



Phi Sigma Epsilon Delta Alumni Association



Vol. 8 No. 1

Spring 1998

Phi Sigs-Delta Chapter – The Fifth House

On March 9, 1987, I watched sadly as the bulldozers razed the House I knew as home for 3 years, the fifth and last Phi Sig House, located at 1509 Second Street in Charleston. What a sad and ignoble ending for such a proud and historical building that stood for 31 years – that in itself is a testament to its quality of construction workmanship. It was often referred to as "The Bomb Shelter."

Prior to the construction of this House, the Phi Sigs occupied a large 3-story home at 1431 Ninth St. As highlighted by its personal history in the Spring 1995 Newsletter, this House still stands, and actually looks quite well today as a student occupied house. In a recent interview with Claud ("Bud") Sanders ('56), then president of Phi Sigma Epsilon in its transition from Ninth St. to Second St., he expressed the joyous sentiment everyone felt in moving to the new fraternity house. Not only were they moving into a brand new House, they were leaving behind a House that apparently had many problems. According to Bud, the House was "a mess." To continue quoting him, "it had mildew all over the walls and the shower made the guys want to shower elsewhere, anywhere." I could immediately relate to that situation, as the first floor shower at 1509 Second St. in the late sixties was not a pretty site either. Fumes apparently were an additional problem in the House and it became a refrigerator in the winter for those living there.

In his capacity of Dean of Men at EIU in the 40's and 50's, it became incumbent upon Rudy Anfinson to perform inspections on all fraternity houses yearly. The Phi Sig House on Ninth St. was always the worst one. According to Bud "they were last in house-keeping, but first in sports and academic achievement." Did you say academic achievement? Yes, I did! Phi Sigma Epsilon had a number of impressive trophies garnered for that achievement in the trophy case until its demise. Most of the membership thought it could never be renovated, and at that point in 1954 the decision was made by the membership to pursue the construction of a new fraternity house. From the June 22, 1955 Daily Eastern News, the quote of PSE President Bud Sanders pretty well summed it up: "We were not at all sad at leaving the old house." His best recollection of what the old Phi Sig house on Ninth St. sold for – about \$7,000.

The PSE Alumni Assn. in 1955, then headed by Phi Sig alumnus H. Nolan Sims, a Mattoon banker, secured the financing for the new Phi Sig house at 1509 Second St. Again, from the June 22, 1955 Daily Eastern News, the article headline "Work started on \$40,000 new frat house for Phi Sigs." A picture of the groundbreaking states "Nolan Sims, president of the Phi Sigma Epsilon alumni association turns the first scoopful of dirt in the groundbreaking ceremonies of the new Phi Sig fraternity house. Looking on are President Robert G. Buzzard (right) and Claud Sanders, president of the fraternity." The actual date of groundbreaking was June 2, 1955 and "The construction is the first house ever built by a fraternity or sorority in the history of Eastern", the article goes on to say.

We don't know how the design for the House came about – whether it was price determinative, or a design put forth by the Charleston contractor, Owen Brosam, or a design based around the number of people expected to live there or a combination of all three

scenarios. We also don't know how the Second St. location was chosen, but perhaps the first sentence halfway through the article in the June 22, 1955 paper offers a clue. "The 'dream house' will be located on Second street, and will be far removed from the other fraternity and sorority homes." Continuing on it states "It will be a two-story building with nine rooms upstairs housing four members each, and the officers are scheduled to live downstairs. The housemother will occupy an apartment consisting of two rooms. Besides the meeting rooms and completely furnished lounge, a modern kitchen is also included in the plans. Complete cooking facilities plus all new appliances are planned for the fortunate occupants. To add to the luster, the house will be covered with stucco with halite underneath. This material will cause the building to be almost 100 percent fire-proof." Bud did not remember that they ever had that housemother that would have had her own living area, and in a later article from the Oct. 19, 1955 Daily Eastern News, the statement that "The two-story modern house will be able to furnish accommodations for 44 men" was made. With nine rooms upstairs and officers and housemothers room downstairs, the complement of 44 men is fulfilled, that being 4 men per room. It's hard to believe that 4 men were sardined per room in 2 double bunks, because in my tenure there over 3 years, we only had 3 per room (1 triple bunk) and that was crowded then.

Fortunately for the fraternity, the contractor finished the House before he went into bankruptcy at a later date. A Sept. 21, 1955 article in the Daily Eastern News states that "Phi Sigma Epsilon, the oldest fraternity on campus, will move into their new ultra-modern home on Oct. 8," but a Dec. 14, 1955 article rebuts that by noting that "Eastern's oldest fraternity became the first organization to build a residence exclusively for fraternity use and occupied the home last November 10." Dedication ceremonies were to be held on Saturday,

continued on page 2



In 1979 a new gabled roof was put on the Phi Sig house with all the work being done by the Phi Sigs themselves.

continued from page 1

Dec. 17, at the Phi Sig house. A description in the Oct. 19, 1955 paper describes the interior colors and furnishings, stating that "On the second floor the house has 11 bedrooms which are painted green and yellow alternately. Downstairs the house furnishes a study, meeting room, separate business offices, and eating space. The Phi Sigs are now going to eat right in the fraternity house. The living room and the library are painted a two-tone green. New furniture for the house has been purchased, also. Black-and-white chairs will adorn the living room. To add color, a red sofa that will seat eight people was also purchased. This two-story house with the new furnishings will probably furnish a great deal of comfort to its inhabitants for some years to come."

At the time, tuition was \$35 per quarter and the biggest problem they had after moving to 1509 Second St., according to Bud, was when the phone bill came in. There were always many unclaimed calls on it, so individual members would arbitrarily pay for a few calls here and there, until it was settled. In our days, the House always got stuck with the unclaimed bills. The new neighbors for the Phi Sigs to the north and south generally accepted them, although probably for different reasons. To the north was the Burger King fast food establishment operated by that legendary restaurateur, Dale Hoots, or as he was better known, Dale of Burger King, probably named after somebody had watched Lawrence of Arabia earlier. To the south was an elderly gentleman named John Gerhardt, who tolerated the Phi Sigs fairly well on alternating dry and wet days, the latter being the preferred method of choice, I'm sure. Speaking of alcohol, it apparently was not much of a problem except for an occasional occurrence in the House, but was not exacerbated by the presence of lockable refrigerators in the rooms, as was the case in our heyday.

Leaving those original days behind, we now flash ahead to the days I can relate to. Over the years, many additional colors of paint were brushed or rolled onto the individual room walls. Carpet was added to some rooms and eventually the sliding birchwood closet doors in each room were removed, either because they did not slide properly or that their removal opened up the room somewhat more. The toilets always experienced a myriad of problems, while the showers exhibited colors reminiscent of an atoll coral reef, until the worms (Pledges, in this case) could scour the varied old and new life forms from the walls. As in the Phi Sig house on Ninth St., the heating and cooling system worked about as well in this House. The single-pane, steel-frame, swing-out windows (1 per room - 2 on corner rooms) were made for maximum inefficiency, as there was often a frost layer over the entire interior of the window in the winter. The cooling system for the room consisted of opening that window (unscreened), thereby insuring that anybody taking Entomology that quarter would be guaranteed to fulfill their collection requirements. The hot, humid, summer-like days, coupled with a flat, black tarpitch roof on the House made it unbearably hot and precipitated many treks to Roc's, Chink's, Ike's, Sporty's, 17 Club, Rendezvous, Elsie's (in Sigel on Sunday) or any kegger going, to sufficiently cool off or make sleep easier to achieve. The kitchen of our time was not

a kitchen anymore, although remnants of cabinets and a stove stood valiantly by, signifying their role in an earlier day. Now was the age of the fast-food craze, although it should have more properly been called leisurely-produced food craze. Most was pretty slow - but it was fresh off the grill. Remember the old dinosaurs - Snappy's (with Armpit Annie at the grill and burnt fries), Sandy's (the big Scotsman - now Hardee's), Burger King (home of the one-sided hamburger and the coke-bottle lensed hamburger smasher), Coffee Time (or as it was better known - Eat and Run), Walt's (great breakfasts - now Marty's), Ko-op, Short Stop (now Domino's Pizza), Country School (count the number of rings in 5 minutes on the neon school bell), Owl's Diner (home of the 99-cent Vegetable Plate dinner), Pagliai's Pizza (great pizza) and many other uncounted eateries.

The furniture in the House was a mix of relatively modern vinyl and chrome living room pieces, including several nice sofas, a walnut (Amish crafted) trophy case, a maple or birch memorial bookcase, a cabinet radio/record player (that knew Under My Thumb and the theme music from The Good, The Bad and The Ugly by memory) and various coffee tables. Then there was the early-attic motley assortment of behemoth, well-worn, donated sofas and chairs, molded fiberglass meeting room chairs and the old homemade meeting room table. It affectionately doubled as the all-night poker table and the table made infamous for its role in such notable Hell Week games as Cuckoo and the Oyster Toss (Nui). Its primary responsibility however, was as the seat of power for the officers during the weekly Monday night meetings, from which direction for the fraternity emanated and counsel (that's the kind word) for the pledges was dispensed.

In 1979, the PSE active body approached the PSE Alumni Assn. about putting a new gabled roof on the Phi Sig house and insulating the existing roof with a new deck on top of that roof, thereby affording a badly-needed storage area. The new pitched or gabled roof would be installed directly over the existing afore-mentioned flat roof, with all the work being done by the Phi Sigs themselves, with oversight and guidance provided by Austin Opp ('79), an Industrial Technology major at Eastern. After repeated assurances of its feasibility and the necessary legal requirements completed, the work was begun and completed on schedule, on budget and the workmanship was excellent. Just as important, the promised additional monthly payments for this project were made to the PSE Alumni Assn. until it was free of the mortgage.

The Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Assn. was instrumental in providing the last Phi Sig house to its undergraduates in 1955, roof improvements by and for its undergraduates in 1979 and a final interior improvement project for its undergraduates in 1985, unfortunately just prior to the ultimate demise of the fraternity at EIU. On March 11, 1987, the last truckload of debris was hauled from 1509 Second St. as I watched and took pictures.

The legacy of the PSE House had endured at one location or another since September 1, 1930, but the real legacy is entwined between the memories in our minds and the joys in our hearts at having had the experience of living at or belonging to one of the Houses as a proud member of Phi Sigma Epsilon.

PSE South Reunion – Frost Nips Our Buds

October 18, 1997 started out like any other beautiful Fall-perfect day; abundant sunshine, beautiful tree colors and a wonderful setting on a rural homestead with country charm, barns and acreage. Such were the amenities offered to the Phi Sigs for the South Reunion at the home of Larry Carli, just outside of Edwardsville, IL. This was projected to be an old-fashioned facsimile of an outdoor kegger, many of which I'm sure we all can recollect at one time or another. Sad to say, it did not attract the number of Brothers and wives that we had hoped for, but those in attendance did have a great time. Besides the host Larry Carli and his wife Donna, there was Ken Gusewelle and wife Sue, Mike Edwards and wife Joyce, Paul Klopfenstein and wife Carla, Bill Granger and wife Lynn, Steve Ringhofer, Bob Colter and Gary Brinkmeyer.

After conversing over beers during the afternoon, the outdoor dinner was set up from the potluck food contributions, while the sunset signaled time to start up the campfire in a firepit. With the beautiful, clear, starry sky overhead, it began to get a bit nippy and progressed downward from there, such that sweatshirts, jeans and jackets were not enough to keep warm as the evening went on. Our chairs and their occupants kept whittling closer to the manicured hot coals in the pit that belched forth flames when stoked or when another log was added. Then, probably around 10 p.m., it hap-

pened. Bill and Lynn Granger had just returned from another earlier engagement with friends and were shaking hands and laughing. When Bill noticed what he perceived to be the apparent demise of our little campfire, he immediately went to the rescue with about a 1/2 cord of new wood on the fire, while exclaiming "___, let's put some ___ wood on this fire and get some heat going."

In a short time, with temperatures approaching cremation levels, the chairs and their occupants were hurriedly making retreats to the rear. Whenever the flames would get any lower than 4-5 feet and you couldn't read a book 15 feet away from the epicenter, Bill would unload again from the wood pile, while exhorting similar incantations to the gods of the cold. This went on until the early morning hours, at which point liquid antifreeze negated the need for such a large bonfire, and it settled back down to the ember state. With the volume of embers present, it continued to crank out major heat to our lower extremities, while our upper extremities suffered the indignity of having frost settled upon them. The kegger broke up at about 3 a.m. and everyone went their separate ways, with memories of the hilariously fun evening nicely stored away with those memories of past events from EIU days. Larry and Donna, you were wonderful hosts and Al Ortegren, we'll get you to the next South Reunion.

PSE Tidbits

– The annual PSE Alumni Assn. Homecoming meeting that was to be held at noon on October 25, 1997 in the McDonald's Room at the University Union, was held instead at the home of Gary Brinkmeyer. It seems that the owner of the McDonald's franchise located in the Union decided that it wasn't worth his time to stay open on Homecoming Day because of decreased business, but failed to contact anyone with reserved rooms in the premises. After the Homecoming parade was over and a group of Phi Sigs were ready to head for the meeting, a phone call from the Union from Steve Dawson (Gopher), who was there to attend the meeting, notified us that the doors were locked to the McDonald's restaurant. After getting directions to my house (Brink's) we promptly began the meeting and therein elected Steve to the PSE Board. Listed below is the compilation of the Board for the 1997-1998 year, ending or continuing in November 1998: Jim Luthe, President; Gary Brinkmeyer, Vice President; Jeff Moore, Treasurer; Ron Eichhorn, Kirk Davis, Marv Randolph, Tom Swanson, Boone Chaney, Dick Swing, Steve Dawson.

– The ongoing Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) rivalry between EIU and Illinois State will get another test when the two teams meet on Homecoming Day at EIU on October 17, 1998 at 1:30 p.m. at O'Brien Stadium in Charleston. This is always a great game and the pre-game tailgate festivities begun several years ago get more popular each year. Discussion within the PSE Board has even suggested that the tailgate area might become a site for the annual PSE

Homecoming meeting, now that we apparently don't have the EIU Union availability anymore. With some additional ideas ensuing, it may well be a way of proverbially "killing two birds with one stone," that is 1) a convenient meeting place and 2) a chance for attending Brothers to visit and/or interact while enjoying some great food at our own site. It could happen – what do you think of it? Let us know!

– PSE Alumni Assn. quarterly Board meetings are just that – an attempt to bring the whole Board together, including the out-of-Charleston members, four times per year, typically on a Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. This affords the greatest possibility of most membership attendance and has worked fairly well in the past. However, we wish to point out to all of you that we welcome each and everyone to these meetings and we are enclosing the dates of the meetings through the summer. The August Board meeting basically is the Picnic Lunch/Awards Presentation that we host for the PSE Student Award recipients and the meeting dates for the November '98 and February '99 meetings will be announced in the Fall Newsletter. We would also like to invite anyone to the above-noted Picnic/Awards to converse with those present and enjoy the catered meal with us. There is always plenty to go around, except for the to-die-for brownies. Those are first-come, first-served. The upcoming meeting date for the PSE Spring meeting is June 14, 1998 at Gary Brinkmeyer's house, 910 Tenth St., Charleston, IL (217) 345-4684. The Picnic/Awards function is Sunday, August 23, 1998 at Sister City Park – contact me for details at the above number.

E-mail Addresses

With the advent of electronic mail (e-mail) and its phenomenal popularity, several requests have come forth that we publish e-mail addresses in the newsletter. If you have one and would like it included, send it to the PSE Alumni Assn. and we will endeavor to publish them in each forthcoming issue. The latest names and e-mail addresses that I have are:

Rick Ratliff – rcr@beecher.will.k12.il.us
 Rich Heineken – kkjlr@juno.com
 Ron Eichhorn – RONEIC@SAFECO.com
 Dan Endsley – <endmark@primenet.com>
 Scott E. Brown – scottbrown2@juno.com
 Rick Schwebke – kirkcamp@dnet.net
 John Ziebarth (changed e-mail) – ziebarth@nas.nasa.gov
 Francis J. Gates – jjjjj@webtv.net
 Mel Medder – mmedder@aol.com
 Tim McCaughey – tmccaughey514@aol.com
 Jan O. Alms – galaxyjan@hcl.net
 Jeff Estes (changed e-mail) – jestes@isi.com

Brothers Eternal

The Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association is once again saddened to report to you the death of a number of Brothers of the Heart from over the years. Let us however, take solace in the fact that we are better for having known them.

Thomas O. Petty	Tony A. Reed
Irvin V. Singler	Stanley W. Gibson
Robert C. Waddell	Howard E. Gibbs
Richard C. Vaughan	

Missing Brothers – Do You Know Where They Are?

In the Fall 1997 PSE Newsletter a listing of 29 PSE Brothers was highlighted, with a request that you receiving this Newsletter help us locate or notify us about anyone on this list, whether living or deceased. Your response was great! We added the names Jim Acklin, Jerry Boles, Gerald C. Ditman and Greg Brenningmeyer to the address list and we were notified that Charles R. Barth, Ben F. Edman and Reno Bianchi were deceased. Seven corrections to our address composite out of 29 listings is about a 25% rate of response and indicates that 1) people do read the Newsletter and 2) that you are willing to share that information with the PSE Alumni Assn. We thank you on both counts! But we still have a lot of missing individuals and we would like to find them or find out about them, in the case of those now deceased. If you know the whereabouts of anybody listed below, even if it's only the city with no address, please let us know, so we can fill the voids in the PSE Address List.

William D. Cavins	George A. Daugherty	Warren S. Fatland
Darrell M. Chapman	Kevin Dahl	Verlon R. Ferguson
Burton W. Clark	Howard C. Deahl	Edward H. Ferrish
Jack R. Clements	Eugene R. Deverick	John W. Feutz
Frank N. Consiglio	Dan Downs	Sam Forzley
Jack A. Couch	Robert J. Drolet	Larry G. Freeman
Fred L. Creamer	Bruno Ejankowski	G. Robert Frost
William E. Couch	Charles A. Elliot	Jeff Gibbons
James R. Cummings	John M. Evey	Philip A. Gibson
Bob L. Daniels	Donald R. Farnsworth	Arthur L. Glad

Britt's Wall

Gordon C. Britton ('72) died on June 12, 1995, in a freak electrical accident while working for his brother's electrical contracting company in California. An eloquent remembrance of Britt, written by his mentor Dan Thornburgh of the EIU Journalism Dept., recalls Britt's rise to become an editor for the Eastern News in the early '70's, and was published in the Fall 1995 EIU Journalism Alumni Paper. A Gordon Britton Memorial Fund had already been established at that time and there was to be an "Editors Wall" memorial dedicated at a future date, listing all of the Eastern News editors, including a memorial plaque to Gordon Britton. The Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Assn. recently made a donation to that memorial in Britt's memory. Several weeks ago, Nancy Britton, now an English teacher at EIU, presented our check to a group representing the re-dedication of the Buzzard Lab School for inclusion in the Editor's Wall memorial for Gordon Britton. If anyone else would like to donate to his memorial, they can send tax-deductible donations to the Gordon Britton Memorial Fund at EIU Foundation, Charleston, IL 61920 or they can be sent directly to Nancy Britton, 709 Timothy Ct., Charleston, IL 61920, who will then channel them to the Britton Fund.

SEVENTH ANNUAL STUDENT AWARDS

As you may well know by now, the Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association has embarked on an annual Student Awards program to financially assist identified children of former Phi Sigs (P.S.E., that is), Delta Chapter at Eastern Illinois University. The Association has been able to award grants totalling almost \$21,000 the past 7 years.

With the receipt of this Newsletter, eligibility is open for you to submit to the P.S.E. Alumni Association, the names of children who will be attending EIU in Fall 1998 or those already in school as full-time undergraduates.

The cutoff date for submission of the Student Award Information questionnaire form in this newsletter is July 1, 1998. Upon

receipt and verification of children attending or about to attend EIU, notification will be forwarded to you regarding the Student Award. Only one monetary award will be granted per family. This monetary grant is free of all payback and has no provisions as to how it must be used. Additionally, it is restricted by age to those 25 or younger and the PSE Board also reserves the right to make discretionary exceptions to the above-noted guidelines on a case-by-case basis.

Further inquiry may be addressed to the attention of the Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association, P.O. Box 931, Charleston, IL 61920. Please be sure to send your address and telephone number.

STUDENT AWARDS INFORMATION

ALUMNUS INFO.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____

Year Graduated from EIU _____

Years Attended EIU-19____ to 19 ____

PHI SIGMA EPSILON INFO.

Pledge Class Year _____

Active Member-19____ to 19 ____

STUDENT INFO.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____ SSN. _____

Projected EIU Start Date (Semester) _____

Projected EIU Graduation _____



Phi Sigma Epsilon
Delta Alumni Assn.
P.O. Box 931
Charleston, IL 61920

Homecoming
October 17, 1998
Illinois State University