

Alabama focuses on fraternity segregation

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) - Fraternities and sororities are the last bastion of the Old South at the University of Alabama.

White-columned sorority houses resembling the plantation home Tara from "Gone With the Wind" stand along Magnolia Drive. Confederate flags hang in bedroom windows a few blocks away from fraternity row.

And the organizations themselves are nearly as racially segregated as a dime-store lunch counter during the days of Jim Crow.

None of the 37 white fraternities and sororities at Alabama has ever accepted a black. And only a few whites have ever joined the eight traditionally black organizations. Black organizations even have their own governing council.

But now, with another rush season starting next week -

and a flare-up last spring over bigotry on campus - the university president and some faculty members are pushing for an end to the racial division. "We clearly cannot tolerate that," said President Andrew Sorensen.

A similar racial divide can be found in fraternity and sorority houses across the South and, perhaps to a lesser extent, student social organizations nationwide.

Fraternity and sorority members nationwide generally separate themselves by race, ethnicity or other distinctions, said William B. Harvey, head of minority issues with the American Council on Education in Washington.

"It is a reflection of society as it exists now," he said. "The question is how we as administrators are going to help people from somewhat limited backgrounds engage

"These groups are driven for the most part by what the students want them to do."

— Damon Sims, Indiana assistant vice chancellor for student affairs

themselves with people of other backgrounds. We have, quite frankly, not done a very good job of addressing that."

At Alabama, the school has adjusted its rush schedule to make it easier for blacks to join white groups. And Sorensen has a task force considering whether Greek groups should lose their low-cost land leases - most commonly only \$100 a year - if they discriminate.

Faculty members are pushing for elimination of the university's racially separate rush periods, when students are courted by fraternities and sororities. Currently, whites are recruited at the start of the fall semester, blacks at the end of it.

In addition, the Faculty Senate on Tuesday unanimously approved a resolution that calls for white fraternities and sororities to accept black members or risk penalties.

The faculty has passed at least three previous resolutions against segregated frats.

"We would love to see the Greek system become desegregated without any pressure or force," said Senate president Norm Baldwin, who wrote the resolution.

"But the whole history of desegregation clearly illustrates you have to have forceful intervention to bring it about."

Black and white students alike at Alabama - including the white head of the Interfraternity Council and the president of the campus chapter of the NAACP - have come out against any attempt to force integration.

The NAACP's Dave Washington said that integration of fraternities and so-

rorities should be left to students and that the faculty and the news media should stop interfering.

He said the existence of black and white fraternities has more to do with cultural differences than racism.

"I haven't experienced racism with the Greek system," he said. "I think the organizations are doing their best."

It was at Alabama that Gov. George C. Wallace made his "stand in the schoolhouse door" against the enrollment of two blacks at the all-white school in 1963.

Another low point in race relations came in 1986, when someone burned a cross in front of the house that a black sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, wanted to occupy on Magnolia Drive. AKA eventually got a house on the previously all-white street.

The issue of integration was largely dormant among students until last fall, when administrators adjusted the rush schedule - delaying it until after classes start, when all students are on campus - in hopes of increasing diversity. White groups complained grades would suffer.

Then, last spring, Melody Twilley, who is black, complained that she wasn't accepted into any of the white sororities she rushed. She wrote a letter to the student paper implying race was the reason. Last year, the University of Georgia suspended a white sorority accused of rejecting a potential member because she was black.

The University of North Texas suspended an all-white fraternity for alleged racial taunting of a group that included black football recruits.

Since 1997, Indiana University has had four governing groups for Greeks: one for white fraternities, one for white sororities, one for mostly black sororities, and one for mostly black fraternities. Damon Sims, Indiana assistant vice chancellor for student affairs, said that about five years ago, the four groups tried to combine, but nothing came of it.

"It continues to be a vexing question. It's difficult to know what direction to go in," Sims said.

"These groups are driven for the most part by what the students want them to do. And that's a fairly fluid thing."

Ritenour

(Continued from Page 8) by reed master Gerald Albright, juggling three winds with ease for his poetic license, and South African born Jonathan Butler with a guitar in hand that he made sing as if it had 20 instead of eight strings, while in a steady duel of heart and soul with dual string and keyboard playing - Ritenour himself.

The set certainly inspired the relatively small, calm gathering of hard core jazz fans and had some shouting,

"Jonathan, you're my hero!" There is a certain unpredictability to the texture of real live jazz the way the Montgomerys of the world laid it down, and Ritenour's CD's pale in comparison to the strength his performance brings on stage.

Every two years or so, Ritenour reminds us with a new release of intricately woven melodies and personalities.

This most recent compilation features an expansion on

Marley's greatest tunes, with the help of the artists who appeared live and a 'lil extra from the likes of Will Downing, Maxi Priest and the ivory master, Dave Grusin.

With all the acclaim Ritenour has received for the honorary effort, critics are in accord with the "not very Marley" sentiment.

Nonetheless, the project has garnered support by way of touring live, the way jazz is really supposed to be enjoyed.

Consequences

(Continued from Page 11) people (The Jewish Problem) and then to annihilate them (The Final Solution).

Now, contrast how persons of the Jewish faith have learned their history lesson and what steps they are taking to prevent their history from repeating itself, with that of what we are doing as result of lessons from our own history.

Man, over a hundred and thirty years after being granted our freedom, our mindset is such that we insist, through our self-destructive behavior, on continuing to enslave ourselves by committing crimes, using drugs and wanting white folks to love us.

After reading the comments of a college official's use of phrase that implies we have tendency to ease in late for scheduled meetings, understanding our mindset as a race, Gene McGaugh, C.J. Cotten and yours truly debated the following question. Is it intellectually honest for persons to sit in judgement of another person's inappropriate use of words after the fact or the persons doing the judging having themselves used inappropriate words to characterize persons from other racial groups?

Needless to say, we did not reach a consensus on the matter. However, there was a general agreement that we would not like to have our entire careers irreparably harmed by

one non-criminal offense. This is too high of a price for anyone to have to pay.

At the risk, which I will take, of being called "Uncle Louie, Tom's brother," let me talk about why some whites may now feel comfortable using a word that is very prevalent in our lexicon.



White folks hear many of us use the word in social gatherings, they purchase 80 percent of all rap music, and they view hit movies that have musical scores containing very little else other than the bad word. Thus, it's a mystery to me why some of us profess righteous indignation when we hear others refer to us in such a manner.

For black folks who need white folks to demonstrate their love for us by performing a public exercise, such as forcing one of their own to resign because of his use of a phrase that certainly has some truth to it, minus the bad word or reference to a particular individual, here are three tips for you.

Tip one: if you want white folks in a capitalistic society to love you, gain control of something. It can be money, land or people. I guarantee they will love you to death. Tip two: learn and take to heart the African proverb, "it is not the name you call me that is important, it is the name that I answer to that is important." Tip three: if you do not act like one, you will not be called one!

A New Way of Living At Vintage Desert Rose

A distinctive senior community*

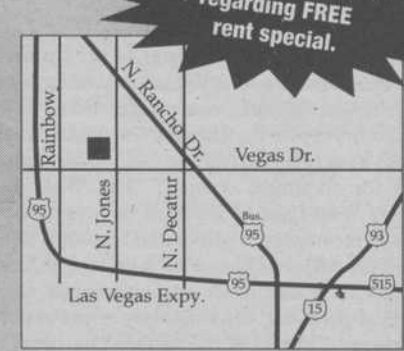
Cheery 1 and 2 bedroom plans beginning at \$446/mo.

COMMUNITY FEATURES

- Large clubhouse for social activities and events
- Patio sunning area with sparkling pool and spa
- Fully equipped laundry facilities
- Close to transportation, shopping and medical facilities


INTERIOR AMENITIES

- Intruder alert systems
- Private patio or balcony entries
- Fully equipped kitchens
- Energy efficient AC and heating




Call for information regarding FREE rent special.

Currently under construction. Please call the Leasing Center at 702-648-5588 for more information.



Professionally Managed by USA Multifamily Management, Inc.



*Restrictions Apply