



It's Greek to me!

I made my annual trek to Greenville last weekend for the big Homecoming festivities. It was awesome catching up with my old college friends and making new ones too. This year was particularly poignant, as it is the 25th anniversary of my first graduation from East Carolina University. How can that be?? There is no way I am that old! But when I look at my friends' kids, I realize we really ARE that old! But life is good, and I am still betting it beats the alternative!

We came in Friday night just in time for Free Boot Friday downtown. It was a hoot being back and seeing so many of the people I had met there so many years before. Same block, same environment, same people, even a similar venue, but many years later.

We adjourned from there for pizza and beer. My husband was counting on Chico's, our favorite Mexican restaurant, but I was following my friends...I can have Mexican food anytime!

We stayed with my college roommate's mom, who invited our dog as well, so it really was like coming home! She even had breakfast out for us, complete with our favorite, Mountain Dew! And she cooked our favorite meal after the game...her famous manicotti! She even offered to send it home with us if we didn't make it back in time to dine with her.

Food flowed all day at the fraternity house...breakfast before the parade, sandwiches and snacks for lunch and a pig pickin from Bs barbecue after the game! We didn't even have a food plan for tailgating because our chief chef was spearheading the festivities at the house. The main event was dedication of the brand new Sigma Phi Epsilon back house; a new revised edition of the old residence that recently burned down. 180 days from concept to completion, including occupancy! WOW! What an amazing accomplishment. Those words whirled in my mind as I imagined the morning of the fire as I have heard it described. The house was a total loss within minutes, but residents escaped unharmed, with the exception of one brother's faithful canine companion. This crisis brought the brotherhood and the community together in a way I have never experienced. Alumni from all over the country started calling and sending money immediately...some for the displaced students, and even more for replacement of their home.

I didn't really get the Greek thing when I was in college. I loved being a SigEp little sister, hanging out with the guys at the house and supporting their efforts, but I never considered joining a sorority.

I thought that was just a way to fit in and make friends for those who may have found this process difficult or daunting in college. But I have watched these men grow into their own, raising families, building successful careers, making a difference in their communities, all built from the firm foundation of their commitment and connection to their shared college experience. And Benji said it best as he cut the red ribbon in celebration of this house so many continue to call home: Brotherhood is forever!

The entire Homecoming experience gave true meaning to Dorothy's revelation: There's no place like home!

Gail is a proud ECU graduate committed to helping you live your best life, at home or abroad! Visit her at Gailo.com or drop her a note at gailo@gailo.com.