

# **Biker Party<sup>1</sup>**

Get out your black leather jacket, Harley Davidson T-shirt, reflective sunglasses, and worn jeans to prepare for this exciting fun event. It's time for a Biker Party!

Start by sending everyone an invitation with one of those removable tattoos enclosed. Tell everyone they must wear their tattoo in order to gain entrance. Then at the function, have more tattoos available for your guests.

A camera is now a must! Have someone taking pictures throughout the event. Posed shots will be great. An added feature will be a few motorcycles outside the entrance to create the needed atmosphere. This will also provide a great backdrop for pictures. Music will also be important. How about a little Joan Jett playing in the background to heighten the biker atmosphere? Can you think of any classic biker movies you could be playing? And of course, this will be a great event in which you can award prizes for best costumes. Go to your local motorcycle shop to get ideas for prizes.

Now picture your guests in their black leather outfits sitting on small red tricycles. This is sure to cause a few laughs. Tricycles races would be great! College students racing on small tricycles has always been fun. And remember, you need pictures to preserve the moment.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NIC Theme Party Kits, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Funded by FIPSE, US Dept. of Education

## **Black Tie Affair<sup>1</sup>**

A Black Tie event is usually stuffy and lacking in fun...but not this one!

For this “Black Tie” party, plan as you normally would. Choose some good music. How about having a “Black Tie” Jazz party with some good jazz music? Or, try this with ballroom dancing music....you could have someone giving a ballroom dancing lesson. And of course, good food such as hors d’oeuvres will be a must for any type of “Black Tie” affair you have. To save money, go to your local wholesale club’s frozen food section for bite-size treats. Have non-alcoholic champagne punch to complement the theme and decorate to complement your music.

Now about the “Black Tie” attire: Tell your guests to wear “Black Tie” as they define it. Maybe they’ll wear a tuxedo, maybe they’ll wear a black bow-tie and a t-shirt, or maybe they’ll wear one of those t-shirts that looks like a tuxedo. Wearing “Black Tie” could mean anything. You’ll be impressed by how creative people can be.

End this theme party with a prize contest for the most creative or best “Black Tie” outfit.

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## Cave Bash<sup>1</sup>

This party idea is another great Hall tradition with many variations: The Cave Bash.

First, your party goers should dress in the traditional cave attire. Burlap, corduroy, and/or sheets can make great cave outfits.

When decorating, many residence halls build a wall of chicken wire at the front entrance and cover it with butcher block paper to create a cave look. This is a great idea for inside walls as well. Fake stone wheels throughout the event will also add to the cave atmosphere. You could even play reruns of *The Flintstones* for an even better effect. Then let the dancing and music do the rest.

Next, you need to plan the cave Olympics. Plan games and races revolving around the wheel. The residents can have a wheel throwing contest a wheel rolling relay contest....just a few examples. You'll then want to give awards for best cave attire and best cave Olympian.

Have fun and be creative when coming up with your own variations!

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from NIC Theme Party Kits, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Funded by FIPSE, US Dept. of Education

## **Class Reunion<sup>1</sup>**

It is time to interact with one another as we prepare ourselves for the inevitable: class reunions. Remember your parents talking about their reunion experiences? This event will give us a glimpse at our future while at the same time, promote an evening of fun!

Start by planning the invitation. How about a letter from the “Class of ‘?’ Reunion Committee”? Then....

Get your hands on an old high school or college yearbook, (use one that is at least twenty years old). To start, the event planners (someone from every residence hall involved) needs to create biographies of all the folks who are pictured in the yearbook to correspond with your guests (the biographies can be based on facts contained within the yearbook or can be completely fictional). As members and guests arrive at the event, they are given a package that contains their bio and a name tag. Use name tags in which you’ve photocopied corresponding pictures from the old yearbook. The picture will represent how your guest “looked” twenty years ago with their bouffant or buzzed haircut.

Each person is to mingle and mix and find the person or people who are mentioned in their bio. The biographies can detail the person’s past, present and even future love interests, jobs, accidents, responsibilities and the like. Some information may be placed on one person’s biography and not another’s, even though both are involved. That’s part of the fun...figuring out who did what with whom and when and where. Gossip won’t stop, so long as the committee working on the event did a good job detailing the trials and tribulation of the class of ...?

And of course, the right music, food, and decorations will make the reunion even better.

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# Construction Party<sup>1</sup>

A hard hat, jeans, and T-shirts will be the attire of choice for this event.

Start setting the atmosphere by sending out invitations designed to look like blueprints. Decorating for this function will be easy. Use anything you would find at a construction site...lumber...bricks...cylinder blocks...saw horses...pipes...wheelbarrows...shovels...The list is endless. Find those large sheets of blueprints that an architect would use, and hang them on the walls as decorations.

Now you need to plan an activity. This would be a great opportunity to incorporate Legos and building blocks. Have teams compete to see which team can build the highest, standing structure in two minutes, or longer if you like. Give prizes to the winning teams. Be sure to take pictures of guests in their construction outfits. You could also play episodes of *This Old House* from PBS and *Home Improvement* from ABC.

Some residence halls have even coordinated this party around an actual project. Building a deck or brick patio, or a house cleaning project, or even a project that will benefit the college/university could only add to this event.

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## **EuB-Titnes....sub-titled...<sup>1</sup>**

This idea works well as a social event between halls. Show foreign movies with sub-titles during the event. See if ISSA will help sponsor the movies portion of the event.

Each of the groups can bring ethnic food dishes from a country to which they have been assigned. Find out the local customs of the highlighted region and abide by their cultural norms. For example, eat with chopsticks or wear kimonos. Different rooms can be different continents, decorated with travel posters from the travel agent or flags that can be made prior to the event. Be sure that you research well so that you do not feed into stereotypes.

International students could be invited to participate from day one. Share planning and arrangement activities with all the different groups involved. International students can offer their personal insights and cultures with everyone. What a great way to celebrate diversity!

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# Garage Sale<sup>1</sup>

Probably the best in innovative theme parties, *Garage Sale* will leave'em talking for weeks.

Find yourselves a large area to hold this event. Decorate the location like someone's garage. Pack it full of old bikes, newspapers, toys, jars, memorabilia from different generations, clothes, knick-knacks, buttons, hats, pins, appliances and anything else you can get your hands on. To help with this, inform all partygoers that they need to bring donations of all the aforementioned items. Once they arrive, price the items they brought and scatter them throughout the location.

Each member and guest also receives a pre-determined amount of funny-money to spend. Some people may actually find something they want—who knows? Throughout the location, food stations could also be established. Sell things like hot dogs, potato chips, apples and ice cream. Be sure to play cheesy old music on an obsolete phonograph.

Advertise the event in the student newspaper, as if it were an actual garage sale, (as long as the event is alcohol-free, there shouldn't be a problem with advertising). Door prizes and fun gifts for those who "purchase" specially tagged item(s) will add to the festivities. Some groups have done this with real money...proceeds going to a local charity that benefits battered women and children. You decide. Either option works and both are incredibly fun for all who attend.

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# Hat Party<sup>1</sup>

This function is a great activity that can foster interaction between different groups of people. The Hat Party has served as a great mixer for years for Halls looking to spend a few hours having fun and laughing at one another.

The object here is to make hats...yes, hats. You start the excitement off by creating a little competition. Tell everyone they will model their hat at the end of the evening and be judged on categories such as Highest Hat, Ugliest Hat, Most Creative Hat, etc. You of course will only give them a limited amount of time. This will create a sense of urgency and excitement.

To start the evening off, you need to provide all the needed supplies. Include cardboard, newspaper, scissors, paste, string, and markers to name just a few possibilities. You will probably also want to provide odd supplies such as used tennis balls, fake flowers, or anything else your imagination can come up with.

While this is going on, you can be playing songs from the group *Men Without Hats*. Serve chips and snacks in upside down hats. The winners from your contest could be awarded *Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Suess.

The more that you do centered around hats, the more fun you'll have!!

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# Karaoke Night<sup>1</sup>

What is the latest social rage sweeping across the country?...Well it's karaoke of course! So, why not turn this popular event into a Hall social theme party. It's easy!!

First, you need to find a karaoke machine. Start by checking out *The Source* for a list of DJ companies. Here you'll find companies that rent the needed equipment. Some companies will rent just the equipment, while others include a DJ to run and set up the equipment for you. The latter is more expensive and generally unnecessary.

When planning from this point on, creativity will be key. You'll want food of course, but how about decorations? Cut out large record albums and musical notes out of poster boards to hand on the walls. Make a makeshift stage to perform on. Have a spotlight to shine on your performing stars...a high-powered flashlight will work if nothing else. Do you want some costumes to complement the singing effort? You could always go to Goodwill so you'll have a wardrobe for your guests to select from. And, of course you'll want to have prizes and contests for those who perform.

This is a great party that can be fun for all. Give it a try!

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## **Mob-Barley Party<sup>1</sup>**

Let's have a party, reggae style! This popular theme has been around for years...and is always being improved upon.

Planning a cookout will be a great start to complement this evening...can't you smell the hamburgers on the grill? How about cutting up some pineapples and grilling those also? Grilled pineapple tastes great!

Now you need to plan some activities. What is a reggae party without a limbo contest? All you need is a long stick, such as a broom handle, and you're set. Be sure to give away prizes to the winners. Now plan some tie-dyeing. Since you'll want everyone to wear their most outlandish tie-dyed outfits to the party, consider inviting everyone over earlier in the day to tie-dye their outfits. Provide a couple of those large plastic kiddie pools and dyes to get everyone started. This will help the buildup to the party later in the evening.

Now, all you have to do is set the mood with the right reggae music and decorations, such as palm trees and large tie-dyed sheets. Be creative!

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# MORP Party<sup>1</sup>

Talk about backwards! Everything for this party is reversed. Have you figured out what Morp is yet? It's Prom spelled backwards. This party is unlike any Prom party you ever went to in high school.

Everything you do at this function should be done nontraditionally, especially the dress. You can wear anything from a prom gown to a tuxedo, but you'll want to accessorize with tennis shoes. Picture everyone dressed up, wearing tennis shoes instead dress shoes. For those who are a bit more daring, garbage bags, electrical tape, pearls, and rhinestones could be the attire of choice. Remember, nearly anything goes except traditional attire.

Don't you normally exchange flowers and corsages? Well not at this function. Exchange fake flowers instead. How about sporting a new outrageous hairstyle using hair paint for even more attention? You'll also want to have a photographer taking prom pictures, but this time use non-traditional backdrops. How about a pair of trash cans?

The goal to all of this is to make fun of our prom experiences from high school. The more backward situations you can come up with, the more fun everyone will have.

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## **Neon Night of Dance<sup>1</sup>**

Remember the “Black Light” parties of the past? Well, this is the new, improved, nineties version with an added graffiti twist. Combine great dance music, and black lights to create an amazingly new and exciting party atmosphere.

Light your room with black lights by simply changing the bulbs in existing light fixtures. And, remember, great dance music and good food should be complementing this fun evening!

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# Old Fashioned Picnic<sup>1</sup>

Picture this: A nice sunny day filled with blue skies, a light breeze blowing through the air, hamburgers sizzling on the grill, a cooler filled with sodas and lemonade...all this complemented by pleasant temperatures with people having a relaxed afternoon enjoying the great outdoors. Well, if you haven't guessed it yet, this is the great traditional past time of an old fashioned picnic...an event everyone can enjoy!

Planning is easy. First secure a convenient location. It might be at your residence hall courtyard or a public space at ND. Next plan the food. Hamburgers, hotdogs, and brats can all be obtained in large quantities at NDFS at great prices. Don't forget the chips, beans, coleslaw, and lemonade.

Now plan the activities. The possibilities are endless...flag football, softball, volleyball, horseshoe, Frisbee, hackey-sac, and tetherball to name just a few.

Now the only thing left to plan is good weather! Have fun and enjoy a relaxing day in the great outdoors!!

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# Pasta Party<sup>1</sup>

A party will always be successful when centered around food. This function will be especially easy if you have a dining facility, but if you don't, there is no reason this theme meal won't work anyway. Here is what you do:

Plan this function as a mixer between halls. First, plan the atmosphere. Have waiters wearing aprons and large white chef's hats. Have Italian violin music playing in the background. You of course will want to have checkered tablecloths and candles to really set the atmosphere. To really add fun, have strolling singers visiting each table. This will be sure to add a laugh or two.

Planning the food will be the easy part...pasta is easy to make! All you really need is boiling water, sauce, and pasta noodles. You can provide variety by making available different types and flavors of pastas and sauces.

And finally, to end the evening with some fun, plan a few skits for your waiters and singers to perform for everyone. Or, you could provide each table an outline of a skit in which they can work on throughout dinner. Then perform at the end of the evening.

You'll be sure to get many laughs out of this evening of fun and food.

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# **Polaroid Party<sup>1</sup>**

It's picture time! You know how everyone loves party pics. Well, how about giving them what they want, only faster and with more fun. Here's how:

Borrow a couple of Polaroid cameras and stock up on film. Appoint a few photographers to take snapshots of all the guests. How about designing a few backdrops for your guests to have their picture taken against?...A beach scene with a palm tree...A famous landmark...Or any other distinguishable look. How about making or borrowing some of those life-size cardboard pictures of famous people for your guest to stand next to and have their picture taken? You could even remove the heads so your guest could impose their face onto someone else's body. How about having your picture taken with the president of the United States? Start placing the developed pictures around your party for people to see. But don't let them take them down until the party is over. You might even want to choose one location, such as a wall, that you can monitor.

Another fun touch would be to borrow a few video cameras and TVs. People like to see what they look like on TV. All you would need to do would be to place a few cameras in high locations pointing toward your guest. Videos of people dancing are great. Have your cameras hooked up to TVs throughout your event.

Some great music and good food will be sure to guarantee a fun time.

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# Recycling Party<sup>1</sup>

Why not turn the latest rage sweeping across the country into a theme party! Parties with a recycling focus are happening on campuses throughout the U.S. and Canada.

A great event for this party is to play the game of Jeopardy, but use the *Earth Day* book to research questions. If you want to dance, you could play music by some of the more environmentally conscious groups such as R.E.M., B52s, 10,000 Maniacs, etc. Decorate your function using an “earthy” green color.

Guests should bring recyclable goods such as cans, newspapers, and/or plastic bottles. Also, contact the Office of Sustainability and get pamphlets and posters to pass out. You could also use these items for decorations. A great food item to serve would be Ben & Jerry’s Rain Forest Crunch ice cream...proceeds benefit the rain forest in South America. Your guests can wear Birkenstock sandals and tie-dyed T-shirts. Get the idea? The possibilities are endless.

Not only can your guests have fun at this function, but they can learn a lot too!

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## Service Social<sup>1</sup>

Two strong characteristics of being Hall are social and service. So, why not combine the two and make a rewarding service opportunity into a social opportunity as well! This could be a great function between a fraternity and a sorority.

Plan a service project as you normally would. Pick an opportunity that is hands-on and involved. Projects in which everyone works side-by-side are best. Any opportunity with children, such as playing ball, will be great. Other events have revolved around Habitat for Humanity. Halls assist in building and painting homes for low-income individuals. The possibilities are endless. Consider contacting The United Way for suggestions and advice when planning this function.

On campus ideas include making fleece blankets for young kids in the hospital, writing out cards for seniors living in assisted living, creating cards to go to Meal on Wheels recipients, etc.

Depending on the function, music and food can complement the effort. A cookout would be a great way to end this unique opportunity.

And remember, while your having fun with other Halls, you'll be helping others and portraying a positive image of the Hall community...all at the same time!

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# The Festival<sup>1</sup>

Find a field. Advertise. Have a blast...at **The Festival!** Talk to a university official about using a field on campus for this event. If you prefer, contact the local parks department about using a city/town park. This relatively easy to organize and is inexpensive...what more could you ask for? Use these five activities and add others as you wish.

*Can Stack* : Teams of five compete to see what team can stack the most empty aluminum cans. Prior to the event, hundreds of empty aluminum cans will have to be gathered. Whatever the stacking method, the group that builds the highest wall wins.

*Jello Toss*: Yes, it's as fun as it sounds. Have plenty of prepared, firm Jello ready for tossing. The two-person teams(s) that still has Jello remaining after ten tosses back and forth wins.

*Egg Drop*. It's interesting to see what happens when eggs are dropped...splat. The goal here it to drop them from a ladder without having them break. Teams try to come up with a contraption that will spare the little egg its life.

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# The Gong Show Talent Night<sup>1</sup>

Remember the TV show *The Gong Show*? This theme party is a revision of an old favorite.

First, you need to set up a panel of judges. It will be their job to decide how long a performance will last. You'll want to provide them with an instrument to signal their displeasure.

Next, prepare for the talent part of your evening. This Gong Show is different because you tell the person, or group, what their talent will be. You might wish to come up with different ideas and place them in a grab bag. Examples include singing, dancing, cheering, baton twirling, or anything else associated with "talent". Make sure you keep within good taste, but be creative. The more creative you are, the more fun everyone will have. Another example would be to give a group a song and tell them to come up with their own words. You could also provide different props for added fun.

End the evening with an awards presentation for best talent, worst talent, most creative, etc. And of course, food and beverages throughout the evening will only add more to your Gong Show Talent Night.

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## **TV Night<sup>1</sup>**

What are some favorite campus-wide television shows? The Simpsons, Monday Night Football, Saturday Night Live, Late Night with David Letterman, etc. Invite guests to a place where everyone can watch a favorite TV show. Make it a weekly event. This is a great, relaxed way for a group to get to know each other.

For the late night shows, have someone record them, then show them later. For example, every Tuesday night could be David Letterman Night. Show an episode from the previous week...without commercials. Of course, if you don't have a house, make arrangement in the student center or some other location on campus.

Some residence halls even record episodes of their favorite soap operas, then show them at the same time every week when everyone can watch them. Soap operas are amazingly short when you don't watch the commercials.

What ever you do, the possibilities are endless when using a VCR. Oh, and be sure to plan for the popcorn and drinks. Have fun!

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# Viva Las Vegas<sup>1</sup>

Have you seen the Elvis movie *Viva Las Vegas*? Well this theme party is based on the King of Rock 'n Roll and his great movie and singing career.

Have all of your guests dress as Elvis impersonators. It will be up to them to decide if they want to portray Elvis as a young man, or more like him in his later years...Remember the controversy concerning the postal stamps? Speaking of stamps, you could give Elvis stamps away as souvenirs during the party, or even mail invitations using his special stamp.

During the party, you of course are playing favorite Elvis hits...*Jail House Rock*, *Heart Break Hotel*, and *Blue Suede Shoes* to name just a few. How about a few Elvis movies playing such as *Blue Hawaii* and *Viva Las Vegas*.

Then, end your evening of rock 'n roll with some fun contest such as best and worst dressed...best impersonator...be creative and have fun!

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## **Warm-Ups<sup>1</sup>**

These ideas will get participants better acquainted. Use these ideas during new member orientations, alumni events and parent's days. Many Halls have adapted these quick routines for use with some of the party ideas in this kit. As ice-breakers, these five activities are quite effective.

### **Cartoon**

Each participant writes on a slip of paper the cartoon character that best depicts her/his personality and why. All slips of paper are put in a hat. Each person draws one slip, reads it aloud to the group and group members try to guess who it describes.

### **Passing Candy**

Pass a bag of candy (like M&Ms) and have everyone take some. Once everyone has taken some candy, have them share one piece of information about themselves for each piece of candy they took.

### **Nicknames**

Everyone should make a list of all the nicknames they have ever had. Each participant must then explain how he/she earned the nickname, and tell personal feelings about the nickname.

### **Birth Order**

Mill around and find 4-5 other people who have the same birth order in their family as you. Share with each other what was the advantage/disadvantage of your birth position.

### **Reception Line**

Divide everyone into two groups, have them stand facing each other. Each talks to the person across from them until signaled. At the signal, the person at the end of the line moves to the other end. Consequently, everyone has a new person with whom to talk. Start the participants with a certain topic.

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# White Elephant<sup>1</sup>

(Webster's definition: Any object that its owner no longer wants to keep but that others may want to own or buy.)

This is a great function for any occasion...a mixer j...an exchange between a new member class and their big brother/sister...a date party for a fraternity or sorority...any function will be complemented by this fun event.

Here is what you do:

Invite everyone to bring one small item that they own, yet never use and/or don't want. Have them wrap their item in white tissue paper (or newsprint). They must not let anyone know what is under their wrapping. When your guests arrive have them place their white elephant in one central location, preferably in a casual room where everyone can gather.

Once all your guests have arrived, have them gather around in a casual format sitting on couches, chairs, or even the floor. Make a grab bag that contains a piece of paper with a number for every guest. For example, if you have thirty guests, you want pieces of paper numbered 1 through 30. Go around the room and have each guest take a number. Hint: the higher the number, the better.

The person with the first number gets to pick and unwrap one of the white elephants. Then the second person, then the third person, etc. There is a catch though: if a person doesn't like what they got, or they see something they like more, they can force a trade with anyone who has gone before them. If you're last, you basically can choose anything you want; if you're first, don't get too attached to what you got, you're probably going to lose it and end up with something else.

Have fun with this one. Halls have laughed for hours into the evening, changing and exchanging others' white elephants. Who knows, you might actually end up with something you wanted!!

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## Whose Line Is It Anyway?<sup>1</sup>

If you get the Comedy Channel, you may be familiar with the popular British game show, *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* This show features comedians participating in a variety of improvisational games that just beg to be activities at a social event. Here are a few of our favorites.

*The Party:* Several individuals posing as party guests have been assigned roles of famous characters to act out. The party hosts have a limited amount of time to meet their guests and guess their real identity.

*Sound Bites:* Participants must ad-lib dialogue to an old movie or video that is being projected on a big screen television with the sound turned off.

*What is it?:* Several teams are all given strange objects for which they have to act out a potential use. A timekeeper moves the acting from team to team to keep the pace moving quickly.

*Freeze Tag:* Audience members throw out a style of a movie and a situation for the participants to act out. Participants create a scene based on this information. Other participants can call “freeze” at any time, stop the action, move into the scene themselves, and send it on a whole new tangent. Fast-paced and fun!

*On the Line:* Several participants form a single file line facing the audience. Audience members then shout out types of characters for the participants to act out. Example: person you least want at your wedding. A moderator then calls out a participants’ name. When called, they step out from the line and act out their idea for the characterization.

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## Win, Lose or Draw<sup>1</sup>

Secure a few flip chart easels and plenty of white flip chart paper. Get some of those mombo-sized markers. Place chairs or couches around the room, facing the easels. Select teams. Play.

All you need to do is follow the same format as the TV show. A group will need to select the words or phrases that the teams will draw during the event. Consider cutting words and phrases out of campus magazines or newspapers. Hall-related items are usually fun for people to try to draw. Campus organizations as well as the phrases and sayings particular to your campus and Hall community are good clues as well.

Compete with different teams. Win prizes. This is a good warm-up exercise before a dance, game or other campus or Hall event. Some Halls have utilized this event as a **study break activity** between halls. Some Hall communities have done this during Hall Week. Campus pledge classes have used this idea to get better acquainted. Some students have done this in a residence hall, or other campus facility. It's an event that everyone enjoys doing or watching.

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## Woodstock Returns<sup>1</sup>

If you were the organizers of Woodstock, what would you have planned to make the historic event even more memorable? Music, of course. Food, obviously. Frisbee, sure. Tie-Dyeing, most definitely. Hackey-sac fun, probably. Bead stringing, groovy. Ten bands from different cultures and folk singers playing from early afternoon until late evening, yes!

Galvanize your interfraternal friends...combine your events for this Hall orchestrated, all-campus inclusive activity. Talk to your parents, your professors and friends to discover the mood, the magic, the spirit that was Woodstock. Read some articles about the event. When you feel ready, plan a return to Woodstock for your Hall community.

This is one of the best activities around that brings students and faculty together in a non-academic, social setting. Although the event is educational, it is a fantastic time for everyone involved. Be sure to involve faculty as much as possible early on so that you as the modern-day planners are able to recapture the feelings of the original event.

Check with university and community officials to see what the best site for the event might be. Be sure the noise of the bands will not disturb the neighbors. Check with local police about security and safety. Sponsors for the event could provide the picnic/BBQ food, the white T-shirts for tie-dyeing and some of the other event necessities.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from NIC Theme Party Kits, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Funded by FIPSE, US Dept. of Education