



Eastern Region



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Barbecue, Brains and Books in Kansas City

From touch down to take off, Kansas City, the city known for its delectable barbecue and melodic jazz, left a lasting impression on all those attending the 2005 convention. On March 16, swarms of "those English people," as we were referred to by the staff, took over the Westin Crown Center in Kansas City, Missouri, for the purpose of four days of all things English!

The theme of the convention was, of course, "Unheard Melodies," and these melodies were given voice by the almost 600 attendees, more than one hundred sessions and three fantastic speakers.

The events kicked off on Wednesday night with the annual *Rectangle* reading, where students and alumni published in

Regent's Report: Portland, Pittsburgh and All Things Green

We are nothing if not alliterative. This spring, we were in Kansas City and Kutztown for the national convention and the Pennsylvania undergrad conference, respectively. With Kincaid, Cole and Hessler in KC, accompanied by 600 society members and sponsors, and a solid line up of seventy student presentations in Kutztown, both gatherings proved to be wonderfully stimulating, exciting as usual. But the 2004-05 year is drawing to a close, so we are looking forward to Portland (2006) and Pittsburgh (2007); preparations, in fact, are already under way.

Portland 2006: Featured Speakers and the Common Reader

Planning is moving forward for the 2006 annual convention to be held next spring, March 29-April 2, 2006, in Portland, Oregon.

Spring 2005 Newsletter

Sigma Tau Delta's literary journals are given the opportunity to showcase their talents to an eager audience. Thursday night began with a captivating performance by the award-winning poet, Henri Cole. The performance was followed by the always entertaining "Dry T-shirt Contest," followed by the crowd-pleasing "Bad Poetry Contest."

On Friday, Jamaica Kincaid, author of this year's Common Reader *Lucy*, gave voice to a man, otherwise unable to speak for himself, through a reading of her novel *Mr. Potter*. Upon the completion of this event, convention attendees lent their own voices for audience members to hear during an "Open Mic Night."

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We have tentative contracts with two speakers, and we have also selected the Common Reader for the 2005-06 academic year. We initiated the Common Reader program this year with Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*. For Portland, we have selected Mark Salzman's *True Notebooks*, Salzman's account of the writing workshop he offered to violent juvenile offenders incarcerated at Central Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles. Salzman, one of our featured speakers next spring, is the author of three novels—*The Laughing Sutra*, *The Soloist*, and *Lying Awake*—and three works of nonfiction—*Iron and Silk*, *Lost in Place: Growing Up Absurd in Suburbia*, and *True Notebooks*. He is also an accomplished cellist. As we did this year, the society is offering an award for the best conference presentation featuring the Common Reader.

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Happy Birthday April-May-June

April

- 2 Hans Christian
Anderson
3 Washington
Irving
4 Maya Angelou
7 William
Wordsworth
15 Henry James
21 Charlotte
Bronte
22 Henry Fielding
23 William
Shakespeare
28 Harper Lee

May

- 7 Robert Browning
21 Dante Alighieri
Alexander Pope
25 Ralph Waldo
Emerson
Theodore Roethke
Jamaica Kincaid

June

- 2 Thomas Hardy
3 Allen Ginsberg
7 Gwendolyn
Brooks
Nikki Giovanni
11 Ben Jonson
13 William Butler
Yeats
14 Harriet Beecher
Stowe
25 George Orwell
27 Paul Lawrence
Dunbar

Continued: Barbecue, Brains and Books...

To wrap things up, China correspondent to *The New Yorker* magazine and author of *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze*, Peter Hessler gave a brilliant account of his Peace Corps experience in China. Hessler shocked and pleasantly surprised audience members with his honest account of cultural differences between the United States and China.

Aside from the wonderful speakers, convention attendees had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get their creative juices flowing with the help of Hallmark Cards. In this creativity workshop, members had the chance to interact with other students and faculty while learning creativity-stimulating exercises used by the staff at Hallmark.

As always, the leadership workshop gave students and sponsors the chance

to share and learn new ways to bring their chapters closer together. They also left with great ideas for fundraising, service and chapter activities.

The annual Awards Banquet was the culmination of the great events. This ceremony was kicked off with live jazz by the UMKC Jazz Combo, and finished, unfortunately, without the beloved limericks, but with a multitude of awards and many thanks to everyone involved with making the convention the success that it was.

The four days were gone quicker than the barbecue spare-ribs at Jack Stack Barbecue, but this year's convention left members thirsty for more and looking forward to what's in store in Portland in 2006. See you there!

Continued: Regent's Report

In addition, the Eastern Region will also be giving out its own Common Reader essay and service awards. We are working out the details, but the awards will go to the best non-conference paper submitted by a member of an Eastern Region chapter. The service award will similarly recognize a service project by an Eastern Region chapter centered on the Common Reader. I have just finished reading *True Notebooks* and have already slotted it into the reading list for one of my spring courses. It is *that* good. Trust me, it is a book that you want to read. And the second speaker—well, think about *p* words, like poet laureate, Pulitzer Prize . . .

NCTE Pittsburgh, November 2005

The National Council of Teachers of English is bringing its annual convention to Pittsburgh next November, an excellent opportunity to visit the city and

preview its attractions in advance of our meetings there in spring 2007. We are also, as it turns out, looking for volunteers to help staff an informational booth in the NCTE exhibit hall. The honor society is growing—as always—and we will be offering information on forming chapters—*Sigma Tau Delta* chapters at four-year institutions, *Sigma Kappa Delta* chapters at two-year colleges, and chapters of the newly-formed National English Honor Society (NEHS) for high school students. If you are planning to attend the convention and would be willing to help out in the booth, handing out informational packets, answering questions, meeting and greeting chapter members and interested parties, send me an email. I'd love to see you in Pittsburgh in the fall and Portland in the spring.

Bob Crafton, Eastern Regent
Slippery Rock University

Meet Your New SR

Greetings Eastern Region! My name is Lynzie Biggs and I am succeeding Autumn Brown as your Eastern Student Representative.

I am a senior English and Communication double major at Alvernia College, in Reading, Pennsylvania. I currently serve as the secretary for the very active and tight knit Kappa Pi chapter, and my plan is to run for president in our upcoming election. Upon graduation, I am hoping to continue my studies by pursuing a Masters degree in Education. Ultimately, I would like to teach English on the secondary-school level and perhaps, eventually move on to the collegiate level. I think that this year is going to be great. Dr. Robert Crafton (Regent), Jessica Gill (ASR) and I have been in frequent correspondence discussing our plans and expectations for the year to come. Our hope is to bring our region together through increased communication.

To achieve this, our plan is to produce four newsletters rather than the required two, two of which will be targeted to specific topics such as service and fundraising. We would also like to compile a chapter officer's mailing list as an easier and more efficient way for chapters to communicate ideas.

We have also discussed the possibility of organizing a regional service project. As Dr. Crafton mentioned, there will be eastern service awards for projects centered on the common reader. So pick up the book and start to think about ideas!

I am extremely excited about this upcoming year and I am thankful for the opportunity to serve my region in this capacity. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions at Lynzielue41@aol.com.



Lynzie Biggs

"I am extremely excited about this upcoming year!"

Meet Your New ASR

Hello there! Jessica Gill, new Associate Student Representative for the Eastern Region here! I am a junior English major at The College of New Jersey, with a creative writing minor. I am currently co-vice president of our chapter and next year, I will be president, which I am really excited about.

I love reading books that are told from unusual perspectives, like *Life of Pi* or *The Circus in Winter*. One of my favorite classes in my college career was a class called "The Witch in Literature." In that class, I was able to combine my love for fairy tales and unusual perspectives/theories. Out of that class developed my idea for my honors thesis. I intend to look at how the story of Cinderella has evolved and been updated according to contemporary and social revolutions. It's going to be a busy year!

I've done quite a bit of traveling in this past year. I lived in England in a castle for a month, and studied British literature. I also went to Scotland, and just before I came to Kansas City, I spent my Spring Break in Seville, Spain. I think there's so much out there to see and do that I want to do it all. One of my big goals is to take a world tour and see everything that's out there.

I would love to hear from you and get to know what you and your chapters are doing, so please feel free to contact me at Gill4@tcnj.edu.



Jessica Gill

"It's going to be a busy year!"

Is Your Chapter Outstanding?

If your chapter has done something great, we want to know about it! We will be publishing two extra newsletters specifically focusing on the topics of service, fundraising and activities. If your chapter has achieved success in any of these areas we would love to hear about it! Send chapter stories to Lynzieluc41@aol.com and we will do our best to get them into the next newsletter! Hope to hear from you soon!

Chapter Spotlight: Eta Delta

Eta Delta was one of six chapters receiving Outstanding Chapter Awards at the 2005 annual convention. In addition to its San Francisco service project (see page 5), members of *Eta Delta* regularly participate in a variety of service and academic activities, including Reading for the Cure, sponsored by Clarion University's English Club, and Slippery Rock University's Relay for Life. Chapter members have appeared in the past year on panels and/or delivered

papers at the annual conferences of the English Association of the Pennsylvania State Universities and the National Council of Teachers of English; chapter members regularly participate on the programs both of the society's annual convention and the annual Pennsylvania undergraduate English majors conference.

For more on this outstanding chapter check out page 5.

Chapter Spotlight: Alpha Epsilon Alpha

The 115 initiated members of the *Alpha Epsilon Alpha* chapter at The College of New Jersey have been very busy. Although newcomers to the National Convention, they were asked to put up a display in the Outstanding Chapter Room in Kansas City.

Each semester AEA runs a film series that shows about 14-20 films. They also organize three Faculty Research Talks, in which English Department faculty share their current research projects. Each FRT has received a great turnout.

This past fall, AEA ran the premiere of the documentary Freedom Road, about education within the prison system.

featuring one of their sponsors in a film about education within the prison system. Professors and students visited the prisons to encourage the women to find their voices through reading and writing. The premier was one of the biggest events that AEA has ever run.

AEA hosted Holly Black, alumnae of TCNJ and author of The Spiderwick Chronicles. They also organized a book drive, which collected over 720 books for orphanages, low-funded schools, and prisons.

Clearly, AEA has been keeping busy, with a minimum of one to two events a week!

Introducing Our Newest Chapter: Alpha Mu Chi

Alpha Mu Chi

Alpha Mu Chi comes to us from Penn State Abington, a college located in the northern suburbs of Philadelphia. They have about 3200 students and about 50 students in the English major. They decided to start a chapter to recognize the achievements of their students and to foster out-of-class activities connected with the major. The chapter will get going in earnest in the fall. The sponsors want to encourage members to decide for themselves what they want the Society to be and do. Activities could range from providing tutoring in writing and reading to taking trips to literary sites in the Philadelphia area, such as the homes of Walt Whitman or Edgar Allan Poe.

Being of Service: Eta Delta Returns to San Francisco

Decidedly Mixed Fruit¹

May contain one or more of the following:

Diced peaches;

Diced pears;

Water;

High fructose corn syrup;

Lighty, the talking light bulb;²

A lonely child;³

Cape Ivy;

Ice Plant;

European Beach Grass;⁴

Hamlet (with a bad case of the dry heaves);⁵

A large barrel of lard;

Karl;⁶

One Chevrolet Cavalier reclaimed from the impound lot;⁷

Pieces of pineapple;

A fortune cookie, lacking a fortune;⁸

Cherry halves dyed red.



"Shiner"

¹ Members of Slippery Rock University's *Eta Delta* chapter, for the second year in a row, spent their spring break in San Francisco engaged in a number of public service activities, including working at the San Francisco Food Bank. Among other tasks, we spent an evening labeling "shiners," unlabelled can goods, so that they could be distributed to the city's hungry. "Decidedly Mixed Fruit" memorializes that evening spent pasting labels on small cans of fruit cocktail, the can's contents intermixed in the poem with references to our other activities.

² A character in a children's book, composed by a class of first graders visiting 826 Valencia, a Mission District writing workshop/tutoring center founded by novelist Dave Eggers. 826 Valencia offers a book-making fieldtrip where, in the course of a morning, students work together with a storyteller, a professional artist, a typist, and an irascible publisher to create, illustrate and publish a picture book. Lighty appeared in one such book.

³ Having composed and illustrated the book (the first two pages of the story are a collaborative venture; individual students then add the concluding page), each student adds an author's note which appears on the book's back cover, along with a very fetching photograph of the author in a pirate hat (an 826 Valencia trademark). When asked to describe herself, one first grader wrote, "I am a lonely child." We quickly determined, poignant as this description seemed, that she really meant to identify herself as "an only child."

⁴ Cape Ivy, Ice Plant, and European Beach Grass are "exotic" species, non-native plants introduced as ground cover in and around San Francisco. Cape Ivy grows in Golden Gate Park, for instance, where it threatens to overrun the last remnant stand of Coastal Oaks in San Francisco; Ice Plant and European Beach Grass grow on the sand dunes around Point Reyes on the coast north of San Francisco, planted by the Army Corp of Engineers to control erosion. These plants have, unfortunately, all but wiped out the native plants and, in some cases, the animals that depend on those plants. We participated in programs devoted to protecting the Coastal Oaks in Golden Gate Park and to restoring the native ecosystem around Point Reyes.

⁵ Some lines are better left un glossed. A word of caution: When staying in hostels, beware of drunken Danes occupying top bunks. (Given the heroic nature of his heave, perhaps we should have nicknamed him Beowulf.)

⁶ 826 Valencia occupies a storefront in the Mission District. In order to meet local zoning ordinances requiring commercial ventures at street level, 826 Valencia operates a pirate supply store, which includes in its inventory supplies of glass eyes, eye patches, and the indispensable bucket of lard. Karl is a local fish who is the subject of an actively growing mythology.

⁷ Service comes in many forms.

⁸ Our week of service included a Chinatown alley sweep led by local high school students. The week also included several memorable dinners in Chinatown, including fortune cookies, of course, one of which, mysteriously, offered no prediction for the future. Or, perhaps, we have no future? Considering San Francisco's liberal heritage, even fortune cookies may serve an editorial function. (See, for instance, San Francisco's association with the Beat poets in the 50s and the countercultural movement of the 60s; the current city administration's support of gay marriage and domestic partnership agreements; the anti-war, anti-administration sentiments of a certain milk-crate orator addressing the people on the streets of Chinatown one Saturday in early March.)

Thanks!
Eta Delta
would like to
thank Citizen's
National Bank;
Nicholas G.
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Kirkpatrick
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Leclair Ryan;
Dr. David L.
Gordley,
D.D.S.; and
the English
Department,
Slippery Rock
University, for
their generous
support of the
San Francisco
project.

And the Winner is...

Future Teaching Award

Beth Genemore
Indiana University
of Pennsylvania

Convention Essay Award & Senior Scholarship

Jennifer Lynn
Vandever
Ohio Northern
University

Critical Essay Award

(Runner-up)
Courtney Rydel
The College of
New Jersey

Outstanding Chapter Awards

Slippery Rock
Eta Delta
&
Thiel College
Alpha Iota Kappa

Congratulations Eastern Region!

Keep up the Great Work!

Convention: A First-Timers Glance

As a first-time convention attendee, I had no idea what to expect. I knew that the Midwest was going to be flat, but beyond that, I was pretty much on my own. After an unusual plane ride that involved an emergency landing, we finally landed in Kansas City, a very flat place.

Once we arrived at the Westin Crown Center, we got settled in and looked at our programs to decide what break-out sessions we wanted to attend. For most of us, it was the first time we had ever presented a scholarly paper or creative piece. I was there to read an excerpt of a short story I had written, but mostly to see what I could learn from other chapters of Sigma Tau Delta.

I was not disappointed. The panels were full of well-written papers, involved interactive discussions, and gave me different perspectives on literature.

It was one of the few occasions my inner nerd was able to celebrate its true love of literature with hundreds of other English nerds. I was in bliss and I loved every minute.

The connections I made in Kansas City were of all different sorts. I met other chapter members and was able to share event and fundraising ideas with them, as well as take some home for myself. I met many future English professors that will encourage future students to love literature, just as we do. Mainly, I just had a really great time being with my friends, being with new friends that loved literature and writing just as much as I did, and seeing a new city.

If you can go to the convention in Portland (which promises to be a bit more hilly than Kansas City), I strongly encourage you to go!

-Jessica Gill

Award Winner Spotlight: Courtney Rydel

After attending her first-ever Sigma Tau Delta convention, Courtney E. Rydel came home quite happy. Her essay "[M]ore conversable than I expected: Harriet Smith's Miss-education" received a runner-up award for best critical essay. For Courtney, it was an unusual experience because it was her first scholarly presentation of her first scholarly paper at her first convention on her twenty-first birthday. It was a memorable day for Courtney, to say the least.

Courtney is a junior English major, creative writing and classical studies minor at The College of New Jersey. She is only five feet tall and intends to get her Ph.D. in medieval literature after graduation. At TCNJ, she is co-vice president of Sigma Tau Delta, and will continue on as co-vice president next year. Congratulations Courtney, on your great achievement!

Bad Poetry. Really. Really Bad Poetry

As the convention theme and John Keats state: "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." Sounds about right, especially when it comes to bad poetry. These are the types of melodies that are better left unheard. But sometimes we just can't resist. For those gluttons of punishment out there, Sigma Tau Delta created the Bad Poetry Competition just for you! This event never fails to draw a crowd and always manages to leave them in stitches.

This year was no exception. The eastern region's own, J.D. Sellgren, senior English and Theology major at Alvernia College, left Kansas City as the proud recipient of 2nd prize in this notorious (and somewhat pathetic) event, for his bad poem *Wolfie*. Our hats go off to you J.D., for your truly horrendous poetry! For those of you who missed it, here it is again!

Wolfie

By J.D. Sellgren

Wolfie, wolfie
On the Prowl-
Wolfie, wolfie
Got to growl.
Wolfie, wolfie
In KC
Wolfie, wolfie
With STD
Oh, how I love the
wolfie.
Wolfie, wolfie, wolfie
Wolfie-
I still hate Hemingway

"[I]t's not just the books under fire now that worry me. It is the books that will never be written. The books that will never be read. And all due to the fear of censorship. As always, young readers will be the real losers."—Judy Blume

Banned Books Week: Celebrating the Freedom to Read

Every year, The American Library Association, along with other co-sponsors, recognizes and publicizes the importance of our First Amendment rights. Under this amendment, we as Americans are granted the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. By not allowing us the freedom to choose what we read and by restricting what we write, the government is potentially harming our basic constitutional rights.

Banned Books Week was created to raise awareness among readers about the damaging effects of book banning. This event is held during the last week of every September and is celebrated nationwide.

This year, the event begins on September 24 and ends on October 1. During this week the possibilities for participation are endless.

The activities range from simple to complex, and from fun to serious. It is entirely up to the participants to decide what the week will hold for them. We encourage every chapter to plan an event—large or small—celebrating our right to read. This project holds great possibilities for success, enjoyment and sense of fulfillment for all involved.

For more information on this event please visit:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/bannedbooksweek/bannedbooksweek.htm>.

"Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment."—Library Bill of Rights

Awards and Scholarships

One of the great benefits of being a member of Sigma Tau Delta is the chance to apply and possibly be granted generous scholarships and awards. These awards range from service awards to study abroad scholarships.

There are opportunities for individual as well as chapter awards and scholarships, and we are now approaching the time of year to begin thinking about the application process. In September, each chapter will receive an application packet from the central office. These forms may be photocopied or additional forms may be downloaded from the official website.

For more information on eligibility and types of awards offered, please visit: <http://www.english.org/awards.shtml>

And for scholarship information go to: <http://www.english.org/scholarships.shtml>

If there are any issues or ideas that you feel should be addressed in future publications, please feel free to contact us. All comments, questions or suggestions should be addressed to Bob Crafton, Eastern Regent at Robclimb@aol.com, Lynzie Biggs, Eastern Student Representative at Lynzielue41@aol.com or Jessica Gill, Associate Student Representative at Gill4@tcnj.edu. Thank you.

Top 10 Most Frequently Challenged Books Of 2004

The Chocolate War
by Robert Cormier

Fallen Angels
by Walter Dean Myers

*Arming America:
The Origins of a
National Gun
Culture*
by Michael A. Bellesiles

The Captain Underpants Series
by Dav Pilkey

The Perks of Being a Wallflower
by Stephen Chbosky

What My Mother Doesn't Know
by Sonya Sones

In the Night Kitchen
by Maurice Sendak

King & King
by Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
by Maya Angelou

Of Mice and Men
by John Steinbeck