



The Far West Outpost

Writing in the Community

A Look at a Poet Laureate’s Effect on the Community

By: Julie Jigour



http://www.scu.edu/csl/images/JM_2.jpg



In the excerpt found below from her inaugural address, San Francisco Poet Laureate Janice Mirikitani reiterates the sentiment of Adrienne Rich: “We must read / write as if our lives depended on it.” When Mirikitani recently visited Santa Clara University as the 2006/2007 “Leader-in-Residence,” several members of the Phi Phi chapter had the opportunity to meet her and to discuss the vital role poetry plays in our everyday lives.

During her two days on campus, Mirikitani visited classrooms, spoke with small groups of students, and addressed larger audiences about her work as both a poet

and an activist. The Executive Director of Programs at the Glide Memorial Church, Mirikitani devotes much of her time to serving the marginalized in San Francisco’s Tenderloin district. More than just a multi-faith church that hosts people from all walks of life, Glide is a volunteer and activist center that runs a variety of different programs to help people who are struggling in the local community. Glide runs a free lunch program, a women’s clinic, recovery circles, a free permanent housing residence, and many other services that have received international recognition.

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At the Cancer Clinic

She is being helped toward the open door that leads to the examining rooms by two young women I take to be her sisters. Each bends to the weight of an arm and steps with the straight, tough bearing of courage. At what must seem to be a great distance, a nurse holds the door, smiling and calling encouragement. How patient she is in the crisp white sails of her clothes. The sick woman peers from under her funny knit cap to watch each foot swing scuffing forward and take its turn under her weight. There is no restlessness or impatience or anger anywhere in sight. Grace fills the clean mold of this moment and all the shuffling magazines grow still.

By Ted Kooser from *Delights & Shadows*, used with permission by Copper Canyon Press: Port

If the power of the word penetrates deeply to our values and beliefs about who we are, and if we care about the world we wish our children to inherit, we must read, write, and vote as if our lives depended on it. If poetry connects and humanizes and restores our souls, the power of our words must be written across the chalkboards of schools, the pages of history and literature, and the electronic pages of the future.

--Janice Mirikitani



The New Far Western Region Student & Associate Student Representatives

Greetings from Brittini Traynor, this year’s Student Representative for the Far Western Region.

I am originally from Portland, Oregon, and I am a student at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah. I am a senior, double majoring in Creative Writing and Sociology. This year, I will be attending the annual board meeting, serving with other SRs, and working at the convention. However, I won’t be in this alone. I will have the help of Julianne Jigour, this year’s new ASR, and of course Matthew Schneider, our regent.

One of the biggest things that I want to work on this year is to help chapters gain a sense of independence. It is important for each chapter to feel confident about the activities and events that it is holding. I also want to continue with Kim Lock’s (last year’s SR) goal of creating a sense of unity. With a sense of unity and strong independent chapters, the Far Western Region can become one of the strongest regions. To help with this, I want to remind everyone about the bulletin board that has been set up for our region. You can access this from the Sigma Tau Delta website.

I also want you to know that I am here to help support and advise chapters in any way that I can. I will try to answer any questions that may come up, and if I don’t know the answer, I know where to get it. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at missbritt125@gmail.com. I wish everyone the best of luck with finals and with the various activities over the summer.

Greetings from Julie Jigour, this year’s Associate Student Representative for the Far Western Region.

Julie Jigour, your new ASR, is a Junior English Major and Creative Writing Minor at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, CA. She is currently the Vice President of the Phi Phi Chapter and the Fiction Editor for the Santa Clara Review.

Congratulations to Far Western Members

Awards were presented at the National Convention in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania to the following Far Western Region members:

Amy Spoelstra

Azusa Pacific University
2nd place, Critical Essay

Austin Hansell

University of New Mexico
3rd place, Critical Essay

Patricia Anders

Chapman University
Scholarly Paper (Graduate)



Simone Billings

Santa Clara University
Elaine W. Hughes Outstanding Sponsor

Alpha Epsilon Tau chapter

Azusa Pacific University
Outstanding Chapter Award



Are You Wishing Money Grew on Trees?

Here are a few tips and ideas for fundraising!



*Steve Carell, *The Office*

Publicity: The most important part of fundraising is getting word out to the community.

- Use your school's local radio
- Place ads in the newspaper
- Flyers
- Screen savers on campus computers
- Invitations

Planning: The best fundraisers are those that are planned out.

- Have enough individuals that tasks can be divided and shared.
- Have back up plans in case of bad weather.
- Keep things organized.

Fundraising Ideas: Remember the word FUN is hidden inside the word fundraising, as its derivation.*

- Bake Sale (Often times, grocery stores will meet the amount made if done outside the store.)
- Car Wash
- T-shirt Sale
- Student and Faculty Readings
- Poetry Valentine Sales
- Raffles
- Silent Auctions
- Service Raffles
- Hold a book drive, and sell the books to a used book store.
- Garage Sale

Chapter Reports - Spring 2007

Report from Alpha Epsilon Tau chapter at Azusa Pacific University

The Alpha Epsilon Tau Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta has had quite a busy year at Azusa Pacific University. Our chapter hosted over seven events in just the spring 2007 semester. Our first event gave our members the opportunity to see *Tea in a China Cup*, a wonderful Irish play put on by our Drama department. With drama still in mind, our chapter hosted *Lunch with a Professor* in which Arthur Miller was discussed with one of our English faculty members, Joseph Bentz. This discussion was in honor of our Drama Department putting on the play *Death of a Salesman*.

We hosted our second *Oxford Night* this year in which students could come and hear from colleagues about their own personal experiences in Oxford, shared through pictures, papers, and a keynote speaker.

Our spring 2007 *Induction* was the most successful yet. We inducted over thirty new members! The night was entitled *Living in Color* and was loosely based on the vibrant creativity of English majors displayed through works of children's literature such as Eric Carle.

As March approached our anticipation rose for the Sigma Tau Delta International Confluence Convention in Pittsburgh, PA. This year we had thirteen students attend, and one of our students, Amy Spoelstra, received 2nd place for her critical essay! Our chapter was also pleased to receive 2nd place for the most *Outstanding Chapter Award*.

The last two events of the year were a way to say goodbye to graduating Seniors, and a welcome for our new Executive Council Members. Our 1st annual *Garden Party* held in the faculty quad of our English Department, in honor of the seniors, was a huge success with over fifty students in attendance. The event was based off a traditional English Tea Party with cucumber sandwiches, scones, and sparkling lights. Our Voting Party will be held on April 23rd and although we are sad to be leaving, the excitement of a new council full of creativity and vivacity for next year will be uplifting.

— Nick Johnson, (President)





Chapter Reports - Spring 2007 continued...

Report from Alpha Gamma Omega at University of California at Los Angeles



This year, we had a very successful English Graduate School Panel event; we invited two lecturers and four graduate students in various stages to serve as panel members and to share their educational experiences and answer undergraduates' questions. Additionally, we saw a performance of David Mamet's *Speed the Plow* at the local Geffen Playhouse and are in the middle of a book drive with Better World Books, to benefit WorldFund. As for fundraising ideas, bake sales work very nicely!

— Jeniffer Lee (President)

Report from Phi Phi chapter at Santa Clara University at Santa Clara



The Phi Phi Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta recently welcomed nine new members! They will be inducted into the organization at a ceremony toward the end of the academic quarter. This past month members of the Phi Phi Chapter met and spoke with San Francisco Poet Laureate Janice Mirikitani during her two-day visit to campus. In June, the chapter is co-sponsoring a visit and reading with fiction writer Nona Caspers (*Heavier than Air*). Currently the chapter is planning an open-mic event and a movie night with the Santa Clara Review, and officers are discussing both fundraising and community writing activities for the rest of the quarter and the upcoming academic year.

Report from Alpha Eta Nu chapter at Southern Utah University



The Alpha Eta Nu chapter has been busy this past year. We were able to induct several new members. This past year we had eleven members accepted to the Sigma Tau Delta Convention in Pittsburg, PA. Nine of the eleven members attended. In February we held an office party, where we watched and discussed favorite episodes of *The Office*. A student reading was held in March, where students were able to present their various works. We look forward to next year with great anticipation. We are planning some great activities that we hope to carry out for the next academic year.

— Trent Gurney (Vice-President)

**WELCOME TO A NEW CHAPTER:
Hawaii Pacific University!**





Community Continued...

For Mirikitani, poetry and activism are one. Her passion for helping the homeless, the addicted, the abused, and the poor is the same passion that feeds her writing, and she sees her work as a poet and her work as an activist as intertwined and inseparable. In her childhood, Mirikitani suffered as both a prisoner in a Japanese internment camp and a victim of incest. She views her journey as a poet as the journey to discover her own voice, a voice that she felt had been forced into silence by the abuses she endured in her youth. Mirikitani speaks of poetry as a powerful mode of spiritual recovery not only for herself but for communities in general. She helps direct numerous creative arts projects at Glide to help men, women, and children find and recover their own voices. Having listened to Mirikitani speak several times, shared breakfast with her and fellow editors from the Santa Clara Review, and volunteered at Glide the weekend prior to her visit, I found myself thinking more than ever about the social power and importance of literature and writing. As a student wrapped up in classes, student organizations, and general university life, I find that it is easy to forget the role the written word plays outside of academia.

Mirikitani's visit and her refreshingly down-to-earth attitude about writing reminded me of what has always been at the core of my passion for literature and my decision to study English. I was reminded that writing is not just about the literary canon or scholarly work or M.F.A. programs--that it's about community, dialogue, and compassion.

In my remaining time as an undergraduate, I hope to work with other Sigma Tau members and interested students to do outreach work in the community to help bring the power of language and writing to those who might not ordinarily have the chance to explore it. The following is a brief list of organizations in the Far Western region through which volunteers can help tutor and run writing workshops in local communities. Perhaps some of these organizations will be of interest to you as you organize projects for your local chapters.

Writing Centers In Your Area:

826 Valencia
San Francisco, CA
Los Angeles, CA
<http://www.826valencia.org/>

Glide Memorial Church
San Francisco, CA
<http://glide.org>

June Jordan's Poetry for the People
Berkeley, CA
<http://poetryforthepeople.org>

Oregon Literacy, Inc.
Portland, Oregon
<http://www.oregonliteracy.org/index.html>

The Power of Hope
Bellingham, Washington
<http://www.powerofhope.org/index.htm>

Project Read, San Francisco Public Library
San Francisco, CA
<http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/librarylocations/accessservices/pr/projectread.htm>

Salt Lake Community Writing Center
Salt Lake City, Utah
<http://www.slcc.edu/cwc/index.asp>

If you have links to favorite websites that have to do with literature, books, poetry, writing (you know, all the stuff we Sigma Tau Delta types love) email them to me and I'll list them in the Fall newsletter.

National Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship Deadlines

May 30, 2007:
The fall 2007 Regnery Internship applications

All applications and entry forms are available at
<http://www.english.org/calendar.shtml>

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