The first and most obvious pro is the social benefit. As a member of the fraternity, you can participate in all the fraternity parties, events, functions with sororities, etc. You also get to enjoy all the hijinx and goings-on at the fraternity house and at fraternity meetings. Enough film and print has been used exploring this benefit of fraternity life,

so I won't waste any more print here.

The second pro to joining is that being in a fraternity gives you experience in being involved in a formal organization, with meetings run by Robert's Rules of Order. This is a benefit as the experience you gain will serve you well should you ever get involved in politics or organizations outside the university.

The final pro is the fact that you get to make friends and have a lifelong bond to a group of people you might otherwise never have met. The fraternity handshakes, secrets, etc. are all part of a common bond you have with the other members, a bond that cannot be broken, as you are a member for life.

The decision of whether or not to join a fraternity is entirely in your hands. If you're on the fence, find out more about it and then make a decision.

My opinion would seem to be that everyone should join. This is not true. Fraternities are not for everyone, but I'm in favor of any activity or organization that requires a person to shed their "why bother?" attitude in favor of participation.

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# The real meaning of "I'm sorry"

## JUST A COMMENT

by Aletra Hart-Lopez

Some lessons you never, ever forget.

It is maddening when others never learn the lessons you know so well.

As an ornery child I learned a hard lesson about apologies. I learned that "I'm sorry" is not really an apology if you say it while you are laughing, especially if you really ticked someone off by doing whatever you did.

I playfully "flicked" water from my hands into my stepmother's face. Only after I saw that she was not laughing with me did I apologize, at which time she snapped, "No, you're not, or you would not have done it."

Ouch! This was a serious blow to my pride.

I never forgot her tone of voice or the look on her face when she said that. Moreover, I never forgot those words she used when she put me in my place eleven years ago.

Over the years I have tried to rationalize her statement, but as I matured, it finally boiled down to one valid point: either sincerely apologize for an apparent accident ("Oops, I'm sorry. I did not mean to step on your foot"), apologize for offending someone after doing something intentional ("I'm sorry. I did not think you would get mad," in other words, "I'm sorry for assuming I could second guess your reaction,") or keep your mouth shut because "No, you're not [sorry], or you would not have done it."

Unfortunately, few people we encounter ever actually learn this lesson.

Some people come this far in life without understanding the meaning of "I'm sorry."

Think about those people who live each day to attract attention to themselves, those people we know who intentionally offend others with their sarcasm and then "apologize" just in time to avoid being alienated by their audiences.

Think about those people who

are entertained by the notion that saying "I'm sorry" is the only tool they need to retain the audiences that give them an arena for their sarcasm, thus, the attention they need so badly.

Who will teach these people?

The woman who taught me about apologies eleven years ago lives across the country with her own daughter, otherwise I would beg her to come to Las Vegas to teach a few people what "I'm sorry" truly means.

I am not as naive as I sound. I mean, if anyone knows that apologies come in all forms, I do. I know that many people are masterminds when it comes to salvaging relationships of any kind; fathers, politicians, sisters, friends, and enemies can be masters of the apology game.

The saddest part of this scenario, though, is that when someone says "I'm sorry" to one of these apology abusers (and means it), the apology has little if no merit because an abuser of the phrase cannot conceive its depth.

It is a hard lesson to learn; I

am just glad that I learned it at a young enough age so my wounded pride was able to recover from the blow.

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