



Just How Many R's Are There in "Theta Chi Fraternity"

By El Ahlwardt (Gamma Rho/Florida State '73), Director of Development

I'm not sure of the origins of the saying, "Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic," but the saying is frequently called "The 3 R's." I knew that from somewhere in my past, but I discovered many other factoids and uses of the phrase when I typed "reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic" into a few popular web search engines.

For example, I found, "Reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic are crucial elements in the education of any child. A child's ability to later cope in the adult world, to have a career, to take charge of his financial affairs and to live independently depends to a large extent on his mastery of these skills." Another site said, "Plural Noun. Etymology: From the phrase reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic, alteration of reading, writing, and arithmetic."

I mention all of that because this issue of *The Rattle* could be subtitled "5 R's." I won't be presumptuous and say "The R's," or presume anything about the number "5," because anyone could come up with their own list of "The's" and they may number more or less than the ones I see. Nevertheless, I readily see at least five R's mentioned in the pages of this magazine, and I want to share a few thoughts about them. They are: **Recognition, Reconnecting, Ritual, Remembering, and Responsibility.** Let me explain, and we'll both reach the end of this issue of *The Rattle* with all of my commercials on the table.

As readers and donors have come to expect from every year's spring issue of *The Rattle*, we publish the names of those who supported the work of the Fraternity's public foundation during the previous calendar year, and an extra month or so of the current calendar year. Providing this **Recognition** is a privilege, as well as a **Responsibility** of the Foundation Chapter of Theta Chi Fraternity, Inc. We also hope that the greater amount of information about the Foundation that is front-loaded in this issue's 2004 Annual Report and Donor List, as well as the additional information you'll find about each chapter's overall giving for the year, will inspire some well-natured Fraternal pride and competition among alumni.

Several years ago, we introduced a feature in *The Rattle* called In The Life Of Theta Chi. Through it, we provide stories about how Theta Chi Fraternity, and its members, are connecting, and in more cases than not, **Reconnecting** with one another. The planned reunions and the spontaneous discoveries of Fraternal bonds are shared, and as you likely noticed a few pages earlier in this issue, the touching stories and incidents are being told in greater numbers.

A long-time friend and brother in Theta Chi, Joe Hrovat, shared some very poignant thoughts in this *Rattle* about his son, Alex, becoming a Theta Chi. Reading Joe's words about attending **Ritual** again and how that special event allowed Joe and his brothers and friends to **Reconnect** is the essence of our Fraternity's heartbeat. In recent issues, we've read similar thoughts from other alumni, and I know we will be inspired by more of them in the future. To that commendable purpose, I encourage all dads who aren't Theta Chi brothers, but who are reading their son's *Rattle* at home, to mention this possibility to their son whenever the moment seems right. Concurrently, I want to encourage my undergraduate brothers of Theta Chi to think about

inviting your dad to become your brother, and our brother.

As Theta Chi began its 150th year of existence at 9PM, on Sunday, April 10th...just a few weeks ago...the frequency and intensity of thoughts about next summer's 150th Convention and Anniversary at Norwich University are really picking up. We are so fortunate today to have the privilege of building upon the heritage that was established in prior years by some incredible men, and by the many family members who supported them. Remembering those people on an on-going basis at every level of Theta Chi is a **Responsibility** that all of us should embrace. Doing so will certainly be a significant and emotional part of next summer's Theta Chi experience in Vermont. Last Fall's *Rattle* Cover Story, written by Frank H. Schrenk, Jr., about his dad and our Creed was very well received by you. You may have identified a pattern here, as in this issue, Mary-Elizabeth Lasher Myers' recollections of her dad, George Starr Lasher, help us **Remember** that Theta Chi Fraternity is family.

Michael L. Smyser, a 1975 graduate of Valparaiso University and a member of Theta Chi via Delta Xi chapter, gave us permission, as do many of you, to use a quote that was provided to us with his contribution to the Foundation Chapter's Annual Campaign. I believe that his words very well reflect the fifth and final R, **Responsibility**: "We as alumni owe it to our future brothers and future leaders in supporting Theta Chi." I could not agree more with Brother Smyser, and I am very pleased to point out that we have alumni who give annually, and some have made planned gifts or told us they will so. Similarly, we have hundreds of undergraduates give annually through the Foundation Chapter's Undergraduate Giving Program.

I may be stretching a little to get to a summary paragraph or two, but please stick with me. I believe that somewhere along the line, Brother Smyser and so many others who support Theta Chi through (as Jim Moylan, President of the Board of Directors of the Foundation Chapter likes to say) "the giving of their time, talent, and treasure," had a **Ritual** experience that remains a good, either near or distant memory, and that memory is laden with meaning that gets better with time. For an ever-increasing number of us, there may be ongoing or a **Reconnection** with Theta Chi at some level. We alumni especially know that both **Ritual** and **Reconnection** are intertwined in **Remembering** Theta Chi, and that we like being **Remembered** and **Recognized** by our brothers and friends, our chapter, our National Fraternity, and by its public foundation. No matter the size, frequency, location where given, or character of the "gift," the folks who extend a Fraternal Helping Hand deserve **Recognition** for doing so, as well as sincere and timely words of thanks.

So, to those who are now give to Theta Chi, to those who will continue to do so, and to those who will begin to do so, I simply say "Thank You, Brothers. Your effort, giving, and Fraternal spirit are appreciated, respected, and admired."

The staff and Board of Directors of the Foundation Chapter are here to help, Brothers. We look forward to meeting you where you are, and communicating with you in the months ahead. ■