

THE SOUTHWESTERN

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SOUTHWESTERN
REGIONAL
NEWSLETTER

THE 2008 SIGMA TAU DELTA CONFERENCE IN LOUISVILLE

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Ladies and Gentlemen, you are cordially invited to...the Sigma Tau Delta 2008 National Conference in Louisville, Kentucky! If you have already submitted your academic papers and creative works, you are to be applauded; if you have not, the submission deadline is not until November 14, 2007. And even if you submit no paper, you are still most welcome to attend the conference from March 5-8, which will be held at the very luxurious Marriott Louisville Downtown Hotel. All you addicts, fear not—there's even a Starbucks in the lobby.

Louisville, home of the Kentucky derby, is a place of Necessary Contradictions, our convention theme which comes from Walt Whitman's excellent Song of Myself: "Do I contradict myself? / Very well, I contradict myself. / (I am large, I contain multitudes)." Notable events in the conference are, of course, the presenting of academic papers, leadership workshop breakout sessions, the awarding of scholarships, and three stellar keynote speakers. Poet Naomi Shihab Nye (*You & Yours*), playwright Susan-Lori Parks

(*Topdog/Underdog*), and fiction writer Kim Edwards (*The Memory Keeper's Daughter*) will be gracing the conference with their perspectives on the literary life. Also, the traditionally held National Book Drive will benefit the local Portland Neighborhood House this year.

Students who have gone with Sigma Tau Delta perhaps to Pittsburgh in 2007 or Portland in 2006 know not only how much fun conventions are, but also how gratifying it is to hear your work affirmed in a critical academic setting. The Sigma Tau Delta convention is the highlight of membership in the honors society, and I know that you, like me, will think of Louisville as a place of both leisure and learning, a centerpiece of 2008.

Want to learn more about the conference? Go to www.english.org and navigate to Conventions, Louisville 2008.

I hope to meet you there!

Kelly Brubaker, SW-SR
Chi Delta Chapter
Oklahoma Baptist University

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Email Kelly at
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THE PRAGUE LITERARY SCENE

Prague, the flourishing Bohemian capital of the Czech Republic, is a city rich in culture, architecture, and art. The only major city to not incur significant destruction during World War II, Prague incubates thousands of years' worth of European architectural developments ranging from Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque; to Art Nouveau, Cubist, Modernist, and Post-Modernist styles. The one-time capital of the Holy Roman Empire, Prague upholds a legacy of rich cultural exploration, scientific innovation, and religious tolerance. The court of Hapsburg Emperor Rudolph II (r. 1576-1612) attracted legions of mathematicians, astrologers, artists, and alchemists, becoming a Mecca for learning and discovery.

The Prague literary scene emerges as a keystone reflecting the progressively daring and keenly intellectual virtues of the Bohemian cultural tradition. Prague's literary heritage, headlined by twentieth century virtuosos Franz Kafka and Milan Kundera, attracts a community not unlike the debauched, freewheeling drifters of the 1950's Beat generation. Called the "Paris of the 90's" by former Prague Post editor Alan Levy, Prague continues to attract legions of would-be Hemingways and Kerouacs, who often become more immersed in the beer than in the ink. The flood of marginally talented literary neophytes has made more experienced and gifted writers leery of participating in a scene that has acquired the properties of a banal cliché. Still, despite the lack of ex-patriot literary talent, Prague has much to offer in terms of urban and old world inspiration.

With all of its bookstores, Prague solicits anabolic steroid-like nourishment for the intellectual mind. The most prolific English bookstores in Prague are



The Anagram Bookshop

the Anagram Bookshop in Old Town and the Globe Coffeehouse behind the national theatre. The Anagram is a nondescript shop that neighbors a cozy café in one of the city's primary tourist districts. A short walk from the legendary astronomical clock in the city's Old Town Square, Anagram offers an impressive selection of intellectually rich if non-



Inside the Globe Café

canonical literature. The Globe café, founded in the early 90's by two ex-patriot journalists that worked for the Prague Post, complements its literary selection with a spacious coffeehouse, where intriguing modern

art paintings adorn the rich crimson walls of the cafe. Both the Anagram and Globe bookstores have expansive and prominent sections devoted to classical literature, Greek drama, and philosophy.

Despite its abundance of intellectual venues, the Prague literary scene is either past its prime, or yet to come. For a small nation that always seems to be tangled in a tug of war between the East and the West, Prague has had difficulty developing a modern cultural identity, interlinked with the lack of a definite literary movement. While Czech authors continue their struggle to capture the character of Eastern Europe in the new millennium, ex-patriot authors remain deluded, trying to imitate the globe-trotting lifestyle of former authors. For a city with so much historical mystique, old world charm, and urban architectural inspiration, a powerful and sweeping literary movement lies surely on the brink of destiny's unclouded horizon.

Tim Lloyd, SW-ASR
Alpha Nu Lambda Chapter
St. Edwards University

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LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SOUTHWESTERN REGION

The leaves haven't even begun to turn yet, but I know that it will seem that I've just had time for a couple of deep breaths of winter before the air will be warming and we'll be in Louisville, the hotel bustling with students and sponsors from all over the country. I hope that many of you are preparing papers to submit to the convention. It's always exciting and rewarding to share one's own work and to hear the work of members from other schools. But I also hope that you will consider another possibility as you think about this year's convention: running for one of the regional leadership positions. We have three regional positions that will be open this spring, and each of these is vital to the successful operation of the Southwest Region.

The two student positions are the Student Representative (SR) and the Associate Student Representative (ASR). The SR works with the Southwest Regent to promote communication among regional chapters and is one of the main conduits of information between the national leadership and the local chapters. Serving as editor of this newsletter, for instance, is one of the responsibilities of the SR. The SR also attends board meetings and the convention, and serves on the Student Leadership Committee, which plans the pre-convention leadership workshop. For SRs, travel expenses to the fall board meeting and spring convention are paid by Sigma Tau Delta. SRs also serve as members of national committees. Kelly Brubaker, our current Southwest SR, will be organizing a panel on literary arts journals for the leadership workshop and working with the Print/Electronics Communications Committee to improve the Sigma Tau Delta website.

The ASR's job is to aid the SR and to be prepared to assume the duties of the SR if necessary. The ASR often assists with the newsletter, providing assistance with articles, layout, or editing. Our current ASR, Tim Lloyd, has produced an article on the literary scene in Prague for this newsletter. Since the ASR may be from

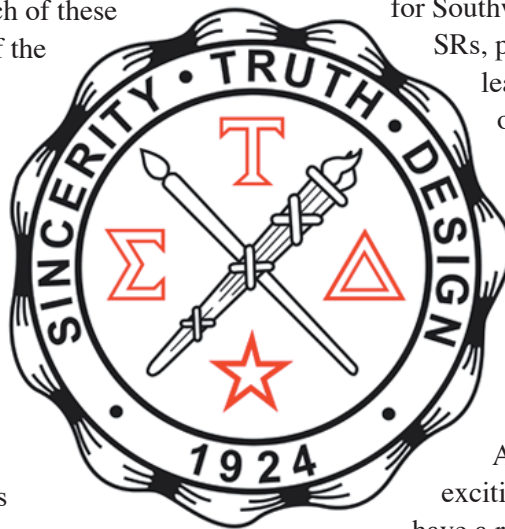
a different state than the SR, the ASR is in a position to bring a different perspective to the newsletter and to serve as a useful contact person in that part of our region. While ASRs do not attend board meetings, they are encouraged to attend the convention and help with registration and other duties. Starting this year, the ASR will receive a stipend at the convention to help defray travel expenses.

This year the Southwest Regent's position will also be open. Any sponsor of an active chapter of Sigma Tau Delta within the Southwest Region is eligible to stand for Southwest Regent. Regents, like the SRs, provide both regional and national leadership. They promote the development of Sigma Tau Delta within their region and work closely with the SR and ASR to promote chapter and regional activities. They also serve on the national Board of Directors and most serve as chairperson of one of the national committees.

All three of these positions are exciting and fulfilling opportunities that have a real impact on Sigma Tau Delta at the regional and national level. The best qualifications may be an enthusiastic love for Sigma Tau Delta joined with good communication and organizational skills. If you are interested, application forms for each of the positions are available at the Sigma Tau Delta website, www.english.org. Elections for these positions are held at the Southwest Regional Caucus, so applicants should plan to attend the 2008 International Convention in Louisville this March—which, of course, is just two short, deep breaths of winter air from now.

Dr. Sidney Watson
Southwestern Regent
Oklahoma Baptist University

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AROUND THE REGION

TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN

CHI THETA CHAPTER DEMONSTRATES CHARITY

As a returning student, commuter Joyce Hutsell defined the term non-traditional student in a unique way: she was 75 years old. In May 2007, she received her B.A. in English from West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas. The Chi Theta chapter had welcomed Joyce as a member in 2005; she served as secretary for the 2006-2007 term. She says, "Sigma Tau Delta members made me feel welcome and enabled me to be a part of an exciting year. My age and commuter status might otherwise have robbed me of the opportunity to know so many wonderful new friends."

The chapter maintains a traditionally high profile on campus. Recruitment of new members and participation in campus-wide orientation creates knowledge of the organization. Representation on administrative and academic boards determining campus policy also help to keep the organization's name in view. Members spearhead two main projects each year. In the fall semester, "Banned Books Week" observation involves an active booth at the student union, with books and T-shirts. This provides the basis for visiting with students about the study of English, literature, books, and the larger issue of censorship.

The chapter hosts a Middle School Papers Conference in the spring. As many as five hundred young writers and readers attend. They learn to value the presentation of their

written work as a learning tool and as experience for the future. This acquaints Sigma Tau Delta throughout regional schools.

Joyce's husband, Ralph, after undergoing surgeries in December and January, once again had heart surgery in March 2007. The cumulative effect of one more illness greatly influenced Joyce's ability to continue classwork and Sigma Tau Delta secretarial duties. "No one complained," continues Joyce. "They just quietly took over some of my duties for the conference. I didn't even know my benefactors. They must have all assisted."

Then, without being asked, members prepared, coordinated, and delivered ten days' worth of meals to the Hutsell couple. "I know who delivered the supplies and meals, but I do not yet know which members participated in this saving measure. Many of these individuals will be anonymous forever."

Anonymity may be best. Now, the entire chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at West Texas State University can be seen as individual heroes, quietly serving wherever needed. Their reward is to honor their organization and their university.

Joyce Hutsell
Chi Theta Chapter
West Texas A&M University

WELCOME BACK

to the reactivated
Phi Theta chapter from
Texas Lutheran University
in Seguin, TX!

RED DIRT FESTIVAL

Oklahoma Baptist University's Chi Delta chapter will be volunteering at Oklahoma's semi-annual book festival on Nov. 2-3.

"...the entire chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at West Texas State University can be seen as individual heroes..."

ΣΤΔ

Have more stories to share?
Email them to your
SR or ASR!

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INSIDE *SECRETS OF A FIRE KING*

In *Secrets of a Fire King*, Kim Edwards compiles fourteen of her fascinating short stories with dynamic plots and unique characters. While readers find themselves diving through air, adapting to foreign cultures, and discovering harmful elements, the common doorway appears through the pages of Edwards' powerful book, which transports readers to many places, but always returns to concepts of passion and motivation.



“Spring, Mountain, Sea” tells the story of an American soldier, Rob, who specializes in speaking foreign languages. Rob’s life-long friends start to question his motivations when he marries a Japanese woman and brings her back to America. The story presents the conflict between clashing cultures as a Japanese mother feels that her children have traded her for America. The family must test if the power of love can overcome the barriers that separate them.

Another conflict about the expression of love develops in “The Way It Felt to Be Falling.” A naïve workaholic, Katie, endeavors to strengthen her relationship with the mysterious, suicidal acquaintance she seeks to love. In her quest for answers to help this friend through a shaky past, Katie realizes that she cannot maintain a one-sided relationship. As she joins her friend in confronting a challenge, Katie discovers that she is “falling” alone and must escape while she has the chance.

“A Gleaming in the Darkness” takes the reader back to the days of Marie Curie, showing how an important, peculiar discovery affects the motives of a devoted servant. While the servant can only speculate about the importance of her master’s experiments, she feels confident that the outcome will change people’s lives. The intrigue accompanying this new

discovery causes her to go a little beyond the normal aspects of her daily life in order to experience the effects of the discovery firsthand.

All of the stories in this remarkable volume enable the reader to connect with the characters because their motives and passions are exposed. The vulnerability of each character makes him or her a perfect candidate for empathy because readers have been in the same emotional position. Edwards extracts the weaknesses of her characters by displaying the things they want and need most in life. While most of her characters are working to discover the meaning of their desires, Edwards reveals the secrets by showing that they all are driven by love.

Unlock the mysteries for yourself by picking up Kim Edwards’ *Secrets of a Fire King*, OR if you’d rather meet her in person, join Kim Edwards at the Sigma Tau Delta National Conference where she will be hosted as one of the keynote speakers for 2008!



Ryann Aaron
Chi Delta Chapter
Oklahoma Baptist University

Hear other award-winning authors at the
Louisville 2008 Convention:

Naomi Shihab Nye will be speaking about
You & Yours, her poetry collection, and
playwright Susan-Lori Parks will be talking
about *Topdog/Underdog*, her play.

CONTACT US

Sigma Tau Delta website – <http://www.english.org>

Louisville Conference website
– <http://www.english.org/louisville/index.html>

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“Sigma Tau Delta
(Southwestern
Region)”

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“NECESSARY CONTRADICTIONS”

...ACCORDING TO GOOGLE



Marriott Louisville
Downtown Hotel

- Social Science & Medicine: The necessary contradictions of ‘community-led’ health promotion.
- JBooks.com - Non-Fiction. Beyond Accommodation: The Necessary Contradictions of Power.
- Glasgow Unity Theatre: The Necessary Contradictions of Scottish Political Theatre. Oxford Journals.
- Dissertation Abstract. Guthrie, Nichole Hurley. Necessary Contradictions: Critical Pedagogy and Kenneth Burke’s Pentad.
- Nigeria. Brad Weiss’ essay relates the necessary contradictions of remembering and forgetting.
- Necessary Contradictions. PDF. “Very well, then, I contradict myself...”

...But as you can see, the most interesting “Necessary Contradiction” of all will be at the Marriott Hotel in Louisville. Hope to see you there!