

# **SIGMA TAU DELTA**

## **Midwest Regional Newsletter, Fall 2005**

### **GREETINGS!**

Dan and I hope that you're enjoying the school year so far and have had a chance to meet with your chapter at least once this year.

As you know, we write two newsletters per year detailing news in our region. We'd like to extend an invitation to contribute to the spring newsletter. Feel free to send pictures, information on service projects, and other events that your chapter has been involved in. We'd love to hear from you!

We're in the midst of planning a Midwest Regional Conference for Fall 2006. We're open to suggestions, and have so far planned a workshop for both chapter sponsors and chapter officers. The Theta Zeta Chapter at the University of WI-Eau Claire will host the conference.

I'd like to encourage all of our chapters to attend the annual convention in Portland. While at the board meeting this fall, I had an opportunity to visit many of the local sites. The hotel is within walking distance of many interesting and affordable restaurants and shops. I was especially excited to visit Powell's bookstore, which stretches an entire city block and is five stories high!

Finally, please feel free to contact either Dan or myself with any questions, comments, or concerns you have. We're here to help you, so let us know what we can do!

*Traci Thomas-Card, SR*  
*Daniel Hardy, ASR*

### **WORDS OF WISDOM**

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind." ~Dr. Seuss

### **NEWS FROM YOUR REGENT!**

I am writing to give you a brief update on the recent Sigma Tau Delta Board meeting that took place in Portland, Oregon, where the Convention will be this spring. I think Portland will be a place the students will enjoy immensely. There is a street market not far from the hotel, a coffee shop on every corner, and a free trolley in the downtown area.

The Society remains stable financially, and to maintain our mission to serve students and promote the study of English, we approved increases in the awards for many scholarships and established at least one new scholarship. Money was also allocated toward the Outstanding Chapter Award, money that is designated to help these award-winning chapters to attend Convention and share their ideas with other chapters.

*Todd Martin, Midwest Regent*

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**2006 Annual Convention**  
**March 29<sup>th</sup>-April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006**  
**Hilton Portland & Executive Tower**  
**Portland, OR.**

**The theme is Green**

**Call for Papers & Panels Postmark**  
**Deadline: November 25, 2005**

**\*Keynote Speaker: Ted Kooser,**  
**U.S. Poet Laureate**

**For more information visit**  
**[www.english.org](http://www.english.org)**  
**and click on the Convention link!**

## **SMART Choices for Giving**

**Daniel Hardy & Traci  
Thomas-Card**

As members of Sigma Tau Delta, we have a wonderful opportunity to help those in need through our annual book drives. At the 2006 National Convention in Portland, OR, members of Sigma Tau Delta will be able to contribute books to two worthy organizations: S.M.A.R.T. and the Cedar Mills Community Library.

S.M.A.R.T (Start Making A Reader Today) is a literacy program that brings adults and children (kindergarten through third grade) together to foster reading skills, and to transform children's futures through reading. Teachers involved in the program identify students most in need of extra attention; once in the S.M.A.R.T. program, the student reads twice a week with two committed adult volunteers for the remainder of the school year. Every month, S.M.A.R.T. provides two free books for each child to take home and keep; sometimes these are the only books in the child's house. To best help the S.M.A.R.T. program, young children's books are the best to donate--those appropriate for kindergarten through the third grades. If you'd like further information about the program, feel free to

visit their homepage at [www.getsmartoregon.org](http://www.getsmartoregon.org).

The Cedar Mills Community Library is primarily supported through member ship donations, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Retail Shop, and various fundraisers. Last year they added more than 5,000 books to their collection, and sold another 10,000 or so in their used book sale. Despite their need for books, the library has a small staff and limited space. They have asked that Sigma Tau Delta restrict our donation to 150 books. The library has requested

- Popular new books (anything on the best seller list)
- 2004 and later travel guides (both domestic and foreign)
- Current software handbooks (2004 and 2005 editions)
- How-legal books (I.e. landlord tenant laws, divorce, incorporating)
- Business plans (books about setting up small businesses)
- Children's books (especially Newbery and Caldecott award winners)
- SAT, GRE, and LSAT test preparation books

As an added incentive, the chapter that donates the most books to either organization will have a monetary donation given in their name to S.M.A.R.T or the Cedar Mills Community Library.

It is never too early to start looking for books to bring to the convention. Thrift sales, used book sales, attics, and closets are all good places to start looking. Let's make this book drive the best yet, and show our support for the children and communities that need our help!

### **CHAPTER INTERACTION INCENTIVES**

Try to connect with at least two other chapters in organizing a joint activity. This could be a simple social gathering, a service project, or a scholarly event.

Each chapter involved in the event will receive \$35, money that could be used to help offset the cost of refreshments or materials for a particular project.

Include a brief letter from each of the chapter presidents describing the event, a list of individual members in attendance from each chapter, and verification from each of the chapter sponsors.

Similarly, any chapter that would like to organize a "mini-conference" should contact me about the possibility of some seed monies.

*Todd Martin*, Midwest Regent

## **Mark Salzman's True Notebooks**

By Dan Hardy

One of my unexpected pleasures this summer was reading True Notebooks, the common reader for the 2006 Portland Convention. The book details the experiences of Mark Salzman as he helps members of a juvenile detention facility express their feelings through writing. Many of the people that he meets could be considered 'hardened' criminals, even though they are under the age of 18.

The book is not designed to give excuses for the crimes that were committed. What it does do is give us their stories, experiences, and feelings through what they write for Salzman. A prime example of this is on page 186, with a work by Victor with the many reasons he "hate[s] to see someone leave." The stories they tell both in class and through their writing changes the way Salzman and some of people working at the facility perceive the 'inmates.'

True Notebooks is enjoyable as well as informative. It doesn't make excuses for the behavior of its 'characters.' Some of its themes could be considered controversial, and would be a great book to critique or write an essay about, especially for this year's convention. It is a quick read, and would be perfect to read over winter break. Make a point to pick up this book, and join in all the discussions at the convention!



### **NEHS ORGANIZATION** Share Your Experience

On March 25, 2004 Sigma Tau Delta formed the NEHS (National English Honors Society), a program designed to reach out to students in high school that enjoy English studies.

The organization is similar to Sigma Tau Delta, and shares the same goals. It is a great opportunity for communication with your local community, as well as with English Educators and students. If you think you would be interested with helping create an NEHS chapter in your community, or know someone that would like to learn more about the organization, check out their website at: [www.nehs.us](http://www.nehs.us)

### **Midwest Writing Contest**

The common reader for the 2006 Sigma Tau Delta annual convention is Mark Salzman's book, *True Notebooks* (Knopf 2003). Dr. Robert Crafton, the convention chair for the March '06 convention in Portland, writes that *True Notebooks* "details his [Salzman's] experiences teaching writing workshops in a juvenile detention facility for violent offenders."

I invite all student members in the Midwest to submit to me a text focused on the '06 common reader using the following guidelines:

- the submission may be in any genre accepted at the convention,

- it must conform to all convention submission guidelines for that genre,
- it must be accompanied by a cover sheet identical to the convention cover sheet,
- it must be mailed to me at Huntington University at the address below, and
- it must be postmarked by January 31st.

This contest is open only to Midwest student members of  $\Sigma\tau\Delta$  who will not be able to attend the convention in Portland. This contest is completely separate from convention submissions. There will be a first-place prize of \$100.00 and, depending upon the number and quality of submissions, there may be other prizes.

I hope that this contest will be a way for us in the region to share a convention-related experience even though not all of us are able to travel to Portland. I also hope that it will give individuals experience in the process of academic submissions (remember, names appear only on the cover sheet) at the same time that it fosters a sense of community in the Midwest region. And, last, it will give each of us space to reflect on the power of writing both in our own lives and in the lives of the violent juvenile inmates that are at the center of Mark Salzman's book.

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