

SIGMA TAU DELTA

MIDWEST REGION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2004

GREETINGS FROM YOUR STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Hello, Midwest Sigma Tau Deltans!
I hope your school year is off to a great start. This year, I have taken a leave from Luther College and I am a student at Washington University in St. Louis. Thus far, I am greatly enjoying my experience and am happy to have met members of the Psi Alpha Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at Wash U.

Psi Alpha is busy publicizing and asking for submissions for their literary arts journal. The chapter publishes a fall and spring journal called WORD. The advertising hook is "Let your voice be WORD," which ties in nicely with this year's convention theme, "Unheard Melodies."

With Halloween looming, I am reminiscing about the annual English Department Halloween Party at Luther. The chapter decorates a professor's house with cobwebs and candles and students attend in "literary" costume for an evening of food, games, and poetry recitations. Last year, I dressed up as Titania from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (as shown in the picture).

I would love for you to share your chapter's own vagaries throughout the year and to do so, I would like the region to exchange "Chapter Videos." The concept is for each chapter to make a VHS tape of their school grounds, activities, and interviews of chapter members or even some English professors. Have **FUN** with it! Perhaps your chapter can even put on a short play or skit. Once you are finished, contact me or another

chapter in order to exchange videos. I am hoping these videos will provide a means for the mid-west region to unify and acquaint ourselves before meeting in Kansas City! I hope to see all of you there. Dr. Scholl, the Convention Chair, is planning a wonderful weekend for all.

Please feel free to contact me with information about your chapter or if you have any questions or concerns. Best wishes!



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GREETINGS FROM YOUR ASST. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend a big welcome to all our members, new and old, in the Midwest region of Sigma Tau Delta! I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at this year's convention in Kansas City!

This past year has brought many changes to my life; it is hard for me to decide where to begin! By far, the biggest milestone occurred this past summer, when my fiancé and I eloped—it's definitely a memory that will last a lifetime! This semester also marks my first as a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and I'm enjoying the experience immensely.

The final detail I'd like to share is that I absolutely love my current jobs on campus. I am finding my position as a tutor and as a gender issues researcher extremely rewarding.

Before I sign off, I just want to wish you all a great semester and encourage you to feel free to communicate with me via e-mail, if you have any comments or concerns you'd like to share. Thanks!

Traci Thomas
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Assistant Student Representative

GREETINGS FROM OUR REGENT

We recently held our Sigma Tau Delta fall board meeting, and I would like to keep you abreast of some of the key issues we discussed. Financially, the organization is sound, although we are continually looking at ways to cut costs. To this end, a motion was made that will reduce the amount of

mailings sent from the central office. Information will be sent electronically and can be found on the society's website (www.english.org). The good news is, you won't be receiving that dauntingly fat envelope with all of the forms you may or may not lose; the bad news is, you'll have one more thing to keep track of in your 'inbox' and will need to take the time to go to the website to print off forms and information.

I want to encourage students to apply for the many scholarships and awards available through the Society. Several awards have not been granted due to a lack of applications; we want to maintain the value of these prizes and awards by ensuring that the best candidates and entries are being considered. Deadlines are coming up soon!

The Midwest region has the pleasure of hosting the annual convention in Kansas City, Missouri. I would like to see you there representing the region. This year, there will be a common 'reader,' Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*; Kincaid will be the keynote speaker and there will be a prize for the best presentation on this work—above and beyond the regular essay prize. This is a great opportunity to gather together and see the quality of our membership. I hope to meet some of you there!



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NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

To receive the latest Sigma Tau Delta news by e-mail every month, go to www.english.org and click on eNews Subscription. The password is blake5.

SERVICE STARS: MEMBERS OF THE THETA ZETA CHAPTER

For more than five years now, the students of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's Theta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta have been sending hundreds of pounds of books to students at Kemerovo State University in Siberia, Russia. This venture started in the fall of 1998 when the Dean of the Foreign Languages Department of Kemerovo State University, Dr. Albina Levanova, was a visiting professor teaching linguistics in the English Department at UWEC. Dr. Levanova marveled at the easy and abundant access the faculty and students here at UWEC have to a vast assortment of texts for their studies. She said there were never enough texts at Kemerovo State University for the university students who were studying English language and literature. Some classes had only two books for twelve students, and, for one essential course, only the instructor had a text. She had observed the Sigma Tau Delta students collecting books for holiday gifts for local children. So she asked me, as advisor to the Theta Zeta Chapter, if we, perhaps, could help her university students obtain books?

When the book-loving students in the Theta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta heard Dr. Levanova's question, they immediately began a mission to collect the needed books, and they also began a campaign to find the money to ship the books. Both were

successful. The books for Russia were obtained by asking the campus bookstore for selected textbooks that were going to be discarded when new editions arrived. The students then sorted through those texts and through books donated by faculty in order to find enough books in good condition. The students were able to find nearly fifteen copies of anthologies of literature, novels, rhetoric texts, handbooks, collections of essays, and collections of poems and stories. The students also located various reference books and even a set of encyclopedias. The students of Sigma Tau Delta also put together a campus wide fund-raising campaign to obtain the money to ship the books. (It costs a dollar to ship each pound of books.) The campaign was very successful and brought in enough donations to send 800 pounds of books over the next two years.

The first shipment of more than 600 pounds of books went to Kemerovo State University in Siberia in the spring of 1999. Dr. Levanova reported that when those first twelve boxes of English books arrived, the Russian students were overwhelmed and overjoyed. They immediately celebrated by throwing an impromptu party in their library amidst the piles of books and boxes. That news was more than enough thanks for the UWEC Sigma Tau Delta students, but they have also received numerous written thank you letters from the Russian students.

Our Sigma Tau Delta students have continued to collect books for the Russian students, have used book sales of other donated books to add to the postage fund, and have sent 200 to 400 pounds of books to Kemerovo State University each year since 1999.

Gloria J. Hochstein, Advisor
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OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER

FUNDRAISING FURRY?

Let other chapters spurn your imagination. To see what others have done, visit the national website, <http://www.english.org> and click on Activities under Chapter Information.

CONVENTION ALTERNATIVE?

The Nu Sigma Chapter inducted seventeen new members on October 7, 2004. The chapter has a real passion for presenting professional quality papers and, in addition to the Kansas City Convention, would like to have a small, one-day conference on their campus. This conference would allow students to have a warm-up or an alternative to the convention in Kansas City. Sponsor Joseph Warren is interested in inviting chapters within a 100 mile radius of Berrien Springs, Michigan. Please contact Dr. Warren, if you are interested.

Joseph W. Warren
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ALL YOU NEED IS BOOKS

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.

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 distribute the books to community groups who need them the most. Here are just a few of the organizations who may benefit from the books you bring: 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; 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 at http://www.pfc.org/promise_about.shtml.

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