



Alan M. Archibald cites public service as a hallmark of Greek life, past and present.

To see the look on their faces, it's worth it. It feels like you've really gotten to know someone and touch their lives."

And as with his predecessors, he has deep bonds with his fraternity brothers. Archibald didn't give it a second thought when he was called in the middle of the night two years ago by his brothers who needed a lift after a car accident four hours away in New Jersey.

"That's what brotherhood means to us. Joining was the best thing I've done in my entire life," he said. "I wouldn't change a thing. There is always someone to count on and that goes for all the Greek organizations."

A LASTING TRADITION

Such is the way of today's sororities as well. Stephanie L. Kennett, a sophomore from North Pittsfield, R.I., is in Sigma Sigma Sigma. Kennett doesn't have a biological sister but found a sisterhood on campus.

"I was a little uncomfortable at first with the stereotypes of what you see on TV, that you come to college and party all the time. But that's really not true



This chariot was raced during the Greek Olympics in April.

at all," she said. "Joining was the best choice I made. We do so much on this campus with community service."

She recalled the recent "teeter-totter-a-thon," where the sisters rode seesaws for an uninterrupted 40-hour stretch to raise money for hospitalized children.

"We had a blast," she said. "It's so much fun. I don't know where I am going to be in the future, but I want to come back and see what our chapter is doing."

The Greek organizations also sponsor a children's Halloween party for the community, among other charitable efforts.

Alicia M. Robinson, a sophomore from Spencer, MA, is one of Kennett's new sisters. She joined as a freshman as a way to be more involved on campus.

"It opens you up to meet other people from other organizations," she said. "I would not have met all the people I have if I didn't join."



Stephanie L. Kennett, left, and Alicia M. Robinson found close friendships through their sorority.

The friendly competitions—chariot races, pie-eating contests, volleyball—help bring new students into the Greek system.

"It's for a lifetime," Robinson said. "We're always going to be sisters. As an alumna, I'll always come back and stay in contact."

"My time at Fitchburg State College was four fabulous years," said Quinn. "I would love to do it all over again, but the only way I would is if I could do it with the same group of people, because it was the people I was with that made it so special."

THE NEASYLONS

Susan E. (Russell) Cogliano '76, a middle school science teacher from Canton and a member of the Neasygons, still knows where her inscribed paddle is more than 30 years after graduation. The inscription reads:

*"For my little sister,
there are memories of the times we've shared,
both bright and gloomy days.*

*Memories of your kindness, and your many thoughtful ways.
There are memories of the things we've done, each special little
chat when we would get together and talk of this and that.
We have sisterhood forever, and forever the brown and gold.
These are special memories that we'll always have to hold,
And as we recall these memories as we go along life's way, we'll
find they'll grow more precious still, with every passing day.
With love and sisterhood forever."*

As each year passes, she said, those handwritten words become more meaningful, the memories more treasured. Cogliano remembers pledging—having to wear the required brown and gold every day—meeting with other pledges at night to study the sorority's history and singing the sorority song over and over. All the rituals made them become a strong, cohesive and trusting group of sisters.



John A. Churcher became an unofficial historian for the Mohawks, taking care of artifacts like the jacket he showed off during a recent campus visit.

THE MOHAWKS

The Mohawks, also planning a reunion, share equal feelings of camaraderie. John A. Churcher of Leominster pledged as a junior in 1984. He also compiled a history of the Mohawks called "The Mohawk Club at Fitchburg State College."



Emmy-winner Melanie Perkins goes to the head of the class

Melanie Perkins '91, an Emmy-winning filmmaker, has fond memories of Fitchburg State and has maintained strong ties in recent years, whether keeping in touch with the professors who mentored her during her studies or returning to campus to give the commencement address last year.

This spring, Perkins added another layer to her relationship with Fitchburg State—guest instructor.

Perkins' road back to the classroom began in the aftermath of winning the Emmy for outstanding long-form investigative journalism in September 2008 for her documentary film, "Have You Seen Andy?" Perkins came to speak to the class of a former professor, George Bohrer. She enjoyed the experience, and was happy to accept the college's invitation to deliver the commencement address the following spring.

As she told the members of the class of 2009 last May, Perkins dropped out of school in her native Lawrence in eighth grade, only later being "loved back to life" by her aunt. She came to Fitchburg State and spent six years pursuing a double major in human services and communications media.

In an emotional and affecting speech, she told the students not to ignore the wisdom of clichés.

"Today, as you sit in your black robes in the hot sun, I want to tell you I've been where you are," she said. "We've taken the same classes, maybe even had some of the same professors. I can tell you the way I always learned best was through experience."

Common pearls of wisdom like "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," "Believe in yourself," and "You never know what the future holds," are trite sayings, but express truths Perkins came to realize as she endured a difficult childhood, her struggles at college, raising a daughter with Down Syndrome, and making her documentary feature.

"Have You Seen Andy?" recounts the disappearance in August 1976 of Perkins' childhood friend, Andy Puglisi.

"I decided to make a film about Andy," she told the crowd at commencement. "At first I was told I shouldn't, then that I couldn't. I wrote grant applications, and was rejected. But with the help and encouragement of so many amazing people—from Andy's family, to my family, to my editor and composer—we forged ahead."

The film was shown on HBO in June 2007. The following year, Perkins was onstage at Lincoln Center in New York, clutching an Emmy.



Melanie Perkins returned to campus in the spring, this time as an instructor.

"I know today that I couldn't have made that film if I didn't at first believe that I could," she told the graduates. "Try to remember, as Michael Jordan famously said, 'You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them.'"

Her story moved the crowd at commencement, and Perkins is still ready to share her wisdom with students. This spring she returned to campus at the invitation of John Chetro-Szivos, the Communications Media department chair, to teach an introductory course on film styles and genres.

Focusing on documentary films, Perkins screened several titles for her students, who are working on their own documentary projects as well as researching other alumni.

"The students are so impressive," Perkins said after her teaching stint

had begun. "They're so smart, fresh and eager."

She also sees something of the mettle that she used to get through college and to get her film produced.

"I had a strong work ethic, and that goes a long way," said Perkins, who is still working on financing her next film, which will address Down Syndrome.

"I am so proud of Melanie," Bohrer said, discussing Perkins' return. "I am happy to count her among my good friends as well as a former student. Her life story makes her accomplishments all the more impressive. Her current work on Down Syndrome children, and the choices parents make, shows her devotion to important social exploration. She is a great example to our current

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