



Cal Delta Spotlight

USC House Corporation of Phi Delta Theta | Summer 2013 | University of Southern California

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USC House Corporation A Word from our New President



Now I know how Gene Bartow felt. In case you're not versed in 1970's trivia, Bartow took over as UCLA's basketball coach when John Wooden retired. Similarly, **Steve Scully '81** has finished a remarkable run as House Corporation

President and I'm succeeding him. Steve led the near miraculous effort to rebuild a burned out shell into the nicest fraternity house on the Row, even offering his personal guarantee to a construction loan to keep funds flowing to the rebuilding effort. It's simply accurate to say that without Steve our chapter house wouldn't be standing today.

With a phenomenally successful chapter now occupying the Row's best house, our focus turns to securing its future. To fund the house construction, our chapter's alumni generously pledged nearly \$2 million to the original capital campaign. Total construction costs came to \$4 million, so today the house has just under \$2 million of mortgage debt.

As it currently stands, the mortgage payments are \$17,500 per month while operating expenses such as utilities, property taxes and maintenance average \$20,000 per month. So total expenses, including loan payments, average \$37,500 per month while revenues from rent payments average \$34,000 per month. Up to this point, the gap has been covered by donations from the five-year pledges made during the rebuilding campaign. But this cash flow is ending as the pledges are paid off.

Therefore the first priority is to make sure we can cover monthly expenses. And more fundamentally, to put the house in a financially sustainable position over the long term, the debt needs to be paid off entirely. High-volume residences like our chapter house typically need a major renovation every 20 years or so. So instead of sending mortgage payments to the bank, experts in fraternity operations tell us that we should be putting at least \$10,000

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Alumni Spotlight: John C. Huck '87

*From the Editor: For this edition of newsletter, we're shining the Cal Delta Spotlight on our Brother **John Huck '87**. From Chicago, IL, John is a two-time Emmy® award-winning anchor for FOX5 News in Las Vegas. Our past Chapter President, he is currently working on his Masters in Communication Management at USC. John recently muscled his way through the Nevada Silverman Triathlon - branded as the toughest course in North America. He is also dedicated to raising awareness and support for the Southern Nevada Alzheimer's Organization, among many charitable efforts. Though May is the busiest time of year for John, he stepped up to the plate for an interview with us. Read on to find out more about our generous and dedicated Cal Delta brother.*



How did you get into Broadcast Journalism?

I actually majored in business at USC but figured out toward the end that I really wanted to pursue this job. So while I was holding down a job at John Hancock, I interned at CNN's Hollywood bureau and got a tape together that was just bad enough to get me my first job in Nebraska. Probably not the smartest way of breaking into the business but it worked.

What type of news do you enjoy reporting on most?

I enjoy the surprise reunions involving our soldiers. Usually, the family is at a baseball game or some event completely unaware and the mother or father returning home is hiding somewhere. The look on the kids' faces of disbelief followed by tears of joy is just terrific. Those stories never get old. I also enjoy when one of our reporters picks up on a story of someone who was wronged, or lost their job, or was scammed and nine times out of ten, we have viewers who email us offering that person a job, or money, or whatever is needed to fix the problem.

How do you spend an average day on the job?

It's usually a nine hour day unless I'm working on a story doing a public appearance on behalf of the station, then it becomes a 12-14 hour day but I'm not complaining because there is always someone else who will do my job for cheaper.

What is the most difficult type of assignment that you receive and why?

Whenever it's a story where children are killed. We had a story here last week where a 15-year-old was killed as he was being robbed of his iPad and then today with the tornadoes in Oklahoma City and many of those killed were kids who were at their school.

Another type of story that is difficult to report but for altogether different reasons is overheated political races. Ultimately, the partisans on both sides are never satisfied with the coverage and they are convinced we are working for the other side. As long as I get emails from both parties, I know we're doing our job.

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Chapter News

President's Message



As California Delta looks back on another busy and rewarding semester it is time to take stock of our accomplishments and lay out our goals for the future. We now have 106 members after recently initiating the Omicron Phikeia class. We were excited to have some alumni at our most recent initiation ceremony, especially David Castilla (Texas Lambda) to watch his son **Nick Castilla** become initiated. Similarly, we were pleased to host chapter alumni and local Phis alike for our annual Founder's Day Dinner.

We again achieved academic excellence and achieved a house average 3.25 GPA, which is higher than both the IFC and All-Men's average and earned the chapter the University's Scholarship Award. We are also proud to have received the Community Service Award, as well as Certificates of Excellence in Risk Management, Membership Recruitment, and Alumni Relations.

Two of our members received prestigious awards this semester: **Daniel Moline** and **Wiley Strahan**. Daniel, our former chapter president, was awarded President of the Year by the University and Wiley was named Undergraduate Student Government Director of the Year.

The semester was also filled with an exciting social calendar. We've held events with all the sororities, ranging from country themed nights to salsa dancing lessons. We also held exchanges with many sororities and held another wildly fun spring formal in Las Vegas.

As always, graduation is a bittersweet time as we say goodbye to our seniors, but we are excited about all their future endeavors. The rest of the active chapter looks forward to a productive summer and another great academic year in the fall.

Yours in the Bond,

Pablo Ortiz

Chapter Spotlight: John Rising



Our Chapter Spotlight, John Rising, from Seattle, WA, is currently working towards his degree as an Aeronautical Engineer. He is the dynamics lead of the USC Rocket Propulsion Laboratory, and may take a trip to Mars one day. Read on to find out more!

What do you enjoy most about being a Cal Delta brother?

Cal Delt's strength is its diversity. You could write a spotlight on each of us and never encounter the same story.

What type of work are you doing with rockets?

I am the dynamics lead of the USC Rocket Propulsion Laboratory (USCRPL), a group of undergrads that designs and builds high powered rockets. Our big project is becoming the first student group to send a rocket to outer space. This rocket has been designed, built, and tested - paperwork permitting, this rocket will fly in September! We also have a lot of other small research projects, including studying solid and liquid fuels, advanced nozzles, and composite pressure vessels. My work with the group focuses on writing computer programs that simulate our rocket motors.

Has this always been your interest or did it develop while in school?

I was always interested in space sciences, but my interest in rocketry developed at

USC. I took a long time to realize what I want to study. In fact, I enrolled at USC as a theatre major! Luckily it didn't take long to realize that I didn't want to work in theatre, and I spent a few semesters as a theatre/physics double major before transferring to mechanical engineering. I still love and stay involved in physics. In addition to being in USCRPL, I lead a (formerly) NASA-funded solar physics research project that studies sound waves in the sun.

Have you given any thought to the Mars colonization program (one way ticket)?

The "one-way ticket" Mars colonization project being developed by Mars One is laughably unrealistic. At best, Mars One is quixotic. At worst, Mars One is a scam. That being said, I would totally join a one-way Mars colonization program.

Do you have any plans yet for after graduation?

I hope to get a Master's in Astronautical Engineering and work for a commercial spaceflight company.

Congratulations to our 2013 Graduates!

Nick Bral
Dustin Byer
Andrew Christopher
Jacob Curry
Sean Gallagher
Matt Garcia
Peter Lee Johnson

Jason Kerns
Tommi Koho
Scott Lindemann
Eli Russell Linnetz
Patrick Liou
Daniel Moline
Andrew Montalvo

Tavish Nanda
JJ Russo
Ali Sheikhpour
Aria Soroudi
Wiley Strahan

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per month into a capital fund to cover a major remodel when the time comes. Never again do we want to see the house in the position it was in before it was closed in 2001 where it had become badly rundown since its last renovation, 26 years earlier, but there was no money to remodel it.

With this in mind, the House Corporation Board is launching a new capital campaign, dubbed *Securing Our Legacy*. When I talk to fellow Phi Deltas, two themes come up repeatedly. First, I often hear the phrase “best years of my life,” referring to our student days in the house. Second, I’m struck by how often alums credit their experience as Phi Deltas for their success in life at least as much as they credit the classes they took in college. These are good considerations to remember as each of us decides on the most generous pledge he can make to the new campaign.

As a USC Phi Delt, you are a member of an elite fraternity at an elite university. The university achieves its success with the help of a \$4 billion endowment. The Phi Delt House achieves it despite a \$2 million debt load. Here is our chance to put our house on a stable financial footing and ensure that we have a chapter house to return to for the rest of our lives. Sure, we all get donation requests from many organizations. But how many give you the opportunity to make such an impact on a cause that made such an impact on your life?

If you have any questions about the new campaign or any other house matter, I’m happy to talk at brucebuettell@yahoo.com or 714-686-7186.

Best Regards,

Bruce Buettell '82

President – USC Phi Delt House Corporation

Securing Our Legacy

Four years ago Phi Delt’s presence at USC became visible once again with a strong group of young chapter members and the opening of our renovated home. This was possible through the hard work of the new members and alumni volunteers and donors. The amount of support that everyone poured out to strengthen the chapter was overwhelming. Now we must band together again to secure our legacy for many generations to come.

Each year since we re-opened the doors, the chapter house has been filled to capacity. It has proven to be the preferred living option for our members. Until now, cash flow from the five-year pledges made to the original construction campaign has filled the gap between money collected from rent and money needed for maintenance and paying our loans. Those pledge payments are now coming to an end. Even with scheduled rent increases to fully reflect the student housing market at USC, we will not have the money required to meet all our financial responsibilities. And longer term, we need to stop sending loan payments to the bank so we can begin building a fund to cover the cost of a renovation that high-volume residences like our chapter house need every 20 years or so.

With this mind, we are undertaking a new capital campaign. This campaign is focused on paying down the debt owed on the house, which currently stands at just under \$2 million, to ensure the place so many of us have called home will be there for USC Phi Deltas in the future. To do so, we need to raise \$1 million. All funds raised will be applied exclusively to debt reduction.

As the campaign continues we will work keep you informed on the progress. You can also visit our website at www.mygreekgift.org/caldelta to find all campaign related documents and make a pledge. For questions, contact our Account Manager, Emily Wood at ewood@thelaurusgroup.net.



The Man Who Saved the Chapter House

By Bruce Buettell '82



I believe it was in 2001, after the chapter had been kicked off campus and closed down due to behavior problems, that Bob visited our boarded-up chapter house. Completely on his own initiative, Brother **Bob Haggstrom '72** checked and found that there was no fire insurance on the House. Acting on his own again, Bob took out a fire insurance policy on the House and paid the premiums at his own expense. Months later a homeless man broke into the house on a cold night, built a fire in the main entry hall

to warm himself and ended up burning the house virtually to the ground. Thanks to the insurance that existed solely because of Bob, the House Corporation received a payout of \$700,000 that served as the foundation for the Capital Campaign that rebuilt the House. You can see that without Brother Haggstrom, it’s virtually certain that we would have lost the House.

Bob also contributed hugely to Phi Delta Theta’s return to USC by offering his palatial home and grounds in Malibu as the site of rush functions when the chapter was getting started again during the recolonization process. We sincerely appreciate Bob, and everything he has done for us.

into the house on a cold night, built a fire in the main entry hall

What has been the most exciting moment in your career so far?

Working at CNN probably provided the most excitement in terms of the amount of breaking news I covered. Being in Haiti when Clinton sent in troops to restore Aristide to power was something to watch. I remember a few times people would shoot at our live shot lights at night, and in one instance, I was interviewing Haitians and the police came running at us with batons swinging. I thought they were coming for us but they were chasing off our interviewees. Needless to say we shot and aired it all.

What is it like to win an Emmy?

Very gratifying. It's a recognition from peers that I'm doing my job. But for the two Emmys I have won, there have been dry years where I wasn't even nominated so I try to keep that in mind. And occasionally a pissed off viewer will email me on some issue and will end his rant with, "What exactly did YOU win an Emmy for????"

As we move further into the age of technology, what is the future for media and journalism?

A lot of hand wringing has been happening on how bloggers and citizen journalists are the future of news and that local news is going the way of the dinosaur. We have seen an erosion of viewers over the years and the some organizations have seen their credibility damaged with less than adequate coverage of their communities; but where do you turn when something big happens?

I'm betting you turned on local or national news, or went to a website maintained by a news organization. If you want to know what's going on in your community, there is no substitute. Plus most advertising revenue is still going to TV stations and it's cheaper for them to produce a newscast than to run a syndicated show where they have to split revenues with the syndicator. So the business model for local news is still very healthy.

Going forward those TV stations with a strong web presence will do fine. Stations will also have to adapt to whatever the next big social media platform is as well. It's no longer about focusing on the next newscast, but also distributing our content through the Internet and smart phones.

What advice can you give our young actives about pursuing a career in your field?

I think with the technology changing so fast in how we gather news, I would tell our actives that they probably need to major in journalism just to keep up with the changes. I would also encourage them to minor in a subject that requires a lot of writing and critical thinking, perhaps political science or international relations.

I would also encourage anyone interested to try and get a summer internship in a smaller market like Palm Springs or Yuma. The staffs are much smaller and interns there do a lot more meaningful work (not picking up the anchor's dry cleaning) and it will be easier for them to build a resume tape than if they intern at one of the LA stations.

How do you spend your free time?

I swim with a masters group several times a week, do quite a bit of mountain biking and golf.

In memory of your father, what can you share with your brothers about his experience with Alzheimer's?

It is an evil disease. If you have a family member with Alzheimer's then treasure every moment because soon they will slip away even as they are physically still with you. I'm fortunate in that my father recognized me up until a few days before his death but it's different for every patient. He was a skilled attorney in his day so it was just very sad to see him struggle with words late in life. He was a great father and also one of the most decent men you'd ever meet.

Why do you feel it is important to maintain a relationship with your Cal Delta brothers after graduation?

Being a Phi Delt was one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. Thankfully through Facebook (find me by searching 'John Chamberlain' and follow me at twitter, @Vegasanchor), I can keep up with quite a few of the guys who were at USC when I was.

There are so many good reasons to maintain those contacts but I think first and foremost is that your brothers like you for who are and not for what you do. I can't say that about everyone I meet. If a fraternity brother I knew at USC lost his job, his wife left him, he hit hard financial times, it wouldn't change the status of our friendship. And I would do whatever I could to help him. That's good to know is that there are people who may not talk to you every day, but still have your best interests at heart.



Competing in a relay team in the Silverman, a triathlon. I did the swimming leg in Lake Mead. 2.4 miles of fun.

Save the Dates!

Friday, August 30: Blue Chip Dinner

On the last night of Rush Week, each fraternity at USC invites the rushees it's interested in to a formal dinner known as The Blue Chip Dinner. It is the most important Rush Week event and is always held at a high-end venue. Today's rushees are more likely to pledge if they see a good alumni turnout because they know it's indicative of a strong house with solid alumni support. So the top houses on the row have turned the Blue Chip Dinner into a big alumni event as well as a key Rush function. Contact the Phi Delts you're in touch with and plan to attend. It's a terrific chance to see your brothers, have a great meal and help bring in a top rush class. Another benefit is seeing the caliber of the actives in the House. It's impressive. Contact **Bruce Buettell '82** at brucebuettell@yahoo.com for information or to RSVP. Location and start time are TBD.

Saturday, November 16: Homecoming Booth

before the USC-Stanford football game. Kickoff time is TBD. The booth opens three hours before kickoff.

All other home football games . . .

Pre-game tailgate next to Tommy Trojan on campus. The past couple years, the chapter has established a tradition of arriving at 5:00 a.m. and setting up its big tailgate party on the most prime spot on campus: right next to Tommy Trojan in front of Bovard Hall. The Phi Delt flag is flying, so you can't miss it. Come by for a beer and enjoy the best tailgating location anywhere.