



THE HIGH PLAINS

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WELCOME BACK, OMICRON GAMMA!

J. SNAVLIN

I can't imagine a better way to start off the fall here at Sigma Tau Delta High Plains than with the arrival of a reconstituted chapter. I'd like to extend a hearty warm welcome to a chapter revitalized after decades of inactivity!

Congratulations on the reconstitution!

ABOUT OMICRON GAMMA

E. JOHNSTON

The Omicron Gamma Chapter at North Dakota State University in Fargo (NDSU), North Dakota, has been rechartered after several decades of inactivity.

According to Sigma Tau Delta records, Omicron Gamma Chapter was first chartered in the early 1930s, back when we were the North Dakota Agricultural College. However, their records showed no activity since before 1968. Fortunately, Dr. Amy Rupiper-Taggart and Dr. Miriam Mara, both of whom were Sigma Tau Delta members before coming to NDSU, have been very helpful in getting the chapter going.

Omicron Gamma currently has 13 members, and we are in the process of recruiting some more. The officers are as follows:

President: Christopher Ellefson

Vice President: Anna Schultz

Treasurer: Tish Jacobsen

Secretary: Meagen Essen



CONVENTION 09

Try on some of this Minneapolis trivia!

Answers on Page 5

The Prospect Park Water Tower was built to serve two purposes. What was its second purpose?

What basketball team played in Minneapolis from 1948 through 1959?

What Minneapolis landmark was once located in St. Paul, but moved to Minneapolis its present location 12,000 years ago?

From 1900 to 1925, this game, which was developed by a Minneapolis Lieutenant in the Fire Department, was called Kitten Ball. What is the game called today?

In 1921, Menne Minniberg, a health guru spilled some bran grill on his stove and thus invented what?

In 1835, Dr. John Emerson went to Fort Snelling. He brought with him his slave. This resulted in law-suits and triggered the Lincoln-Douglas debates. What was the name of the slave?

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

J. SNAVLIN

The most immediate memory of the St. Paul/Minneapolis area most readers of this newsletter might have is of the Republicans descending on Minneapolis' sister city. Perhaps it's of the bridge's fatal, devastating collapse (just to let you know, that bridge has already been rebuilt and opened not too long before). Perhaps they haven't heard anything about Minneapolis – this final piece is perhaps the most likely, as Minneapolis itself remains a diamond in the American rough.

The Midwest in general has found an unfair reputation of bovine, farms and fields of grain but the educated English major knows there's history in the repudiated walls. After all, DC Comics has a headquarters squarely in its homely walls – and let's not forget the copious amounts of satisfying American novelists hailing from the Minnesota area, such as the author of our common reader Mike Perry. And just to show that Minneapolis/St. Paul isn't as conservative as it might seem: Minneapolis is home to The Gay '90s, the Midwest's largest gay and lesbian club.

The city itself sprawls out in a logical, ecological frenzy of beautiful architecture and telltale nooks and crannies. The architecture hails from the Scandinavian influences of yore present in the area, with grandiose arches, elaborate stained glass and the coolest, fanciest, most-mod-inspired-IKEA-esque Target I have ever seen. I kid you not this Target is possibly the mecca of all Targets—and rightfully so, Target is, after all, a Minnesota company.

The hotel our wise and noble William C. Johnson, esq, has chosen for the convention is beautiful and set right along the scenic Nicolett Mall. Shortly after arriving, I took a short walk to get my bearings and one block away from the hotel, a Korean woman was selling fresh fruit for two dollars a tray, five dollars for three. Three blocks away an independent bookstore had an entire bookshelf of contemporary poetry for five dollars a book. Eight blocks away the light rail, a two dollar ride from the airport back, can take visitors to the elegant Walker Center for art and a meal or to the famed Mall of America, featured in convention speaker Neil Gaiman's novel American Gods.



CONVENTION 09

Cool Facts About Mr. Perry:

Perry's essays have been heard on All Things Considered

Perry's written for Salon.com, The Onion, The New York Times and more! He's also a contributing editor to Men's Health.

Mr. Perry has since moved from the scene of Population 485.

Perry "equates his writing career to cleaning calf-pens - just keep shoveling, and eventually you'll have a pile so big, someone will notice."

He can run a pitchfork, milk a cow in the dark, and say "I don't know" in French, German and Norwegian.

from sneezingcow.com

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

J. SNAVLIN

And even the Gods have to eat, right?

The Local, just three blocks up the Nicolett Mall, serves some of the best desert my cohorts had ever tasted. A block the other way is Ichiban, a habachi grill with twenty dollar all you can eat sushi. A little ways in the direction of Ichiban is India House, with a delectable buffet and reasonable but delicious entrees. For the veg*an, never fear; almost all eateries along the Nicolett Mall provide sustainable vegan and vegetarian options. I'd suggest skipping The Newsroom, however; despite a wonderful décor, it suffers from the same issues most Newsrooms suffer from: a lot of numbers without a lot of substance.

MIKE PERRY

J. SNAVLIN



Now, I'll be the first to admit I'm a loser - that's right, loser - who didn't read the Common Reader last year. When offered an experience to share a book with an international scope of literature students who know what I mean when I say simile, I passed it up. **I passed it up.**

Luckily, I've learned from my mistakes and taken up reading, even in an eighteen credit hour, two-jobbed rat's nest, this fabulous common reader. Population 485 is a funny, fast-paced collection of narrative nonfiction about small towns, big people, and a whole lot of quirk. Essays on the common reader are always welcome in the halls of the International Convention, and with a common reader like this, I can't imagine you'd have trouble finding a litany of high-quality material to write on.

Mike Perry is our keynote speaker and will be signing autographs and talking about his book and his other works at the International Convention in Minneapolis. You can check out his website at <http://www.sneezingcow.com>, but please, pick up this amazing book: Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time, ISBN # 978-0061363504.



THE HIGH PLAINS

ISBNs:

Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight
978-0375758997

Scribbling the Cat
978-0143035015

1602
978-0785125693

American Gods
978-0060558123

Anansi Boys
006051518X
(ISBN-10)

Coraline
978-0061139376

Good Omens (with
Terry Pratchett)
978-0060853983

Neverwhere
978-0060557812

Sandman vol. 1
978-1563890116

Stardust
978-0061142024

ALEXANDRA FULLER



Our resident postcolonialist for this convention is the lovely Alexandra Fuller. Ms. Fuller specializes in memoirs about her time growing up on a then-Rhodesian, now-Zimbabwean farm. After leaving Zimbabwe she moved first to Malawi and then to Zambia. Her book Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight was awarded the Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize in 2002, and she's subsequently published Scribbling the Cat in 2004.

This book won the Lettre Ulysses Award for Reporting in 2006. Ms. Fuller now lives in Wyoming with her husband and three children, and has been gracious enough to agree to read for us and answer a few questions. I highly suggest checking out her work - the multi-faceted quandries of the African experience are a notable study for any English major, and Ms. Fuller's observations are truly poignant.

J. SNAVLIN

NEIL GAIMAN



Mr. Gaiman has been affectionately referred to as the "rockstar" of modern literature, and its becoming truer and truer the longer he stays in the business. From titles like Sandman to the Hugo, Nebula, SFX Magazine and Bram Stoker award-winning novel American Gods. The Britain-born wizard of Science Fiction has agreed to have an autograph session and an actor's studio interview with Deltans about his work and processes, particularly focusing on American Gods and Anansi Boys. These books are absolute literary masterpieces, so if you haven't had a chance to check them out a trip to your local bookstore is certainly in order.

J. SNAVLIN

And if Sci-Fi isn't your genre? How about the recent Beowulf film? Maybe Coraline or Stardust? How about the film Neverwhere? If you're a comics fan like yours truly, you might divulge in a title like 1602. The extent of Gaiman's influence on the literary medium is enormous, and we're pleased to welcome him to our conference.



TALKING LOCAL

The trivia answers from page 2 are below!

Prospect Park Water Tower was built to be both a water tower and a bandstand; however, there was only one concert in the band shell because of the difficulty of the musicians in carrying their instruments up the tower.

The Minneapolis Lakers, now the Los Angeles Lakers

The St. Anthony Falls' fragile limestone eroded and broke into pieces and the falls slowly moved upstream to where they are today.

Softball!

Wheaties

Dred Scott

WHY AM I DOING THIS?

A. SPEIRS

Okay. You're member of Sigma Tau Delta.

You love literature or the act of creating it. We all do, and come to convention and I'll show you a thousand more that love literature and the act of creating it as well. It's why many of those thousands signed up for Sigma Tau Delta. Is that why you did? Millions of people already love literature as much as you and I do, and there is most likely at least one person who loves it more.

The above begs the question: "what are you getting out of this?"

I'm getting a sense of community and a broadening of my perspective of the word's capabilities. Most likely, that's what you've initially received as well. If your quest ends there, Sigma Tau Delta has done you a great service and we're glad to have you with us. That's one of our main jobs: we build community, something that's absolutely essential for any English major.

There are also many other things that are essential, however, for the grad school bound English major. There's things like learning the fine art of solving organizational problems, making one look like a unique asset to any campus, putting one's own talents to the forefront. Ultimately, all of these skills add to community building in one crucial similarity: they all make other's lives easier.

Truth is, if I helped out all the people that I would like to, I would be living an absolutely selfless life. The unfortunate truth is that my disposition just doesn't quite fit that mold. I'm willing to bet most advantageous readers aren't in school for that reason, either. In the most straight-forward way possible, I'm here to be awesome, and if that betters humanity, so be it. I have a feeling you're suffering a similar motivation.

So what you have to do then is break this catch-22. Our types need to learn how to make things easier for other people without distracting from our supreme goal of awesomeness, right? "How do you do that?" you might ask. Lucky for you I've already figured it out, at least for myself.



TALKING LOCAL

It is possible to fail in many ways...while to succeed is possible only in one way.

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC),
Nichomachean Ethics

Don't be discouraged by a failure. It can be a positive experience. Failure is, in a sense, the highway to success, inasmuch as every discovery of what is false leads us to seek earnestly after what is true, and every fresh experience points out some form of error which we shall afterwards carefully avoid.

John Keats (1795 - 1821)

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day? I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

Walt Whitman (1819 - 1892)

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950), *Man and Superman* (1903) "Maxims for Revolutionists"

WHY AM I DOING THIS?

A. SPEIRS

You problem solve. The easiest way to be in a position to problem solve is to run for officer of your chapter. Any officer position will do. By solving problems, you're ultimately leading to organizational glory. By leading to organizational glory, you're providing yourself with an easy access of socialization. By socializing, you're building connections and community, and getting to your base desire for joining Sigma Tau Delta to begin with.

It's like riddles. The more you solve them the better you get at it. You can choose to become a leader. Any entrepreneur will tell you that your success is measured by your failures, so I'll grab onto that one and say that to become a great problem solver you must fail.

A lot.

I'm trying to learn as much about failure as I can before my salary is on the line, as should all of you. I crash and burn more than I care to admit, but I know I'm learning.

Look: understanding, loving, and creating literature are the most noble paths to take towards awesomeness in my mind, but there's a bigger broccoli out there to steam*. Become an officer. Problem solve. Being to learn.

Being great, also known as being awesome, is learned.

Sigma Tau Delta will give you that opportunity. Seize it.

*Editor's note: Adam would never use such a fool-hardy analogy. This has been placed in upon editing. I am merely selecting to spare his reputation my horrible cutesy simile.



DEADLINES

Did you get your annual chapter reports in? If you didn't, here's a reminder to get it in even if its late. It's important to keep track of a chapter's progress for further development and a record of all the problems you're learning to solve.

Are you planning on sending a contingent to conference? Now's a good time to start fundraising! T-shirts, bake sales, group-gatherings, and fundraisers are a great way to prepare for the great trek to Minneapolis! If you've got any great ideas for fundraisers, you ought to send them the way of the High Plains - jnavlin@mscd.edu or shadow.apple@gmail.com should do!

DEADLINES, DATES AND DIVERSE

J. SNAVLIN

Some important dates coming up that any wise Deltan ought keep track.

October 2008

- Oct. 30 - Outstanding Chapter Award applications due
- Oct. 30 - Service Award applications due
- Oct. 30 - Project Grant applications due
- Oct. 30 - Outstanding Literary Arts Journal Award applications due
- Oct. 30 - P.C. Somerville Award for Future Teachers applications
- Oct. 30 - Junior/Senior/Graduate Scholarship applications due
- Oct. 30 - Henry Regnery Endowed Scholarship applications due
- Oct. 30 - Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship applications due
- Oct. 30 - Sigma Tau Delta Study Abroad Scholarships applications
- Oct. 30 - Scholarly Paper Awards applications due
- Oct. 30 - Regnery Internship applications due

November 2008

- Nov. 21 - Int'l Annual Convention, Minneapolis, Call for Papers and Panels deadline
- Nov. 30 - Individual and Chapter Website Award due
- Nov. 30 - Elaine W. Hughes Outstanding Sponsor Award applications due

January 2009

- Jan. 30 - Regnery Internship applications due

February 2009

- February 25 - 2009 International Convention Early Registration

March 2009

- March 25-28 - Sigma Tau Delta 2009 International Convention
- March 30 - Sigma Tau Delta Study Abroad Scholarships applications due
- March 30 - Sigma Tau Delta Summer Program Abroad Scholarships applications due



UNTIL LATER

Diversity doesn't mean race, gender, class or social status. Nor does it mean personality, looks, good breeding or genetics. Diversity simply represents a standard of accepting difference and encouraging difference amongst a group of very different people.

Now, the ultimate conclusion of individuality is that none of us is essentially a snowflake, but there's no way we're a carbon copy either. The patent inbetween in each and every human being is the glory of being alive, and without it reflecting in Sigma Tau Delta's ranks we've lost the iambic pentameter in our very lovely sonnet.

DIVERSITY: A CLOSING NOTE

J. SNAVLIN

At the board meeting in September an off-hand comment turned into a personal mission. When I was sitting in the little corner of Student Representatives, our knees knocking when asked to give a report to all those awesome big-wigs that've made all of these wonderful experiences possible, I saw a lot of familiar faces. In fact, almost all of them looked like mine.

The issue with this catatonic similarity is not in the fact that there are similarities between the overwhelming European contingents in Sigma Tau Delta. It is not even in the fact of any group being homogenous in any manner whatsoever. It's that I can witness even on the local level a disturbing lack of that difference that makes Sigma Tau Delta so great.

In this circumstance, I think it's important to reflect on the impact diversity has had on our existences as a whole. Though a petty example by any means, the most immediate thing one doesn't even think about is food. How many of us have a favorite food that is typically from our own cultures?

If something as miniscule and unimportant as food can be so monumentally affected by different backgrounds and ideologies, can you imagine the impact of increased multiculturalism on the conference, on the journals, on your local chapters? The experiences and imaginations of the world come together in our differences, and as any writer or reader should know, it's the visions of these tapestries that make any piece of literature or any pursuit of the humanities wonderful.

Let's make a pledge, High Plains: let's find those cultural stories and bring them to the forefront in our papers for convention, not because we're looking to downplay the similarities but because we're looking to bring contrast to the usual routine. Ever notice that good things seem even more precious when standing next to the worst? For every bit the cliché that sounds, it's every bit the truth.

Let's look to connections, Deltans!