

EQV Newsletter

This newsletter is intended to bring you up to date on events vital to EQV's future which have occurred since the last newsletter was sent out approximately one year ago, Conversations with the administration in April of 1964 had resulted in the following pledges, among others, for moving EQV: first, that the new location would be at the south end of campus; second, that the cost would be no more than "other fraternities pay" in room rents. (An earlier promise was that costs would be no more than what EQV specifically had previously paid in room rents.) In the fall of 1964 the administration offered Weeks House, located at the corner of High and Washington Streets, as a solution to the fraternity's housing problem. The Weeks House offer did not satisfy either of the above conditions. Nor was EQV's insistence that the above pledges be met in the least arbitrary.

With respect to the first pledge, it is essential to note that EQV is a local fraternity with no financial support from alumni. The fraternity has always depended upon eating club profits to meet unexpected allocations. The fraternity could not possibly survive were the eating club to undergo any sustained operation at a loss. The location of Weeks House on the northern fringe of the campus would have seriously jeopardized the financial success of the fraternity's eating club. EQV has always prided itself on the freedom which the fraternity allows its members and has not, in contrast to the practice of other fraternities, set up rules requiring brothers to eat at the house. This policy would have led to a particularly difficult situation since a substantial number of brothers study in the College plans, now located in the new Lawn Avenue Dormitories at the south end of campus. The eating club would have been further threatened given the closing of the John Wesley Club to undergraduates, and the ever-diminishing number of upperclassmen living in the Hewitt Dormitories and in North College.

As for the second pledge, traditionally the difference between the dormitory and fraternity room rents has covered the cost of fraternity dues. This has always been true at EQV. With the Weeks House offer, costs rose not just to what "other fraternities pay," but rather rose, in theory, to dorm rent costs, a full \$100 per brother over past EQV rent. Rent and maintenance were to amount to \$2500 per year more than at 300 High Street. Because two important pledges had been broken, and for a number of auxiliary reasons (e.g., the University was unwilling to undertake certain structural renovations EQV deemed to be essential), EQV formally rejected the Weeks House offer in February of 1965.

When the Weeks House offer was extended EQV was told that no property was available as a fraternity site at the south end of campus. There was vague talk of "redevelopment" in that area. In December of 1964 fire leveled the Delta Tau Delta House. The University proceeded to offer the Saraceno House to Delta Tau Delta in exchange for their old property adjacent to the Davison Art Center. The Saraceno House is located at the corner of High and Church Streets, precisely in that area which, according to the University, did not afford possible fraternity sites. EQV was of course dismayed at the sudden availability of property at the south end of campus.

EQV formally rejected the Weeks House offer on February 5, 1965, at a meeting of the Joint Committee on Fraternities. Present at the meeting were one representative from each of the faculty, the alumni council, and the administration; two from the Board of House Presidents; and five from the Board of Trustees; two EQV officers and EQV's faculty adviser attended the meeting; as guests. Portions of the Joint Committee's minutes follow: it was "resolved that the committee express to the Board of Trustees its acceptance and its sympathy and support for the criticisms of the Weeks House location, as expressed by EQV. The Committee further is in agreement that the needs of EQV are far better met by being south of their present location rather than north. It was suggested that the Trustee Committee recommend to their Buildings and Grounds Committee that a solution for no more than one year, in anticipation of satisfactory relocation, was preferable to the Weeks House. A temporary solution must include some provision for keeping the eating club together, although provisions for same do not necessarily have to be in the same location as the social and sleeping spaces.

Mr. Maynard reported that several suggestions had been offered at the dinner meeting which included the Saraceno House, but that nothing could be discussed actively until Delta Tau Delta had made its decision about relocation...

"In conclusion, Mr. Maynard hoped that before the next Trustee meeting in April (1965), several viable alternatives could be discussed with EQV.

In March of 1965 it appeared that EQV's housing problems would finally be settled. According to a letter dated March 22, 1965, from Dean Mark Barlow to Larry Duberstein, then President of EQV, "...this note to you is to convey to the brotherhood of EQV the decision of the college to adapt the Saraceno House (the present temporary Delta Tau Delta location) as a full fraternity house accommodating in the neighborhood of twenty to twenty-five students with eating club

as the future location of EQV. Such facilities will be available no later than September 1, 1966." In early June of 1965, Howard Matthews, Vice-president and Treasurer of the University, agreed verbally that EQV would have "plans on the wall" with which to rush in September of 1965. Working through Mr. Matthews, EQV submitted a petition to the June meeting of the Board of Trustees requesting that the University pay \$75,000 for the internal renovations of the Saraceno House, and that the cost of the addition to the House be paid for by EQV on an amortized basis. In August EQV learned the fate of its petition. According to Mr. Matthews, the Trustees had decided that it was "financially inadvisable" to renovate the Saraceno House. In short, EQV could have to enter rushing in September without knowing where it could find itself after the 1965-66 academic year -- EQV would have to enter rushing unable to offer freshmen any concrete plans for the future. A letter dated August 16, 1965, from Associate Dean John W. Schlieman explained that I know you feel that Dean Barlow's letter was a rather firm commitment on the part of the University and I am sorry about this misunderstanding, but I can only say that the letter was written at a time when the Saraceno house appeared to be a sure thing for EQV housing." EQV was rather disappointed that the University had extended any offer at all without first investigating its financial implications.

This year, EQV rushed without plans for the future from its temporary home, a block of rooms in the new Lawn Avenue Dormitories.

EQV pledged what we believe to be an excellent class of a junior and sophomore transfer student and fourteen freshmen. EQV is permitted to use certain recreation facilities in the new dorms for parties and meetings. EQV is currently eating at Alpha Celta Phi, an arrangement for which we are deeply indebted to that fraternity.

Last September 16, just prior to rushing, the brotherhood of EQV met with Dean Idzerda, Associate Dean Schlieman, and Vice-Presidents Hallowell and Matthews. At that time, three alternatives were extended to EQV. The first was to move into the Saraceno House as it stands. The University refused to permit any renovations whatsoever on the property. This meant, first, that there would be no eating club facility within the House, and second, given existing fire regulations, only five to ten brothers would be able to sleep in the House. No indication of this last fact was given when the offer was actually extended. The brotherhood of course assumed that we could live fifteen students in the House, as had Delta Tau Delta previously. Only subsequent questioning of the administration revealed that Delta Tau Delta's arrangement was permissible only because it was on an "emergency basis."

The second alternative was to move into the Delta Sigma House were it to become available. Delta Sigma has recently agreed to move into a renovated Weeks House in September of 1966, and thus the property will indeed become available. To be blunt, but candid, EQV's reasons for refusing to move into the property are no other than Delta Sigma's reasons for deciding to move out. We have taken the deans on a tour of the property, and believe them to be sympathetic with this position. Externally, the house is an eye-sore. The internal physical conditions are singularly intolerable; there is one bath tub and no showers, there is no heating on the third floor, the ceilings periodically turn brown, the basement periodically floods, and the electric power periodically fails in winter. In addition, fire laws permit a maximum of eighteen brothers to sleep in the house, whereas twenty-eight could live in the property at 300 High Street. The second alternative does not measure up to the specific requirement of comparable sleeping facilities. Finally, given the physical condition of the Delta Sigma House and its location adjacent to the new Lawn Avenue Dormitory complex, we cannot believe that anything but the house's demolition could be in the long-range interest of the University. Dean Barlow's letter of last March confirms this opinion, stating that "...the Delta Sigma House is not here for the long range future, and some more permanent situation will have to be found." EQV currently finds itself in a temporary arrangement; there is no reason to move from one temporary arrangement to another.

The third alternative was essentially for EQV to bide its time for a number of years until some break occurred in the overall fraternity housing picture. This is obviously no alternative at all. A physical plant is a precondition of a fraternity's (even EQV's) existence. A second year spent in the new dormitories could prove disastrous. EQV cannot entrust its future to the hoped-for benevolence of Dame Fortune. EQV needs a concrete solution to its housing problem, now.

In a letter written October 25, EQV rejected the three alternatives listed above, and did so for substantially the reasons outlined, although at greater length. The letter indicated that EQV actively continues to seek a solution along the lines enumerated by Gilbert H. Glee, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Wesleyan, in a letter dated February 4, 1965, to Philip Allen, then President of EQV: "The University is thus willing to redo the best available building that it has and build a wing to house 30 boys that will provide superior accommodations. It proposes to charge for these accommodations an amount that does not exceed what the boys would pay if they were to live in dormitories. As a matter of fact, this means that there will be a subsidy inasmuch as the funds spent will not provide an adequate return and could be put to work for the benefit of the college at much better rates in another investment."

In the letter of October 25, EQV proposed two solutions of its own for long-term housing. We indicated as a first preference the Ellis House at 101 High Street, which is ideally located at the south end of campus, and requested that cost estimates be made for a number of architect's plans for converting the house into a fraternity; The Ellis House currently serves as faculty apartments. Our second preference was listed as the John Wesley House, which is currently serving as a graduate facility. We requested that the various studies be completed in time to permit presentation to the board of Trustees on Saturday, December 4, 1965, and to the appropriate Committees of the Board the night before.

We pledge ourselves to stay in better touch with our alumni and that future newsletters will keep you posted on any important developments. If you have any questions or suggestions please write: Louis Loeb, President EQV, Wesleyan Station, Middletown, Connecticut 06457.