

# FarmHouse Fraternity at Michigan State University

## A Pictorial History

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Mark E. Havitz, MI 77



Part Seven of Nine: Low Water and High Hopes --  
From 1970 to 1979



Sometimes at night  
I see their faces  
I feel the traces  
they've left on my soul.

Bob Seger

Travlin' Man (live)

*Live Bullet* (1976)

As the 70s dawned things were, at times, chaotic at the now 45,000 student university. A few years later, enrolment topped out at just over 48,000. Farm Lane bridge repairs, such as those at left, that would have been hardly noticed but by cattle, sheep and their herdsman a few decades back, literally brought the campus to a standstill.

[Source: 1978 *Red Cedar Log*]

Bicycles were everywhere, nothing new for MSU campus, there were just more of them! The fact that wide-bottom bells were in style didn't make matters any easier for cyclists. [Source: 1976 *Red Cedar Log*]



In comparison with the past several decades, hairstyles were longer and ties wider as the 1970s dawned. The Beatles shocked the world by breaking up and, much to many people's surprise, the Rolling Stones did not. The war in Vietnam raged, the civil rights movement remained high in profile, and women's liberation emerged as a new theme. Inflation was problematic for much of the decade and many traditional industries began downsizing after several solid decades of growth. Politically, socially, and academically, it was a volatile environment. Here are brief profiles of a few of the early 1970s men who lived those times.

Denny Arkens '70 (left) held several offices including that of President in 1972. After graduation he served in sales and management capacities with Cheesbrough Ponds, Inc. Denny passed away, of cancer, much too young in 1991. Karl Kincade '73 (right) was Arkens' eventual brother-in-law, marrying Denny's sister Linda after graduation. Karl has made his career in agricultural finance with PCA and Farm Credit Services in southwestern Michigan. [Source: 1972 and 1973 FarmHouse Composites]



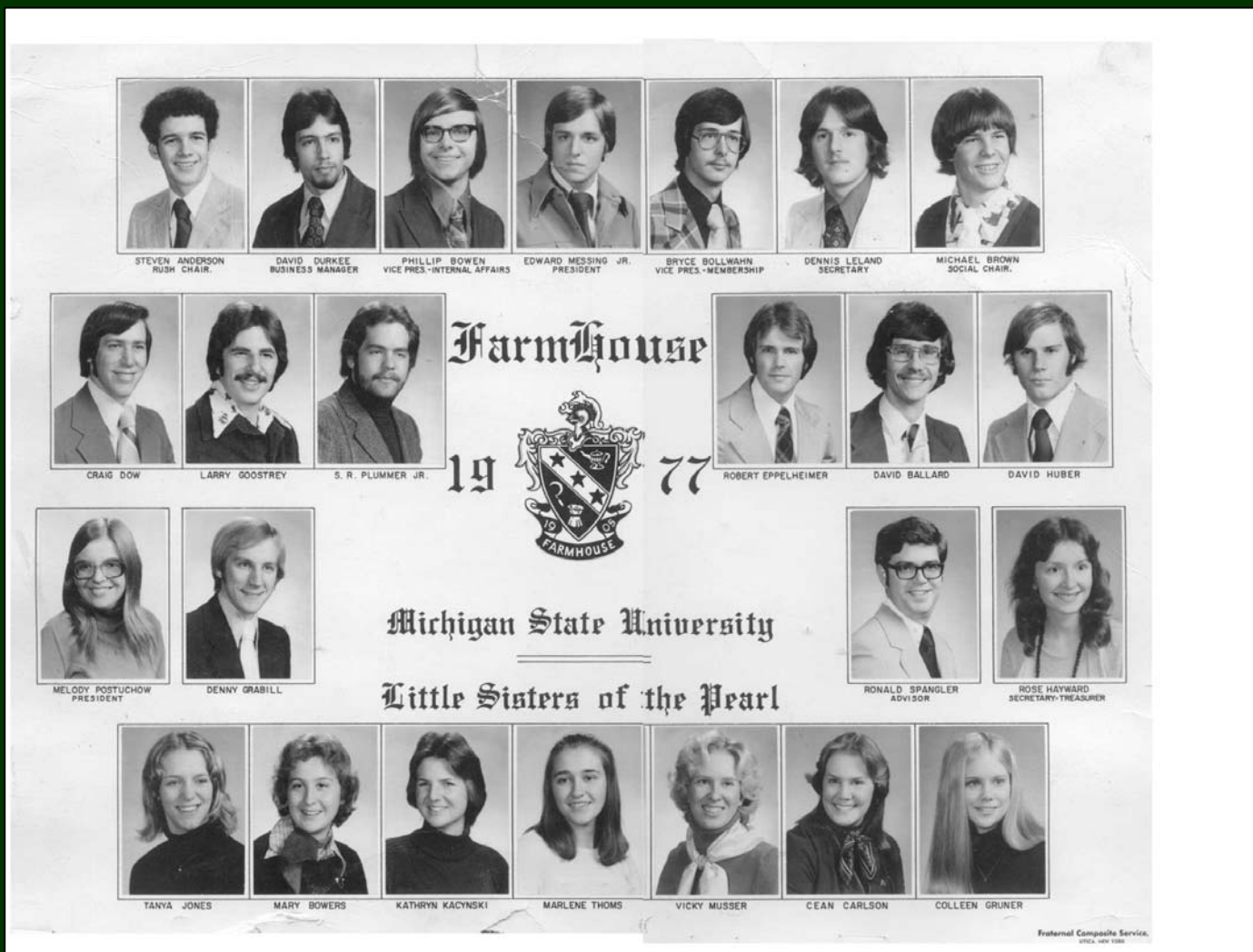
Brothers Dave '72 (left) and Phil Bowen '74 (right) arrived from the Thumb and were also prominent in FarmHouse activities, holding offices as diverse as Secretary and Vice President. A network software analyst in places as diverse as Texas and Minnesota since graduation, Dave also enjoys barber shop singing. Phil has served the Harbor Beach school system for over two decades in the capacity as both teacher and coach.



Joe Panci '73 (left), a forestry major, was President in 1975. He has spent most of his career in the Eagle River area of northern Wisconsin, working for Trees for Tomorrow Natural Resources Education Center. Jim Monroe '67 (right) enjoyed a long FarmHouse career spanning through 1972. Post-graduation he has worked as an agricultural management specialist with the Farmers' Home Administration and in Rural Economic and Community Development in the Traverse City area. An appropriate activity for their respective homes, both Joe and Jim enjoy cross country skiing.



Although the MSU student body was much larger than in the past, the Vietnam War and associated social changes of the late 60s and early 70s were hard on a lot of fraternities. Fraternity membership lost much of its social necessity. A good number of houses closed during this time. Others struggled mightily. MSU FarmHouse fell into the latter category. Our numbers dropped steadily, if not precipitously in the first half of the decade as illustrated by the 1976/1977 composite. Compounding that crisis, nearly half of the guys in this composite graduated in the spring. Pledges were few and far between. Thus, our low mark occurred in the fall of 1977 when only a dozen active members returned to campus.



FarmHouse as a whole and at MSU also struggled with the role of women. As you can see from the previous photo, the “Little Sisters of the Pearl” (LSP) organization, begun nationally in the 1960s, was seemingly gaining strength and influence. Though the LSP organization pre-dated such formal documentation, LSPs first appeared on MSU FarmHouse composites in 1972. A major problem, however, was that it was an auxiliary organization. Little brothers could soon become big brothers, but not so with little sisters. LSPs like Marcia Foss who joined in 1977 (posing below with the FH rug made by LSPs) gave their hearts and souls to the chapter, but never gained full membership. This was, after all, a fraternity. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



LSP presidents from 1972 to 1977 included (from left) Linda Bristol, Elisabeth Buchheister, Colleen Pamp, Linda Arkens, Kathy Kacynski, and Melody Postochow. These were the years during which LSPs were included in FarmHouse composites [Source 1972 - 1977 composites]



The actives and the board struggled with solutions to the chapter's membership problems. It was tempting to blame each other. Some did, but most didn't. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that FarmHouse was no longer financially viable at 151 Bogue Street. Much as we loved the house and the location, we were just too small to support the large facility and were barely viable as an organization. The Association Board made the tough decision to move the Chapter during the spring of 1977. We moved out that summer and in August the FarmHouse letters were removed from 151 Bogue with a hacksaw, the symbolism mirroring our collective pain. FarmHouse took up residence in three basement units of the Beechwood Apartments, 1130 Beech Street for the 1977-1978 school year. 151 Bogue St. was rented to recently re-colonized Alpha Tau Omega. It hurt seeing the ATΩ men (below) in our living room in the MSU yearbook photos. [Photo source: 1978 *Red Cedar Log*]



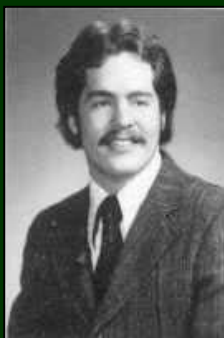
We struggled mightily with attrition throughout the decade. The fall 1977 pledge class (right) was typical. From the seven pledges pictured here in our Beechwood Apartment chapter room, only four “went active.”

Many students of that time questioned the relevancy of fraternities and their programs. Individualism was in. “Do your own thing, only sheep follow organizational rules” was a common refrain. Hazing was out. Unfortunately, we didn’t have enough positive ideas to replace the negative ones that had been discarded. We changed “pledges” to “affiliate members” and re-vamped our programs in an attempt to ride out the storm.

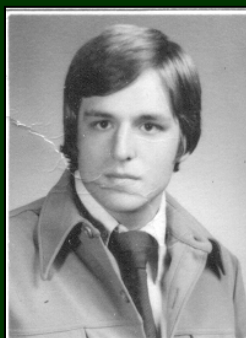
Fortunately, the guys who stayed were good ones, including Steve Skrobak (top row, second from right) and the three men kneeling in front (Joe Hickey, Al Bakker, and Roy Messing). [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



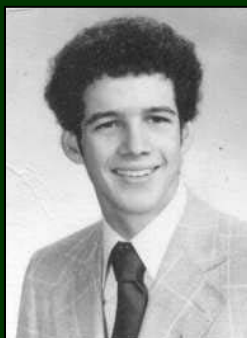
We also chose our leaders wisely. The collective will of the few active men and courageous leadership from a string of strong presidents helped us through. Here are five of them from the crisis years of the mid-1970s: Rusty Plummer '74 of Owosso; Ed Messing '74 from Harbor Beach; Steve Anderson '76 from Maumee, Ohio; Bryce Bollwahn '75 of Lansing; and Steve Dragt '77 from Byron Center [Source: 1976, 1977 and 1978 MSU FarmHouse composites].



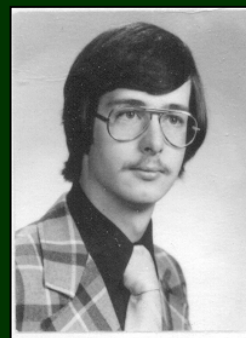
Plummer



Messing



Anderson



Bollwahn



Dragt

Rusty Plummer's diverse contributions to the Fraternity and University also included membership on the MSU Livestock and Horse Judging teams, the 1977 MSU Homecoming Court, and service on the Association Board.

After graduation, Ed Messing earned a law degree at Cooley Law School and currently serves as Friend of the Court for Sanilac County, MI.

After a short stint as President, Ohio native Steve Anderson transferred to Ohio State. He later earned his Ph.D. from Ohio State and now practices as a psychologist in Ohio.

Bryce Bollwahn deserves special note for taking over the presidency at perhaps our darkest hour in July of 1977. Bryce served for two years and guided us through two moves. He even postponed his graduation and wedding in order to complete his second term. Bryce's father Lester '50 and older brother Keith '74 preceded him in FarmHouse and we benefited greatly from his family's grounding in our organization. Bryce is an engineer.

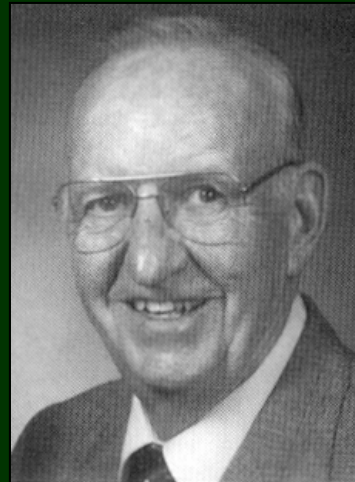
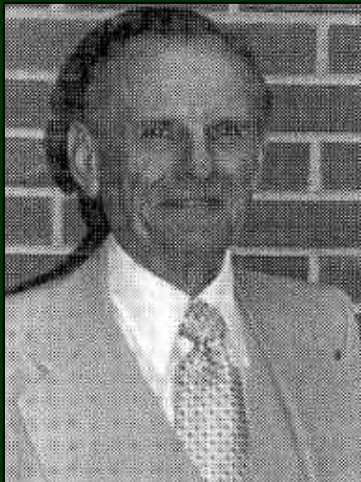
Besides being a strong leader Steve Dragt also, until very recently and the 2001 initiation of Davis Vader (though John Daly '92 may also have a case), held the distinction of "longest hair in a composite" of any MSU FH man! I guess Steve will have to settle for "longest hair of any 20th Century initiate!" More on Dragt later.





International Executive Director Bob Off CO, '64, pictured at top left with his wife Linda, was concerned and lent a sympathetic ear. Like D. Howard Doane had done with the MSC FarmHouse club back in the 1930s, however, he promised no easy solutions. [Photo source: *Pearls & Rubies*]

But in addition to his own consultation visits, Off sent some of the best FarmHouse staff to East Lansing. Visits from C. J. Gauger IA '37, (below right), and Dave Morford IA '73 (not pictured) helped us through that first critical term outside the house.



Another renowned FarmHouse stalwart, Dr. Hilton Briggs IA '33, (below left) also provided support and counsel during the late 1970s as did Assistant Executive Director Mike Goolsby OK '73 (below center). [Source: *Pearls & Rubies*, Mark Havitz personal collection]

Life in Beechwood Apartments seemed odd to those who had lived in 151 Bogue, but perhaps less so to the half of our membership that pledged in Winter and Spring terms of 1977 because we had never actually lived in our large House. For the latter group, the Apartments were all we had ever known of fraternity life!

Too small for cooperative purchase, our grocery bill was nevertheless, fairly lengthy. Here are Dick Waligore '77, Mark Havitz '77 and Ken Gross '77 showing off our haul after a bi-weekly trip to Meijers. One interesting incident occurred early that fall when Treasurer Gross and Assistant Business Manager Havitz, city boys both, bought some soy "milk" because it was on sale. Roundly chastised for the next few days by outraged brothers, especially the dairy farmers, that was a mistake that was not repeated! [Source: Mark Havitz personal collection]



The apartments provided a challenge with respect to fraternity living. We rented three units. After some discussion, we allocated one of the three apartments for the Chapter. The living room served as our dining and Chapter room and its two bedrooms served as our office space and study area. In the fall, we put six guys each into the other two apartments; two in each bedroom and two others in each living room. Unhappy with that arrangement, we opted during Winter and Spring terms to move all 12 beds into a single living room in order to create a dormer sleeping arrangement. Men's personal effects remained in the various bedrooms. Regardless of our sleeping arrangements, it always seemed crowded and cluttered. The pressure of adapting to the new environment, recruiting and maintaining the general functions of a fraternity were challenging to say the least. Luckily, we were young. Two last-term seniors, Larry Goostrey '76 and Rusty Plummer '74 provided stability in the fall of 1977, but the rest of us had at least two undergraduate years remaining. The Beechwood year, or Bumwood as we called it, was tough; arguably the low point of our Fraternity's 60-year history. In fact, so deep are the memories that many of my contemporaries gave me grief 20 years later for moving to Beechwood Street in Waterloo, Ontario, even though that address was 250 miles from the Beechwood Apartments in East Lansing!



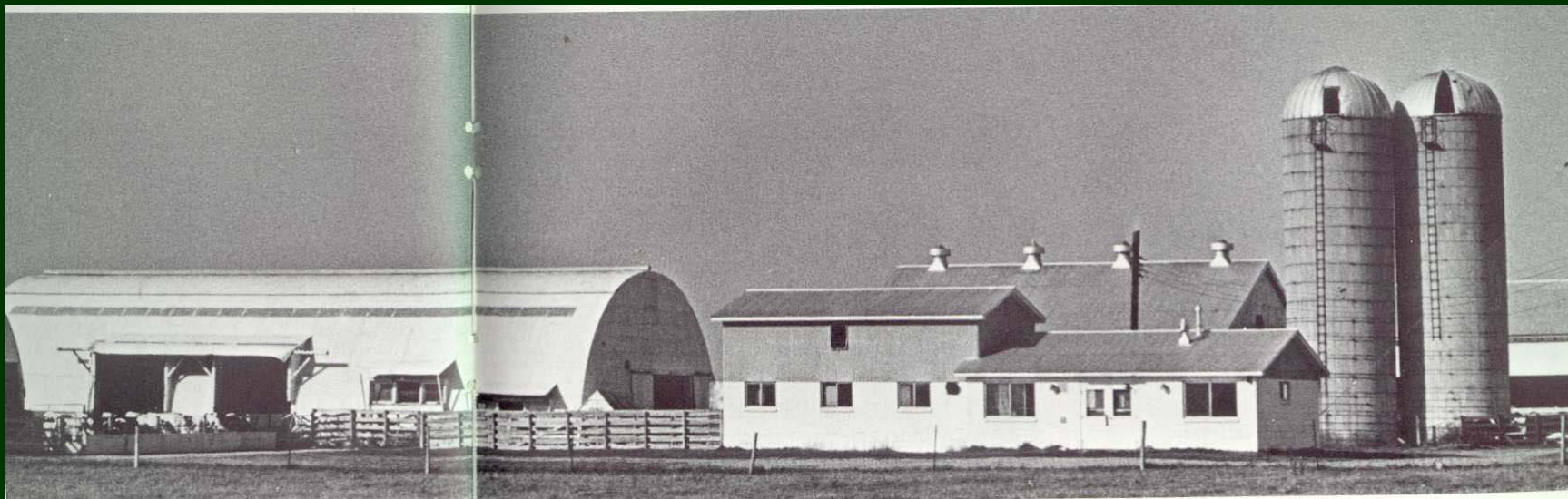
By the spring of 1978 things had improved a bit, but most members felt that the apartments were stifling our personal and organizational growth. The Chapter voted to move on and rent a small house at 435 M.A.C. Avenue (1978-1979). The house at 151 Bogue St. was still rented to Alpha Tau Omega. A couple more good pledge classes joined, and things were finally looking up for FarmHouse. The MAC quarters were small and dated, but the obvious aesthetic benefits of being on MAC Avenue helped raise our morale! [Sources: Personal collection of Dave Ballard; Spring 1979 *Spartan Scribe*]



Though small, we tried hard to maintain a campus presence. For example, several actives and LSPs were in the Dairy Club. Jeff Bricker '77 sported a FarmHouse cap (fourth from left in the second row), Marcia Foss is third from left in the third row. [Photo source: 1978 *Red Cedar Log*]



Speaking of dairy, the fall 1978 affiliates collected some really ripe material from the MSU Dairy barns (below) to pull off their pledge raid before departing to Purdue (or was it Kentucky?) for a pledge retreat. All I know is that the actives were left to clean up the mess which adorned our dining room table! [Source: 1976 *Red Cedar Log*]



Small numbers didn't help as we went three years without winning a single game in either intramural football or basketball. We were a bit better in softball, always winning at least one game per season, and we did ok in water polo and the Lambda Chi Alpha Jr. 500. Here's a photo (right) of the 1978 Jr. 500 featuring Roy Messing '77 (pushing the first leg on Circle Drive) and Dave Ballard '76 (driving). Bill Breslin '78 (not pictured) leapt 6'7" to win the Intramural Track and Field high jump competition in 1978. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



The inter-fraternity athletic highlight of the era, however, was definitely the fabled semi-final round tug-of-war with arch-rival Alpha Gamma Rho during the 1977 Greek Week competition. Nearly pulled over the line, FarmHouse roared back to drag the ATPs to defeat in the longest tug of the night! Pictured above left tugging their hearts out are (from right) Phil Bowen '74, Denny Leland '75, Perry Hickey '76, Dave Huber '77, and pledge Steve Cousins. Steve Dragt '77 (back to camera blocking the view of other FarmHouse team members) chanted out the cadence. The crowd went crazy and we so tired that it didn't really matter that we lost a close match in the final, I believe to Theta Chi. In some ways, that ATP tug was symbolic of the whole organization. We bent, but we didn't break. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

Traditions helped us through the tough times. Recent alum Craig Dow '76 (right), who wisely wore his work clothes when visiting the House, was defiantly lead to a bath in the horticulture pool following his 1978 engagement. Doing the honors are (from left) Joe Hickey '77, Bryce Bollwahn '75 (face partially obscured), Gary Powell '77 (face partially obscured), Perry Hickey '76 (arms around Dow's waist) and Larry Goostrey '76. Dow survived the ritual dunking and later made a career in Ag Education and sales. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



90
91

**A FarmHouse Girl**  
Moderately Slow Ternum  
G D7

A FarmHouse Girl... is like a gold-en mel-o-dy—  
A gold-en mel-o-dy— in hea-ven-ly  
har-mo-ny— A FarmHouse Girl... will al-ways  
keep your heart a-glow— For some-how you will know  
she loves you so

**We're from FarmHouse**  
(Tune: Cassion Song)  
Daryl Stamm, MIC63

We build men, we tell yarns,  
We clean out the farmer's barns,  
We're from FarmHouse at old MSU\*.  
We are tough, we are free,  
And let this our custom be:  
Wipe your feet before coming inside.  
Well it's Hi Hi Hee  
To the farming gent-ferry.  
All we can raise now is our hats.  
When the cows went dry,  
We kissed the farm goodbye  
And we headed for old MSU\*.  
Miss the barn, miss the hens,  
We miss the barnyard pens;  
We're from FarmHouse at old MSU\*.  
Well it's sling, sling, sling—  
Hear those pitchforks ring—  
We love this pure and sweet, clean air.  
For we are FarmHouse men,  
We live in country glens  
And our Frat house at old MSU\*.  
\*Substitute your own school initials.



We won no Greek Sing competitions (in fact we never entered during this era), but to our credit, we still sang a lot. Here (at left) are two classics, “A FarmHouse Girl” and “We’re From FarmHouse” also known as “We Build Men!” Words to the immortal “We’re from FarmHouse” (sung to the tune of the Army’s Cassion Song) were written by our own Daryl Stamm '63 (insert). His tongue-in-cheek hats-off to his Fraternity remains popular among many FarmHouse Chapters. [Source: FarmHouse Songbook, 1966 MSU FarmHouse composite]



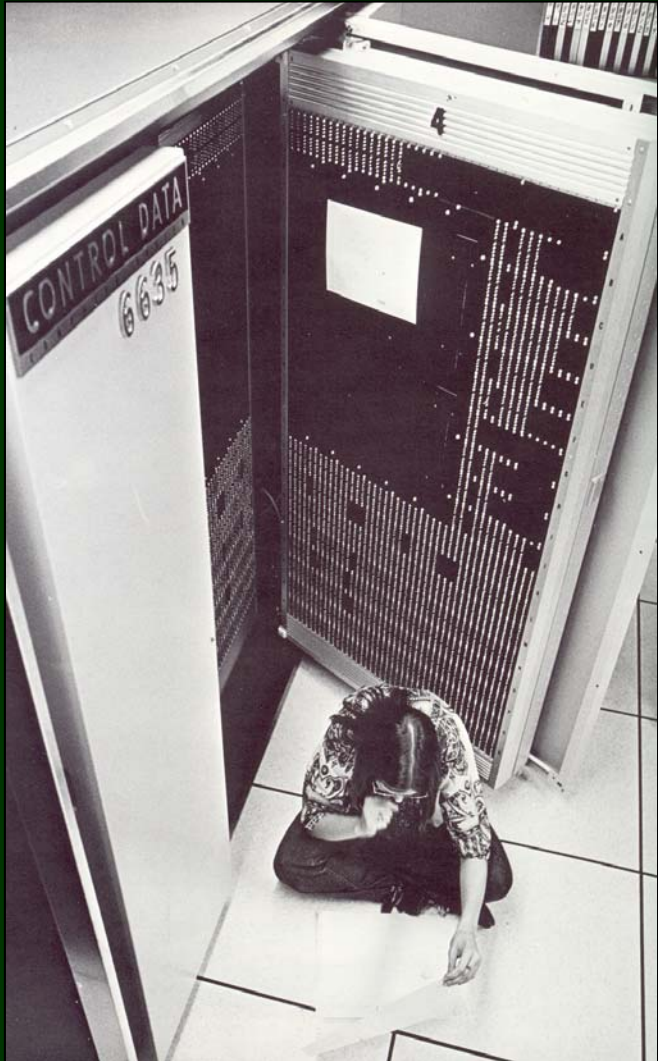
“FarmHouse Girl” was a favorite at weddings like Ed ‘74 and Robin Messing’s nuptials in 1978 (upper left) wherein, after the East Lansing ceremony, a large crowd drove up to Harbor Beach for the reception.

Just one week previous, another large group gathered near Eaton Rapids for Dave ‘75 and Joanna Ballard’s wedding reception (lower left). From left, Al Bakker ‘77, Larry Goostrey ‘76, Ron Ballard ‘72, Roy Messing ‘77, Ken Brodbeck ‘78, Mike Brown ‘76, Dave Huber ‘76, Gary Powell ‘77, Don Miles ‘72, Darryl Barwick ‘72, Phil Bowen ‘74, Paul Weller ‘73 and Ed Messing ‘74 among others partially or fully obscured were part of the chorus honoring Jo.

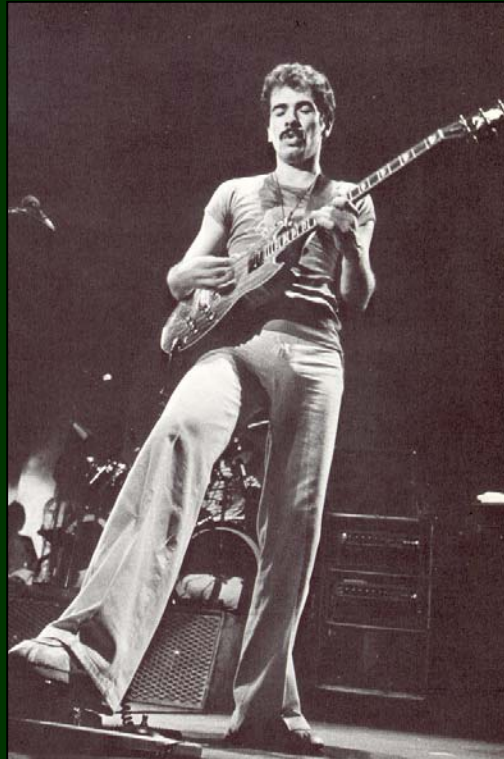
Crowds are smaller when a member gets married long after graduation, but the singers were no less sincere for my FarmHouse girl in 1996! From left, Steve Dragt ‘77, Joe Hickey ‘77, Sue and Mark Havitz, Roy Messing ‘77. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection; Dave Ballard personal photo collection]



On campus, even people other than engineers now had to deal with the mainframe computer (below left). This monster was state-of-the-art at the time as PCs were still not on the horizon for the consumer market. Students in computer programming classes still fed our data in via computer cards and waited hours for most of our output, dreading the all-too-common error messages whereupon we would repeat the same process. [Source: 1976 *Red Cedar Log*]



Music tastes continued to evolve and popular culture profoundly influenced the House, though I'm proud to say that, to a man, we strongly resisted all things disco during the 1970s! Already a guitar virtuoso, Santana (below center) hit campus in 1977. By all accounts, he is still going strong. [Source: 1977 *Red Cedar Log*] Country rockers Marshall Tucker (below right) provided more traditional FarmHouse fare. [Source: 1977 *Red Cedar Log*]





Several members including Steve Dragt '77 and Dan First '79 (right) parodied long-time House favorites, the Beach Boys, at our January 1980 "Bleach Boys" rush event. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



With respect to contemporary music, Boston, Queen, Neil Diamond, Jimmy Buffett, Frank Zappa, Blue Oyster Cult and Willie Nelson were also popular in some quarters, but rocking Robert Seger (above) and his Silver Bullet Band were clearly the FarmHouse favorites! Finally, an export from Ann Arbor that we could fully appreciate! Modifying Bob's lyrics a bit, we all agreed that, "You better watch out for the Po-Lice . . . when you're drivin' into Lake O!" [Source:1976 *Red Cedar Log*]

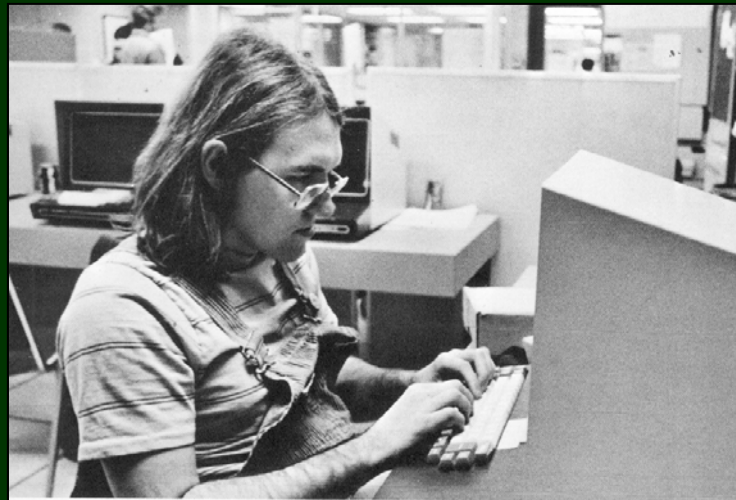
Dan First '79 (below right) made a 1970s fashion statement and paid tribute to Saturday Night Live's "wild and crazy guys" Steve Martin and Dan Ackroyd at the 1979 Halloween party. And though the men of fictional fraternity Delta Tau Chi bore little resemblance to most Farmhouse men past or present, as a group we could recite every line from the now classic movie "Animal House."



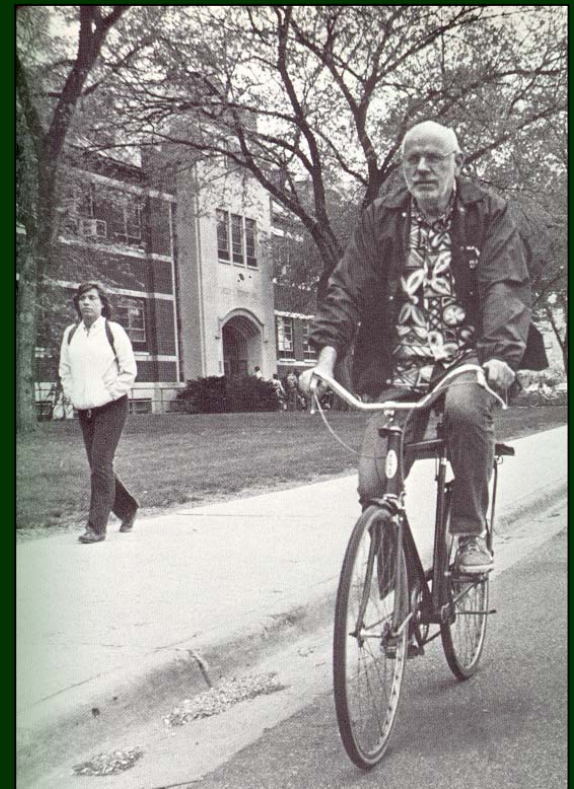


At left: Perry Hickey '76 and Dick Waligore '77, in the green canoe second from right, created a mean wake during a 1978 Greek Week competition in which canoeists raced from Farm Lane to Bogue Street and back. They didn't win, but neither did they sink! [Source: Mark Havitz personal collection]

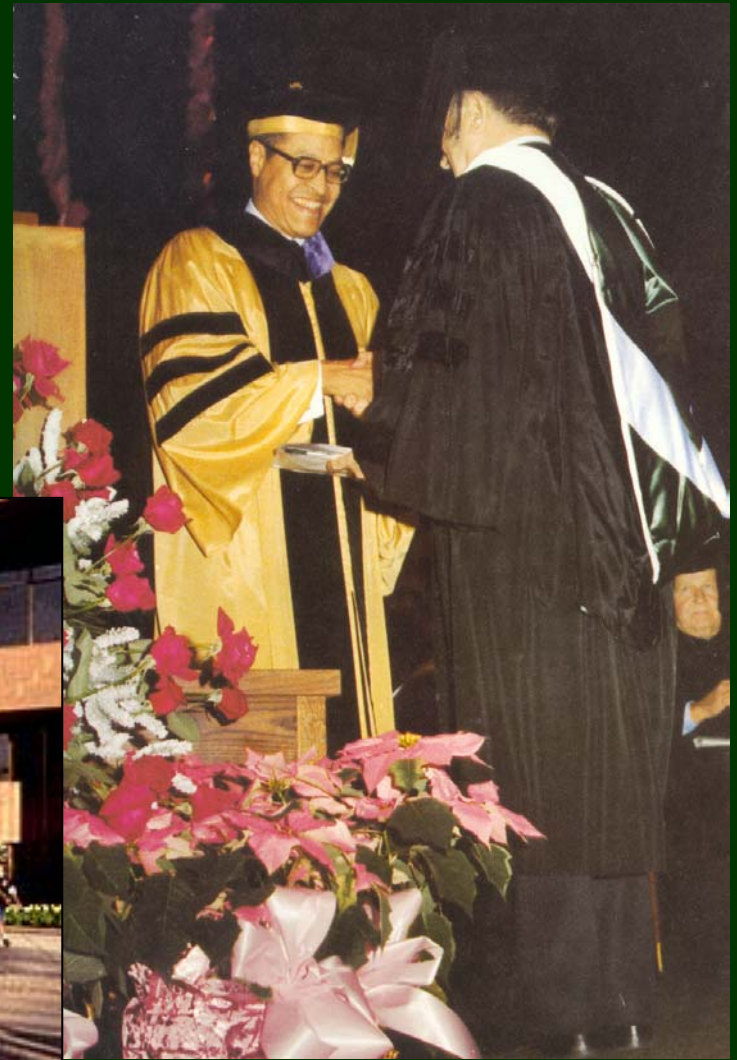
Campus activist Mark Grebner (right) wasn't a fraternity man, but his "*Grading the Profs*" pamphlet was widely read by Greeks and non-Greeks alike.



Economics professor Charles "Lash" Larowe, shown at far right astride his ubiquitous bicycle, was one of the most provocative and visible MSU faculty members of the 1970s. [Source: 1977 *Red Cedar Log*]



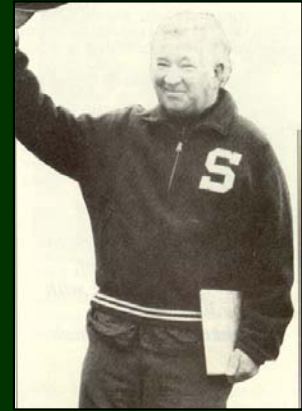
MSU President Clifton Wharton Jr. (in gold gown) was the first, other than at traditionally Black colleges in the south, African American head of a major university in the United States. He had the tough job of following up John Hannah, but over time proved to be a visionary leader and was popular within the MSU community. [Source: 1978 *Red Cedar Log*]



Dr. Wharton and his wife Delores were later honored in the naming of the new performing arts center. [Source: MSU website]

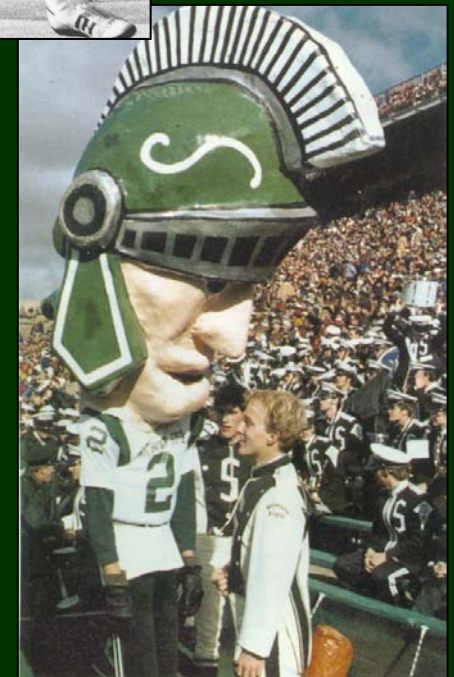
Former football coach and athletic director Biggie Munn was the namesake for the new ice arena (below), a big improvement over aging Demonstration Hall. Spartan hockey teams were pretty strong in the early 70s, but weaker in the latter part of the decade [Source: MSU website]

Football fortunes also waxed and waned. The immortal Duffy Daugherty (far right) retired early in the decade. MSU fielded some relatively weak teams in the early 70s, but fortunes were buoyed by a stunning upset of top-ranked Ohio State in 1974. Just one year later, coach Denny Stolz resigned amidst recruiting scandals. He was replaced by offensive-minded Daryl Rogers and by the end of the decade the Spartans began scoring in bundles. All-American flanker Kirk Gibson (near right) lead the Spartans to a share of the 1978 Big 10 title including a victory over the other co-champion Wolverines, but MSU was on probation so the Rose Bowl would have to wait. It was our only gridiron victory over Michigan during the 1970s.



A two sport star, Gibson chose baseball over football for his professional career and later hit famous home runs for both the Tigers and the Dodgers in the 1984 and 1988 World Series respectively. [Source: 1979 *Red Cedar Log*]

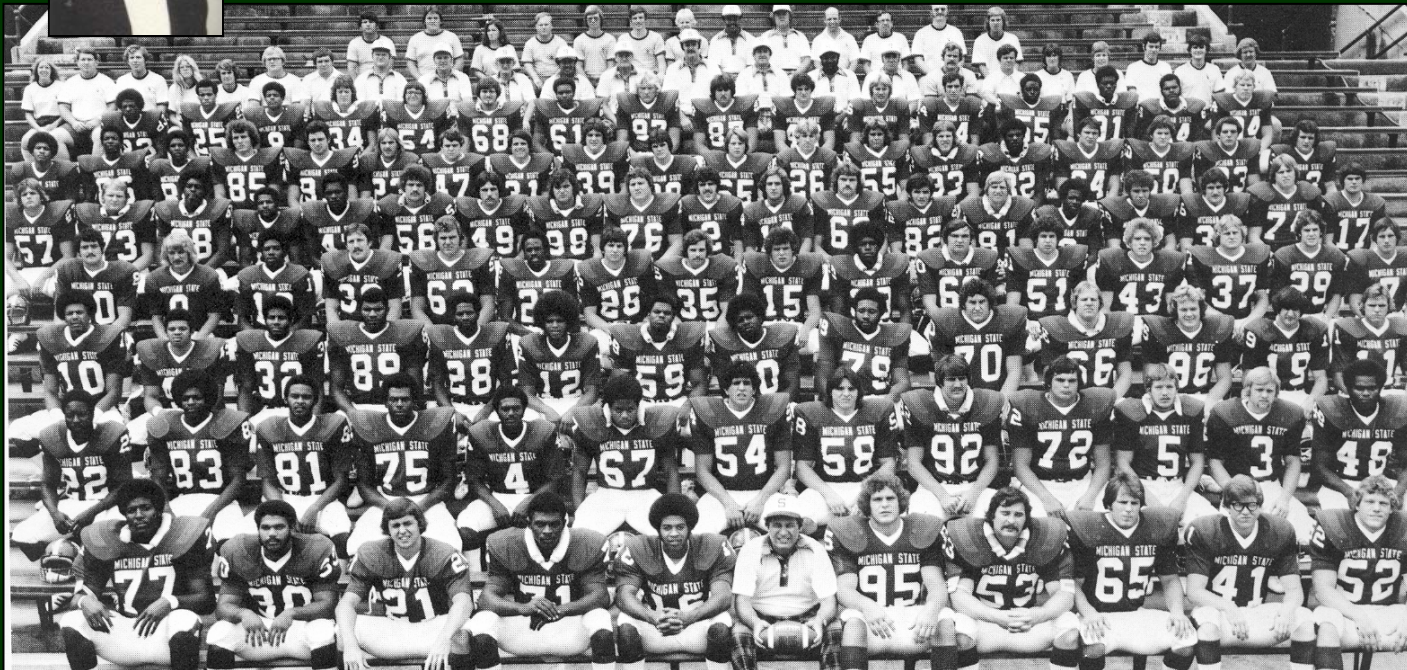
Sparty (below right) was still paper-maché during the 1970s. To my knowledge, no 1970s FH initiates were members of the Spartan Marching Band. [Source: 1978 *Red Cedar Log*]





FarmHouse member's contributions to MSU athletics were modest in the 1970s. Though a senior in this photo, walk-on Mark Havitz '77 (bottom row in the dark shades) ran cross country on a pair of freshman-dominated teams in 1977 and 1978. His top effort was as 7<sup>th</sup> man versus the University of Michigan in 1978. [Source: 1979 Red Cedar Log]

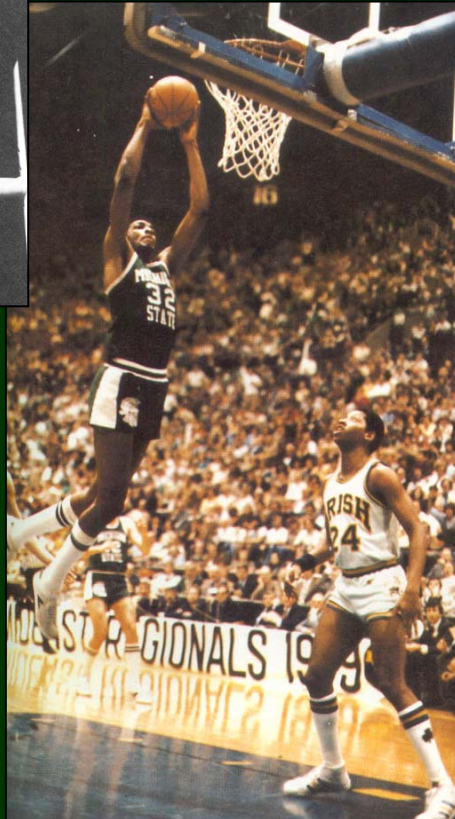
Paul Weller (top row, seventh from left, and insert) served as manager with the football team from 1973 through 1975. Dennis Leland '75 recalled that "after each MSU kickoff he (Paul) would sprint onto the field to retrieve the kick-off tee. Just as the crowd noise was starting to subside, all of FarmHouse would stand and cheer wildly for him. Everyone in the stands around us would look at us like we were crazy. "Dennis continued, "He also would give his



passes to away games to brothers in the house. I saw MSU beat Notre Dame [in 1975] from the sidelines in South Bend. Also got to go a Purdue game in West Lafayette." [Sources: 1976 Red Cedar Log, personal communication with Dennis Leland]



Jud Heathcoat, being interviewed by former MSU basketball coach Gus Ganakas at left, took over a struggling basketball program in 1976. His first recruiting class proved to be Magic! The 1977-1978 team reversed several years of losing fortunes, won the Big 10 title and made it to the NCAA Regional Finals before bowing to eventual national champion Kentucky. [Source: 1978 Red Cedar Log]



The next year was even better! Shown above beating Ohio State in a key game on the way to a second straight Big 10 championship, Earvin "Magic" Johnson teamed with Greg "Special K" Kelser (left) and others to lead MSU over highly-ranked Notre Dame in the Regional finals before we whipped previously undefeated Indiana State and their star Larry Bird in the 1979 NCAA title game. [Source: 1979 Red Cedar Log]

Bolstered by the Federal Title IX legislation, women's intercollegiate athletics made a tentative, but soon triumphant, return to the MSU campus during the 1970s. Women's gymnastics, track and field, and cross country were exceptionally strong during this time, but the most successful outfit was the 1976 softball team (below), which captured the National Championship. The Spartans were lead by pitcher Gloria Becksford, who would later serve several decades as the MSU coach. [Source: 1976 *Red Cedar Log*]



Fortunes at FarmHouse continued to rebound. After just one year in the MAC house we needed a bigger place. Ironically, the available rental property most suited to our needs was at 526 Sunset Avenue, our old address! It was a bit run-down, but after some loving restoration done by the actives beginning Labor Day weekend, it was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1979. We were definitely on our way up! [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



Another important addition was the return of Housemother Delima "Mother Dee" Knox. Our Chapter's cook for a number of years (she is pictured in that role in the 1966 composite earlier in this presentation), Mother Dee was Housemother twice, first from 1972 to 1975. Then, in 1979 at the urging of the National Office, we talked her out of retirement. She was with us for two more years --- 1979-1980 at the Sunset House in 1980-1981 back at Bogue Street. Prior to her arrival, I remember being somewhat ambivalent about having a housemother. I always welcomed new faces into our group, but 1978-1979 had been a positive year overall so I thought things were already pretty good. How much better could they be with her there? Well to put it bluntly, a lot! She was a wonderful role model and a good friend. She was also a quietly dignified leader with a wonderful sense of humor.



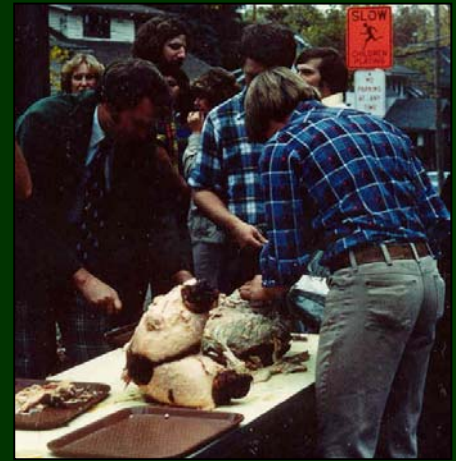
Mother Dee (right) hadn't been with us for three days when she had her first impact on me. We were refurbishing the living room of the Sunset House and we were hauling the heavy iron radiators back into the house after they'd been stripped and cleaned out in the street when I got my foot caught under one of them. My immediate reaction was to blurt out a couple of choice four-letter words! Then I caught Mother Dee in the corner of my eye; she'd come far enough into the living room to be seen and lingered just long enough until I saw her. She never said a word but I turned about eight shades of red and cleaned up my act.



Two other stories revolve around food. Many of you are well aware that Mother Dee was an excellent cook. One FarmHouse dinner tradition was that no guy could eat his desert until she started hers, and she wouldn't start until the last guy had finished his main course. Well, with the possible exception of my mother, I'm the slowest eater in North America. One evening, around 6:30, I looked up from my plate and noticed about six impatient guys glaring at me. It seems that they had a 7:00 p.m. lecture to attend. Mother Dee sat in her customary spot with a slight grin on her face watching me while she waited to tackle her desert. Embarrassed again, I asked her to go ahead, which she did, and everyone made it to class on time. After that it became a standing joke -- I'd wave her on, then finish my third helping of potatoes while everyone else had their cheesecake.



But my favourite story came as a result of a mistake. Mother Dee was making jello and for some reason it wouldn't set. So, thinking she hadn't added enough jello to the water (remember she was cooking for 25 people), she added more powder to the mix. Well, because of a prior commitment, she didn't eat dinner with us that night. And we couldn't figure out the extremely sticky, chewy, bouncy jello. Eventually, we stopped trying to eat it and just played. First we bounced it on the table - the record was about 13"; then we stuck it to the table and pretended when we picked it up the whole table would follow. Actually two guys had crawled underneath, hidden from view and lifted on cue. Prior to that, Ken Brodbeck '78 (left) had run upstairs to fetch his video camera so we had all this nonsense on tape. I still remember the night several weeks later when Ken showed the video to the House, Mother Dee included. We nearly died laughing. She doubled-over and could hardly stay in her chair and had tears of joy in her eyes by the time the video was over. Of course, the irony struck all of us; here was the best cook in the history of East Lansing making fun of her own miscue! [Photo source: 1980 MSU FarmHouse composite]



Here are a few informal views of life at FarmHouse, 526 Sunset, during the 1979-1980 school year. Top left, Dave Huber '76 and Roy Messing '79 defied both the East Lansing health inspector and basic standards of human decency in order to rustle up some breakfast on a Saturday morning. Above center, Charlie Wolgamood '79 ignored both the apparently headless referee and the incredibly tough defensive effort by the opposing fraternity to get off this shot during intramural water polo action. Top right, Michigan FarmHouse Association President and MSU Animal Science professor Maynard Hogberg IA '64, Jeff Bricker '77 and Roy Messing carved the roast hog for a hungry Homecoming crowd which included (from left to right in the background) Vicky Musser, Larry Goostry '76, and Craig Dow '76. Below left, The seemingly sleepy men at this Chapter retreat (including from left, Ken Brodbeck '78, Dennis Hasenick '78, Perry Hickey '76, and Karl Ehnis '79) produced some good ideas including our "urban hayride" with Alpha Gamma Delta. [Source: Personal collection of Mark Havitz]



Alumnus Gary Powell '77, at the wheel of an old John Deere pulled two wagons filled with a cider bar, a guitarist, a banjo picker, and 30 happy people through the MSU campus and the streets of East Lansing (right). Action was so fast and furious that the photo is blurred! [Source: Personal collection of Mark Havitz]





In November of 1979, FarmHouse flexed its entrepreneurial muscle and purchased several acres of old, dying apple trees from an orchard near Potterville. We converged there on a cold Saturday and spent the day cutting them down and chopping them up. We then hauled the wood back to East Lansing where it was sold for firewood. We didn't get rich, but we were able to reduce our collective House bills by a few dollars!



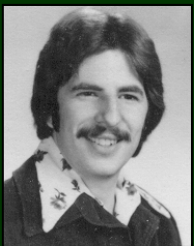
In the top left photo, Karl Ehnis '79, Roy Messing '77 (with back to camera) and Mark Havitz '77 manned a mechanical wood splitter. Pictured in the center photo are: (in the green Ford, Karl Ehnis, Dan First '79, Perry Hickey '76; in front of the blue Ford, Tom Read '79, Bill Breslin '78, Jim Woelmer '79; and next to and in the red International, Chad Eppelheimer '74, Mark Havitz and Roy Messing. Steve Dragt '77 took the photo. Never one to do things the easy way, Perry Hickey opted to do the remainder of the splitting, back at the House, the old fashioned way. [Source: Mark Havitz personal collection]

The Native Americans had it right when they chose new names for people as they entered adulthood. This tradition made sense because they could choose a name that fit the personality or described the exploits of the bearer. Perhaps nicknames assume that role in today's "western" society. A few years ago on TV, the "Cheers" gang was discussing the importance of nicknames when perennial loser Cliff Claven exclaimed, "Do you know what my nickname was in high school?" To which everyone shook their heads no. "I didn't even have one," he admitted despairingly. Well, we all had 'em at FarmHouse!

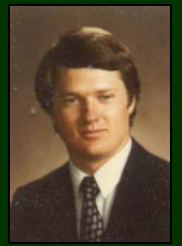
I know this has been true down through the years, but will highlight a few from the late 70s and early 80s because I know most of the origins. Many were just plays on people's regular names. Larry Goostrey '76 was "Goose," Jeff Bricker '77 was "Brick," and Dave Huber '76 was "The Hub." Perry Hickey '76 has proudly been "The Hick" for as long as I've known him! And we all called him Denny, but women in the Williams Hall dorm referred to notorious womanizer and babe-hound Dennis Leland '75 as "Dennis the Menace." Steve Horrocks '80 was "Hork". Six foot two inch tall Dick Waligore '77 was "Big D" and Tom Kaczynski '81 was simply "K" the latter because most of us could neither pronounce nor spell his name.

Others nicknames referred to peoples preferences, physical appearance or dreams. John R. Main '79, MSU rodeo team member, was "J.R." after the infamous "Dallas" TV character. Big 6'4" Scott Ruth '82 was known as "Meat" after a character in the cult-classic "Porky's" movie series. Steve Dragt '77, pictured wearing his famous straw hat, was "Tex" after his fondness for the western frontier.

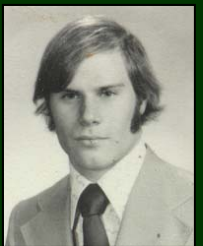
[Photo sources for this page and the following page: 1977, 1978, 1981, 1982, and 1983 FarmHouse composites, Mark Havitz personal collection]



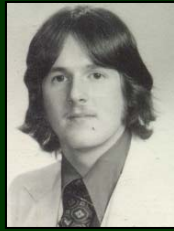
Goose



Brick



The Hub



Denny



Hork



The Hick



Big D



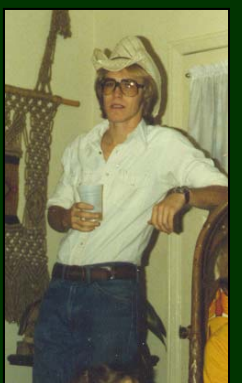
K



J.R.



Meat



Tex

But it wasn't enough to just have a nickname, it had to evolve as well. Dan Spears '82 was initially known as "Daniel Boone," then simply "Boone." Bruce Ballard '81 was temporarily "Loose Bruce" before becoming just "Loose." Jeff Steele '82 was "Iron Bro" then just "Iron." And sometimes it took a while to find the right one. Gary Powell '77 started out as "Big Bird" after the funny way he laughed. His laugh was especially noticeable after he did some thing moronic; like the time he directed an MSU tour bus into a ditch during Small Animals Day. But Gary was forever known as "Crash" after one day riding off on his motorcycle with the kickstand still down. He made it about three blocks before wiping out on a corner, whereupon newly christened Crash walked back to the House where, laughing hysterically, he explained over and over how his Levis, stretch-leather jacket, and helmet had saved his body from being ground into hamburger.

King of the nicknames, Roy Messing '77 went through at least a dozen including Roy Boy, R-Boy Roy, Mayfly (after the Messing family's prodigious reproductive capacity), Ricky (after he and I went to a Halloween party dressed as over-rated UM quarterback Ricky Leach and volatile coach Bo Schembechler), and Number 9. His last nickname was his best. It seems that one of Joe Hickey's cousins had remarked how her female friends thought that his brother Perry was cute and I, knowing full well that FarmHouse could do better than "The Hick," sent her a House composite with a hand-written number on the back of each guy's photo. A note was enclosed explaining that the women should reply back in order to meet the men of their choice. Well, they soon replied, but somehow the letter fell into Roy's hands first. So he showed up at a House meeting wearing what seemed to be a plain gray t-shirt and read the letter during Other Business. . . "number 15 is cute and number 3 looks like a nice guy and some of us like number 6, but on one thing we all agree...we definitely want number 9!" Whereupon Roy turned around to display, to the groans and catcalls of other men, that number proudly printed on his shirt!



Boone



Loose



Iron



Crash



Ricky adjusting Bo's headset!



Number 9

Of course, it wasn't enough that **we** had nicknames -- our cars did too! The "Dragtmobile" was a classic red Camero with rear shocks high enough to ensure that the car always travelled downhill. Theoretically Steve got the best mileage in the house and rumor had it that he only bought two tanks of gas in four years! Then there were Al Bakker's canary yellow Plymouth Duster -- the "Dustpan" and Roy Messing's "Caribou" -- a Chevy Malibu capable of withstanding the worst weather that Harbor Beach and the Thumb could generate! Perry and Joe Hickey's giant Ford LTD, flagship of the "Aircraft Carriers" as we called the larger cars, was christened the "LSD". As legend has it, the LSD was fast enough to allow the Hickey brothers to leave their house west of Lake Odessa at 7:45 p.m. and still make it to East Lansing on time for our 8 p.m. Sunday evening House meetings. Of course, there was only one stop light in Grand Ledge in those days. Fittingly, the LSD's final triumph was in a demolition derby at the Ionia Free Fair. Gary Powell's boxy International Scout, "The Tub," was perhaps the most loved FarmHouse vehicle. The Tub took many of us touring through Lansing both during and after the Blizzard of 1978. The snow was so deep that the Tub was literally the only vehicle on Grand River Avenue save for a couple of kegs being hauled by some dorm rats by toboggan to the Brody Complex. It also got Gary and I up to New Lothrop after that same blizzard where we picked up a side of beef for the House freezer. The Tub capped off 1978 by winning the Delta Chi Road Rally during Greek Week! By the way, I drove a yellow Chevy Vega hatchback, a car generally recognised as one of the low points in General Motors' automotive engineering history. As might be expected, my wimpy Chevy Vega had no nickname! I guess it was the Cliff Claven of the FarmHouse cars.

Here then, nicknames and all, is a look at a few of the MSU FarmHouse personalities from the late 1970s: Following graduation, Jeff "Brick" Bricker '77 took up residence at his family's Bear Creek Angus Ranch in Cameron, MT where he served as General Manager from 1986 to 1999. He's pictured here in 1983 with "Teddy Bear" a prize winning Angus bull. Jeff has also served as Managing Partner of North Fork Angus in Townsend, MT from 2000-02. He currently works as Cowherd Manager for The Fairview Ranch, Melville, MT. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]





Here's evidence that God has a sense of humor! Long-hair Steve (alternately known as Tex, S. R., or Drag-T), Dragt '77 lost it all by the time he was 40! But he's lived his dream by moving to California, marrying a "California girl" and raising his family there. Pictured in 1998, clockwise from top left, they include Janet, Steve, Danielle and Matt. [Source: 1977 FarmHouse composite, Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

Steve is Engineering Manager for Wm Bolthouse Farms, Bakersfield CA. Bolthouse Farms market, among other products, the "Look Mom" brand of mini-carrots. Steve designed their plant. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]

A common thread among many FarmHouse men over the years has been our love of the land and, for those lucky enough to live on them, our farms. I recall listening in on many heart-to-heart talks in the late 1970s between Ken “John Deere” Brodbeck '78 (pictured earlier) who was trying desperately to talk his homesick pledge-classmate and best friend Dennis Hasinick '78 (top right) into staying in school rather than return to the farm. Their talks were especially poignant because I knew all too well that Ken missed his farm every bit as much as Dennis missed his. Ken was partially successful in keeping Dennis on campus but, though a strong student, Dennis never did stay long enough to finish his degree. Dennis and his family still happily run the family farm near Springport, MI. Ken, meanwhile, has carved out a successful engineering career with Firestone in Akron, OH.



Though growing up in the suburbs of Lansing, Gary Powell '77 (right) got hooked on farming while working on his crop and soil sciences degree at MSU. Gary has worked for MSU as a crop technician for over 20 years, completed his masters degree, and bought with his father Ed '49 (not pictured) hundreds of acres near Portland, MI which Gary now farms in his “spare time.” Ed is retired after a long career with Farm Bureau Insurance. [Source 1978 and 1979 MSU FarmHouse composite]



Not all farmland stories have happy endings, however. Leland Farms is a Centennial Farm near Whitmore Lake, occupied by the Leland family since 1869. The corridor between Ann Arbor and Brighton is under extreme development pressure. Dennis '74 recently optioned the majority of his land to a developer for a proposed mega-housing project. “It was a difficult decision, but I’m more of a realist,” Dennis said. “I milked cows for 20 years until 1996. I now work in a fabrication shop. There’s no money in farming.”



At right are two photos taken at the 1997 FarmHouse summer picnic at Leland Farms. In the top one, Dennis is pictured in the green shirt and hat serving food off of one of his hay wagons. He’s also at back left (bottom picture) in the dark green shirt awaiting a return from Rich Miller '81 (white shirt facing camera and Dan First '79 (arms raised). Stephanie Huber (blue shorts) and two unidentified children with their backs to the camera complete that team. Partially obscured behind Dennis is Dave Huber '76 and in front of them are Roy Messing '77 and Kevin Weidmayer '87. [Quote source: Ann Arbor News, August 8, 2002. photo source: Personal collection of Mark Havitz]





Like several FarmHouse men including Don Bush '68, Bill Newcomer '70, Dave "Durk" Durkee '74 and Al "Tech" Bakker '78, I was hired by the Gregorys and Veliquettes, in my case to work the summer cherry harvests in the late 1970s. That's me (below) on the tractor pulling a 70s era "roll-out." Long suffering the barbs of my FarmHouse brothers as a park and recreation major and later as a leisure studies professor, I felt some need to document my agricultural credentials to this production! [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection]



Durkee

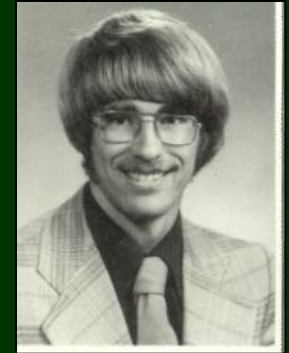


Newcomer



Bush

Durk is now an optometrist practicing in Lowell, MI. He is also President of the Michigan Optometric Association. Several years ago, he wrote: "I just got elected Vice President of the Michigan Optometric Association. I will be inducted as President on Mackinaw Island in August 2002. I'm looking forward to representing 80% of the practising optometrists in Michigan in the political and legal arena. I can owe many of my leadership skills, in particular my knowledge of Robert's Rules, to all the great FH people I knew while in school (Thank you FFA)." Newcomer and Bush are, respectively, a logistics planner near Ada and a farmer near Sandusky. More on Al Bakker follows. [Source: 1971 and 1976 MSU FarmHouse composites, *Spartan Scribe*, personal collection of Mark Havitz]



Upon graduation with his two-year fruit production degree, Al "Tech" Bakker '78 (above right) hired on full-time and, as Field Manager, has become a Cherry Bay mainstay. Here's Al (top left) using some early-1990s technology, a "one-man" shaker during harvest; and Al (bottom right) using a more refined version in 2001. Al and his wife Lynn raise apples and cherries on their own 70 acre farm in their spare time. [Source: Mark Havitz, personal photo collection, 1978 MSU FarmHouse composite]





Wild turkey that he is, it is safe to say that no FarmHouse man initiated in the 1970s was more popular than Joe "Will" Hickey '77 (pictured here with his son David after a spring hunting outing near Lake Odessa). Joe has worked for some years as an appraiser with Farm Credit Services while also doing community service with the Knights of Columbus. Joe, Criss, David and Emma are regular participants at FarmHouse alumni gatherings. It's just not the same if they are not there! [Source: Personal collection of Mark Havitz]

In the summer of 1979 I did a work term with the Department of Parks and Recreation in Evansville, IN. One weekend Steve Dragt '77 and Gary Powell '77 rode their motorcycles down to Evansville so Steve could look for a good rust-free pick-up truck. You see, there's no need for regularly salting the roads in southern Indiana, unlike what is commonly done in Michigan's unrelenting winters. This was the type of reasoning that I, as a non-mechanically minded city kid, would never have considered prior to joining FarmHouse but it was second nature to Gary and Steve! We started looking for trucks early Saturday, found one by late morning and Steve bought it: a full-sized white GMC pick-up with a hydraulic tailgate lift. It went great with his classic Willie Nelson-style cowboy hat! The perfect vehicle to replace the red Camaro Dragtmobile of his younger days! Unfortunately, the Indiana motor vehicle office closed before we got there and both Steve and Gary had to be back at work in Michigan by 8 a.m. on Monday. So they had no legal way of getting the truck back to Michigan and still keep their jobs.

When we stopped at a dumpy garage for gas, I stood quietly in the background as Steve and Gary explained the dilemma to the attendant. My post-Watergate liberal morals didn't permit any room for an "end justifies the means" philosophy. Oh, the burden of being one of the social consciences in a fraternity so straight that it was the only dry house on campus, not to mention the only one which still employed a housemother! After talking with Steve and Gary for a while about their dilemma (wimp that I am, I was hiding even further in the background by this time) the guy walked over to a scrap metal pile and grabbed an old Kentucky license plate. "Take this," he said, "and put it on the back of the truck. You only need a rear plate in Kentucky. But if you get stopped by the cops, you never heard of this place." Sunday morning Steve and Gary loaded the two bikes on the truck and high-tailed it back to Lansing, even surviving a pass by from a state trooper at dusk, shortly after Steve had discovered that the truck had no low-beam headlights!



Dragt and Powell leaving Evansville on their drive back to East Lansing.

Throughout the 1970s, FarmHouse held to the tradition wherein graduates read a "senior will" at their last House meeting during which they give encouragement and sentimental gifts to various members. I don't know the origin of this tradition, but expect it went back a number of years. When he graduated in December 1980, Steve Dragt's speech was especially emotional because he'd been one of our leaders and because the Chapter had been dealing with some growing pains. There were raw nerves throughout the room, yet we all wondered with which treasures he would part and to whom would they be given. He verbally tore into us for a while, as he was prone to do when the House strayed too far from his vision. Lack of effort, lack of freedom, and excessive timidity were among the themes. Then he eloquently reminded us, near the end of his talk, that Joe Will Hickey always went all-out and never quit at anything. Steve spun suddenly and grabbed and threw his coveted cowboy hat across the room to Joe. I've got to tell you Joe, I really wanted that hat! But the gift I received minutes later was just as good. His message to me, still taped to the back, reads: "Use this as your symbol to live aggressively and become capable of doing what you desire and achieving any goal. Thanks, Steve." Twenty-two years later, that Kentucky license plate still hangs in my garage. Sometimes the reminder is extremely important. Thank you Steve.



And thanks again to all of the men of the 1970s. We stumbled often, we fell hard, we struggled mightily but, as a group we never gave up on each other or on the Fraternity that we hold dear. When life, as it is prone to do, throws me a curve these are men and experiences upon which I can always count. Back then, we would often chat about what life was like during the glory days of the 50s and 60s. What was it like to gather scholarship trophies without ceasing and to win intramural championships and Greek Week competitions? What was it like to have so many members that some actives wouldn't fit into the House, and to not have to pack up and move year after year as we did in 1977, 1978, 1979, and would do again in 1980? That 22 years and counting of FarmHouse history has unfolded at 151 Bogue Street since 1980 is a testament to our spirit, however. With several decades of hindsight filling my sails I can state, unequivocally, that I'm very, very proud to have been a part of the 1970s cohort. As the songbook says, "Let's give a cheer for FarmHouse fellowship, let's give a cheer for FarmHouse ready wit! Lets give a cheer for all the brotherhood we share . . ."