



Reflections From the Road: One Consultant's Career Retrospective

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If someone had told me that in six months I would have to duck three destructive hurricanes named Katrina, Rita and Wilma and later—in an unrelated incident—be forced to sell the remains of my car for \$10, I probably would never have believed it.

If you had told me I would eventually regard it as a *positive* experience I would have called you crazy. But that is exactly what happened. The irony of it all is that I enjoyed almost every moment.

When I look back on the whole ride—from the interview week-end all the way to the present—I can't help but be grateful for everything that has happened, the good along with the bad.

Before I hired on as a Leadership and Education Consultant (LEC) for Theta Chi Fraternity, I spoke with several former consultants and field representatives. Ubiquitous to each of those conversations was one little bit of advice: "You will truly never be able to explain your traveling experience to someone who hasn't done it."

Well, I can try. I can tell some pretty great stories, like the one about the two days after Hurricane Rita I spent at Theta Eta/Sam Houston State University with no power or lights in the chapter house. I can describe the excited, optimistic atmosphere of colonization ceremonies I attended at Beta Tau/University of Southern California and Alpha Iota/Indiana University.

I can also explain utter disappointment and frustration, felt while visiting two now-defunct chapters that wouldn't steer themselves away from pending destruction. I tried my hardest to make them understand

the mistakes they were making. I tried to make them understand the pain they were causing their dedicated alumni—one of whom was a Founding Father of his chapter who was forced to package up the charter that had his name on it. But it wasn't to be. The alcohol culture of that particular group was too deeply etched. Simply put, they valued booze more than brotherhood and ideals. I've visited chapters right before an incredibly successful recruitment effort and I've visited groups shortly after the untimely death of an undergraduate brother.

Along the way, I've been able to do and see some fantastic things with my free time. I've visited the Grand Canyon, Carlsbad Caverns, the world famous Pike's Place Fish Market in Seattle and the Kennedy Space Center near Cape Canaveral, Florida. I've seen Duke basketball, Auburn and Georgia Tech football and Anaheim Angels baseball. I've seen mountains, deserts, oceans, California redwood forests, Texas plains and Florida swamps. At 25 years old, I've seen more of this country (and Canada) than many people see in their lifetimes, much of it from behind the wheel of a 1994 Ford Tempo (may it rest in pieces). Experiences like mine can't be bought.

But even writing it all down doesn't do it justice. Admittedly, I've lied a time or two when random people have asked about what I do. Certainly I'm proud of what I've done, but sometimes I just don't have the energy to describe it. Describing it to another Theta Chi is hard enough, much less a non-Greek. I often find it refreshing to run into former LECs and Field Representatives in my travels. They have been there. They know. Though the times have changed somewhat, the adventurous nature of their stories echoes mine. We share a special brotherhood, a bond of common experience that only a tiny percentage of Theta Chi men ever have. From 1924 to the present, only 187 of us have traveled for Theta Chi in such a capacity. That is a pretty elite company of brothers, one of which I'm proud to be a member. I like to think of us as a fraternity within the Fraternity.

I am so proud to have served Theta Chi as an LEC and I am eternally grateful for having been given the opportunity. As I approach the end of my tenure with Theta Chi, my only hope is that I've given the Fraternity half what it has given me. It seems like I'm always saying that. Though my effect remains to be seen, there is one thing I do know: I am better for the many experiences. Yes, even those pesky hurricanes.

