



Lambda Lyre

Lambda Chapter of Kappa Delta Rho | University of California, Berkeley | Winter 2010

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From the President

by Aaron Burke '00

Welcome to the Winter 2010 Lambda Lyre! I hope your holiday season was one of happiness and joy, and of family and friends. I personally had the opportunity to see some KDR brothers that I hadn't seen in quite a while and really appreciated the chance to share stories and hear the news in their lives.

As we move fully into 2010, I've got some important announcements regarding what has been going on with the Lambda Chapter. A decision was taken by the brothers of the chapter to fully restructure the fraternity. Essentially what this means is that the chapter will become dormant for a short period of time (6-18 months) while we focus on improving the overall fraternity experience for the undergraduates. This process will involve increasing revenue, ensuring that

the chapter house is structurally sound, renovating the bedrooms and common areas of the chapter house, and finally, reorganizing the chapter.

I want to assure everyone that the chapter is in good standing with both the university and with the national fraternity, and will not have any issues with either once the decision to reorganize is made. The reasons behind this move are difficult to fully explain in the space here, but I'll just summarize by saying that the chapter was trending in an unsatisfactory direction on several fronts, and it didn't seem possible to create the strong chapter KDR deserves without starting fresh.

This decision was not an easy one to make by anyone involved, but I am convinced that the long-term results will be wholeheartedly positive. We have a core group of dedicated alumni who are committed to seeing this process through successfully. **Brian Lewis '99** is leading

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(left to right, back row then front) Sean Healey, Robin Bollinger, Ben Chaika, Vitaliy Belevich, Mike Oda, Jon Gray, Chidi Ndubaku, John Ledoux, Aaron Burke.

Before there was Michael Phelps, there was Peter Rocca



It's been 30 years since Peter helped Cal capture their first national swimming title in 1979, but his involvement and impact on Cal's swimming program is still evident today. Peter was a three-time All-American for the Bears, set school records, earned All-American honors in 17 different events during his college career and captured the silver medal in both the 100- and 200-meter backstroke in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. His dedication to his alma mater and the swim team that helped him make it to two Olympic Games (he qualified for the 1980 Olympics, however the USA boycotted the games in Moscow) helped him to establish a scholarship in honor of his former coach, Nort Thornton.

The Nort Thornton Scholarship is awarded annually to the swimmer who exemplifies the qualities of Discipline, Responsibility, Leadership, and hard Work, and to help Create an Environment Where Champions are Inevitable. Peter recalls, "Being a NCAA DI

swimmer at Cal was tremendous, but challenging experience during my time at Cal. It was my freshman year at Cal, under the tutelage of Nort Thornton, that gave me the needed conditioning and experience to make the 1976 Olympic team. I owe so much to the program at Cal and for the guidance that Nort gave to me".

Cal and Rocca have a long history together. Peter's father, Louis, attended Cal, as well as his son, Nick, who is now a sophomore there. Peter joined KDR his sophomore year in 1976 because a roommate of his was a member and another one of his roommates joined with him. Most students have to worry about pledging the fraternity and keep up their grades. Peter had to worry about also training for the Olympics while at KDR. Peter was never a Chapter officer, and because of the early mornings and rigors of competing in swimming and water polo, he chose not to live in the fraternity



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Chapter News

Words from the Consul

by Piotr Kula '10



The Lambda Chapter of Kappa Delta Rho has been the most important part of my college experience. I am not the only one; many of our Brothers have the Fraternity to

thank for friendships, great memories, and years of life experience. She has brought together men from different walks of life and made them share their experiences, explore their differences, and care for each other—she made us family. The responsibilities that she bestowed upon her Brothers turned us from adolescents into men, from followers into leaders. I cannot think of anything in my life that has more profoundly changed how I act, how I think, and who I am. For this and more, I am truly grateful.

It is with a heavy heart, then, that I must tell you that the Lambda chapter will not be active in the spring of 2010. For many reasons, the past few semesters have been very difficult for our Chapter. Problems with communication and cooperation hurt our family, and caused disagreements to surface. Many of our Brothers chose to leave and focus instead on academia and their other interests. With our chapter growing smaller every semester, the responsibilities meant for many fell to a small number of very dedicated Brothers. Those who stayed, my closest family, bravely held our values and worked day and night to resurrect the Lambda Chapter. The hardships brought the undergraduate Brothers and the Alumni together, closer than we have been in the many years. However, with the close of fall semester of 2009, it was clear that this task was much greater than we would be able to overcome. The remaining

undergraduate Brothers met with our Alumni Board and decided that our wisest course of action would be to start anew sometime in the future.

Seeing our Fraternity become inactive is truly heartbreaking, but it needs to happen. It will allow time for old wounds to heal and when the Lambda rises once again, she will be stronger because of it. It is critical that we take to heart the lessons we learned as our Chapter declined and take action to ensure we will not fall into the same traps when we return. The relationship between undergraduate Brothers, our Alumni Brothers, and the National Fraternity must remain as strong as we have cultivated it to be in these past few semesters. I am confident that none of this will be forgotten, as our dedicated brothers become dedicated Alumni that will watch over Lambda until she reactivates.

I call out to those of you who want to see the Lambda whole again but have not had a chance to take on an active role—come visit our Chapter. This coming semester there will still be Brothers, including myself, caring for our chapter house. We will need to build a solid foundation in order to restart in the upcoming semesters, and to do that we will need as many Brothers as are able. Together we will not let Lambda fall; we will carry her until she can stand again. I look forward to hearing from those of you who are interested in keeping the Lambda Chapter as the jewel of the west coast.

Thank you, my Brothers, for making me who I am today: a leader, a Brother, and a true Kappa Delta Rho gentleman. Honor Super Omnia.

Lambda Alums celebrate at Homecoming

For the fall of 2009 alumni event, we decided to take a break from the routine alumni dinner. Instead, we organized a brunch and BBQ event at the chapter house for alumni and actives during the Homecoming game against USC.

Several board members arrived early for the morning brunch event to make fresh homemade pancakes and fruit salad for invited alumni and actives. Later, the board opened up the event to everyone and ran the BBQ event before the football game. Many alumni were able to make it and relive the fun of game days. Actives and alumni invited friends and family to join as well.

The alumni also opened up the lawn for parking to those who could donate a minimal amount to the alumni association to help us with our building projects.

This event was a success, and new and creative alumni events like this are in store for the future.

Jon Gray and Nicole Blaquiére.



Chudi Ndubaku.



Don't forget to check out Lambda's website! We are updating it monthly with new newsletters, information, pictures, events information and announcements.

Visit us today at www.calkdr.org.

News & Notes

Doing their part for KDR

by Simon Grille '08

When I was elected president, I knew as much about leadership as a vegetarian knows about cuts of beef. The brothers could sense my lack of confidence, and I quickly recognized that the authority of my title was not enough to mobilize members of the chapter. The summer after my first term became a critical time for me to prove the depth of my commitment. The alumni corporation was willing to allocate funds to renovate two decks in our house, but the amount was not sufficient for the entire project. I volunteered my spare time to help reduce labor costs.

The old decks consisted of wooden planks that had to be cut into manageable pieces and removed before the contractors could begin their renovations. There was probably enough wood to supply Kinko's with paper for a month. I spent many hours with just the company of a reciprocating saw, but I could never have completed the project without extensive support from brothers **Vitaliy Belevich '08**, **Ken Metzger '03**, and the legendary **Chris Harley '74**. My ears buzzed and my head throbbed, but it was worth it, and brothers continue to benefit from our labor. Our accomplishment helped me understand the productive power of brotherhood and the devotion requisite to the success of our fraternity.

The Lambda Chapter has recently hit a low point and faces one of its greatest challenges. Regardless of the chapter's perceived status, there will always be brothers ready to embody our motto and devote themselves to Kappa Delta Rho. With the prospect of reorganization on the horizon, I am proud to be a member of an alumni board committed to preserving our unique tradition of brotherhood. The challenges ahead are immense, but I am more than confident that many of you will contribute in some way to the efforts that we have begun. I look forward to joining all of you as we work to renovate our property and reorganize our proud chapter.



Members of Lambda enjoying the BBQ at Homecoming.

In Memory

It is with great sadness that we announce that **Charles Walstrom**, Class of 1950, has recently passed away.

Bob Lavelle, Class of 1950, remembers Charles:

"His full name was Charles John Walstrom, as I remember, but Jack was the only name we knew him by, and he was one of my roommates for at least two semesters, maybe more. As a member of KDR, Jack was one of the most honored and respected if for no other reason than his grade point average which was very high and served to raise that of the entire house, which was not always something to be envied. Aside from his great intellect, he was naturally very funny and whimsical, even at times a bit crazy, but in a good way...Another reason that Jack brought considerable prestige to the KDR house was his 1948 Studebaker convertible, and I can remember that we double dated more than once in that wonderful vehicle. Aside from all the superficial reasons, Jack Walstrom was just a great friend, one whom I shall never forget, a truly one-of-a-kind guy and one on whom I do not lightly bestow the title of brother."

*Lambda Chapter wants to remember brothers who are no longer with us. When making your final arrangement, please ask that the executor of your estate contact **Ben Chaika '04** at ben.chaika@gmail.com or (510) 501-8973. If you learn of a brother's passing, please contact Ben.*

Alumni News

William E. Nelson '55

Retirement isn't slowing him down. Now retired from his position that was responsible for nuclear emergency response, William is now trying to improve his golf game. He also spends his time serving as the Chair of the Police Advisory Committee in Alamo, CA, and Treasurer of the Bay Area Tailhook Ready Room, and as the Secretary of the Naval Aviator Association at the Country Club men's club.

John W. Alving '62

During a road trip with his wife, Mary Louise, they visited **Brian Shoemaker** in Lacey, WA and **John Brennan** in Mt. Shasta CA. In July, while cruising in British Columbia, they met up with **Doug Maclachlan** in Nanaimo and then in Ganges.

William D. Sharon '67

He and Joanne will be moving to Middltown, CA (in lake country) later this year.

Gary G. Chapla '69

"Greetings from the land of blue skies, palm trees, margaritas and guacamole!"

house, but the camaraderie, and the friendships made are still friendships that he has today.

Even though Peter spent much of his time competing for Cal on the swim team and the water polo team, Peter has many fond memories of the fraternity. "Our Pledge class challenges created much bonding and laughter from some of the absurd things that we did – all in good fun. One evening that I remember with fond memories was



Peter, his brother Ric, and son Nicholas in Berkeley, CA.

our scavenger hunt where we traveled all over the Bay Area and throughout campus solving the many challenges that our older brothers set up for us." Peter encourages the brothers of KDR to stay in touch, "those college friendships will bring you great happiness over the years as you remember your college adventures together and as you forge new memories in your life after college." He continues to stay in good touch

with two KDRs – **Larry Varellas '80** and **Peter Tragitt '79** - fellow swimmers and both roommates at Cal. This past year he connected again with **Perry Lange '78**, his roommate who got him to join KDR. Since graduating from Cal in 1980 with a BA degree in Exercise Physiology, Peter had a great opportunity to join a small sporting goods company, Hind Wells, Inc. Instead of pursuing a career utilizing his exercise science background, he went the sales marketing route with Hind Wells. After a few years there, he went back to pursue a Masters degree in Sports Management at the U. of Massachusetts, Amherst, wanting to move from sales into marketing/brand management. Soon after, he got a job with MacGregor Swimwear, which led to an even better position with Mizuno Sports, Inc. as a Brand Manager for their apparel/court footwear and accessories. After a great career there, Peter decided he wanted a change and switched industries joining Merrill Lynch as a Financial Consultant. After 10 years at Merrill Lynch, Peter had the opportunity to join a smaller, boutique money management firm as a partner - Palisade Asset Management in Minneapolis, where he currently is working today.

Peter is the Director of Marketing and Business Development at Palisade. He enjoys the business development and the client relationship management responsibilities. Peter works with his clients directly to solve and assist with their financial management issues. He promotes pursuing whatever your interests are, even if they may deter slightly from your college academic emphasis. "Don't be afraid to ask for guidance and help from your KDR brothers. And remember to return the favor to any fellow KDR whenever you can." Peter credits the process of developing friendships and relationships at KDR, "[it] Is the same process that I have followed in my professional life here in Minnesota and a key element of my success in my work."

Peter met his wife, Jeanne, while at Berkeley, but they started dating a year after he graduated. They were married in 1986 and have three children, Nicholas, a sophomore at Cal, Sarah and Margaret, who are in High School. Even though most people will remember Peter for all of his accomplishments in the pool, and all he has done to help build up the swimming program at Cal, Peter remembers fondly the special role that KDR played in his collegiate and post college years.



Peter and Jeanne with Nicholas, Sarah and Margaret.



Greg Shea, Margaret Pines, Belinda Perez, Alex Porto, Brian Lewis, Sandi McCoy, Aaron Burke.

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the effort to fix and renovate the chapter house, and **Simon Grille '08** has volunteered to head the reorganization committee. Brian and Simon are both gentlemen I have worked closely with, they both care deeply about KDR, and I believe they will produce excellent results.

As of right now, the chapter house has been converted to and is functioning as a boarding house. With the help of **Piotr Kula '10**, the last active president, we have filled every room. Also, the alumni board is taking steps to secure irreplaceable Lambda Chapter artifacts during this period of time to preserve our history.

If you would like to help in the reorganization process, sit tight and we'll be sending out more information as we get further along. If you have any wisdom about this process you can pass along or if you have any questions you may always contact me at AaronMBurke@gmail.com.

We are also creating a new Lambda Chapter website. It will eventually serve as a hub for information about the chapter and host photos. It will have a special section for prospective new members. It is far from complete at this point but does have copies of all recent Lambda Lyre issues, a few photos from recent chapter events, and will have a blog in the "news and updates" section. You can find it at www.calkdr.org.

Again, I want to wish everyone well and I will keep you informed as we move through this process. KDR has provided me with so many fond memories, so many friends, and so many positive experiences that I know that I will do my best to share the opportunity for that with others and ensure that the Lambda Chapter is around for many, many years to come.

Fraternally,

Aaron Burke