Nu Delta Revived – Like the Phoenix itself

Over the past few months, Nu Delta has undergone many renovations that have improved the quality of the house dramatically.

The loan from the MIT Independent Residence Development Fund (IRDF) was finally approved and, once the summer came around, work finally began. Many of the house repairs that the grant was planned to cover have already been completed. These numerous improvements are easily visible throughout the house.

The following are some of the highlights: all of the windows in the Chapter Room have now been replaced, providing much needed insulation; the roof on the front of the house was completely replaced, preventing leaks; all of the pipes throughout the house have been repaired; and the basement bathroom was completely gutted and rebuilt, now complete with all brand-new fixtures.

Most of the aforementioned improvements were completed in conjunction with this year’s amazing Work Week, which was spearheaded by Radu Gogoana ‘10. With so many projects being completed during this week, energy began to build within the brotherhood, and this energy was channeled in various ways. First, the front “garden” was completely transformed from a patch of overgrown shrubbery into a brand-new rock garden, which was filled with white rocks and, in the center, prominently displays our house symbol, the Phoenix, in red. Next, many brothers spent countless hours improving their own bedrooms in their spare time. All of this work demonstrates the passion the brotherhood has in maintaining and improving our beloved Nu Delta home.

On a legal note, throughout this past year, we have successfully passed our two annual inspections. This, along with having everything else serviced in a timely fashion, allowed us to obtain a new housing license, which we are required to keep current.

All in all, this past year has brought about an amazing change in the condition of our house. There are still some projects that need to be completed, such as fixing the roof on the rear bay window, but these remaining tasks have already been scheduled and, in little time, our renovations will be complete. It has been a lot of work, and there is still much to be done, but Nu Delta is very well on its way to being restored to the glory it greatly deserves.

Anthony Saucedo ‘10

The Phoenix welcomes all brothers and visitors in our new front-entry rock garden.

View from the President’s Desk

As I begin my last year here at MIT, I realize how great Nu Delta has become over these past four years. Every aspect of this house has improved. The current brotherhood stands at 33 brothers, and another strong rush has brought in 10 freshmen from the class of 2011, eager to demonstrate their commitment to the house during pledge training. I am extremely confident that by the end of this process this pledge class will be ready to receive the honor of having a place in our brotherhood.

For the past four years we have worked hard with the MIT administration to obtain a construction loan in order to renovate many areas of the house. The loan finally came through, the renovations began this summer, and the few projects that are left have been scheduled for completion. In addition to this, a very efficient Work Week, organized by Brother Radu Gogoana ‘10, resulted in the completion of projects that were not covered by the construction loan. Needless to say, the house has never looked this good.

The brothers of Nu Delta have achieved an almost perfect balance between academics and social life. I notice many brothers working hard on problem sets together in the dining room on weekdays, and enjoying themselves in the Chapter Room on weekends. A renewed social atmosphere has brought new guests into the house, and events help brothers and guests unwind after a tough week.

If there is anything that could use more improvement, it is alumni involvement. I strongly urge all alumni to maintain a strong connection to the house. Anytime you’re in the Boston area, let us know! We would love to hear your stories of Nu Delta during your time here at MIT. Always remember that this is your house, and you are always welcome to stop by.

As this year progresses, I know that we will strive to improve as brothers and as a house, and after many learning experiences, struggles, and achievements, everyone will know how proud we are to be called Nu Delts.

Rodrigo Sanchez ‘08
World War II occurred during 1939-1945 and was infamous for its vicious and nullifying outcome. Then, the Nu Delta Chapter of Phi Mu Delta had been around for about 17 years. One would ask, “What was happening to Nu Delta during this time?” Simply put, Nu Delta had been established for close to two decades but the fraternity faced challenges due to its small size. The world war did not really settle in until about September 1939; as such, things before then went on normally.

In the month of May 1939 Brother Chamberlain was the chapter president of Nu Delta. During this time meetings were within the ranges of 10–20 minutes. The oath and the prayer were usually said at the beginning of meetings and were symbolic of the prim and proper ideals that Nu Delta held high at the time. The issue that constantly kept resurfacing was the problem of brothers paying house tax. It was not a blatant aim by brothers to not pay, but rather the economic situation made it very difficult for members to come up with the money. Aside from this, times were rather laid back, comfortable enough for the president to propose a summer camp from August 3 to September 2. Brothers also took part in harmonizing at meetings by singing of a song before adjourning.

As usual, the new academic year of 1939 saw many additions to Nu Delta’s structure. From new pledges, to a new mail distribution system that would allow mail to be forwarded to alumni and gave everyone their own receptacles. However, as bright as the new year may have looked, one daunting point that was cause for worry was that, “There were not enough pledges,” as Brother Chamberlain said. This continued into November (two months after the beginning of World War II) when the problem of rushing was the height of Nu Delta’s problem. There were simply not enough men. The president, rather distressed by this, proposed to have himself changed as pledge coordinator to try and bring a new approach to the whole process. Newly appointed Brother Davis attempted to use active sport members in Nu Delta to try and recruit pledges from their respective teams. The house’s financial situation was worsening, with consistent house loses. The September-October balance sheet registered a loss of $686.25, which was a $100 greater than the same period the year before.

The house lacked not only pledges, but also brothers. There were not enough brothers to fill all the needed house positions. It went to the extent that Brother Francis had to provide an incentive of $2.50 for any brother who would like to add the position of doorman to their load. The thought of war was undeniably in the air, and Nu Delta brothers could be found either discussing its legitimacy, or recreating war scenes by using house candles to make war pellets. In an effort to set the brothers straight, the president raised the threat of ejection from the dining table for their undignified behavior.

Financial matters did not end well for that year. January 1940 saw a reported gain of $110.95 for December 1939, but an overall loss of $734.90 for the year. Brothers were cordially asked to be conservative of lights and firewood to keep expenses down. On a more hopeful note, though, an extra pledge by name of Lee Martin had been recruited. Brother Chamberlain was therefore able to leave office in February with a lighter head in terms of the future of Nu Delta. The next few years saw Nu Delta struggling with the same problems of money matters and the difficulty of obtaining more pledges to expand the number of brothers in years to come. Slowly the hands of World War II began to stretch its span and take a greater toll on Nu Delta than simply dragging down house finances.

On March 27, 1945, during the office of J.S Fonken, men such as Brother Davenport were said to have gone on vacations of indefinite periods of time. This was mostly the result of intervention by the U.S. Army in getting strong young men to aid their country. Nu Delta, possessing men of character and warm hearts, ended up having more than just a few people devoting their services to the nation. As a result of this, the issue of the number of brothers became a worsening matter. For example, J.S. Fonken, though presiding at the time, also became acting secretary to cover for his former secretary, F. Mackenzie, who was at war. By May 12, many positions had been lost due to Nu Delta’s active participation in the conflict. The war had the detrimental effect on America’s economy and resulted in a recession. Nu Delta’s financial issues became worse with this. The ability to purchase forms of entertainment for parties became doubtful since they were too expensive to afford. Things were bad but little did they know that it would become so bad that their meeting would be the last until January 21, 1946.

The following is a poem written by a brother during that gap, and goes to show how important hope and faith were to the people during this difficult time:

“Oh Lord who did instruct thy faithful, in the light of thy holy spirit grant us in the same spirit to relish what is ever more, to re refrain in thy wholly carryout – through Christ our Lord, Amen”

During the gap, there were no records of meetings to show what occurred and so we are left to guess how great an influence the war had on Nu Delta to cause such a halt in its practices.

The void lasted up until January 21, 1946. Brother Fonken, who was still presiding and consecutively acting as secretary had the issue of the house structure refinements as his main agenda.

Elections were to be held off until next term due to the extreme drop in the number of brothers.

Nu Delta’s full-of-life contribution in to World War II may have reduced the already small number of brothers, but just as the phoenix that is symbolic of our three traits, Respect, Trust and Brotherhood, the brothers of Nu Delta struggled through and rose from the ashes to reestablish the fraternity to a point where we as their descendants can now spread our wings proudly and boast of our history.

Nu Delta, live on.

Nana Essilfie-Conduah ’11
The 2011 Pledge Class — Ten Men In

"I pledge!" Millions of freshman college students across the country utter those two words but, for ten of us, the class of 2011, "I pledge" began a process of becoming something greater, something more than us. Each of the ten of us would learn very quickly that the whole is much more than the sum of its ten individual parts.

I met most of my pledge class the summer before class started, during a summer program called Interphase. The program’s goal was to teach incoming freshmen about teamwork, ensuring that everybody in the project would succeed. Granted, I didn’t know that I would one day call these friends my brothers.

My first impressions of my pledge brothers will last in my memory for the rest of my days. First, Chiedozie Okafor, originally from Missouri. My first impression of him was definitely his hair. He’s got these huge “Shaft”-style sideburns and a large ‘fro. He loves soccer and probably exhibits the most competitive spirit out of all of us. Also in Interphase is my second pledge brother, Chuky Mbagwu. He’s the youngest of us at 16 years old, and the rest of the pledge class reminds him of this quite often. Chuky is wise beyond his years though. He’s originally from Riverside, California.

Next is Jonathan Blackwood, pledge number four. I first met him during rush while playing Super Smash Brothers entirely too long. Jonathan’s hometown is Marquette, Michigan. The fifth pledge comes from across the pond. His name is Nana Essifie-Condua. He lives in Wembley, England, but he was born in Cape Coast, Ghana. Nana is so cool though, I often forget he’s not from America, so really basic things are not basic for him. It’s great to have a pledge brother who brings something new to the table.

Number six is Manny Corral, who I met for the first time in CPW and then again during Interphase. Manny is the last person I expected to meet here at MIT, and though incredibly smart, he never lets that get in the way of him having a great time.

Next up is pledge number seven, Jason E. Douglas from Louisville, Kentucky. When I first met Jason, I felt like I had known him forever. Jason is really music oriented and it’s rare that you see him not plugged in. Together, we represent ten very different backgrounds and point of views. We all have one common goal though, to one day become part of this brotherhood and leave our legacy on the walls of Nu Delta.

Ronndre Price ’11

From the Alumni Treasurer:

As a nonprofit corporation in Massachusetts, the Alumni Association of Nu Delta/Phi Mu Delta faces many challenges common to all such organizations, and some that are unique to fraternities. Our source of revenue is predominantly derived from rent installments from the undergraduates and supplemented by donations from the alumni.

The rent collected from the undergraduates has increased by about five percent per year to reflect growing costs. Despite this, Nu Delta provides our young MIT scholars with room, board, and the incalculable benefits of being a brother, at a cost similar to a typical dormitory double for board alone and at a rate below the fraternity average. Donations from alumni have increased, year after year, with increased communication (e.g., this newsletter) and we are hopeful that this trend will continue as we build our alumni relations program.

MIT and the Alumni of the Independent Living Groups (AILG) have also provided increased assistance in recent years with a number of programs made possible by a more powerful AILG leadership.

The Fraternity, Sorority, and Independent Living Group (FSILG) claims almost all of the FSILGs among its members, combining the purchasing power of MIT’s FSILGs to provide discounts from common vendors, as well as generating lists of pre-approved contractors.

The Safety, Licensing & Inspection Program assists the fraternity in passing city inspections and keeping important documents on hand, making these processes relatively painless, a welcome change.

The Educational Operating Grant (EOG) program generates significant cost-savings for the fraternity by allowing us to draw on the MIT Independent Resident Development Fund (IRDF) for reimbursements on education related expenses including a percentage of city taxes, fire prevention, utilities, and other costs as well as $10,000 per year which the undergraduates can use toward computer equipment, desks, the house website, etc. For many years the IRDF has provided low interest loans to the fraternity, such as our recent $190,000 construction loan. Therefore, tax-deductible donations made to MIT through the IRDF can indirectly benefit the fraternity (currently, alumni can not make tax-deductible donations directly to the fraternity; however, new legislation to change this is pending in the form of the Collegiate Housing Infrastructure Act of 2007 H.R.643/S.638).

Many of the aforementioned programs are monitored or organized by the AILG, which is expected to vote for incorporation as a 501(c)(3) organization as this newsletter goes to print.

Our goals include continuing to provide the brothers with competitive housing prices, reducing our dependence on MIT loans by generating sufficient savings to pay for future house improvements, and fostering alumni interest and involvement. I hope that you join me in expressing appreciation to former treasurer of the alumni association, Greg Zacharias ’67, for his 10 years of service. I am looking forward to the challenge of this role as we continue to work toward achieving these goals.

Richard Possemato ’01
Carlton A. Chamberlain ’40 writes, “I was initiated into Nu Delta in 1935 and served as president in my junior and senior years. We moved the fraternity from Bay State Road to 460 Beacon Street, so I guess that qualifies me as a Founder. I learned to fly and earned a pilot’s license while still an undergraduate and enjoyed flying so much that even with my degree in electrical engineering, I’ve spent much of my career in the aeronautical industries. After MIT I trained as a cadet in what was then the Army Air Corps. After Pearl Harbor I was assigned to a fighter group on its way to Africa. I served in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy. After the war I designed engines. I worked on the NASA Apollo project through the first three lunar landings. I honestly say that the fraternity was as important to my career as my MIT education.” Reach Carlton at 20196 Village #20, Camarillo, CA 93012; send e-mail to carlcham2@verizon.net.

Rob T. Parry ’41 writes, “Great job on the nu delta beacon newsletter! I loved the (relatively) short haircuts on the class of 2010 group. It was also nice to see the alumni report from one of my era: Herb Knape ’44. Our greetings to him and all Nu Delts.” Keep in touch with Bob at 865 Central Ave., #D-305, Needham, MA 02492; send e-mail to robesparry@comcast.net.

Herbert F. Knape ’44 writes, “I founded my latest firm in 1965 after 10 years in tool & die & stamping and another 10 years in family hardware manufacturing. Knape Industries finishes and decorates auto, furniture, and appliance parts. We do vacuum metaling, painting, hot stamping, pad printing, silk screening, emblems, gear shifts, headlamps, and bezels, with only 20-40 employees.” Write to Herb at 435 Edgemere Dr., Grand Rapids, MI 49506. Send e-mail to herb.knapeind@wmis.net.

George A. Russell ’58 has moved to 579 Sagamore Ave., #10, Portsmouth, NH 03801; garussell@alum.mit.edu.

Robert J. Dulsky ’61 lives at 113 Edgehill Dr., San Carlos, CA 94070; send e-mail to dulsky@sbcglobal.net.

Marco Pravia ’97 has a new address: 1007 Ashford Pkwy., Atlanta, GA 30338; e-mail to praviam@gmail.com.

We regret to report the deaths of:

John F. Allen ’23 on March 8, 2007
Arthur E. Karnuth ’42 on May 7, 2007