



Phi Sigma Epsilon Delta Alumni Association



Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas

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Gary Brinkmeyer – Editor psebrink@mchsi.com

Fall 2014

PSE Alumni Assn. 85th Reunion - June 12-14, 2015

Seven months from now, we Phi Sigs will be in the throes of celebration amongst those friends and Brothers we befriended in school at Eastern Illinois University. The event is the much anticipated gathering of as many members of the Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Assn. as we can assemble. The date is that noted above, which is a Friday-Sunday timetable and the location is the totally refurbished/new ownership Unique Suites Hotel or U-Hotel, as it is now called. This hotel is the grand central station for our Saturday evening banquet and program, as well as our home-away-from-home for the weekend. Okay, here is the critical information you need to know to make your experience at this Reunion a pleasurable one:

Rooms and Rates:

For your home-away-from-home for the weekend, here is the information you must be aware of. The PSE Alumni Assn., has a block of 50 rooms secured for our guaranteed use before they are released to the general public. You **must reserve a room 30 days prior** to the event date-after that date they will be released to the general public. You might get lucky within that 30-day window and still get a room, but I wouldn't push your luck. There are two levels of room rates and most of them are at the level called Executive rooms. The Executive rooms are rooms that have been totally refurbished-new paint/wall coverings, new furnishings including beds, new carpeting, plumbing upgrades, AC upgrade, pretty much everything. **Our group rate** for that level of room is **\$86.49 per night and you must reserve it through the hotel to receive that rate.** The phone number to make that reservation is **(217) 348-8161** and **you must tell them that you are affiliated with the PSE Alumni Assn.** The other room level that is available to us, but in lesser numbers, is called the Standard room. These too, have new beds, but still retain older furnishings, dated appearance and not brought up to the level of Executive rooms. The rate for a Standard room is **\$70.49 per night, and again you must call the hotel direct and note your affiliation.** There is also one two-room suite that is available

for our group and it, like the Executive rooms, has been thoroughly upgraded. It goes for **\$145 per night and again call the hotel direct.** There is another two room suite and the hotel has already comp offered that for our use as a Hospitality Room. We are allowed our own alcohol in conjunction with that hospitality room and our own hotel rooms. We are **Not Allowed** to carry our alcohol from our rooms or the Hospitality Room to the Pool area or the outside patio area, adjacent to the Brickhouse Bar. Our hospitality suite is located approximately where our previous PSE Alumni hospitality room was located. With each room reservation, you are entitled to the **FREE hot breakfast** that is provided between 6 AM-10:30 AM each day. Additional guests who are not staying at the hotel can partake in the breakfast for a flat \$6.95 fee. I have been apprised by the hotel, that **as of now, you are open to start making your room reservations.** I was also told that three rooms have already been reserved for next June, so don't put this off too long. There will be a listing of other hotel/motel room phone numbers at the end of this article. There will not be any special room rates with other hotel/motel units.

Friday evening (June 12th) activities:

As noted and pictured in the Spring 2014 PSE Newsletter, we are planning a Phi Sig gathering at Roc's, the home of many of our yesteryear escapades. I'm not going to issue directions in here, 'cause we all know where it is in the downtown area. We have secured the upstairs area at Roc's (called Top of the Roc) and we will have it to ourselves starting at 6 PM and ending with the last person standing. The Alumni Assn. is not planning on having any snack foods or hors d'oeuvres available, but you can have a seated meal in the downstairs Roc's restaurant adjacent to the old bar or any other fast food, pizza or seated dining facilities in town. There will be ample seating at Top of the Roc and a bar and bartender(s) dedicated to our group. We have a minimum bar tab that we have to meet, but we told them that it would be no problem. Since we can be sitting around in booths upstairs, why don't you think

about bringing some old pictures from our Phi Sig days or old memorabilia that you may have to show off.

Saturday morning (June 13th) activities:

Our resident golf pro (Charlie Henry) is in charge of the Saturday morning golf activities. He has secured the use of the Meadowview Golf Course (near Mattoon) for the morning of Saturday, June 13th, 2015, as part of our Phi Sig activities for the Reunion weekend. As of this time, I do not have any information about tee time(s), costs or making reservations. That will all come out in the earlier Spring 2015 PSE Newsletter.

We know that you Phi Sig ladies that come in with your Phi Sig hubbies have always been left to figure out what to do with while hubby is out doing his thing. For this Reunion, **we are planning a ladies program**, that we hope will allow you to participate in the weekend fun. At the present time, we are not ready to offer up any details, but we will provide that in the early Spring 2015 PSE Newsletter.

Saturday evening (June 13th) activities:

The event of the evening, of course, is the PSE Alumni Assn. Banquet at the newly decorated U-Hotel. It is set to begin at 6:30 PM, following the cash bar that will begin at 5:30 PM. There will be a small bar that will be set up in our Banquet rooms and we will have our own bartender or two, negating the need to go over to the Brickhouse Bar, unless you have need for an exotic drink. The meal will be a buffet style affair with plenty of food for everyone. For those of you who have attended past Reunion Banquets, it is in the same rooms, but they, along with everything else, have been upgraded. The choice of the meal varieties has not been decided yet (plenty of time), but we will post that in the early Spring 2015 PSE Newsletter, along with prices as part of the registration form. As we have progressed in age, we of course need to accumulate less and less "stuff", so we have decided not

to do souvenir favors for the Reunion. I still have a large box of PSE whisky tumbler glasses leftover from the 2010 Reunion. I am planning on bringing them to this Reunion, with the intent of disposing of them for a donation. After the meal portion of the Banquet is over, we will be presenting a short program, similar to what we did in 2010. There will be a guest speaker for each of the decades of our time at Eastern (5-8 minutes each) followed by a photo collage presentation by Jeff Estes (similar to the popular continuous loop of pictures of 2010). All of you can help us out here, by sending pictures or copies of pictures that you think highlight PSE brothers, PSE House or EIU activities, to Jeff Estes or you can just email the pictures to him. It helps to know who is in the pictures and when it was taken, so please keep that in mind. Information for Jeff is as follows:

Jeff Estes
1120 McKenzie Rd.
Lake Helen, FL 32744
(386) 561-9200
Email - JeffEstes@SimplyHomeProducts.com

Additional local hotels/motels

- Days Inn - Charleston (217) 345-7689
- Comfort Suites - Mattoon (217) 235-6745
- Hampton Inn - Mattoon (217) 234-4267
- Holiday Inn Express - Mattoon (217) 235-2060
- Super 8 Motel - Mattoon (217) 235-8888

The Annual Phi Sig Golf Outing - May 31, 2014

I sit here writing about this year's version of the Phi Sig golf outing, while this year's version of the polar vortex is moving into almost the entire continental United States. The first big blast of winter is a good time to dredge back some memories of the fun that 19 Phi Sig Brothers had in late May. They did that while chasing after a two-inch diameter white ball that is supposed to fall into a four-inch



you have hit it with a specially-shaped steel ingot attached to a shaft. Sounds simple enough, but I have often heard that the game of golf is called "Golf" because "F ____" was already taken.

May 31st was the default date for this outing, which was again held at the Railside Golf Club in Gibson City, IL, and hosted again by Gene and Sue Everett. The originally planned date of May 17th

diameter hole in the ground, after

Kneeling L to R: Jerry Brendel, Dwayne Nyckel, Boone Chaney, Tim Kearns, Jerry Nyckel, Gene Everett
Seated: Dave Carrell, Dick Swing, Ken Dennison, Jim Luthe, Ron Eichhorn, Darrell Brown
Standing: Dick Carpenter, Rick Tate, Bill Brown, Tom Brown, Steve Houghton, Tom Swanson, Wally Kos

had to be cancelled, because

the golf course had been pummeled with 5-6 inches of torrential rain a few days earlier, leaving parts of the course under water. Since I was not a participant in this year's event, I am relying on notes from Tom Swanson and Gene Everett to craft this article, with a picture from Sue Everett. Thanks to all of you for helping me.

The weather on that Saturday was as good as it gets in May, with bright, sunny weather, temperatures in the 80's, and quoting Swanny, "windy as hell". Now for some, that wind can be an asset, while I'm sure for many others, it is a detriment. It probably depends on the directional layout of the different holes on the course and the number of "12 oz. curls" you've had traversing the greens. The tee time of 10 AM allowed for enough time to warm up the morning air, while a shotgun start enabled the group to finish by about 1:30 PM. Since there were 19 Brothers golfing, they comprised 4-foursomes and 1-threesome.

After conquering the course and retreating back to the Everett acreage for some additional socializing, the prizes were awarded for the efforts of the winning teams. I say teams, because there was a 3-way tie for 1st place. The tie was broken by a blind draw and the winning team members all received a

sleeve of golf balls, no doubt replacing some of those lost earlier in the day. In addition, the last place team also received the same prize, thereby validating the old axiom from pledgeship, that we are "all equal". With that behind them, what would a social be without burgers and brats, once again provided by the Everett's. They also provided hotel accommodations to Boone and Jim Luthe for Friday and Saturday night and breakfast for everyone who showed up early on Saturday morning, prior to the 10 AM tee time.

The winning team was comprised of Dick Swing and the Brown relatives, Tom Brown, Bill Brown and Darrell Brown. The other golfers that played were Boone Chaney, Dick Carpenter, Ken Dennison, Ron Eichhorn, Steve Houghton, Jerry Nyckel, Dwayne Nyckel, Jim Luthe, Dave Carrell, Rick Tate, Tim Kearns, Tom Swanson, Gene Everett, Jerry Brendel and Wally Kos.

Because the Phi Sig Reunion is taking place on June 12-14, 2015, it was decided **NOT** to have the Spring golf outing next year. Within the Reunion festivities, there is already a golf outing at the Meadowview Golf Club (near Mattoon) being planned for Saturday morning. More information about that will be coming out in early Spring from your PSE Alumni Assn.

PSE Twenty-Fourth Annual Student Awards

As we approach the quarter-century mark in the Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Assn. Student Award philanthropy, we are hanging on, with just one student receiving the Award for this 2014-2015 EIU school year. Discussion continues to ensue within the Alumni Assn. regarding the transition, once we have reached that endgame point in time and there are no recipients left. For the time being however, our recipient this year is in her sophomore year of college and if all goes well, she should be on track to receive two more Student Awards within the next two years. That is, if her parents abide by the tenets of our requirements and reapply each Spring for that financial award, without our reminder. If that happens, and I alluded to that at our Award luncheon, she would be the first student in our Awards program history to receive the maximum financial award for all four years. Now, we have had several other students receive the Award for the four year time period, but differing circumstances dictated that the full \$500 amount could not be given to each student.

We met again for this Student Award presentation on Sunday, August 17, 2014, at my home in Charleston, IL. The festivities began around 11 AM with the pre-luncheon preparations to ready our gathering for the luncheon and program. Although it was pleasant weather, the threat of an impending rain precluded holding the luncheon outside, so we moved the cars to the street,

set up tables in my garage and attached the PSE banner to the garage exterior (for later pictures). The luncheon was served around Noon and consisted of the standard fare that we have enjoyed for

several years, with the exception of the iced brownies that I used to bake. I found that our local food market, with a bakery, baked and iced some awesome Texas Sheet cake squares for a reasonable price, so I have opted for them. To date, I have never had to dispose of any of those squares. Following the luncheon, we proceeded into the introduction of all those present, both Board members and invited guests. Representing the PSE Alumni Assn. was President Jim Luthe, Boone Chaney and myself (as Treasurer) and my wife, Sharon. Our invited guests were Michelle Fechner and her parents Jim and Janet Fechner of Downers Grove, IL. They shared some information about the



Michelle Fechner, Jim Fechner

goings-on in their busy lives, both in the work environment and personal endeavors, with Michelle updating us on her first year of school and educational interests.

Upon the conclusion of remarks, it was time to once again present a check for 500 dollars to Michelle for her use in this EIU school year.

With the Awards and a bit of PSE and Awards history concluded, we all “let our hair down”

and relaxed around the old pictures, composites (‘80-‘83) and other PSE collectibles that Jim Fechner brought from his home and personal collection. Since the PSE Archives doesn’t have composite pictures from ‘80 through ‘82, I took camera pictures of them for future reference. We also, of course, took Awards photos with the PSE banner backdrop, as we have since the inception of the program. Several of those photos are pictured here as part of this article. Jim has also agreed to help me out with the identifications of many of the Phi Sigs on those composites, where the Brothers only ID’ed themselves by nicknames or other comical idioms, known only amongst themselves. With the afternoon waning on, we concluded the PSE activities and set our sights upon the quarter-century celebration in August 2015.



L to R: Boone Chaney, Michelle Fechner, Jim Luthe, Gary Brinkmeyer

Many of you probably remember the layout of the area surrounding the Phi Sig House at 1509 Second St. On the south side of the House lived our Second St. neighbors, who begrudgingly tolerated us and to the east, the PSE parking lot with the adjacent Coffee Time little restaurant at the northeast corner. Outside the front of the House was Second St., with the Deep Rock gas station to the right, on the corner of Second and Lincoln Ave., while directly north of the House was the Burger



Gary Brinkmeyer and Dale Hoots

King restaurant, a major contributor to the

folklore of being a “worm” next door. It was owned and operated by a man named Dale Hoots, who was affectionately dubbed “Dale of Burger King”. While my wife and I were dining recently at the Brickhouse Bar (part of U-Hotel complex-site of upcoming Reunion), an elderly gentleman came in with a group of six individuals and seated themselves at a table next to ours. A look of familiarity finally required me to ask if he was who I thought he was. It turned out he was indeed Dale Hoots, as my wife had indicated. He came over to our table and we were immediately transported back to the late ‘60’s in our conversations. He remembered all the meals and ice cream varieties that the “worms” were required to order, buy and return to the actives at the House, while I told him of my recollections of him bringing over leftover trays of burgers that he could not sell, in attempting to close down on a Sunday evening. One of the funniest stories told by Dick Rodie involved Dale, as Rodie attempted to buy a slight variant to a standard sandwich and Dale tried to explain

why he had to pay for two different sandwiches. You just gotta hear Rodie tell it. Anyway, it was a fun diversion back to the past and you can see Dale in the accompanying picture from that evening. By the way, who can remember yelling at the “Bread Man”, as he made early, early deliveries to Burger King from the alley adjacent to the Officers Room?

Congratulations are in order to William L. Robinson, aka “Robo” (‘76), as he ascended to the position of President of the Eastern Illinois University Foundation Board at the annual 2014 Homecoming Weekend three weeks ago. The EIU Foundation is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the Foundation endowments, that provide funding for university departments and scholarships for approximately a thousand-plus different students at EIU. For the past four years, he has served on that board, two years as it’s Treasurer and one year as it’s Vice-President, from his home in Scottsdale, AZ, with occasional visits back to EIU. This will be a one year obligation for Bill, with one of his meetings in Charleston occurring around the time of the Phi Sig Reunion in mid-June 2015. Bill is a retired executive from Pepsi and loves living in Scottsdale, AZ, after having moved there from northern California. Congratulations Bill!

Monte Popham (‘79) hosted a “hog roast” on Saturday, June 28, 2014, at his rural lake “outbuilding”, as noted in the email I received on May 26th from Monte. Hog roasts generally conjure up the image of a whole hog being spitted for hours over



Enjoying the hospitality at the lakehouse

cremation-level heat, while you drink beer to excess and periodically check the rotating hog. At one hog roast I viewed in college, an approximate 120 pound hog yielded about 15-20 pounds of uncharred pork that wasn't drier than a popcorn f__t. Monte didn't actually take on that obligation, but opted to buy quantities of 3 or 4 cuts of meat from our local barbecue joint called Smoky's House BBQ, which I personally like and frequent



Front row – L to R: Ted Smith, Pete Kasperski, Monte Popham, Rusty Boone, Jeff Moore
Back row – L to R: Larry Brown, Gary Kling, Bill Robinson, Steve Houghton

periodically. It was great tasting and was accompanied by several different sides and multiple beverages. A number of Phi Sigs from the mid-to-late '70's, some with their wives, and from different states, were able to attend the weekend get-

together at the 19-acre bass-stocked lake on Monte's rural farm acreage. Lots of visiting and some successful fishing took place over a weekend dominated by excellent weather. Some of the wives were spotted cruising the grounds on one of Monte's Quad vehicles and having way too much fun. The accompanying picture identifies this vintage '70's group of Phi Sigs in attendance. Thanks Monte, for hosting a fun gathering for your Phi Sig peers. It genuinely sounded as though everyone was having an awesome time, while recreating many old stories and memories from the past.

The Annual Phi Sig Camp-In, this year being Camp-In 42, was even more successful than past ones, if you measure success by the numbers present. All of our bedrooms in five cabins were filled, even with the unfortunate absence of Charlie and Jeannie Henry, due to a golf commitment in Michigan. It didn't look like we were going to see him there next year either (same golf commitment), because we had originally booked the same third weekend in September as we've always had. The popularity of our campsite must be spreading,



Clockwise from bottom left: Paul Klopfenstein, Mike Goodman, Mike Ellis, Larry Carli, Jerry Nyckel, Gene Everett, Rick Tate, John Ziebarth, Jim Luthe

because we couldn't reserve all the units that we typically reserve due to somebody else getting in before we could. So, we changed our weekend to the fourth weekend of September 2015 (9/25-9/27), which freed up Charlie and Jeannie-it was the only weekend they had free, so an even larger group next year. In addition, this year brought back Scott and Kathy Hahn (their second year) and brought in for the first time, Jerry Nyckel. Jerry also plans on being back next year, maybe with younger brother Dwayne in tow, and stated that he was very impressed with our layout and accommodations. Rounding out the weekend, we also had Saturday late-afternoon, early-evening visits from Dick and Aggie Christman (Danville) and for the first time, Charlie Titus and friend Elda Ueleke, from Charleston. They were pretty impressed with our facilities and especially with the quality of the Saturday evening Fish-Fry, with Corn-on-the-Cobb, multiple sides, desserts and more. Some would say that extra fish is the dessert for them. See accompanying pictures.



Clockwise from bottom left: Aggie Christman, Dick Christman, Mike Goodman, Rick Tate, Charlie Titus, Elda Ueleke

The Spring '68 Pledge Class consisted of eleven men originally, but only ten of them completed their pledgship to go active. That eleventh man was named James G. Miller, but he was better known as the "old man" and maybe other monikers too. He was older (about 35), was married with 1 or 2 kids and commuted back and forth to Danville, while also working in the Printing business. He certainly made a very favorable impression on many Phi Sigs of that era, because he is still fondly remembered. While getting some Phi Sig information recently from the EIU Alumni office, I received an email obituary from them for a James G. Miller. Now although I didn't know Jim well, I did remember that he was in the printing business, was older, and lived in Danville, as stated in the obituary. Thinking that this could be the long-lost "old man" that many remembered, I contacted Wally Kos, who was in that '68 pledge class. I emailed him the obit copy to see what he thought about the picture and information within the obit. Wally believed that it was a good possibility that this was their former pledge brother. I also sent the obit copy to Ron Rami and a non- PSE friend in Champaign, IL, who apparently were close to Jim. They both responded quickly that they were as sure as they could be, that this was their former friend. They, and many others had always wondered what ever became of the "old man". Now at least, they have some closure. I have a link to that obituary, if anybody would like it. Jim passed away on January 2, 2014, at the age of 83.

After the Spring 2014 Newsletter was out online, Dennis Vidoni ('68) sent me some information about having written a couple of short stories in the last year and wondered if we could give him a little exposure. It isn't about making money, as he states that he makes very little from the sale of his books-it is more about telling two good stories, and more than that as he comically noted, "It also makes a nice statement about Phi Sigs being able to write. Not everyone in 1968 would believe that." The first book was entitled "Canoeing the Kaskaskia: A Father and Son Short Story." A quick summary states "Canoeing the Kaskaskia is a real-life account of a father and son as they explore...of Illinois. The voyageurs take one day per year over twenty-three years...to maturity. Along the way the relationship is tested as they are impeded by fallen trees...low water, cows...the county sheriff...Corps of Engineers." You can find it online at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, eBay or order it at local bookstores. The ISBN number is 9781457521508 & SKU is 1457521504. The second book (an eBook) is titled "White Shirts in the Wilderness: A Brothers Survival Short Story." A short summary states "Two brothers, wild and crazy guys...to Canada. They are ill-prepared...two-day store of food. They encounter...their ingenuity is spurred...misstep and misery." Again, you can find it at Barnes & Noble and many other eBook stores. My Canada history tells me I should read this and my familiarity with a similar experience will ensure that I do. The ISBN number is 9781311230553. Dennis lives in Urbana, IL and is retired from the University of Illinois.

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.

Paul D. Cox
Daniel N. Sherrick

Richard O. Laymon