Social Screaming

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Abstract

I KNOW A LOT of people must have lectured to you about the adjustments that have to be made when you move into a sorority house, and I agree wholeheartedly with all of them. In fact, the only trouble is that there are some adjustments that are always overlooked. Screaming is one of them...
I KNOW A LOT of people must have lectured to you about the adjustments that have to be made when you move into a sorority house, and I agree wholeheartedly with all of them. In fact, the only trouble is that there are some adjustments that are always overlooked. Screaming is one of them. It’s really amazing that people forget about this factor when it’s so important to anyone who hopes to be a successful sorority girl. It’s an art to be able to apply the correct scream to the right situation, and it takes years of experience before one can really feel sure of herself. Maybe I can help you out, though, by outlining the most important uses of the scream.

One of the first screams you should learn and the one you will probably use most often is the “pinning scream.” Naturally it’s used when one of the sisters comes in wearing a fraternity pin. If you should be the first to discover the pin, it’s especially important that you should know all the details of the pinning scream, for you have to use it to cue all the other sisters. No, you don’t have to learn any formula of words for this scream. You can use the girl’s name if you want to, but just any sound that will suggest overwhelmed surprise, extreme pleasure and uncontrollable excitement will do. Be sure to yell loudly enough to rouse any of the sisters who might be sleeping or studying. It’s very important that no one be left out, and it’s your job to see that they are not. Your duties aren’t over after you have warned the sisterhood of the event. You have one more duty to perform. It’s your job to give the newly pinned girl a feeling of security against the oncoming mob by slipping your arm around her waist and chattering excitedly.

Another scream that you should learn right away is the “five-pound-party scream” which is used at all engagement announcements. You might think that you could cheat a little and substitute the pinning scream here, but that would be a terrible faux pas. If you’re on the ball at all you’ll realize that the five-pound-party scream has got to get across a feeling of sentiment and awe as well as surprise and pleasure. It’s rather a touchy situation, so be careful that you
don’t imply too much surprise or a “Well, you finally hooked him” tone. And never forget that you’ve got to go from this scream to a sentimental sorority song. That transition is bound to be hard for beginners.

One of the hardest screams is the serenade scream. It’s especially difficult because it’s yelled in unison by the whole chapter. It’s very appropriate in this situation to clap loudly while you scream, and you will also find that the clapping helps considerably to thaw out your hands in the winter time. Your scream in this case can suggest a number of things—that’s what makes it so difficult. It should always convey delight, admiration and gratitude. Sometimes it may imply amusement, shocked amusement, or emotional impact. If the song is particularly sentimental you can build up the scream with a “delighted murmur.” We’ll say more about the delighted murmur later.

We’ll just mention this next scream to remind you of it. It’s actually the easiest one to learn, mostly because, unlike the others, it is usually given because you feel like giving it and not because it is expected of you. It is the “winning scream” which erupts spontaneously whenever the chapter has won a volleyball game, infiltrated an honorary fraternity, or captured a trophy. You can really let yourself go on this one—even to the point of waving your arms, hugging the sisters, and jumping up and down.

Let’s go back to the delighted murmur now. It can be a very handy tool for sorority girls when an out-and-out yell would be frowned upon by the house mother or any other wet blankets. It’s very handy at the dinner table and sometimes at serenades. It is a substitute for a scream, or actually a suppressed scream. My only complaint about the delighted murmur is that sorority girls don’t use it enough. But then we must understand that it requires great finesse and restraint.

Now, I believe that just about does it. You should be ready to start practice now. Oh, one more thing. When you move into the house, don’t forget to bring a family-size bottle of Anacin.

—Diane Bennett, H. Ec. Sr.