

The Far West Outpost

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Unheard Melodies: Sigma Tau Delta's 2005 International Convention Speakers

This year's convention in Kansas City is going to be very exciting. Jamaica Kincaid will deliver the Key Note address on Friday. Kincaid was born and raised in Antigua and



moved to New York to work as an au pair. She has penned several critically acclaimed works, including *Lucy* (this year's Common Reader), *At the Bottom of the River*, *Annie John*,

and *My Brother*. Her skill at crafting emotionally charged and compelling poetry and prose has earned her several prestigious writing awards and has led to her recent election as a new member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

The convention will also feature Henri Cole and Peter Hessler. Cole is the poet responsible for such works as *The Zoo Wheel of Knowledge* (1989), *The Look of*

Things (1995), *The Visible Man* (1998), and *Middle Earth* (2003), for which he received the 2004 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. He will speak on Thursday night and will offer a poetry workshop on Friday morning.

Peter Hessler graduated with a creative writing degree from Princeton and then earned a degree in English literature as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He taught English with the Peace Corps in China from 1996-1998, after which he published an acclaimed account of his experience in *River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze* (2001). He currently lives in Beijing and is the China correspondent to *The New Yorker* magazine. He will give a talk/reading prior to the Saturday night banquet, as well as offer a workshop on creative non-fiction.

2004-2005 S?? Common Reader

Lucy, Jamaica Kincaid's semi-autobiographical 1990 novel, will this year's common reader. The goal for the common reader is to provide all members with a common text to enjoy and discuss. S?? is offering \$150 prize for the best convention presentation featuring *Lucy*.

From Your Student Representative

Ellen Feusahrens
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Kansas City, here we come! I hope everyone is as excited as I am for the upcoming national convention. I was able to check it all out during the fall board meeting and it is going to be a lot of fun. The Westin Crown Center is fabulous. It is connected to a mall, food court, and movie / I-Max theatre. There are many restaurants nearby which vary by both cuisine and fare. The hotel rooms are each furnished with a "heavenly" bed and shower; there is also a brand-new fitness center, including a pool and hot tub. A World War II memorial and the Kansas City Union Station are right across the street! There is going to be plenty to see and do.



Donna, the Southwest Student Representative and Ellen, the Far West Student Representative, in the lobby of the Westin Crown Center Hotel.

The conference is a great opportunity to present a paper, meet fellow S?? members, and listen to both collegiate and critically-acclaimed writers. I hope our region will be well represented at this conference. Don't miss it. It is going to be amazing!

New Sigma Tau Delta Members Thrilled At Induction Ceremonies!

By KalieRae Casselman
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Alpha Eta Nu, the budding chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at Southern Utah University, has been experiencing major growth since its reactivation three years ago. New potential members were on fire with excitement about the convention and other exciting Sigma events. When this year's president, Candice Kuhlmann, saw that there were more than forty eligible new members, she was in awe.

"The addition of twenty-four new inductees has doubled the size of our chapter," she said. "Since a lot of our new members are newer in the department, we wanted to find a way to start off with a real bang to keep them involved throughout the year."

The evening ceremonies were adorned with racks of dessert, student readers, a keynote speaker, and huge faculty attendance. Two new inductees were French and History majors with English minors, an opportunity for the Alpha Eta Nu chapter to reach beyond its traditional "English major" boundaries. One of the new inductees, Hannah Neville, a senior French major, participated as a student reader. Her piece was creative non-fiction. Other readers included Andy Bahlmann, a returning senior member, who read a segment of a critical essay on *Huckleberry Finn*; Josh Olenslager, a new

member, who read several poems; and Kellie Jensen, a returning member, who also read a series of poems.

Another highlight of the evening was the discussion of Georgia Beth Thompson, Vice-President for Student Services at Southern Utah University. Because of Thompson's generous donation to the chapter last spring, Public Relations Director Tim Coray was eager to invite her to make a few remarks.

"Georgia Beth was the one who made it possible for us to attend the conference in Daytona last spring, which was an unforgettable experience. Having her speak at the induction was just another way of us telling her thank you," Coray explained.

Thompson's remarks were poignant; she spoke on the satisfaction gained from creating long-term relationships in academia and the fulfillment of camaraderie gained by associating with close friends. Dr. Kay Cook, Sigma Tau Delta advisor and long-time friend of Thompson, was enthusiastic about the evening.

"I believe this was the best induction yet!" she said. "It was extremely engaging and enjoyable. This year's presidency has done a wonderful job."

Trying some unusual and new tactics to put on an unforgettable induction certainly paid off for the Alpha Eta Nu chapter. Other chapters who are

looking forward to planning induction ceremonies in the future might consider some of the activities and efforts here explained to help invigorate chapter activity and enthusiasm.



The New Far West Regent

As many of you might have known, the Far West was briefly regent-less after Kerry McKeever accepted a new job as a dean at the State University of New York at Geneseo. Luckily, the Nominating Committee found us Matt Schneider, Associate Professor and Chair of English at Chapman University in California. Matt has agreed to serve as Far Western Regent for this year and we hope he will stand for election as Regent at the convention in Kansas City. Matt has served on a number of Sigma Tau Delta committees and has been a reviewer for the Rectangle. If you would like to offer him welcome, he can be reached at schneide@chapman.edu

All You Need Is Books

By Kathy Turner, Student Advisor

Last year's book drive for the Volusia Literacy Center in Daytona Beach was a big success. We asked everyone to bring one book for the literacy center and you all came through. This year's book drive will hopefully be an even bigger success. This year, Sigma Tau Delta is teaming up with Partnership for Children and Kansas City's Promise to bring books to several organizations in the Kansas City area. These two organizations work to make sure that all Kansas City area children have access to the resources they need to succeed in life. The books we bring to this organization will benefit many different organizations within the Kansas City community.

All you need to do is bring books to the convention in Kansas City. You can bring any type of book for any reading level. Kansas City's Promise will make sure the books get to community groups who need them the most. Here are just a few of the organizations who could benefit from the books you bring to Kansas City: Whatsoever Community Center, a group that needs books for their community library and to send home with children and youth in their area; Independence Academy, an alternative high school that needs books for their library and to give to students who love to read but cannot afford to purchase books for

themselves; and Reach Out and Read, a group that reads and gives books to sick children. You can find out more about Kansas City Promise and the wonderful ways they serve their community by visiting their website http://www.pfc.org/promise_about.shtml. They also provide a database of all the organizations that they serve in the community.

Everyone should bring a book to Kansas City. It won't take up too much room in your suitcase. You could even bring two books. Just think what we can do!



Call for Papers and Panels

This year's conference theme is "Unheard Melodies." "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." Submissions for papers and panels to be presented must be postmarked by November 25, 2004. Guidelines for submissions can be found at www.english.org/pdf/convention/05cfp.pdf.

The Westin Crown Center Hotel: A Heavenly Place for S??

The Westin Crown Center is where the 2005 convention will take place. It is a beautiful hotel with a lot to offer any literary mind. It is connected to a three-story mall, which includes movie theatres and a food court. The lobby of the Westin has a beautiful five-story waterfall, as well as a stylish bar.

Chapters attending will need to make their reservations by February 12, 2005, in order to secure the discounted rates. Also, check out www.westin.com/crowncenter for more information.



Kansas City's Union Station, right outside the Westin Crown Center.

2005 Leadership Workshop: "Chapter Harmony: Fine-Tuning Your Leadership Skills"

For the leadership workshop in Kansas City, the student advisors and student representatives have thought of something a little different. This year's leadership workshop will feature S??'s most successful chapters. The workshop will include two breakout sessions. During each breakout session, there will be smaller workshops put on by S?? chapters who have excelled in specific areas. Breakout session one will include smaller workshops on fundraising, activities, chapter administration, and national leadership opportunities for students. Breakout session two will feature sessions on fundraising, activities, chapter administration, and leadership for sponsors. The new format will allow a chapter to send as many students as they want. Each student can attend a different smaller session and report what he or she learned back to the chapter. Come to the workshop on Thursday ready to network and learn something new!

ATTENTION S?? LEADERS:

After the Leadership Workshop we will be electing a new Student Representative and a new Assistant Student Representative. These are great leadership opportunities for anyone looking to become more involved on a national level. Come ready to run! Please e-mail your SR, Ellen, or your ASR, KalieRae, with any questions!