

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- **Fall Board Meeting Highlights**
- **Common Reader and Convention Awards**
- **Contests and Opportunities**
- **Convention Insider Info**

INSIDE THIS  
ISSUE:

<b>Insider Tips for Louisville 2008!</b>	2
<b>From the Regent's Desk</b>	3
<b>Common Reader Award and Election Announcements</b>	4
<b>Collaboration Contest Form</b>	5
<b>Book Review</b>	6
<b>Regional Facebook</b>	7
<b>Midwest Literary Conferences</b>	8

# Midwestern Region

SIGMA TAU DELTA HONOR SOCIETY

FALL 2007

## Fall Board Meeting - Changes and Challenges

The Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors met September 6th through the 9th at the Downtown Louisville Marriott Hotel, site of this year's International Convention.

Here are some of the highlights and changes which will affect the chapters nationally, as well as regionally.

- There have been changes made to several of the scholarship and award applications. Please read them carefully when filling them out.
- A large scale information project has been approved which will update the website, increase the ease of chapter reporting, and bring the Website up to

date. More information about this project will be released next Fall.

- A board position and awards have been created for active members of the Alumni Epsilon chapter of Sigma Tau Delta.
- The number of scholarships and awards being given out have increased for this year, and many of the prize amounts have been raised.
- In addition to the travel stipend given to SRs to attend the Fall and Spring Board meetings, ASRs are now eligible to receive a \$200.00 travel stipend for attendance at the Spring 2008 Conference.
- Sigma Tau Delta is in solid financial condition and the

board has assured this well into the future with sound investments and very prudent spending practices.

- Communication continues to be a large concern for the Society. With over 725 active chapters world wide, equating to roughly 17,000 active members at any given time, the Assistant Student Representatives, Regional Student Reps, Student Advisors, and the Regents are the key to representing the collective student voice of Sigma Tau Delta to the Board of Directors. Please drop your Student Representative an e-mail now and again.

## Don't Forget to Grab a Copy !

Kim Edwards' first collection of stories, *Secrets of a Fire King*, has been selected as the 2007–2008 common reader. The goal of the common reader is to celebrate the works of our featured speakers, to provide a common text for our own reading and enjoyment, and to establish a focus for chapter activities fostering literacy and the pleasures of reading in our local communities. Sigma Tau Delta is offering \$150 for the best convention presentation (in any genre) featuring the common reader.



# Spring 2008 International Conference

## Insider Tips

While the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center is one of the classiest places in downtown, I know you are going to want to get out and explore the city between those great sessions and after hours, so here are some tips about where to go, what to avoid, and some of what you have to look forward to in the city of Louisville!

Details can be found at the main Sigma Tau Delta Website:

**WWW.ENGLISH.ORG**



## Where (not) to Eat!

Watch for the board set up by your convention chair with great recommendations for cheap eats and bites of local flare. The Student Advisors and Reps ate out at a great local spot called Cunningham's for less than \$10.00 a person. Though I didn't find it, I hear there is a White Castle close by. Arby's is also near with breakfast under \$2.00!

That sure beat the heck out of the \$14.00 breakfast buffet at the Marriott. Of course, that pricey place looks like a real bargain in comparison to a steak house where the plates started at \$54.00. (We paid for our water and drinks, left a tip, and ran off to find some grub at 4th Street.)

## 4th Street Live!

<http://www.4thstlive.com>

Just blocks from the hotel on 4th Street, there is an eclectic collection of bars, restaurants, and live music. In the evenings they close off both ends of the street and wristband everyone coming in. This is because the entire location turns into a giant block party. Safety is a primary concern for the city, and while the night life seemed very well attended, the most dangerous thing we ran into was a bad smell at one of the upstairs restaurants. Upstairs, above the Hard Rock Café at 4th Street Live entertainment district, is also where you're going to find the local CVS. (Pharmacy, Drug Store, and large scale convenience shop with much better prices than your hotel shop.)

## Bad Poetry Contest and T-Shirt Skits!

Two of the most popular events at the convention every year are the bad poetry contest and the T-Shirt Skits. When a friend send me a chain e-mail about bad metaphors, some of them just had to be offered up as inspiration:

- He was as tall as a six-foot, three-inch tree.
- From the attic came an unearthly howl. The whole scene had an eerie, surreal quality, like when you're on vacation in another city and Jeopardy comes on at 7:00 p.m. instead of 7:30.
- The ballerina rose gracefully and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a fire hydrant.

# From The Regent's Desk

**“The deadline for applications for most of the awards and scholarships is October 30. It's time to get those applications finished and sent!”**

I am now well into my second year as the Midwestern Regent. Serving on the Board of Directors of Sigma Tau Delta has been and continues to be exciting, time consuming, interesting, enjoyable, and a great honor.

For those of you who are new to Sigma Tau Delta, here's a bit of biography: I grew up in Minnesota and was educated at Augustana College, University of Arizona, and University of Wisconsin. I have been teaching English at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for three decades. I love teaching, and I love working with students, so, at UW-Eau Claire, I am the faculty advisor to four groups: the Theta Zeta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Festival Organization (which puts on a large language arts conference each spring), the Eta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega (service fraternity), and the Alpine Ski Club. I most enjoy teaching science fiction literature and English grammar and usage (not necessarily in the same course). If you want to know even more about me (though I cannot imagine why), you can go to my website:

<http://www.uwec.edu/hochstgj/>

Numerous opportunities are available to you as members of Sigma Tau Delta. Please apply for some of the numerous awards, grants, scholarships, and internships. Sigma Tau Delta gives out nearly \$50,000 annually in scholarships, awards, and grants, including a couple of scholarships worth \$2500

to \$3000 each. Some of these awards, grants, or scholarships have only a handful of applicants. Your chances of getting one are very good, but only if you apply. **The due date for Service Award applications, and for most of the other awards and scholarships is October 30. It's time to get those applications finished and sent!**

In addition, your chapter may request some modest funding from your Regent (me) to support multi-chapter activities. The amount will vary by event, number of chapters involved, and regional funds available. These should be requested in advance of the event, and they are available on a first come, first served basis. Requests should describe the event, name the chapters involved, and have the sponsor's endorsement and contact information. This fall, for example, we are contributing to the MUSE conference being offered by Illinois Wesleyan in October. We anticipate supporting a Midwestern regional conference in fall 2008.

Are you about to graduate? Do you dread leaving Sigma Tau Delta behind? Well, take heart! You are a lifetime member of Sigma Tau Delta, and you can stay in direct contact by joining the Alumni Epsilon chapter. In addition, there are convention paper awards just for alumni. And, at the 2008 Spring Convention, for the first time, alumni members will be voting on an Alumni Representative who will sit on the Board of Sigma Tau Delta. The person holding this AR position will need to be a paid-up member of the Alumni Epsilon chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, but you can join that at any time, even at the convention.



Think MINNEAPOLIS 2009. The Midwestern Region is hosting the 2009 Sigma Tau Delta International Convention, and your regent (me) will be the convention chair. The tentative convention theme will be a variation on “REFLECTIONS,” referring to the literal reflections of sky and trees in the many rivers and lakes of Minnesota, and, of course, to the internal reflections of writers. Please send me your ideas about how we can best show off the Midwest.

As your Midwestern Regent, I want to create more opportunities for student involvement and I encourage more participation in the opportunities that exist. I also want to be a resource for sponsors. I will answer all of your questions or refer you to someone who can answer your questions.

Please feel free to email me anytime at: **HOCHSTGJ@UWEC.EDU**

I look forward to another enjoyable year and I hope to see many of you in Louisville. Let's show them how vital and dynamic the Midwestern Region is!

**Gloria J. Hochstein**

## Elections and Appointments for 2008

There will be an election for both the Student Representative and the Associate Student Representative positions at the 2008 Annual Convention in Louisville Kentucky. Additionally, a seat is opening on the Board for one Student Advisor. Please check the handbook available online for more details about the positions and bring your forms for the SR and ASR positions to the Regional Caucus at the convention! Making a difference in Sigma Tau Delta has made a large and lasting difference in my life. Let it make one in yours. There is so much more at stake than compiling a newsletter like this one, although I have to admit I have had a lot of fun doing it. SRs, ASRs, and SAs will learn how a non profit organization works, develop real life leadership skills, and leave lasting imprints on many lives through their work.

Patricia Jones, Midwestern SR

## Regents' Common Reader Award 2008

**The common reader for the 2008 Sigma Tau Delta Annual convention is Kim Edwards' first collection of stories, *Secrets of a Fire King*.**

Apart from panels and individual presentations on Kim Edwards or on *Secrets of a Fire King* at the 2008 convention in Louisville, the regents invite individual chapters to organize and host a local event or activity around this text. Up to four chapters from each region are eligible to win an award of \$50.00. In order to apply, a chapter must submit to its specific Regent the following three documents, postmarked on or before February 15, 2008:

- a cover letter, signed by the chapter sponsor, confirming that the activity or event took place,
- a narrative, not to exceed 500 words, describing the activity or event, and
- a list of all participating persons or groups.

This award is open to all active chapters of Sigma Tau Delta. It is completely separate from convention submissions. Results will be announced simultaneously both at the convention and by e-mail.

The Regents hope that this award will be a way for chapters in each region to share a convention-related experience even though not all of us are able to travel to Louisville. We hope it will encourage creative, text-based activities and events. And, last, we hope that it will give many of us space to reflect on the power of poetry both in our own lives and in the lives of others.

Gloria J. Hochstein  
Midwestern Regent  
[hochstgi@uwec.edu](mailto:hochstgi@uwec.edu)

English Department  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004



# The Resurrection Trade by Leslie Adrienne Miller

Reviewed by Thomas Dillingham, Faculty Member of Sigma Tau Delta

I should start by admitting that I have known Leslie Adrienne Miller since she was an undergraduate; that is not a claim of authority, but an admission that I may have a bias. I don't think so, but the reader may judge.

Leslie Miller's poems, from her student chapbook through her five mature volumes (so far), offer rich and intense experiences; she has a sensitive and discerning eye for detail, a startling wit to make unexpected connections, and command of the language that allows her to create vivid illusions of presence. Others have commented on the wide-ranging and sophisticated materials of her poems, drawn not only from many places around the world, many periods of history, but also from a range of intimate experiences tied to issues of public importance in ways that assure the reader that there is matter of note in these lines.

The Resurrection Trade brings together a number of poems inspired by anatomical images, especially but not only of women's bodies, created during the 18th century by such artists as Gautier d'Agoty and Jan van Rymdyk; one reaches back to

the famous (and inaccurate) representation of copulation by Leonardo da Vinci, and another reconstructs for our minds' eyes the use of MRI technology to discover the actual interaction of the human organs of generation. Images of flayed bodies (collected for the purpose of dissection from gibbets and looted graveyards) offered to civilized eyes in poses of social insouciance or even self display, stimulate thoughts on the meanings of nakedness, of the exposure of what is private or kept unseen--who decides which are or are not proper to be seen?, who is allowed to expose the hidden and what conventions of representation allow the exposure to pass for respectable information? These pictures are medical science, not titillation, but as we see them we may need to choose between attraction and repulsion. The images are not erotic in any conventional sense, yet eroticism and sexuality pervade such representations, including these poems as verbal reconstructions of the visual images. But there is a kind of intellectual distance maintained in the critical analysis of the peculiar poses and settings the artists have used to normalize and, arguably, de-sexualize these variously tormented human

bodies. Although the flesh, muscles, and organs of the bodies are horrifically ripped and wrenched, split open and drawn out, the one feeling never explicitly evoked is pain. But in Miller's poems responding to the images, the spectre of pain is ever present though seldom explicit.

Along with the ekphrastic poems, Miller includes as well some more personal or meditative poems, and a bravura metaphysical conceit (in "Cherries") asserting ownership from before her own birth of the child to whom she has given birth. Not only visual arts, however, sustain this book; many images of the power of music mix with the evocations of engravings, and both intertwine with poems about the ecstasies and horrors of motherhood, the pains of lost friendships, the frustrations of family interdependence.

Miller's ekphrastic poems do not stop with the word picture; some poets are content to evoke the image of the painting, photograph, or garden; like the better examples of that tradition, Miller's presentation of the picture is usually a  
(cont. page 7)

(cont. from page 6)  
prelude to a step through and beyond, or sometimes to the side, with a connection to a situation or relationship not exactly relevant or analogous to the subject of the picture, but ripe for association and possible deepened significance. Though the almost clinical examination of detail--both in the pictures and in the narratives of life experiences--might seem cold or distant, the poems, like the ecorches,

remind us of the humanity of the observed. In the opening poem of the book, Miller describes her earlier poems as creating "memory of someone not quite gone," implying that there is more and different to be found here; that is so, but it could be said that all of her poems are about "someone not quite gone" because preserved either in these images or in her poems, themselves. This is a powerful book and a significant movement forward in Miller's poetic

achievement. I strongly recommend it.

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This review originally appeared as an online review at Amazon.com. To read more about Adrienne Miller and her poetry, including a review by Ted Kooser, please visit her website.

<http://www.lesliemillerpoet.com>

## Regional Facebook—Staying in Touch

It can be difficult to stay in touch with what is happening in the region from week to week. Chapter meetings, sub-regional conferences, readings by speakers from all over the globe slip past and we find out too late. In order to facilitate better inter-chapter communication

the regions began Facebook sites. These are unofficial gathering places for members, ideas, questions, and information. If your chapter already has a Facebook account or if you would like to participate, please log into Facebook at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and

drop a note to the Sigmataudelta Midwestern Region profile in order to get hooked up as a group. If you would like to participate in keeping this site actively updated, please contact the SR and ASR as soon as possible. **Get Involved. Stay Involved. Experience Lasts a Lifetime.**

*“The site should function as a means to share ideas, keep in touch...and increase the flow of information...”*

## Chapter Based Fundraising and Service Projects

Rachel Moses and Ryan Fletcher hosted a fantastic panel on Fundraising at the International conference. Here are a list of some of their ideas for fundraising, as well as some of the ideas offered by those attending the panel:

**Faculty Spelling Bee**  
**Poets for Hire—Valentines Day**  
**Bookmark Sales**

**Penny Drive for Best Professor**  
**Parents’ Night Out**  
**Book Sales at Local Library**

Kin Lock and Jenny Allen-Ayres hosted a fabulous panel on Service Projects which produced some of the following suggestions:

**Hosting a One Day Conference**  
**Host a Guest Speaker**

**Freshman Activities**  
**Mentoring On Campus**  
**Mentoring for Local Youth**  
**Reading to Assist a Charity**  
**Co-Sponsored Events**  
**Banned Book Awareness**

Watch for a longer list and more details on the upcoming Facebook site.

## Resources On The World Wide Web

### Conferences

Here is a great resource for keeping up on those calls for papers: <http://calls.eserver.org/>

This site explains abstracts: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>

A worldwide list of English conferences : <http://www.conferencealerts.com/english.htm>

### Writing and Publishing

Poetry publishers accepting online submissions: <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/pbonline.html>

A very large freelance writing resource: <http://www.fwointl.com/>

Resource for online writing tools: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/internet/resources/genre.html>

## Literary Conferences in the Midwest

### MUSE

This year Alpha Eta Pi of Illinois Wesleyan University will be working in partnership with Lambda Delta of Illinois State University to host the annual one-day conference event at the IWU campus in Bloomington, Illinois. The event will be held on Saturday October 6th, 2007.

The MUSE Keynote Speaker this year will be Shakespearean scholar **Wendy Wall**, Chair and Professor of English at Northwestern University. There will also be a forum on post graduation options and a number of sessions with presentations of student papers throughout the day.

MUSE 2006 featured 27 student presenters, whose papers addressed topics from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales to the Vietnam War's influence on the media. Presenters came from Augustana College, Carthage College, the College of the Ozarks, Knox College, Illinois College, Monmouth College, Oakland University and Purdue University, as well as IWU and ISU.

Contact Information  
<http://www.iwu.edu/~sigmatd/muselitconf@gmail.com>

### CALLED TO CREATE

Creative writers associated with the Lutheran Church will gather and give public readings of their work at "Called to Create: A Lutheran Festival of Writing," scheduled Nov. 2-4 at Luther College.

Through readings, lectures, panel discussions and open-mike events, the three-day festival aims to support and encourage serious writing and to cultivate a community of writers and readers in the Lutheran world.

The keynote speakers are National Book Award winner **Walt Wangerin, Jr.**, author of "Jesus: A Novel" and "The Book of God," and **Marilyn Nelson**, former Poet Laureate of Connecticut and three-time National Book Award finalist. All 19 featured writers will read five-minute selections from their award-winning stories and poems at the Saturday night Writing Sampler, "when we'll hear the diversity of voices in and around our church," said Shepherd.

The festival is open to the public. For complete information about the festival, presenters, and how to register, visit

Contact Information  
<http://programming.luther.edu/lutheranwriters/index.html>

### MCLLM

The Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, and Media (MCLLM) is hosting its fifteenth annual conference on February 29 and March 1, 2008.

The conference will be held at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois.

Confirmed keynote speakers are **David Bevington** (University of Chicago) on the subject of race and gender in Early Modern literature, and **Russ Castronovo** (University of Wisconsin-Madison), on the subject of American and African American history, particularly trade.

We would like to solicit proposals for 20 minute papers from scholars at all career stages, from beginning graduate students to established and senior scholars.

Elizabeth Bowman and Christina Gilleran  
Co-Chairs, MCLLM 2008  
Department of English  
Northern Illinois University  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
(815) 753-5599

Contact Information  
[mcllm2008@gmail.com](mailto:mcllm2008@gmail.com)  
<http://www.engl.niu.edu/mcllm/>