



SIGMA TAU DELTA

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

THE SOUTHWESTERN

FALL 2008

AZ, AR, NM, OK, TX

SOUTHWESTERN
REGIONAL
NEWSLETTER

Southwestern Regional Conference, Oct. 17-19 Christopher Flynn, Southwest Regent

Your elected representatives here in the Southwestern Region have been working this summer and fall on putting together our regional conference, "Illuminating Shadows." The conference will take place from Friday, October 17 – Sunday, October 19, on the campus of St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Hannah, Kyle and I are looking forward to hosting students from around the region for what promises to be an exciting few days.

Our conference is focused on working on seeing presentations as performances. I still remember my first conferences as a student member of Sigma Tau Delta. It seemed there were some people who gave good papers. Others – me, for example – who wrote well enough, but basically stared at the page and plowed through until we got to the last period. It vaguely occurred to me back then that there was an art to giving a paper, and that that art was not exactly the same involved in writing one. But I had a capital R Romantic notion of where art came from, and that was some mysterious realm closed to anyone not divinely inspired.

Later, as a student of 18th-century British literature, I learned a more practical, less inspirational approach to art, and found that applying it to this very mundane genre of the conference paper was a useful thing to do.

Our moderators will work with the students presenting to help them see how to improve not just the content, but the presentation of their talks. Nothing against the Romantics, but for a weekend we'll all be citizens of the Enlightenment.

Our featured speaker for the conference, Doug Dorst, recently published his first novel, *Alive in Necropolis*. It's the story of a

police officer in Colma, California, a town filled with cemeteries where San Francisco buries its dead. Mike Mercer finds he has a certain rapport with those who have passed, and the story takes off from there.

Dorst is on the faculty at St. Edward's, where he teaches creative writing. He is a former Stegner Fellow at Stanford, a graduate of the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop, and the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts.

In addition to the talks by students and our featured writer, we will have a workshop on student leadership. A scavenger hunt in South Austin is planned, along with a Saturday night banquet. Austin likes to call itself "The Live Music Capital of the World" with many clubs and cafes, is home to the Capitol of Texas, Lake Ladybird, and many other attractions. We think it will make a great setting for great conference, and look forward to meeting the students and faculty sponsors from the region.

The hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast have affected many in our Region right around conference submission time. Please be aware that we are still open for submissions to give as many people who want to come join us in Austin the chance to do so. For more information, see the website under "Conventions." , Austin, TX 78704.

Dr. Flynn is an Assistant Professor for St. Edwards University

Inside this Issue

International Convention "Reflections" Minneapolis, MN 2

Featured speakers for the International Convention 3

Southwestern Representatives Contact Information 3

Scholarship and Banned Books 4

Greetings from Micah Hicks 4

Deadlines 2008 - 2009 5

Stephanie Schiefelbein Micha Hicks 5





International Convention “Reflections” Minneapolis, MN March 25 - 28, 2009

It's that time again folks! I hope that everyone had a fantastic summer and a great start to the fall semester. I wanted to take the opportunity to get all of you excited about the Sigma Tau Delta International Conference 2009 in Minneapolis.

Our regent, Dr. Flynn and I went to Minneapolis a few weeks ago for the fall board meeting and we had the chance to check out the town. The conference is being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, and let me tell you, it is absolutely gorgeous! There will be a block of rooms set aside for those coming to the conference in March, so make those reservations!

One of the things that I found to be nifty about our location is that there is so much to do within walking distance of the hotel. There are a variety of restaurants, both price wary and upscale, including Indian, Korean, Japanese, and good ole' American that are great for groups. There are also two or three places to eat within the hotel itself for those with time constraints. Also, should you have the chance, there will be public transportation to the renowned Walker Art Center in groups or for self guided tours. I would encourage everyone to get out and have fun during your down time!

If you went to the conference last year, then you are familiar with some of the events that take place. The open mike and bad poetry contests are back

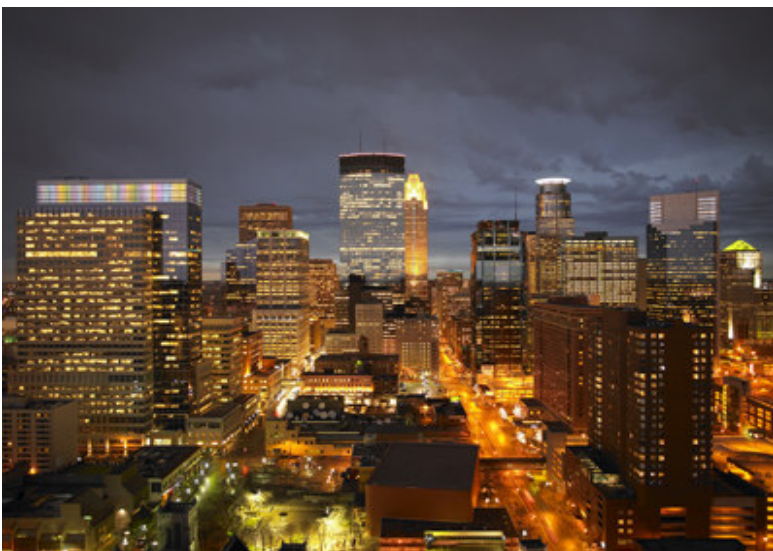
as well as a possible poetry slam and flash fiction. In addition to all that fun, we will be offering a new slew of workshops and panels and a brand new range of guest speakers.

Guest speakers this year include Mike Perry, musician and author of *Population 485*, Poet Alexandra Fuller and author Neil Gaiman form the outstanding lineup. There will be readings, interviews, and books signings to attend throughout the conference. Do not pass this up!

I would ask all of you to submit your literary works for the possibility to present at the conference and a chance to win scholarships.

I look forward to seeing everyone in March and cannot wait for another exciting year in Sigma Tau Delta.

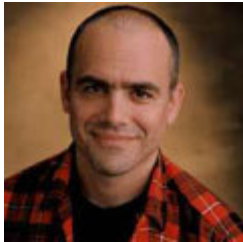
Hannah Stewart is a Senior at Wayland Baptist University. She is a member and past president of the Eta Theta Chapter of ΣΤΔ



Featured speakers for the International Convention

For a additional information regarding featured speakers please visit:

<http://www.english.org/sigmatd/minneapolis/speakers.html>



Michael Perry, Thursday, March 26, 2009
Workshops Friday, March 27, 2009

Alexandra Fuller, Friday, March 27, 2009
Workshop



Neil Gaiman, Saturday, March 28, 2009
Interview Saturday, March 28, 2009



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Scholarship and Banned Books

By: Kyle Baker - Associate Student Representative

University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus

The pendulum of public opinion swings back in forth in every community. At times, conservative voice prevail and impose their values on the civic sphere, while liberal voices enact the same ends when opinion and public favor returns to their camp. With the advent of Banned Books Week in 1982, more public attention has been given to this observable phenomenon. In the United States, a nation that prides itself of freedom and openness, an interesting history of censorship exists.

The reasoning for these imposed censorships are widely variant in each circumstance. When the prevailing religious winds shift in a civilization, the voice of the people is often expressed through reinterpretations of scriptures and other revered texts. Naturally, the powers that exits wish to maintain their ideological hegemony, so certain books and texts are considered heretical and are subsequently banned. The fact that we, as humans, still possess some of these censored volumes speaks to the indomitable spirit of human thought.

Other cases of censorship are not so philosophically motivated., however. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* has faced numerous and repeated challenges from a wide range of civic groups because of its explicit language, not to mention the personal proclivities of the author. James Joyce, the author of the stream-of-consciousness epic *Ulysses*, endured a long and protracted court battle before his novel was allowed to be published or possessed in the United States. The novel, which features long scenes of exquisite and occasionally overt descriptions of sexuality, was a lightning rod to pro-censorship groups who refused to believe that the unusual technique used by Joyce was even considered as literature.

Political tensions often lead to the censorship and outright destruction of printed material. The public burning of books has been a ritual occurring in innumerable instances from the most professedly free-thinking societies to the most totalitarian regimes. Not all political censorships have been so brazen, however. During the "Red Scare" of the 1950's, a committee led by Senator Joseph McCarthy successfully had texts removed from several libraries, both here in the United States and in its military bases abroad. Of the texts censored or removed, the most famous example is Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, a foundational text in modern political thinking.

Many people are often surprised to learn that Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is the most challenged work of fiction in American History. Many groups initially found the depiction of interracial relationships to be disturbing, while others felt that the text contained strong arguments for the basic equality of African-Americans in the United States. Later, groups have challenged *Huckleberry Finn* because of a perception that the novel glorifies juvenile delinquency. Most recently, and perhaps what would be most surprising to Twain is the censorship of the novel due to its repeated use of racial epithets, such as the dreaded "n-word".

Our honor society strives to stimulate interest in all aspects of English, which invariably includes the patterns of public opinion that have surrounded a given text. Over the next week, we encourage you to read a banned book. Obtaining a list of banned books is as easy as a Google search, but Pennsylvania University maintains a list of controversial titles online at <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/banned-books.html> . The opportunities for personal growth contained within the examination of controversial texts are critical to the development of a well-rounded education. Where would we be as English majors, without the tragic ending of King Lear? Where would struggling minorities be without the guidance of Thoreau in *Civil Disobedience*?

Another set of opportunities that you may be missing are the excellent scholarships available through our honor society. Every chapter is sent detailed information on each scholarship available through Sigma Tau Delta, many of which are worth a considerable amount of tuition dollars. If for some reason, your chapter has not received these materials or you need extra copies, direct your browser to <http://www.english.org/sigmatd/awards/scholarships.shtml> . Each scholarship is presented in a detailed format, along with extra copies of applications as well as guidelines for applying.



Kyle Baker, Graduate Student
at the University of Oklahoma

Deadlines 2008-2009

Scholarships

All Scholarships are due by October 30, 2008, with a few exceptions. The Study Abroad (2nd Round), Summer Scholarship Awards, Website Awards, Outstanding Sponsor Awards, and Regency Internships have different due dates respectively and if interested you should check out the Sigma Tau Delta website.

Minneapolis Call for Papers

All conference papers MUST be submitted before or by November 21, 2008 by 11:59 pm. If you have been accepted will be notified by January 30, 2009. If you are accepted you MUST be prepared to travel to the conference to present your work and possibly receive awards.

2009 Conference Registration

If you register between January 5, 2009 to February 25, 2009 then you will receive an early registration discount. \$50 for student presenters and \$60 for everyone else. After Feb 25, it will be \$80 for everyone. There is also the option of onsite registration when you get to Minneapolis and this will also be \$80 per person. Also, please consider purchasing a conference T-Shirt, they are really nifty this year!

Greetings from Wisconsin

Stephanie Schiefelbein
Student Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire



Greetings, Southwest! From Micah Hicks

Micah Hicks, senior at Southern
Arkansas University

