

## 52 WEEKLY THOUGHTS ABOUT PHI BETA DELTA

These essays include ideas for your chapter activities as well as suitable readings for your chapter openings and inductions, for the chapter newsletters or for printed menus and other chapter literature.

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## ***1. Phi Beta Delta: Now More Than Ever***

These days there is a danger that America will turn inward, shocked and confused by terrorism. It would be a shame if that happened, because it would be handing victory to those who have attacked civilization with such cruelty and barbarism. Phi Beta Delta is a society committed to internationalism in the best sense, to an internationalism which witnesses to the pluralism of the university, to the ecumenicism of tertiary education. A chapter of Phi Beta Delta is a statement by a college or university that it wants to be a cosmopolitan, pluralistic community.

Having a chapter of Phi Beta Delta on your campus is making a statement. It is making a statement that the best education is one that exposes students to multiple cultures that the best education is one of diversity where values and traditions are appreciated rather than combated.

These are indeed difficult days. Good people need to take a stand and one way to do that is to support the world's leading honor society for internationalism. If you care, then Phi Beta Delta is for you.

## ***2. Phi Beta Delta: The Torch***

One of the symbols of Phi Beta Delta is the torch, common enough in the iconography of academic institutions. The obvious meaning is the illumination that knowledge gives, and that is certainly part of the story and part of what Phi Beta Delta represents. But reflect for a moment on the fact that the torch is a particular kind of illumination -- it is generally carried by someone. The most obvious example is the famous Olympic torch, carried by a succession of runners after being lit at the site of the original games.

Someone must carry the torch! And not someone anonymous. The torch needs you and me. Without us it cannot do its job. So for all Phi Beta Delta initiates, there is a double meaning to the presence of the torch on our shield. Not only are we committed to the ideal of knowledge lighting the world, but we undertake as members to carry that light and to pass it on.

The torch then teaches us Deltans responsibility: not that the other fellow will do it but that we must do it. Not that progress will come if someone else carries the burden but that progress will come if we do our fair share. The torch needs to be carried and when we become members of Phi Beta Delta, we solemnly undertake to help carry it. With honor comes duty.

## ***3. Phi Beta Delta: Being Greek***

Phi Beta Delta is a Greek society. Sometimes, especially to those not familiar with the involved American academic system, that seems strange. Do we have some special ties with Greece? Are we people whose ancestors came from Greece? Do we consume Greek food or spend holidays in Greece. Probably many of our members do have some such ties, but that isn't what makes us a Greek society.

Then why are we Greeks? Well, we are Greek in the sense that we share an affinity for the past -- civilization has roots and one of those roots of course is in that long ago but memorable time when Greek thought was a wonder of the world, and when Athens was a veritable burning sun of ideas. Our use of the Greek alphabet is a way of paying homage to the time and to that special contribution that Greece made.

We are not social Greeks, but we are social! We have our receptions and our dinners, and our fun, but the social Greeks on campus are different and our original connections with them, two hundred and more years ago, have become less obvious with the passage of the years. Rather than providing residential facilities or an elaborate card of entertainments, we spotlight excellence and internationalism.

Excellence and internationalism are values the Greeks would have appreciated, for they were an urbane band.

So it wouldn't be amiss at a chapter meeting to serve a Greek dish or have a speaker on an aspect of Greek history and culture, or to invite the consul of Greece to help at an installation. Someone said that it was great to be Greek, and we would just add to that and say its great to be a Deltan.

#### ***4. Phi Beta Delta: Promoting Internationalism***

A primary purpose of Phi Beta Delta is promoting internationalism. That sounds like promoting something that everyone agrees about, but it isn't that simple. While to many of us it would seem a given that an international attitude is a necessity in a steadily smaller world, a world now closely bound by technology, the fact is that parochialism and prejudice are still very much alive. Isolationism, someone said, never is far away. Our society is not political, but it does stand for inclusiveness and urbanity, for an ecumenical approach to the world's cultures and for an appreciation of the real value in education of diversity. These are values they need all the support they can get in an era when suspicion and mistrust are afield.

So having a chapter of Phi Beta Delta is rather like building a lighthouse. It isn't an accident that our ritual and our shield involve a torch. In a modest but persistent way, we press for international ties between colleges and universities, for the exchange of students and faculty, and for campuses, which will more and more reflect a world of many peoples and many persuasions.

#### ***5. Phi Beta Delta: The Idea of Initiation***

In this busy age, most organizations to which we belong do not have a formal initiation. In fact, speaking frankly, a lot of such memberships are more like subscriptions. The National Geographic Society has annual meetings but few people take membership as a personal commitment. Joining is not a serious experience in many groups, which possibly is an indication of how standards of excellence and of competence have been assailed. Indeed, mentioning initiation immediately indicates that the organization is different from the ordinary -- it would seem strange to speak of being initiated into the automobile association, however useful such membership might be.

As an honor society, Phi Beta Delta is different from other campus clubs. The ceremony of joining or of initiation is important. The candidates have the symbolism of the society explained to them and they are enjoined to live up to the ideals, which are represented. Initiation implies real commitment and obligation, and carries with it the notion that with honor comes responsibility. In Phi Beta Delta, one is singled out amongst peers not only for having shown an above average interest in internationalism but also for willingness to work for international understanding in the future.

Initiation only occurs once. If the candidate is not properly prepared, or if a chapter fails in its duty to make the moment a meaningful one, it's not something that can be done over. It is a unique moment. Many chapters of Phi Beta Delta make it so, using the arts and challenging the initiate with music and a proper solemnity. So proper preparation and lots of thought about making the event special are well in order. It should be an event to be remembered, cherished, and reflected upon.

## ***6. Phi Beta Delta: Recognition***

Recognition is a concept that we don't think about enough, and it's basic to the idea of Phi Beta Delta. We are "recognizers". Of course we say "thank you" almost without reflecting on it. We should think more about this but we don't. A more formal recognition often goes by the boards. It's the old case of the path of good intentions. Someday. Somewhere. Somehow. We mean to give recognition to someone for accomplishments, but we never get around to it.

Phi Beta Delta offers colleges and universities an opportunity to take recognition from the back burner, to give it the significance that it deserves. A chapter is encouraged to single out individuals in the community who have gone the extra mile in promoting international understanding. Is there someone who for years has been a help but hasn't had that formal special thank you? This could be the local honorary consul of a country, always willing to assist with answering questions or expediting a visa. It could be a librarian who works to building a school's collections in international fields. It could be a local museum curator who has gone to pains in trying to have exhibits that single out the multinational nature of the local scene.

Of course we also want to recognize students who help. They often go far beyond what their scholarship or work study requires of them. Every academic department and every service department of a university has such students. They not only have a keen interest in things international, but they demonstrate by work that they are willing to give of themselves.

Recognition in the academic equation is not only polite but essential, because we all hope that when the Phi Beta Delta medal is conferred, that those watching will "go and do likewise". Recognition is inspiration, and every campus that aspires to become international needs the recognition that having an active chapter of Phi Beta Delta gives to this vital part of the curriculum. Phi Beta Delta is not a luxury on a campus but a necessity.

## ***7. Phi Beta Delta: The Shield***

The insignia of Phi Beta Delta are displayed on a shield, which on the newer medallions appears in die cut bas relief and so is easier to recognize than in a one dimensional rendering. Take time to look at it. The shape of the shield is unusual -- other honor societies do use a shield but not this one, for the shape is not of the shields that knights carried in the Middle Ages but rather from the Greco-Roman world.

Since the beginnings of our society, the explanation given for the shield is that Phi Beta Delta stands for academic freedom. Just what is academic freedom? It is not freedom for those whose opinions please us, but most especially for those whose opinions stir our violent disagreement. Sometimes that asks for great tolerance indeed.

This would make an excellent subject for a chapter meeting -- try to get a resource person who can talk about what it is to be a student or teacher in a country where unpopular opinions

can put a person in jail or worse. Ask someone from the American Civil Liberties Union or Amnesty International to discuss what challenges there are to academic freedom.

The shield of Phi Beta Delta is a special reminder to all of us that freedom is never passive. It is an active value, sustained by vigilance and at times by courage. Almost all the opinions that have advanced the world have at one time or another been unpopular and opposed -- and we would do well to remember that.

## ***8. Phi Beta Delta: The Book***

Phi Beta Delta displays an open book on its medallion. Many colleges and universities as well as learned societies do so. Harvard has three books, and in the nineteenth century the Harvard alumni and faculty debated whether there should be three open books. Two books were open, displaying "VE" and "RI " but one of the books was displayed with its cover because the Harvard motto, Veritas, divided nicely into VE RI TAS and if there was a closed book then the last three letters of veritas, the Latin word for truth, could be displayed neatly with one letter, the "A" on the spine of the book.

Well, eventually and after an all too long discussion which even involved its alumnus and President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, Harvard decided that despite the strong artistic argument for having one book cover-side out, that it wasn't symbolically appropriate and the books should all appear open, with the "A" straddling the space between two pages. So it is today.

The Phi Beta Delta book has appeared in various guises. Sometimes it seems to be a bigger book and have more pages than other times! Some artists just give it a few pages. Fortunately it is an open book. It isn't one specific book, and could and perhaps should be the book that has most influenced you. Or it could remind you of good times in the library on a rainy day, or the book you bought on a magic trip to Paris, or the book your family gave you on a birthday. What is important it is an open book, and just as Harvard decided a long time ago that an open book was a symbolic shorthand for what education is about, it's our reminder of the treasures that books can hold for us -- a wonderful world that can transform us. We are, after all, a society for scholars!

## ***9. Phi Beta Delta: Heat in the Kitchen***

Phi Beta Delta trains leaders. The students that help with a model United Nations, an international fair, or a congress are getting practical experience that will stand them well in years ahead. A good university education is not only about the subject matter in class but about the kind of organizational and social skills that an active Phi Beta Delta chapter should teach.

Leadership sometimes means "telling it like it is". Often we hear about people skills and certainly the old parable about the donkey being motivated more by the carrot than the stick has much validity. But there is another maxim, President Harry Truman's famous remark about the duties of his office and the criticisms that he received for change and innovation: "If you don't like the heat, get out of the kitchen."

If your chapter is stuck in the mud like an old Model T, it won't go anywhere by just talking. We live in a world with all kinds of enormous changes happening. So leadership means taking decisions, moving ahead, and taking some heat.

Phi Beta Delta is for real leaders. Are you a leader in your chapter? Do you set an example in terms of commitment and work? Or do you just sit on your hands? Remember, leadership is a privilege and an honor, and having a medal means having a desire to do something and not just watch others work. Reflect honor on the medal that has honored you.

### ***10. Phi Beta Delta: Flying the Flag***

Sometime chapters need to think imaginatively about their challenges. A think session can be quite productive. Take the question of flags and banners.

Phi Beta Delta has a banner and a flag. What is the difference? Well, now there isn't any and you can use the flag as a banner, but at one time the society had a flannel-like banner, which could be affixed to a table or mounted behind a table or rostrum. It was very heavy, so taking it to meetings or trying to get it to stay on a wall was a considerable challenge, not to mention the cost. Washing it was a real dilemma.

More recently, the society has a fine combined flag and banner made of silk or rayon, which can double for either purpose. You can pin it behind a table or on the front of a table, or have it on a pole. The brilliant red of the official colors is the background for the shield, rendered in our familiar gold. If a chapter wishes they can have their name on the flag, although the international headquarters displays one with simply the shield. Now folks can have a flag or a banner, and it's easy to transport.

There is a simple moral to the story, which is that sometimes we find there are ready answers to chapter problems that not only resolve our frustrations but are a way clear to new opportunities. If our chapter looks around campus, there will be -- for example -- events and activities that would welcome a co-sponsor. Perhaps another group has a scholarship event that has become a little tired and would benefit from having your group as well as the other to help out. Possibly a department has a lecture series but attendance has not been what it could be. Phi Beta Delta chapters frequently are co-sponsors, and indeed very welcome ones. One might say that the banner and flag are co-sponsors of Phi Beta Delta!!

As for the flag and its use, well a flag has to be of a fabric that can catch the wind. Wet blankets don't make good flags. Is your chapter catching the wind? Show chapter enthusiasm. These days as Phi Beta Delta expands, we are flying the flag. And flying the flag is a useful phrase because it is true that to be successful your chapter has to let people know that it is active. Don't keep your flag in a drawer but get a standard for it and have it showing in your department office or even in the foyer of your college president's office. It's beautiful and something you can be proud to display, and it shows that you are a chapter that is keeping the flag flying.

### ***11. Phi Beta Delta: Of Seals, Waxen and Not Furry***

Phi Beta Delta is well endowed when it comes to symbols, for it has both a shield and a seal. We generally think of seals, if we think of them at all and aren't thinking about furry grey seals, as imposing devices made out of wax, often with red ribbons attached, and used to confirm the authenticity of treaties and deeds. The Great Seal of the United States appears on dollar bills is regularly if controversially cited as an example of the influence of Freemasonry on the early Republic. The Phi Beta Delta seal consists of a world constructed by lines of latitude and longitude, with the Greek letters of the society superimposed and a botanical halo of leaves encircling the world outline.

The shield on the other hand is much discussed in our society's initiation ritual and is a heraldic device, familiar to anyone who has seen some of the palaces in Europe, where shields are much used for ornamentation. Our shield appears without supporters, those strange animals like unicorns that sometimes hold the shield upright. If it did have supporters, perhaps a student and a teacher would be better choices than mythological beasts! At any rate, the shield is usually the representation that is most used by Greek societies, but many of them like us also have a seal.

All of this goes to remind us that Phi Beta Delta is part of a river of history, going back many years. Our signs and tokens link it to the rich and complicated history of tertiary education, and to the many ways in which honor and accomplishment have been recognized. Joining brings initiates into a great company of men and women who have been part of that river, and should be a source of pride. We should remember that we are for the moment what people think about Phi Beta Delta. We should strive for the community's seal of approval for our energy and our commitment to the values of international education.

## ***12. Phi Beta Delta: Ribbons of Meaning***

Ribbons can be meaningful. The display of them often indicates a hope or wish.

There is something special about ribbons. They adorn hats, they are tied around our gifts on special days, and they are part of our regalia as members of Phi Beta Delta. When we are inducted into the society we have the colors of the ribbon explained, but possibly we don't reflect much on how ribbon is used so frequently to convey meaning. A blue ribbon can mean someone supports the Campaign for Free Speech or the International No Diet Day. A purple ribbon protests animal abuse. But a purple ribbon can also indicate cancer awareness or Workers for Religious Tolerance. A metallic gold ribbon stands for childhood cancer awareness. A green ribbon supports children with optic nerve hyperplasia, but a green ribbon can also spotlight a supporter of organ donation. A violet ribbon indicates Artists Against Racism. Pale brown ribbons can mean the Taskforce Against Chain Emails. Black ribbons stand for Suppressing Hippies or a member of the Anarchist League. An orange ribbon indicates a member of Fighting Fingerprinting or a brother in the Loyal Orange Order.

Clearly ribbons can back a powerful punch. These days people have opinions about an awful lot of issues and they have taken to sporting ribbons to show their feelings. We might well ask ourselves in Phi Beta Delta what the ribbon that we all wear with our medallion means. Does it mean as much as all those ribbons that we see? Surely it means standing for the international values of education, for the respect for cultures and traditions not our own, and for the exchange of views that comes with travel and study. We can wish others well with their ribbons, while remembering that we too have a ribbon, a special one -- red and yellow, representative of the values of our society and its interesting history. It's hard to think of a birthday or anniversary without ribbons, and it's hard to think of Phi Beta Delta without our familiar and, if one may boast just a little, quite handsome ribbon.

## ***13. Phi Beta Delta: After September 2001***

The awful tragedy of September 2001 should make all of us think deeply about the world in which we want to live. Certainly without more efforts to bridge the gap between cultures, we are set on a stormy and dangerous course. There are too many prejudices and mistaken judgments, and too few efforts to break down the walls.

We need to ask ourselves what kind of thinking and would despair would motivate young people, some of whom studied in the United States, to embark on suicide missions against innocents. Confronted by other countries and other cultures, we can sense that for some of our friends and neighbors that the chances of misunderstanding grow by the day. The exotic foods become poisonous and the strange music becomes bedlam -- we demonize and all kinds of suspicions crowd out good will.

Phi Beta Delta is about understanding. Its mission is to set education on an international course, and goodness knows such a course is needed in these times. The foreign student at your college whom is befriended may be tomorrow's leader who will remember your kindness and avoid stereotyping an entire nation because you showed a human side. If more evidence of the value of international programs, international methods, and international studies were needed, then the tragedy of September 2001 should have convinced even the most doubtful that we cannot afford to live in a world where appreciation of other societies is an also ran in the curriculum. Every campus needs an active chapter of our society, and all of us need to reflect on what the alternative to international understanding could be.

#### ***14. Phi Beta Delta: The World in 2300***

A distinguished scientist, Sydney Brenner of The Salk Institute, writes that people are depending too much on medicine to fix what they do to themselves. They smoke and overeat and then believe that medical science will save them with a pill. He urges us to be more responsible.

Whatever the world will be like in 2300, the need for human responsibility will not have gone away. And for the world to make it to the year 2300 is going to require a lot more responsibility than we currently show. While some of us are killing ourselves by over nutrition, many throughout the world are dying for lack of food. While some of us expect medicine to patch us up when our troubles are of our own making, many throughout the world lack the most basic medical care. Brenner remarks, "Somehow, in our abstruse discussions about the high technology of health in the developed world, we need to balance the equation by thinking about the rest of the world as well."

Phi Beta Delta is about a responsibility towards the rest of the world. When we accept the honor of membership and enjoy the pride that comes with wearing the shiny gold medal, we also have to accept a responsibility for helping to achieve the goals of the fraternity: We need, to quote Dr. Brenner, "to stand up for all humanity". If we do accept responsibility, there is a chance the world will be around in 2300. If we don't accept responsibility the prognosis is not good. How do you measure up to responsibility that goes with the wearing of that gold medal?

#### ***15. Phi Beta Delta: Difference Blindness***

A good chapter activity could be a study of the United States Supreme Court ruling regarding the University of Michigan Law School's problems in considering an applicant's race. The court found, with considerable soul searching, that universities would admit few young people from some minority groups if there was not some preference because of ethnicity. One interesting facet of this is that the court seemed to set higher education apart from other areas where ethnicity might figure.

There are profound philosophical questions that the use of race in admissions presents. Seemingly worthy goals collide -- blindness to difference, scholastic achievement, and the

need for a diverse student body. Before you form an opinion, reading the court's views, including the minority opinions, is a useful exercise.

Phi Beta Delta believes in diversity and its part of our role to advocate the educational advantages of a diverse campus. We don't have a set view on the mechanisms by which that is achieved. We can all agree that disadvantaged youths may not think about higher education; it is therefore important that there be vigorous recruiting of really able students who might not be getting the encouragement they need.

Beyond that we may disagree, as the justices of the court did. What is certain is that all of them thought that campus diversity was important. How to achieve it is not as simple. The case and the great discussion it prompted is another illustration of how our society is involved with some of the most significant issues of the day. As members we have a duty to be well informed on these issues, and to see that our chapter meetings provide a forum where there is more light than heat!

## ***16. Phi Beta Delta: The Chapter Cycle***

In earlier times, when most people lived in rural communities, there was an undeniable cycle to the year. The sowing and reaping imposed a sense of time, which is now missing in our fast-paced urban cultures. Without overly romanticizing what was a hard and strenuous life, we can accept that something is now missing, a feeling of the passage of the days that framed and ordered life.

A successful Phi Beta Delta chapter will have a year that catches something of that missing sense of time. There should be some sort of autumn start to its affairs, perhaps a lecture or other program that catches the attention of new students and new faculty. There should be a fall induction so there will be workers for the coming academic year. The holidays should be noted and observed, because they are part of the educational experience of the foreign students that the campus is hosting. By the same token, the national holidays of our visitors from abroad should be marked, because that is part of cultural understanding.

A January induction is a fine way to start the New Year. The midwinter is a good time for solid work. Just as it was time for farm matters that spring and summer gave little time, it is a time when the chapter can work on long-range projects -- and chapters should have long range plans as well as monthly events. For example, with the help of your chapter historian (and, do you have a chapter historian?) now would be the time to research the ties of your college with overseas, both through alumni and research done by faculty. What are the countries with which your college has historical associations?

Spring comes and with the approach of graduation it's a priority to have some sort of event to mark the departure of some members. Summer comes and too often chapters forget about all the foreign students who will be on campus. Yes, the seasons do exist for our Phi Beta Delta, and a thriving chapter will have a calendar as rewarding as that of the rural scene of long ago. Consider well your chapter cycle and how you can enrich it.

## ***17. Phi Beta Delta: 3363 Candles***

One authority says there are 3363 institutions of higher learning in the United States. A Unesco figure some years ago was that there were more than 29,000 universities in the world. Presumably those figures vary but the fact is that there are an awful lot of colleges and

universities. Most of them have students from other countries. Canadian universities have Argentineans and British universities have Americans, and so on -- and on. The permutations are mind stretching. Moreover, we can safely say that having some people who are particularly tuned to the problems of international programs, the challenge facing foreign students, the trials and tribulations of students from the home campus going overseas, is all to the good. So we have to admit that Phi Beta Delta has a long way to go in chapter expansion.

You may think colonization is the job of your international officers, and it certainly is. However, it is also your job. Chapters should go out and start chapters at schools that are nearby, are connected by athletics or historical origins, or where chapter members have friends. Having some chapters near you will make your own activities more fun -- the doors are opened wider for the sociability and collegiality, which is part of the Phi Beta Delta experience.

Just think if there were 3363 chapters of Phi Beta Delta. What a mighty force that would be for international understanding! What a powerful force for good! That isn't going to happen tomorrow, but if each of us sees that our chapter works on expansion, we will see a lot more chapters in the future than now and all of us will be the gainers. Light a candle rather than curse the darkness.

### ***18. Phi Beta Delta: Faculty Can Be Lonely***

We often think of loneliness and being at odds as a student phenomenon, and talk a lot in Phi Beta Delta circles about how we can help foreign student adjust to a new and different campus life. But we should remember that not every new faculty member is instantly at home. Nor will every new faculty member easily find friends or mentors.

Phi Beta Delta is a place where students and faculty meet in a less formal setting than the classroom. Chapters have an opportunity to help new faculty get adjusted, met people, and see another side of campus life -- and that could involve running a workshop on where to take dry cleaning or buy organic food, or providing a student helper for the first few weeks of dealing with local transportation and the telephone company. Don't assume that someone is doing all that for them, or that they have a busy social life from day one.

A chapter can make life easier for both visiting professors and those who have come to stay. We all need help in adjusting. It would be too bad if we spent all our time worrying about the new students and none of our time worrying about the new teachers. Keep in mind too that Greek societies will be a new world for some and the difference between social Greeks armed with paddles and our Phi Beta Delta Greeks may not be immediately apparent. The nuances of Greek life are one of the subjects that visitors to the United States find absolutely mystifying, whether it is honorary or social. Explaining that we don't have paddles might be of considerable interest to your newest professors from abroad! You just might have the luck of recruiting an active and valuable member.

### ***19. Phi Beta Delta: Well Beyond Money***

Three of the best-known service clubs have international projects. Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis are wide spread -- Rotary is in 166 countries, Lions in 192, and Kiwanis in 89. Their local chapters have lots of local service projects, but all three movements also have very large international projects.

Rotary has taken on polio. It has raised over half a billion dollars towards polio eradication. Its members have been involved in immunization campaigns reaching two billion children. Lions is the foe of blindness and has a full-scale program against river blindness, trachoma, glaucoma and diabetic eye disease. And Kiwanis has made mental retardation caused by iodine deficiency its specialty, and is now helping with programs protecting 91 million newborns each year.

The World Health Organization has said that without Rotary, the eradication of polio would not have been feasible. So "NGOs" can make a real contribution, and not just a token one. The significance, as public health leaders testify, goes beyond money. The money donated is great but even more important are the networks of well-informed people who are lobbying and are consciousness-raising.

Note that the diseases being fought by these service clubs are largely eradicated in the places where one generally finds such organizations. Their members are not afflicted. It is others, often less fortunate, who are the recipients of these service projects. We have to ask ourselves, as Phi Beta Delta members, whether we are building a network for something. It is great to have a network, but what is it for? We need to be alert to ways in which we can serve. Service goes well beyond money.

## ***20. Phi Beta Delta: Achievement***

Education has been sharply divided by discussions over achievement. There certainly has been a lot more heat than light about the topic. Legislators have passed a blizzard of controversial bills that require students to meet certain standards, and newspapers have been full of supposed scandals where administrators are revealed as fudging the achievement statistics. There are numerous catchy slogans such as No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress, and such programs are worthy. Schools and colleges are continually getting a lot of criticism, so a word about achievement and the role of Phi Beta Delta is not out of place.

No doubt we do need better program design, more community partnerships, and improved evaluation tools. There is nothing wrong with quality assurance or re-assurance. Some re-engineering is undoubtedly in order. One does wonder though if possibly anxiety about teaching effectiveness is a case of "nothing new under the sun", -- but there can be no quarrel with demands for quality and standards.

Notwithstanding all of this, perhaps a word should be said about the old-fashioned notion of appealing to the idealism that young people fortunately have. An honor society is, after all, a supremely idealistic organization. It assumes that the carrot is as significant as the stick. Recognition and reward are tools just as much as testing and assessment. Phi Beta Delta is the carrot. It rewards work and dedication. That time worn line about catching more flies with honey than vinegar has a point. Having a chapter of Phi Beta Delta is a modest investment in waving the carrot and not the stick. By all means let us have tests and rules and regulations to induce higher standards, but let us also consider that rewarding achievement also has a place. There are sometimes ways to do something in a positive rather than negative way. Rewarding academic achievement is one example.

## ***21. Phi Beta Delta: Of Multiculture and Multi-Ethnic***

The word "nation" can be tricky. Most -- in fact probably almost all -- nations are multi-ethnic and multicultural whether they like it or not. So the fond idea that the world is simply made up of nationalities wears a trifle thin. There is no country without its groups, without a long and often troubled history of migration, and without inherent pluralisms. There are of course, and alas, countries in self-denial that do not accept that they are pluralistic.

Phi Beta Delta is based on the idea that the world is multi-ethnic and multicultural, and that this is a virtue rather than a vice. Educational systems that were forged to create artificial identities and bespoke loyalties are potentially a problem. When imposed identities conflict with the aspirations and ambitions of the various groups within a nation-state, clouds appear on the horizon. What is sorely needed then is an education system that strikes a reasonable balance and inculcates respect between all the distinctive cultures in a nation, while acknowledging the need for common and uniting values, symbols and hopes that permit everyone to participate in a "nation".

Education can either ease or exacerbate the tensions between groups in a society. Curriculum can either favor or hinder the development of positive attitudes towards pluralism. Campus decision-makers should be aware that policies will either help integrate the campus or create divisiveness. A chapter of Phi Beta Delta is a good step towards saying that diverse groups are part of the strength of education.

Having a chapter is putting out a sign that says clearly that the campus welcomes the diversity that is the hallmark of a great college or university. Education that appreciates diversity is good education. Chapters of Phi Beta Delta bring together students and staff and faculty with many traditions who agree that internationalism is a positive and important educational component.

## ***22. Phi Beta Delta: Legacy of the Greeks***

As a Greek society, Phi Beta Delta reminds us that Greek thought has been enormously important to civilization, and that the rather mechanistic schemes of these days would have struck the Greeks as misjudgment or an over emphasis. The Greek philosophers spoke at length about such now little considered ideas as soul and virtue. The Greeks asked themselves some very basic questions about life, and what they talked about is still relevant.

So, since Phi Beta Delta is indeed a Greek society, we should reflect on what the Greek contribution to civilization was and is, and how their discussions of happiness and justice still have validity. A recent thinker who has made great use of the Greek tradition is Leo Strauss, whose work on human nature and human aspirations is well worth reading. A lecture on his work would be worth sponsoring.

The unconsidered life is not a life well lived. A Greek society like ours has a duty to sponsoring programs and events, which cause people to think. In a world where there is so much static, 400 channels on the TV and endless chores to be done, that is a much easier task to talk about than to deliver on. Still, our chapters should be places where there is intellectual life, where events that give the campus a chance to ponder the big issues of internationalism are put on the table. In that respect, we modern Greeks can emulate the ancient Greeks. Perhaps we are all in such a hurry to go somewhere we haven't asked enough just where we are going.

### ***23. Phi Beta Delta: Life Membership***

Joining Phi Beta Delta is a lifetime proposition. Unlike many societies, you are still a member if you don't pay your dues! And if later in life you find yourself near a chapter, all you have to do is to pay the current year's dues and you are again an active member. So you don't have to worry about paying twenty years of arrears!

That is different way of doing business from most things to which we belong. If we don't pay, we are out. And many associations require the payment of back dues before they will let someone be a current member. That of course makes sense in its own way.

However, Phi Beta Delta takes another approach. You were initiated. You made a promise. You made a commitment to the ideals of international understanding. So we take you at your word. In other words, you have a line of credit. You are trusted.

But reflect on the fact that the society does trust you. You stood up at a ceremony and accepted an honor. Now, what about that? Empty words? An honor taken lightly? One hopes not. Rather, you aren't pursued for dues because you are indeed a lifelong member, active or inactive. The hope and expectation is that you are a person of your word and that when you can help, you will help. Isn't it nice to have someone have confidence in you? Phi Beta Delta has confidence in you and that you joined with the serious intention of living up to the ideals of your initiation. So if someone asks, of course you are a member. Maybe not as active as you should be, but nevertheless a member -- for life.

### ***24. Phi Beta Delta: Dignified Means***

An early piece of Phi Beta Delta literature stated its purposes as including, "...a scholarly and dignified means through its rituals and ceremonies to appropriately recognize achievement and excellence." Thinking about that, we might recall times when the desire to recognize was great but the means were rather, well, insufficient. It is always good to say thank you and to express appreciation, but sometimes it isn't done as well as it could be done. The intention is fine but the execution is limited.

Phi Beta Delta takes proper recognition very seriously. After all, it is a part of our heritage and our modes of recognition can be traced back to the establishment of Phi Beta Kappa at William and Mary College in the eighteenth century. So we like to see ceremonial done well. If it isn't done well, one can hardly ask for another try!

Just calling someone to the podium and handing them a plaque is not a fitting way to express thanks for what may well be years of service and thousands of hours of volunteer labor. A major reason for Phi Beta Delta's foundation was to see that recognition was done in a "scholarly and dignified" way. The words are well chosen, and ours should be too when we seek to honor.

### ***25. Phi Beta Delta: The World's Problems***

The number of hungry people has been increasing according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The UN reports that one out of every seven people in the world are malnourished. And that number has been growing. The UN also says that it isn't that the food can't be grown -- it is a matter of will, not agriculture.

To think that so many are so hungry not because of any enormous technical problem in growing food but because of the failure to spread knowledge, the lack of expertise, the lack of marketing and distribution -- problems that could be solved -- should make us reflect on what we are doing to influence leaders. For example, the Congo is an enormous area with fertile land but seventy-five percent of its population is undernourished.

With so many agencies, and with so much new science, it is time that people had enough to eat. It is great to talk about international understanding, but nearly one billion people are perhaps less interested in our philosophy and more interested in food. So Phi Beta Delta chapters have a role to play in sponsoring discussion and action about this continuing crisis.

## ***26. Phi Beta Delta: Lagniappe***

In Creole Louisiana, the word lagniappe means "a little something extra". When you are in a shop, the proprietor will put lagniappe in your bag, the equivalent of the baker's dozen of Victorian days. It's one of those wonderful customs of a state that is quite unique, and it sends one on the way with an extra bounce in the step. A small treat or bonus, a pleasant thank you and a way to show appreciation...

It's a concept we all need to put into our work. Giving that little something extra is what makes people special. The fact is that as an organization Phi Beta Delta is that something extra that makes a university special. Everyone is in favor of international friendship, but Phi Beta Delta does something about it. Having an active chapter is adding to the life of the campus, and enriching the daily routine -- the initiation, the pride in wearing the medallion, the satisfaction in supporting an international movement, the identification with a historic headquarters in Washington -- all of that is lagniappe.

Lots of us do our job. Some of us go beyond to do that extra which is at the center of success in life. Phi Beta Delta people are special and they understand that the baker's dozen, lagniappe, is part of what makes our society so distinctive. The medallion is the sign and token of someone who goes the extra mile. Call it giving the baker's dozen or lagniappe, it is a simple formula for success in life, and it is very much the philosophy of Phi Beta Delta.

## ***27. Phi Beta Delta: For Whom?***

Phi Beta Delta of course started for colleges and universities, for scholars, young and old, on campuses. But there is a trend in honor societies to initiate people who are not students or staff or faculty -- people "outside". Chemists are asked to join chemical honor societies, and so forth. Additionally, there have always of course been Greek professional societies whose membership is overwhelmingly made up of graduates and which are not campus based at all.

Well, outside is an awkward way to describe those who fit the ideas of an honor society but do not happen to have a university affiliation, but it does call attention to the many people who subscribe to the goals of Phi Beta Delta but are not on the enrolment ledgers of our institutions. Chapters can vastly enrich their membership by recognizing those in the community who are spreading the values of internationalization. Every chapter should have as members some of the honorary consuls of foreign countries in their cities.

The day will come when a chapter may be imbedded in a company. A large international bank, a consulting firm -- those are places where it is quite reasonable to think that a chapter

could be a great asset to our entire organization. One wonders who will be the first to propose this and where that first chapter will be?

## ***28. Phi Beta Delta: The Credentialed Society***

We have to face the fact that we live in an increasingly credentialed society. As the competition for good positions increases, people are more and more anxious to build a good resume. It would be nice to think that the tide will turn and there will be more judging people on their performance rather than a barrel of papers, but the need for "proof" is probably going to be more rather than less.

As an honor society, Phi Beta Delta along with other honor societies is a part of that credential experience, and so we have to constantly be working to maintain standards. For the medallion to be something, all of us in the society must be something. The value of Phi Beta Delta membership rests with all of us who are active now in the society, to add to the standing of the society by what we do.

The Wizard of Oz tells the Scarecrow, "Back where I come from, we have universities, seats of great learning -- where men go to become great thinkers, and when they come out, they think deep thoughts -- and with no more brains than you have -- but they have one thing you haven't got! A diploma!" You will recall that the Wizard then confers the degree of Th.D., Doctor of Thinkology, upon the Scarecrow. It doesn't help because when the Scarecrow tries to give a speech; he makes a perfect fool of himself.

Giving awards means a responsibility to give them to the worthy. That is a process that requires work and our chapters have a particular charge to vigorously look for the best. We are known on many campuses for having the best, and we want to have the best on all campuses.

## ***29. Phi Beta Delta: Verbal Learning and Ritual***

The invention of the printing press and the growth of public education were to an extent complementary. Of course, when the written word began to gain the ascendancy, oral skills were challenged. Troubadours are not common these days. So a fair question is whether the rituals of Greek societies are going to be impacted by computer technology -- is the computer now, like the printing press was, a challenge to existing norms?

The answer is almost surely yes, but it is not a challenge that we should fear. Some time ago, Phi Beta Delta was one of the first Greek societies to put its ritual on a website, with a Power Point program. There is a certain ironic twist to this, because it could be argued that such computer ritual helps will abet a return to verbal learning. There is another analogy, to the way in which email has actually restored the old art of letter and note writing that had so declined. People write more to their friends now, via the Internet, than they did via the post office.

Ritual is the stuff of which Greek honor societies like ours were originally made. Its diminishment would be a break with a long history. With ritual, the initiates are bound not only to the present membership and the membership through the years of Phi Beta Delta, but to the whole tradition of academic fraternalism. Undoubtedly our rituals will show that we are in a new age of computer technology (who could doubt that), but if the new technology is used with intelligence, it should enhance the impact of the ceremonies. We need to remind

ourselves that since the days of university life in Paris and Oxford, nearly eight hundred years ago, academia has always been changing: it is really not how fast we are moving, but where we are going that is important.

### ***30. Phi Beta Delta: Pigeons and Peacocks***

Phi Beta Delta chapters are all different. Some meet three times a year, some meet monthly. Some have formal dinners. Some send out for pizza. What all of our chapters need is to have plans and learn to make them realities. There is an oriental saying that a pigeon today is better than a peacock tomorrow.

Many things are desirable. It would be great if a chapter could endow a scholarship. But every chapter can sponsor a prize. It would be great if a chapter could have famous speakers. But every chapter can have interesting speakers. Just remember that there are lots of simple good meeting ideas that don't cost. If you can afford it, do have a spectacular meeting. There are all sorts of desirable things that a chapter might do or could do, but the question is whether a chapter does something.

In sum, a chapter does need plans and ambitions but needs realizable ones, ones that can take life. In planning and advancing your chapter, just remember that pigeons today may be worth more to you than peacocks tomorrow. Also, pigeons are easier to feed!

### ***31. Phi Beta Delta: In Fifty Years***

Undoubtedly our planet in some condition or other will be here in fifty years, but whether society as we would like it will be here is an entirely different question. Societies like Phi Beta Delta do not exist in a world of their own making, but they can help make a world. The aspiration for a better world is inherent in Phi Beta Delta's emblems and rituals: the torch which reminds us of hope and leadership, the sun burst around the globe -- all visual indications of our ideals.

Phi Beta Delta members are enablers. They are people who look for ways, small and large, to enhance the international ethos of their campuses, to promote cultural exchange, to constantly remind their friends and colleagues that a better world will only happen if we do something rather than talk. Torches require fuel. The Phi Beta Delta torch is lit by the activities of its chapters. It burns brightest when a chapter is active.

In fifty years will the world be a tired, torn place or will the new technology have been used for creating a world where nature and humankind are not at war with each other, where children regardless of their nation have a chance, where humanitarian values have overcome exploitation? It is fine to light a torch, but even better to keep it burning brightly.

### ***32. Phi Beta Delta: Sacrificing a Bull***

Supposedly after Pythagoras discovered his famous theorem, a cornerstone of Western logic and rational thinking, he then sacrificed a bull to Apollo. That perhaps illustrates that life is not ever entirely and totally based on logic, and that human motivation is not ever entirely based on cold reason. Even the most unemotional are touched by holidays, birthdays, or other rites -- life without such color and poetics is simply not full or fulfilled.

Phi Beta Delta is not a necessity like water or bread, but it singles out one of the most important of all contemporary interests, internationalism, and goes about adding its colorful contribution to the campus and community. We are, when all is said and done, a recognition society. We want to recognize those who believe as we do that it is one world and that education is best when it is diverse, pluralistic, and resolutely international.

Knowing what we admittedly little we do know about Pythagoras, it seems open to question whether he really believed in Apollo other than as a sort of conceit for certain values. However, it is somehow reassuring that with all his genius, he took time out to perform a ritual and recognize a community value. We can live without our medallions and our ribbons, but like Pythagoras, we Greek honor members also know -- as Pythagoras did -- that being cerebral is only half the story, and being utilitarian is not the whole purpose of life. Occasionally in even the most balanced life, there is a need for the romance of ritual.

### ***33. Phi Beta Delta: When?***

If not now, when? Ask yourself if there is ever going to be a better moment to really grow your chapter. We all have vague ideas about learning another language, visiting a particular museum, and so on. These laudable but unrealized hopes are generally tombstones along life's road. So it is not just the chapter, but so many things that we have to ask whether there is ever going to be a better time.

The chapter depends on its members. Nobody else. If you aren't going to do something to make it a success, it is unlikely that someday, someday, somehow, somebody will get done. The decisions about how good a chapter to have is with you. And since Phi Beta Delta can bring so very much to your campus and to its students, not to go ahead is to neglect a most important resource.

Those who have had the joy of a really active chapter will tell you how much fun it can be, and how much good ensues. It is just about the most exciting activity you can imagine if it is done well. So stop for a moment right now and reflect -- if not now, when? When will your chapter be what is surely is capable of being, and what are you going to do about it.

### ***34. Phi Beta Delta: Red of the Incas***

We think Phi Beta Delta has unusually beautiful colors, red and golden yellow. Red to us in the society is fire, the feelings of the heart, the blood that flows through all humankind. In the Inca Empire, there was an exceptional system of rapid communication, when from post to post runners would relay messages that used the Inca system of knots on cords, called quipus. Every knot and color meant something different. The red represented the Inca Emperor himself, along with life and power. A cord tied with the right red knots at the top would mean a great battle.

The Incas used several shades of red. Some came from the brazil tree, others from the annatto plant, and then there was the extremely special red ruby shade from the cochineal, an insect. Red is a magnificent color and when we see it in the sunrise and the sunset, we are minded of its universality -- it literally orbits our earth.

These days Phi Beta Delta members use the Internet rather than cords, and our bright reds come from paint boxes rather than beetles. But the red color adopted by our society carries

just as important a message as that of those Inca runners, of the universality of scholarship and learning, and of the significance of the commonality we all share as citizens of one world.

### ***35. Phi Beta Delta: Gold of the Sun***

In imperial China, the Emperor was the only one allowed to wear gold-colored vestments. In India, often Krishna, the lively version of Vishnu, wears golden-yellow robes. And in Chaucer, the redoubtable Sir Thopas had a beard "lyk saffron". Saffron was an alternative to gold leaf much used by medieval artists. It generally is the most expensive spice in the market, so its color is appropriate.

The gold we have adopted as one of our society's two colors nicely compliments and complements our red. It is of course the color of the sun, which we remind initiates about. The sun touches all of us and all of us depend upon it. It is a symbol of our universality. The color is also a symbol of value, of worth. And thus it teaches us that membership in Phi Beta Delta is valuable. Perhaps of all the colors of the rainbow, Phi Beta Delta has adopted the two that are most symbolic.

Picasso wisely wrote that "There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who, thanks to their art and their intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun." In Phi Beta Delta, we seek by the work of our chapters to transform drab and simple yellow into gold. As members of the society, we work as modern alchemists, making occasions much more significant by our touch of ritual and giving to students and faculty the gold of encouragement and thanks.

### ***36. Phi Beta Delta: The No-Drip Popsicle***

Sometime we live with something for many years and then, one day, we turn our attention to the problem and we solve it. Such is the case with popsicles. We all have watched kids dripping popsicles all over their clothes. Some of us have done it to ourselves, or passed up a popsicle because of the threat to our attire. Ugh!

A few years ago a family named Klehn in the Germany town of Buxtehude, near Hamburg, were thinking about this. They sold lots of popsicles from their family factory but the Klehns are a fastidious family and they were dismayed by the dripping. It turned out that the answer was simple. There is a food product called wine gum, a mix of sugar and jelly, which becomes iron hard when it is cold. The Klehns experimented with putting wine jelly in their popsicle mix and in just two weeks time they had the no-drip popsicle. A Klehn popsicle bends, but it never drips.

Well, if your Phi Beta Delta chapter is in the doldrums, consider the no-drip popsicle. Think about having more frequent initiations, about sponsoring a zoo animal, about establishing a flag rental service -- it may take longer than two weeks, but we would wager you would find an answer and start enjoying chapter life again. Phi Beta Delta is a lot of fun if you make it so! Just remember all those years of dripping popsicles and then along came the Klehns, and their popsicles just don't drip.

### ***37. Phi Beta Delta: Collages***

Collaging is one of those once fashionable hobbies, which has faded into the past, rather like cribbage or canasta. It still has its devotees, but they are limited and number. Once it was

fantastically popular and people would spend their evenings around the fire cutting images out of magazines and old calendars and pasting them on to screens or even on walls. Occasionally an auction house will offer a screen from the nineteenth century and it will fetch a merry price, because with its mosaic of steamer tickets and old menus it brings back another era as perhaps nothing else can.

Collages are assemblages of small things from here and there which when brought together make an impact. Alone, the tulips from a seed catalog cover, the cow from off a milk bottle, the Highlander from an old diary frontispiece, and the bird from a seed packet are not much to attract our gaze. But the collager brings them together and they become something far more important than what they were in their solitude.

Phi Beta Delta is a collage. Many chapters, many projects, many individuals. Each alone might not be significant, but together as our worldwide society, we take on a real significance and are a real presence on campuses from Geneva to Cholula and from Syracuse to New Orleans. We are indeed a collage, a human collage of all kinds of different people who share a commitment to internationalism in its finest sense. The collages of the Victorians may no longer be in fashion, but our collage, Phi Beta Delta, most certainly is.

### ***38. Phi Beta Delta: Conversing with Imagination***

Our society is an exercise in imagination. Our imaginations are sparked, or certainly should be, by the internationalism, which is so central to Phi Beta Delta. Probably nothing incites daydreams as instantly as a poster of the opera house in Sydney or of the Eiffel Tower. All of us are romantics when it comes to travel and fee of us, especially members of Phi Beta Delta, are not intrigued by the prospect of a trip to some far off place.

Imagination is a conversation with ideas, and a life without imagination is not a life well lived. Goethe went so far as to say that a great scientist could not exist without imagination. Pascal said that it was imagination that creates beauty, and happiness. We hope that process is part of your chapter.

In developing your chapter, are you letting your imagination work? Are you bogged down in tired meetings or do you have some exciting projects in prospect? When people on campus think about Phi Beta Delta, do they reach with a yawn? Fortunately our honor society is about something that brings us into conversation with the exotic, the intriguing, the amazing. But only if we have the energy to take advantage of that chance.

### ***39. Phi Beta Delta: Knowledge***

Lord Beaconsfield remarked that to be truly conscious that you are ignorant was a great first step to knowledge. When we step forward and we are initiated into Phi Beta Delta, this is certainly not some sort of graduation from life. Nor is it some sort of certification that we know a lot about the world. Far from it. What it is assuredly is a sign that we are anxious to know more about the world.

To talk about all the cultures and nations, to think why some have risen and some have declined, to speak of the architecture and art of such a vast and varied globe... Well, that is surely what education at its best is about and that is really what Phi Beta Delta at its best is about.

All the knowledge though that we seek is only partial if we keep it to ourselves. It is making that knowledge available to others that really makes it our own, and enables us to go through life feeling we have worth. That first step when we are initiated into Phi Beta Delta is then the start of learning, and the start of sharing.

#### ***40. Phi Beta Delta: Of Chapters and Columns***

The word "chapter" is very ancient. In Latin it had among other meanings, the top or head of a column. In the Middle Ages the word begins to be used for the meetings of the canons or governors of a cathedral -- and one wonders if there is some sort of transfer of meaning from the architecture of cathedrals to the meetings of the canons -- something such as "meeting by the headed columns" morphing over the centuries to mean meetings of the chapter. On the other hand, some scholars think that since the canons would read aloud, the transfer of the meaning of chapter to divisions of a book had already occurred and was then given to the meetings in the cathedral. So it is a rather mysterious word when it comes to tracing its antecedents.

In any event, in 1305 we find St. Edmund writing about a chapter meeting of the cathedral at Salisbury. By 1681, the word had enlarged in meaning and was being used for meetings of orders -- the 1681 reference is to a session or chapter of the Order of the Garter. In the eighteenth century, Thomas Dunkerville, the illegitimate son of King George III, was designating groups of Royal Arch Masons as chapters, not lodges. This usage has continued: the Royal Arch degrees are to this day organized by chapters.

In the early nineteenth century, the word became popular with the founders of the various Greek societies. And so we in Phi Beta Delta, heirs to the Greek tradition, meet in chapters and not in clubs. It is perhaps a little difference, but one worth remembering and one that our members should know about.

#### ***41. Phi Beta Delta: Latitude and Longitude***

Our Phi Beta Delta shield shows the Earth with its lines of latitude and longitude. Any location on Earth can be located by longitude and latitude, including the location of our Phi Beta Delta chapters. Each chapter has its own latitude and its own longitude. If a ship's captain wants to know where he or she are on a map, these are the "coordinates" they need to know.

What that value is depends of course on where we begin -- on where zero longitude is. For centuries the line passing through the old Royal Astronomical Observatory in Greenwich, England, has been the one chosen as zero longitude. Located at the eastern edge of London, the British royal observatory is now a museum. A brass band strip passing through its yard marks the "prime meridian." Quite naturally, many people get photographed as they straddle it -- one foot in the Earth's Eastern Hemisphere, and the other in the Western hemisphere.

Your chapter may not need to fix its latitude and longitude in a literal sense, but it certainly needs a plan and program and to know where it is and where it is going. If you don't know where your chapter is going, it is unlikely to get there. All of us need to know, in a metaphorical sense, our coordinates.

## ***42. Phi Beta Delta: We are Deltas***

Of course delta is the fourth letter of the Greek alphabet: But it is also the word we use to describe the network created by a mighty river. What a sight is the mouth of the Nile -- that historic delta of rich soil carried down stream for eons, fertile beyond belief and coveted by farmers for the bountiful crops which can be raised. Egypt in old times was called simply Delta.

Phi Beta Delta can be compared to a river and its delta. We roll along as an organization, gathering more and more strength, and when the river of our chapters' activity flows into the sea one can see all the grand results of this work. The alluvial product of a society like ours can well be compared to a delta.

There are delta brain waves, still little explained deep waves that underlie other brain activity. And there is a peculiar metal, delta, which is composed of copper, zinc, and iron. So delta has a number of meanings, but one more than others -- and so, since it is our last name, we might think now and again about the great Nile and its rich delta.

## ***43. Phi Beta Delta: Of Volunteerism***

The Indian philosopher Tagore remarked that civilization would be judged by its institutions. Indeed. When we ask about a culture, we want to know what kind of societies it boosts about. Does it have universities and libraries? What kind of social organizations does it have? Are there associations for environment or historic preservation? In short, we want a temperature reading about the state of its volunteerism.

Now, some will argue that by belonging to associations we sacrifice our individuality. That is really not so. Our memberships are an expression of our individualism. For example, we belong to Phi Beta Delta partly because it expresses our conviction that internationalism is fundamental to education. We could hold that belief in solitary, but by belonging we give real, practical witness to it.

Volunteerism is indispensable to a free society. Phi Beta Delta is part of a vast network of voluntary associations that are part of democracy and a helpmate of a healthy culture. Our chapters take their place alongside other groups working for all kinds of causes -- open space, disaster relief, alleviation of poverty. We are part of that vast voluntary network that is so important to the health of the countries in which we have chapters.

## ***44. Phi Beta Delta: Our Worlds***

Phi Beta Delta lives in three worlds -- past, present, and future. Our past is both long and short. As a Greek honor society we go back to the eighteenth century, and indeed even further back because Phi Beta Kappa was itself a shoot off the tree of fraternal societies that had their origins in the Middle Ages. Our separate identity as a movement dates back to the nineteen eighties.

Our present world includes chapters in several countries and our headquarters in Washington, with a variety of new activities developed because of that extremely strategic location. But we are not in just one place -- every day somewhere there is a Phi Beta Delta gathering.

Our future world depends on each one of us. Where do we propose to take Phi Beta Delta in the years ahead? We all feel that it has too few chapters for such a big field as internationalism, and that we should grow in size. That would give us resources so in the future we could do more good in the way of scholarships and fellowships, and be of more use to our colleges and universities. The future world of Phi Beta Delta is what we make of it.

#### ***45. Phi Beta Delta: Books***

An open book is on the shelf of Phi Beta Delta. Even the smallest chapter budget can afford the presentation of an occasional book to the library, and of course books make wonderful commemorative gifts to recognize a student or faculty member's accomplishments. As an honor society, we have a strong interest in supporting libraries and certainly every chapter should make itself known to the library staff of its institution and seek ways to support the library.

A nice chapter evening could be had by asking everyone to bring and read a little from their favorite book. Someone has said that the good life is one where the day is spent in the garden and the night in one's library. Well, without belaboring the similarity between a garden's flowers and a library's books, it is true that as members of Phi Beta Delta we have a special reason for appreciating books and libraries because they transcend national boundaries -- Russians and French and Mexicans and North Americans happily coexist on the shelves together.

In books we can visit all those places we hope to visit in the flesh, talk with all those famous foreign personages we wish we could have met, and become more international in our intelligence. In Phi Beta Delta we ask that our members have a background of foreign experience -- if they live in Mexico, then to travel perhaps to the United States, if they live in Switzerland, perhaps to travel to Italy. In any event, we should also travel intellectually, and we are lucky that most of us live near a library, which can take us abroad even quicker than on an airplane.

#### ***46. Phi Beta Delta: Visiting Chapters***

Many of us are guilty of visiting other campuses but not taking the time to look up the local chapter of Phi Beta Delta. Our society is known for its hospitality and there is no better way to meet people than to send an email before you visit and make arrangements for coffee or a meal. One of the ideas behind our fraternity is to promote interchange, and that networking depends to an extent on effectively using our website and email, and on taking a few minutes to put a local chapter visit into your itinerary.

Now, that is a two way street. Some chapters have to give attention to their listings on their college or university website, in the campus directory, and in the relevant departments. Too often the names of last year's officers linger like a holiday wreath still on the door in February. Be sure all your listings are regularly updated.

When all is said and done, one of the great advantages to Phi Beta Delta membership is the wealth of contacts that it provides. When our turn comes to welcome a fellow member from another chapter, remember that their impression of your university is going to be at least partly and perhaps wholly based on your kindness and enthusiasm. Be sure they experience from you the fraternalism of our fraternity!

## ***47. Phi Beta Delta: Plures***

The letter P was considered among the most elegant by medieval illustrators. The famous Lindisfarne Gospel written about AD 695 has an outstanding page where the word plures, meaning "many people" appears with the P fashioned out of a dragon and a seagull. The letter itself is one of the oldest in our alphabet, and appears in Phoenician about 1000 BC. The Greek language adopted Phoenician letters, including P, about 800 BC, and then P continued on its journey, finding its way into Latin. The standard for the later development of P is the capital P in the Trajan Inscription of AD 113. This Roman inscription provided the model for subsequent Ps. printes (naturally) are still partial to it as a letter, feeling it has great style in its shape and design.

As an abbreviation P stands for phosphorus in chemistry and for softly in music. We all know the phrase "mind your p's and q's". The humorist James Thurber wrote, "The letter P, that broad, provocative expanse between O and Q, is one of the most ambivalent of all the twenty-six, for in it one finds pleasure and pain, peace and pandemonium, prosperity and poverty, power and pusillanimity..." He might have added that it is fortuitously the first letter in our first name as Phi Beta Delta, and we sincerely hope that we always do as members mind our Ps.

## ***48. Phi Beta Delta: Our Middle Initial***

One doesn't know if John Paul Jones was JPJ to his shipmates, but of course PBD also has a middle initial. The letter B has been around for at least four thousand years. It shows up in excavations at Wadsi el-Hol in Egypt that date from 1800 BC. It appears in Hebrew, where it is called bayt or bet or beth. There its name means house. The Greeks kept it in second place in their alphabet when they took it from the Phoenicians. But they changed its name and gave it a Greek feeling by calling it beta.

Since it is the second word in our name, it is not surprising that the Greeks eventually used beta as a noun to mean second. The scholar Eratosthenes of Cyrene, director of the library at Alexandria, was known for his vast knowledge of almost everything and was given the affectionate name Beta, because his broad expansive learning made him second in almost every field of knowledge after the leading scholar in the field.

These days, the beta version of any software is considered best, because the alpha version has all the bugs. Certainly B is a worthy initial and in PBD we might think about its long voyage through time until it ended up in our title. It is one of the rafters in our society's house.

## ***49. Phi Beta Delta: Our Last Name***

The sound of D, according to language mavens, is learned very early in infancy. Possibly it is the first letter sound that we acquire. Some people feel it started life as a fish and over centuries began to look as it looks now. The shape possibly suggests how the delta of a river looks, but linguists are unsure if that is a true explanation.

In any event, D is one of those letters that has been with us for a long, long time. There is a rock face at Serabit el-Khadem in Sinai, from about 1750 BC, and there is D, admittedly looking like a fish. It has been a good companion and if not a fish that could sacrifice physical hunger, has been a helpmate in satisfying intellectual hunger. Occasionally it has had some

excitement, as with Delta Force. There is a celebrated if risqué novel by Anais Nin, *Delta of Venus*. But in general D has been a solid citizen.

PBD has a proud history to its initials. The scribes enjoyed the P, the philosophers mused about B, and D is a good solid letter, just as we hope we are a good and solid society. A huzzah for our initials, a time capsule that takes us back to ancient Greece, and even further back, way back, to the very start of letters.

### ***50. Phi Beta Delta: Oldest of Them All?***

Sometimes when people are discussing honorary Greek societies such as Phi Beta Delta, you will hear them referring to them as "learned societies". Phi Beta Delta is a special kind of learned society, but it does belong to that broad class of academic and scholarly organizations that fall under the description of learned societies.

One debate when scholars get together is over which of these societies is the oldest. The American Historical Association was established in 1884, but the Modern Language Association began a year earlier in 1883. The American Philological Association trumps that as it was founded in 1869, and the American Oriental Society was organized in 1842. The arguments over which is the oldest are complicated by other societies that pre-existed the formal founding of many of the major present day ones and were merged into them.

However, there is no question but that Greek honor societies are far older still. They all can at least date their family tree from the establishment of the first chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, on December 5, 1776. Since the majority of the founders of that first chapter were freemasons, an even earlier origin can be claimed, although that is somewhat tenuous. In any event, Greek honor societies certainly have a history of more than two centuries. So Phi Beta Delta has an impressive genealogy.

### ***51. Phi Beta Delta: Saying Thank You***

Oh, it's a busy world and so often we mean to say thank you but don't. We take a lot for granted. People help and support international programs, they give time and effort, and we know that, but we don't say thank you. You can say *danke*, *merci*, *arigato* or *gracias*, you can write a letter and you can even give a hug. You should. We all should, more often.

But when you confer the medal of our society, you are going further and you are really letting the initiate know that they are on the right road, that they have their values about international education in the right place, and that you want to give them the recognition that they deserve. You validate the choices a student has made, and you recognize the contributions a more senior person has made.

All of us get additional steam from being thanked. All of us, if we are truthful have been hurt or sad because we were trying hard but nobody responded with appreciation. Phi Beta Delta is many things, but at its heart, and the center of its life, is the conferring of recognition.

When we give the medal, we are telling people that they count. We are telling them that the community knows that they count. And this is not simply window dressing. It is critical to a healthy institution: our universities and colleges sometimes forget to say thank you and we are all the poorer for it. Phi Beta Delta is the penultimate way to say thanks.

## ***52. Phi Beta Delta: Scientia Mutua Mundi***

The motto of our society is *Scientia Mutua Mundi*, the world's shared knowledge. When we consider the contributions made to our daily lives by diverse peoples, we can appreciate just how important this idea is. Take food as an example. Every week we eat foods whose origins are a United Nations of cuisine.

The great thing about this sharing is that it makes our lives the better for it. A few minutes thought produces many, many examples of important aspects of our life that we borrow from other cultures. Music is a great instance. Its composers can be German or French or Finnish or Hungarian, but its pleasures are universal.

This value to sharing is so self evident that it comes as a rude shock when we find that there is not universal agreement about its values. Surely, we think, the value of the world's shared knowledge is crystal clear. Unfortunately though, there at work forces that dispute the value of internationalism. As heretic and thing to flout, wrote one thinker, they drew a circle to shut us out. But, went the refrain, we drew a circle and took them in. So it is with Phi Beta Delta and its members everywhere -- to build a circle that takes people in.