



SIGMA TAU DELTA

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

Fall 2008

Reflections: The 2009 Sigma Tau Delta Convention

Gloria J. Hochstein

Convention Chair

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire



You are invited to bring your *REFLECTIONS* to the Sigma Tau Delta 2009 Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 26-28, 2009. The state of Minnesota takes its name from the native Dakota word for the Minnesota River: *minisota*, which means “water that reflects the sky.” Growing up in the farm country of southwestern Minnesota, I was surrounded by the natural wonders of sky and water and trees and growing plants and animals, and also by the human-made wonders of architecture, machines, and books. Such a combination encourages us to reflect on both the natural and the human-made world and on our place in those worlds.

Two childhood events remain among my most vivid memories, and I find that reflecting on these events leads me down divergent paths. When I was nine, our family took a vacation to northern Minnesota. In Bemidji, I saw the huge statues of Paul Bunyan and Babe, his Blue Ox. I was told that Lake Superior and the other Great Lakes were formed from Babe’s hoof prints. Even then I knew that the Great Lakes were not really Babe’s hoof prints and that no giant lumberjack logged the forests. Looking back, I see that these stories started me on a life-long interest in discovering why humans create mythological creatures and stories to explain natural phenomena and human behavior. I eventually came to understand that it is much more poetic to attribute the logging of the great forests to a giant being than it is to accept the more mundane explanation that a growing nation needed the lumber for its expansion.

Later in that vacation by Lake Itasca, as we stepped carefully on the rocks that bridge the small stream that is the source of the Mississippi River, my brother shoved me. Losing my balance, I stepped off the rocks into the water, my new saddle shoes making foot prints in the bed of the Mississippi. Standing in the stream with the water trickling around my ankles, I marveled that this quiet, shallow stream was the source of the huge river that flowed through the Twin Cities only a few hours south. I also found myself awestruck that I was actually standing IN the great Mississippi, yet I was in no danger. I felt both small and powerful. Looking

back, I now see that I was reflecting on the dynamic relationship between the natural and the human worlds.

When Minneapolis was selected as the site for the 2009 convention, I knew I wanted the theme of *Reflections*, a theme that would invite us to see the idea of the water reflecting the sky as a metaphor for an expanded vision, for a thoughtfulness enhanced by the contemplation of natural wonders and human endeavors. In 2009, the waters of Minnesota reflect much more than the sky. They also reflect buildings and bridges and machinery and skylines with much more than sky and clouds in them.

On a literal level, *Reflections* identifies the relationships between the sky and the sky-blue water, and between the natural world and the human-made world. On a figurative level, *Reflections* suggests the contemplative meditations on the individual and on society often experienced in the presence of natural wonder.

In 2009, we will be only blocks from the Mississippi River, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on the Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis. For eleven blocks, wide sidewalks flow on the Nicollet Mall in front of shops and restaurants, with only taxis and buses allowed on the streets. This is a pedestrian’s delight! For only \$1.50, the light-rail line and the buses connect the Nicollet Mall to all parts of the Twin Cities, including the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport and the Mall of America. Even better, the buses cost only 50 cents in the Downtown Zone.

Certainly, a Sigma Tau Delta Convention is about *Reflections* of a literary nature and often of a personal and introspective nature as you share your creative and critical work. A convention is also about renewal and regeneration as you exchange ideas. It is about enlightenment and appreciation of our featured speakers and of each other. It is about recognition for your accomplishments. A convention is also about enjoyment and fellowship with others who love literature, language, and writing as much as you do.

Interested in going to the Convention?

Proposals due November 21!

See: www.english.org/sigmatd/conventions/index.shtml

CONTENTS

page 2
*President’s Corner

page 3
*2009 Convention Speakers

page 4
*From Student to Teacher: Growing Through *Sigma Tau Delta*
*A New Chapter in the NEHS Story

page 5
*What Can You Do With an English Major? Intern Job at Penguin
*Serve Society by Fostering Literacy

page 6
*Grave-robbing Eliot: Hosting a Regional Conference
*Award Winners 2008

page 7
*Award Winners Cont.

page 8
*The 2009 *Sigma Tau Delta* Common Reader



President's Corner

Bob Crafton
President

Slippery Rock University, PA



Change

As I write these words, I'm in the not-quite-calm before the storm. The new semester begins next week. My syllabi are in and copied, ready to be distributed on Monday, when the tsunami of students—54 in Comp II, 48 in Intro Lit, 25 in Writing about Lit—strikes, and I shift into semester mode. But that's next week. Before then, I have all those other things to do—like write this column—that will quickly be washed away in the flood of class preps and papers the semester brings.

Revising my syllabi for the coming term has caused me to reflect on the course of my career in education and just how things have changed. As an undergrad, I attended an academy still, to some degree, playing out the legacies of New Criticism. (I am that old.) Change was already afoot, but it was still easy to immerse oneself in the aesthetic pleasures of the text, almost always poetic. Poetry was to be read as poetry, and not some other thing; novelistic fiction I was mostly baffled by, fun to read, but I was never quite sure what to do with it. The *Norton Anthology* we used in the surveys of English literature was an all-male affair and remained that way for a good ten years after. I still have those books and take them to class when we take up feminist criticism. Mary Shelley and Kate Chopin were all but unheard of then. Now they are central figures in an academy where 56% of the undergraduates are women, 44% male. Things have changed.

My teaching of first-year composition has similarly changed. In the early days, we were all about product, having students crank out finished drafts every two weeks or so, drafts we marked and slapped a grade on, the grade then entered in the grade book and the paper promptly forgotten. I did think that one of the primary purposes of the comp course was to introduce students to the academy, to reading, thinking, and writing at the college level—an introduction to academic discourse—which I still think is one of our central tasks.

But those things have changed, too. My current Comp II course, a course in argumentation, still focuses on academic discourse, but we have fewer books, fewer papers, and everything goes in a portfolio, with revision a central feature of the course. I have this semester, for the first time in a long while, included a grading rubric in the syllabus, and I will, also for the first time in a long while, provide grades on student papers. Forms that I thought forgotten, like the five-paragraph theme, have come back with a vengeance, complicating the already complicated problems posed by Internet resources, cut-and-paste papers, and the wonders of Wikipedia.

While I still think of the course, in very practical terms, as an introduction to academic discourse, I have come to understand, in ways that were clearly invisible in the New Critical academy of my college days, that all education is “civics” education, that the primary function in the comp classroom is to participate in the preparation of an engaged and informed citizenry, “voter education,” perhaps, in its most basic sense. My focus has shifted in very self-conscious ways to the examination of educational purposes and policies and the role argument plays in a democratic society. I teach in a “state system” university, and I am, in very

direct ways, an agent of the state, more so than ever before. It's best to be honest about such things, to recognize the ideological forces at work in the classroom, even to consider the ideological implications of class size and the ways it fosters a consumer culture, not a participatory democracy. It's something to think about.

Changes at Sigma Tau Delta

Things have changed, are changing, and continue to change at Sigma Tau Delta. I joined the Board of Directors six years ago in Cincinnati for the fall board meeting, the newly elected Eastern Regent. The Central Office at that point, included our half-time Executive Director, an office manager, and a graduate assistant; another part-time employee provided technical support. The economy then, as now, had taken a downturn, so we spent the entire board meeting cutting items from the budget, reducing the amounts we could offer for scholarships and awards, and figuring out how to save money. We shelved the proposal to hire a full-time staff person to assist with chapter development and the management of the annual convention, making do for another year or two with the succession of grad assistants whose year appointment almost always seemed to end just as they were getting up to speed. Those were interesting times.

When the board meets in Minneapolis in several weeks' time, things will be much different. Fully a third of the board will be attending their first board meeting. We have new Regents, new Student Representatives, a new Editor of Publications, and a new Director of Communications and Chapter Development. After making herself indispensable in the Central Office, Zenia Lee is returning this fall to graduate school, pursuing a degree in vocal

music performance. We also have a number of new positions, including the Director of the National English Honor Society. If memory serves, Bil Johnson first proposed developing a high school English honor society in Cincinnati. We'll also, for the first time, have an Alumni Representative sitting on the board. The value of our accounts has climbed, crossing the million dollar mark in the past year, meaning, among other things, that our monies are now being managed more carefully, not left to rise or fall with the market. We'll see in several weeks where things currently stand, but the blood-letting of the Cincinnati meetings should be a thing of the past. The phenomenal growth of the National English Honor Society since its debut just over two years ago, if nothing else, represents both a significant investment on the part of the Society and a significant source of income. We'll also have a new database system and a new web site, with new capabilities for on-line registration and on-line merchandizing, among other things, finally a 21st century web site. And we have a new seal, on top of everything else.

A few things haven't changed. Bil Johnson is back, still going strong after 25 years on the job as Executive Director. The convention promises to be terrific, as always. And being a chapter advisor, coming to convention, participating on the board, being associated with Sigma Tau Delta is still one of the best parts of my academic life. In the midst of so many other changes, that much has stayed the same.

Things have changed, are changing, and continue to change at Sigma Tau Delta.

2009 Convention Speakers



NEIL GAIMAN

Saturday, March 28, 2009
Interview Saturday, March 28
www.neilgaiman.com

A prolific writer, Neil Gaiman produces poetry, prose, comics, music lyrics, drama, journalism, and film. Born in England, Gaiman now lives near Minneapolis. Gaiman's works have garnered numerous awards, including 3 Hugos, 2 Nebulas, 1 World

Fantasy Award, 4 Bram Stoker Awards, 9 Locus Awards, 1 British Fantasy Award, 2 British SF Awards, 4 Geffens, 1 International Horror Guild Award, and 2 Mythopoeic Awards. Some of the award-winning novels, graphic novels, and novellas include *Anansi Boys*, *The Wolves in the Walls*, *The Sandman*, *A Study in Emerald*, *Smoke and Mirrors*, *Coraline*, *American Gods*, *Stardust*, *Neverwhere*, and *Good Omens* (with Terry Pratchett). Gaiman has written numerous short stories, non-fiction essays, and screenplays, including the script for the film *Beowulf*. Gaiman's description of *Anansi Boys* could be applied to many of his works: "It's a scary, funny sort of a story, which isn't exactly a thriller, and isn't really horror, and doesn't quite qualify as a ghost story (although it has at least one ghost in it), or a romantic comedy (although there are several romances in there, and it's certainly a comedy, except for the scary bits)." Gaiman created and wrote DC Comics series, *Sandman*, which won numerous awards, including the 1991 World Fantasy Award, a literary award. Norman Mailer called the *Sandman* series "a comic strip for intellectuals, and I say it's about time."

MICHAEL PERRY

Thursday, March 26, 2009
Workshops Friday, March 27
www.sneezingcow.com

Humorist, author, musician, Michael Perry is the author of the 2009 Sigma Tau Delta Common Reader, the bestselling memoir *Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time*, essay collection *Off Main Street*, and, most recently, *Truck: A Love Story*. Perry got his nursing degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1987 and has worked as a

cowboy, truck driver, proofreader, country music roadie, forklift operator, physical therapy aide, and is still active as a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical responder in rural Wisconsin. All the while, Perry has been writing and entertaining. Perry has written for *Esquire*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Outside*, *Backpacker*, *Orion*, *Salon.com*, and *Runner's World*, and is a contributing editor to *Men's Health*. His essays have been heard on NPR's *All Things Considered*. Excerpt included on page 8.

Want to find out more about these convention speakers?
Go to: www.english.org/sigmatd/minneapolis/speakers.html

Preview of Neil Gaiman's new work:

The Graveyard Book

There was a hand in the darkness, and it held a knife.

The knife had a handle of polished black bone, and a blade finer and sharper than any razor. If it sliced you, you might not even know you had been cut, not immediately.

The knife had done almost everything it was brought to that house to do, and both the blade and the handle were wet.

The street door was still open, just a little, where the knife and the man who held it had slipped in, and wisps of nighttime mist slithered and twined into the house through the open door.

The man Jack paused on the landing. With his left hand he pulled a large white handkerchief from the pocket of his black coat, and with it he wiped off the knife and his gloved right hand which had been holding it; then he put the handkerchief away. The hunt was almost over. He had left the woman in her bed, the man on the bedroom floor, the older child in her brightly colored bedroom, surrounded by toys and half-finished models. That only left the little one, a baby barely a toddler, to take care of. One more and his task would be done.

Excerpt from *The Graveyard Book* copyright (c) 2008 by Neil Gaiman. Used by permission from HarperCollins Publishers. All rights reserved.

ALEXANDRA FULLER

Friday, March 27, 2009
Workshop
www.alaxandrafuller.org

Born in England in 1969, Alexandra Fuller grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Malawi, and Zambia, received a BA from Acadia University in Nova Scotia, and now lives in Wyoming. In her memoir, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood*, 2001, Fuller describes growing up in Africa amidst political struggles, civil war, turmoil, and loss. In *Scribbling the Cat: Travels With an African Soldier*, 2005, Fuller returns to Africa and looks at the Rhodesian War from another vantage point. *Scribbling the Cat* received the Ulysses Prize for Art of Reportage. Fuller's latest book, *The Legend of Colton H. Bryant*, also non-fiction, tells the story of the life and death of a young man in the oil fields. Having seen the ravages of war in Africa, Fuller recognizes a familiar beautiful yet harsh vista in Wyoming. In a May 1 *New York Times* article, Fuller calls the oil field "a war landscape" and says, "I can't talk about my childhood, I can't talk about the war, and its hard to talk about what's going on in the oil field. That's why I wrote the book."



Want to find out more about these convention speakers?
Go to: www.english.org/sigmatd/minneapolis/speakers.html

From Student to Teacher: Growing Through Sigma Tau Delta

After five years as an undergraduate member, a graduate student primary officer, and finally, a faculty advisor, I have seen the many ways Sigma Tau Delta can inspire, cultivate, and bring together English majors and minors. From the sunny coast of North Carolina to the Pacific Northwest shores of Alaska, Sigma Tau Delta has guided me along the path of academia and continues to do so in my profession.

I first became a member of Sigma Tau Delta as an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW). After transferring to UNCW and declaring my major as English, I was delighted to discover in the Alpha Alpha Upsilon chapter a community of people with interests and goals similar to mine. The advisors, Sue and Stephanie Richardson, provided guidance in many areas of my life. They, along with my fellow English scholars, inspired me to strive for academic excellence and to become an active member in the UNCW community.

Two years later, as a graduate student at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), I immediately sought out the school's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, but discovered that interest in the Alpha Epsilon Nu chapter had waned, there was little funding, and even less participation. Recalling the importance of my undergraduate experience with the International English Honor Society, I rallied some of the other first year grad students, and together, we rebuilt the club. I was elected President, and with the help of our other members, we increased membership to forty-two graduate and undergraduate students. Together, we raised money for the Pacific Rim Conference on Literature and Rhetoric, which, in its 12th and 13th years were a great success with visiting scholars from Canada and the lower forty-eight.

A New Chapter in the NEHS Story

The National English Honor Society (NEHS), sponsored by Sigma Tau Delta (ΣΤΔ), began a new chapter in its exciting, yet-unfolding story as the only English-discipline honor society for high school students in the nation.

In August, Dave Wendelin accepted the reins of leadership as director of NEHS from Dr. William C. Johnson, Executive Director of ΣΤΔ and formerly of NEHS. Because of the growth of the high school "branch," the ΣΤΔ board hired Wendelin to pick up Johnson's "torch of excellence," so evidenced in the creation and development of NEHS over the past few years.

Wendelin, who lives in and works out of Denver, brings close to forty years of experience as an educator to this new work, with positions ranging from twenty-seven years as a high school English teacher and department chair to twelve years as a central office administrator responsible for K-12 English language arts and social studies for Jefferson County Public Schools, the largest school district in Colorado with approximately 84,000 students.

Additionally, he is actively involved in the National Council of Teachers of English; his most recent role is that of chair of the Standing Committee on Affiliates, a position he will assume in San Antonio in November. Of most significance for NEHS, however, is that he was one of the original National Advisory Council members selected in 2003 to the high school level, a recognition of outstanding achievement in English studies so well exemplified by the work of ΣΤΔ and Sigma Kappa Delta

Erica S. Veth
Instructor of English
University of Alaska-Anchorage



This year, I am excited to report that I have completed my M.A. degree in Literature at UAA, and I have been hired recently as English faculty. I am thrilled that after the last five years as a member and officer of Sigma Tau Delta, I have become the faculty advisor to the club, and we have an exciting year planned. We are going to be working to publish a creative arts magazine, *Understory*, which will feature photography, creative writing, non-fiction, and artwork. We will be prepping for the 14th annual Pacific Rim Conference, and we will be expanding membership once again. Many of our members tutor in UAA's Writing Center, and we just wrapped up Campus Kickoff 2008. Fifteen of our current members will graduate with Sigma Tau Delta regalia in May 2009, and we hope to entice first-year students to take interest in the English major so that they too can strive to become active members of UAA's Sigma Tau Delta chapter.

To say Sigma Tau Delta is an important experience for English scholars is an understatement. For those of you who have recently become members, or for those of you thinking of becoming an officer or faculty advisor, I strongly encourage you to jump in with both feet and promote community and scholarly involvement. Participating in your local chapter's activities can open doors for the future and introduce you to a network of people with whom you probably have a lot in common!

(ΣΚΔ), the two-year college English honor society.

NEHS continues its amazing growth. Currently, there are 240 chapters across the country, involving over 12,000 high school students who are passionate about the love of English studies and are engaged in wonderful work within their schools and communities. The NEHS motto is *Gelast Sceal Mid Are*, "Duty Goes with Honor"; it is truly inspirational to learn of the activities to which chapters apply their time and energy.

Some examples of the outreach efforts include: holding contests to encourage student writers; writing letters to elementary students and American servicemen and women; working in local nursing homes to read to and write letters for the elderly; sponsoring a national Shakespeare competition; and tutoring. The stories from the chapters generate pride in all those involved, be they chapters sponsors, members of ΣΤΔ, or the staff at Northern Illinois University.

NEHS is nurturing future English majors, ΣΤΔ honorees, and professionals who will use their gifts in English in myriad ways. The work of ΣΤΔ, ΣΚΔ, and NEHS is "honorable"; working together as linked entities, the important "duty" is being done and is changing the lives of students across the country.



Dave Wendelin



Amy Miller
Clarion University, PA

Of all the things that Sigma Tau Delta has given me as a member (friendship, cool gear, a great addition to my resume), nothing could be better than the opportunity to be an intern at Penguin Group, USA, for the summer. In my ten weeks as an intern I learned more about myself and what I wanted to do with my future than I had learned in my three previous years of college.

On June 2nd I started my job as an intern in the Penguin imprint of the company. Within this imprint my main responsibility was reading titles that had already been published in hardcover by other publishing companies and determining whether or not we would want to acquire the paperback rights. At times I would also read original manuscripts or even proposals for books that had been sent in.

Aside from reading, I also attended meetings where we would discuss what we had been reading. Think of it as a class discussion, only with these discussions we would talk about whether or not the books could actually make money. Often I would research competitive titles and see how they sold so that when I went to the meeting I could explain why we should acquire the book or why we should pass on it. Like most interns, I also did a great deal of copying and general office work that helped to keep things running smoothly.

In my brief period with Penguin I learned so much about the publishing industry and how books really get made. I had a general knowledge going in, but I came out with a first hand insight of the work that really happens from start to finish in publishing a book. Much of this can be attributed to my wonderful bosses, which included Sigma Tau Delta member Branda Maholtz, who many heard speak at convention in 2008. But of all the knowledge I gained, what impressed me more than anything were the things I learned about myself.

First: I am actually a very organized and efficient person. During the school year I am a procrastinating student, like so many of my friends. However, when it came to this job I jumped at every opportunity to learn something new and to complete my tasks as quickly as possible, with the hope that once I was finished I would get to do something even more challenging. Everyday I walked in with an urge to read something else or learn more about the publishing field.

Second: I have a lot to work on. Any of my professors can attest to the fact that I have no problem voicing my opinions in a class room and that I do so (a lot). But a strange thing happened when I walked into meetings at Penguin. When I discovered that they actually cared about my opinion I was scared to give it. I would sit at a table with the head boss and be scared about what I was going to say. I would let my nerves get the best of me. I think this might be common with any intern, but for me it is something I know I want to overcome.

Third: This may be the job I want to turn into a full-time career. It may not be the glamorous life I expected it to be, but publishing is a great way to make a living. I think I envisioned a fancy high-paying job with editors sitting in their offices drinking coffee with big name authors, and going to lunch with agents everyday. And while that may happen eventually, there is so much hard work that goes into becoming a successful editor, but I know I have the drive to do so. I went to work every day happy to be there. I loved the idea that I was being paid to read. Even though becoming a successful editor is competitive and at times stressful, I can see myself sitting in my boss' chair someday.

So if you are planning on going into the field of publishing once you graduate, I suggest you jump at the opportunity to apply for this internship. There are so many departments you can work in, and there is something for everyone whether you want to work with art, publicity, or editorial, like I did. I am so grateful that this internship came my way, and I hope I did my best to make Sigma Tau Delta proud. I know I'm proud of myself.

Serve Society by Fostering Literacy

I wish books could solve all the world's problems. Hunger, disease and poverty wouldn't exist if one could simply contemplate the answer to world hunger over *Green Eggs and Ham*, find the cure for AIDS while reading *Harry Potter*, or discover how to grow money in *The Giving Tree*. Though I grudgingly admit that reading a book, in fact, cannot solve all the troubles we face, I maintain the belief that books have more power than people realize, especially if we are talking about literacy. I know that all of you, as members of Sigma Tau Delta, believe in the power of books as well, which is why each year, Sigma Tau Delta chapters have been asked to participate in a national book drive. This book drive has benefitted organizations located at the sites of the international convention held each spring.

For the 2008-2009 year, because we believe so strongly that books are the answer to the problem of illiteracy, we are embarking on a new challenge. We are going to hold a book drive that is truly nationwide. Not only will it impact an organization in Minneapolis, MN, the host city of the spring convention, but it

will reach out across the entire nation. To accomplish such a goal, we will choose a national organization that has locations all over the U.S. Individual chapters can then contribute donations regardless of where they are located or whether they are attending the convention. We encourage chapters to partner with other nearby chapters, sharing ideas and resources. As chapters donate books to their local organization, a running total will be kept of the donations contributed nationwide. This book drive will allow everyone to impact the same organization, but in a location that is most meaningful to the individual chapters. Though we may have to accept the fact that no single book will solve our problems, perhaps we will discover through our shared effort that we have the power to make illiteracy a thing of fiction.

Join in the Book Drive:
www.english.org/sigmatd/minneapolis/bookdrive.html

Stephanie Schiefelbein
Student Advisor
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire





Grave-robbing Eliot: Hosting a Regional Conference

Kyle Baker
St. Edward's University, Austin, TX

While searching for an appropriate theme for our regional conference, we exchanged several ideas in the hopes that one might immediately separate itself from the pack. With a focus on performance and presentation, the idea of a spotlight seemed entirely appropriate. However, conference themes of that nature tend to rely on silly puns and a theatrical sensibility that does not always seem useful. In a quiet moment, I turned to a well-worn volume containing T.S. Eliot poetry.

His poem "The Hollow Men" has always been a favorite of mine. While reading it, I thought about the possibility of lifting some of his words to create a theme. Eliot's poem, which explores the negative consequences of living ultimately meaningless, violent lives, elucidates the empty space between the beginnings and endings that unite human experience. Lifting the lines out of context is a somewhat dubious strategy, with a long and glorious history written by those tasked with providing inspiring, yet generalized, themes for conferences.

As inauspiciously as it began, our theme of "Illuminating Shadows" formed around the idea of exploring the process of presenting work, as well as performing original work. Too often, undergraduates are exhorted to be confident and speak loudly

when presenting their work in class. The resulting product of that environment is too often an awkward affair, with students muddling through a reading while nervously defending ideas to their peers. In these shadowy corners of performance we choose to direct our energies.

Our workshop sessions will provide attendees with an opportunity to present their own work, which of course reflects well on their résumé. In addition, attendees will have an opportunity to meet local authors, members from other chapters in the region, and spend time soaking up the considerable culture of the beautiful host city: Austin, Texas, on October 17-19, 2008, at St. Edward's University.

The conference logo combines these elements together in a striking way, with a bold spotlight revealing our theme's title. We will explore what exists between ideas and reality, between the motions of academic work and the act of producing new and insightful thoughts, and to explore what possibilities exist when we set to the task of illuminating shadows.

Attend or even host a Regional Sigma Tau Delta Conference.
See: www.english.org/sigmatd/conventions/regional.shtml

Sigma Tau Delta Award Winners 2007-08

E. Nelson James Junior Scholarship



Stephanie Schiefelbein
University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
Stephanie is currently a junior pursuing a dual degree in English and music with a minor in communications. The President of the Theta Zeta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. She has also recently accepted the student advisor position and looks forward to this greater involvement.

E. Nelson James Junior Scholarship, Runners-up



Chelsea Feustel
Furman University
Chelsea is a junior at Furman University, majoring in English with a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies.



Paul Utterback
St. Norbert College
Paul is an English major with a creative writing emphasis. He is the Vice President of the Alpha Tau Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta as well as the Rainbow Alliance. He works as a student editor for Sigma Tau Delta's publications and helps out at the college's writing center.



Alison Veneziano
Penn State Altoona
Coming from rural Drifting, Pennsylvania, Alison found herself with much free time to enjoy literature. She has been involved in English activities like the yearbook of her small high school, the Literature Club of her university, Penn State Altoona, and the campus literary magazine.

Elva Bell McLin Senior Scholarship



Julie Milo
Flagler College
Julie Milo is a recent graduate of Flagler college in St. Augustine, FL where she was president of the Alpha Epsilon Omega chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. She majored in English, and now attends the University of South Carolina for an MLIS degree.

Elva Bell McLin Senior Scholarship, Runners-up



Chad Iwertz
Pepperdine University
Chad is a recent graduate of Pepperdine University, where he was president of his local Sigma Tau Delta chapter. He is currently taking a year off before beginning graduate studies in Texas next fall.



Katherine Regeimbal
Grand Valley State University
Katherine Regeimbal is completing her undergraduate degree in English at Grand Valley State University focusing on children's and young adult literature. She will begin a Master of Library Science (MLIS) degree at the University of Maryland in the fall.



Paula Tremain
Centenary College of New Jersey
In graduating with her degree in English, Paula looks forward to the challenges she will encounter in the graduate degree program. Thus far, she has developed an appreciation for literature and how it relates to history as well as our contemporary moment.

Sigma Tau Delta Award Winners 2007-08 *continued*

Edwin L. Stockton, Jr., Graduate Scholarship



Kathleen Turner
Northern Illinois University
Kathleen is pursuing her PhD in English at Northern Illinois University; she specializes in American literature, film, and women's studies. Her dissertation examines literary and film depictions of marginalized women in American cities. She served as Midwest Student Representative and Student Advisor for Sigma Tau Delta from 2002-2006.

Edwin L. Stockton, Jr., Graduate Scholarship, Runners-up

Jennifer Veilleux

Western Carolina University

Jennifer Veilleux will complete her MA in December 2008 with a concentration in professional writing. She hopes to continue her education at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO engaging Theology and English.



Jessica Wedemeyer

Northern Illinois University

Jessica is currently working on her MA in literature with a focus on 19th century British literature. She was the Vice President of the Xi Delta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta and is the editor-in-chief of *Towers Literary and Creative Arts* magazine. Jessica teaches composition and would like to instruct literature at the community college level.

Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship



Micah Hicks

Southern Arkansas University

Micah's long-term goal is to make a career out of his fiction. In the meantime, he hopes to attend an MFA program in fiction writing and teach literature and creative writing at the college level.

Runner-up Ruth Weeks Johnson *University of Alabama, Huntsville*

Henry Regnery Endowed Scholarship



Elif Guler

Old Dominion University

Elif has a BA in International Relations from KOQ University in Turkey and an MA in English with a concentration in professional writing from Old Dominion University, where she is a PhD student in Rhetoric and Textual Studies.

Henry Regnery Endowed Scholarship, Runner-up



Rachel Holtz

Northern Illinois University

Rachel is a graduate student pursuing an MA in British and American literature. She hopes to teach composition at a community college.

Eastern Regent Scholarship



Kevin Kelley

The College of New Jersey

Kevin is a senior English major at The College of New Jersey. He spent the second semester of his senior year studying literature at Oxford University in England.

Far Western Regent Scholarship

Christopher Whittaker

Brigham Young University

Christopher is in his first year at the J. Rueben Clark School of Law, BYU-Provo.

Southwestern Regent Scholarship

Dawn George

West Texas A&M University

Dawn is a single parent embarking on a second career. She will complete her MA in 2009 and undertake her PhD soon after.

P. C. Somerville Teaching Award



Jenessa Bonikowske

Luther College

Jenessa is a 2008 graduate of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa where she double majored in English and Psychology. She played and served as team captain for the Luther College Women's golf team and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa while at Luther. She currently teaches English at the secondary level.



Ryan Resch

University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

Ryan will be teaching in Zamara, Spain full-time starting in September, and is very excited. He enjoys keeping busy and reading European literature.

Sigma Tau Delta Study Abroad Scholarship



Kathleen Hynes

The College of New Jersey

Kathleen Hynes is an English major and classical studies minor at The College of New Jersey. She spent the second semester of her senior year at The National University of Ireland, Galway.



Kristin Taylor

Columbus State University

Kristin Taylor is a senior at Columbus State University majoring in English. For her senior year she will be studying abroad at the University of Oxford. After graduating, she plans to attend graduate school in English.



Torry James van Slyke

University of Idaho

Torry was born and raised in Caldwell. He will graduate from UI in May, 2009 with BAs in philosophy, history, English and Spanish, with minors in economics and religion studies.



High Plains Regent Scholarship

Denis Illige-Saucier

University of Denver

Denis was born and raised in Denver, CO and is currently enrolled in the MA in Literary Studies program at the University of Denver. He has a BFA in Creative Writing and a BA in History from the University of Evansville, where he was the editor-in-chief of the *Evansville Review*.



Midwestern Regent Scholarship

Catherine Barnett

Taylor University

Catherine Barnett plans to graduate in May, 2009 from Taylor University, where she is an English Education major and a member of the honors program.



Southern Regent Scholarship

Vincent Price

University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg

Vincent Price is a senior English licensure major and French minor. He served as the Sigma Tau Delta president for his chapter during the spring of 2008. After graduation, he intends to get his MA degree in English.

The 2009 Sigma Tau Delta Common Reader: Population 485

Peter Scholl,
Immediate Past President
Luther College, IA



The full title of this year's Sigma Tau Delta "common reader" is *Population 485: Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time* (HarperCollins 2002, Perennial 2003) and its author is Michael Perry. In *Population 485*, Perry writes about his life in a small Wisconsin town near the farm where he grew up—then he moved away and earned a degree in nursing, became an emergency medical technician (EMT), worked in cities at a range of jobs, and, after a dozen or so years, returned to his roots. Somewhere along that path he started writing.

From his window in downtown New Auburn, Wisconsin—which is near the farm where he started—Perry could survey most of the comings and goings. But since typing in a room most of the day doesn't always help you meet your neighbors, he signed up for the local volunteer fire department. As a registered nurse and an EMT, he had many of the relevant skills already. And that choice gave him much to write about, introduced him to a cross-section of folks, and offered such perks as having to sell tickets for annual fire department fundraisers.

Though he was never an English major, he has the distinction of being the first EMT in his town to answer his pager from poetry readings, rushing off from literature to conflagrations and carnage on country roads. In fact, his stories about life in New Auburn, Wisconsin, often alternate between humorous or sweet or pastoral scenes with unforgettable locals—to sudden excursions into gory episodes when someone has missed a turn and gone airborne and landed hard, maybe for good. Just when you think things are slowing down and getting contemplative, Perry takes off with explicit and expert accounts of traumatic events that race the blood.

Some of the medical detail reminded me of the work of surgeon/author Richard Selzer in the way we get close-ups of life and death situations—but most of Selzer's trips were to the relatively predictable environment of the operating room, while Perry's trauma tales might happen in the raw moments or hours before the surgeon ever comes into the picture. Though the book is primarily a memoir, composed of stories linked to a place, it would almost make a useful "how to" book for prospective EMTs or would-be volunteer fire people.

At least one reviewer compares Perry's look at his Wisconsin environs to Garrison Keillor's visions of Lake Wobegon. Both writers are wry and funny and sometimes sentimental about the American village. But Perry actually lives in his small town and his accounts are grittier, informed by day-to-day encounters with his farmer brothers and the crowd at the Corner Tap—and there is that whole non-English major education and world of experience fighting fires and cinching up traction splints that gets us closer than Keillor gets into the starker sides of rural life, closely observed.

Perry's book is a great choice for our Common Reader since this Sigma Tau Delta project was created by the Service Committee, and Perry has been doing a lot of public service: nurse, EMT, volunteer fire fighter—and let's not forget writer, a chronicler of life in a small place, minutely and sensitively observed which makes it resonate for readers everywhere.

Preview of Michael Perry's new book COOP

In the company of our six-year-old daughter Amy, my wife Anneliese and I have recently moved to a farm. I would like to present some sort of grand agrarian charter, but the whole deal is predicated mainly on the idea of having chickens. We are not alone in this: *These Troubled Times* seem to have precipitated a fowl renaissance. Mail carriers labor under the increased load of multicolored hatchery catalogs, the latest issue of *Backyard Poultry*, and perforated mailing containers that peep. Drop the term chicken tractor and behold the knowing nods. The online world is alive with Subaru-driving National Public Radio supporters trading tips on eco-friendly coop construction and the pros and cons of laying mash; my NASCAR-loving brother-in-law tenderly minds a box of chicks beneath a heatlamp in his garage; my biker bar bouncer-turned-Zen Buddhist pal Billy and his wife the nurse's aide are building their second backyard coop with an eye toward expanding into "ornamentals." Anecdotal evidence to be sure, and a drop in the Colonel's bucket, but something is afoot. The subject of chickens was raised between my wife and me fairly early in our courtship, and has sustained us. We are enthused by the idea of fresh eggs, homegrown coq a vin, and (at least until butchering day) a 24-hour turnaround on the compost. In addition, it is my longstanding opinion that entertainment-wise, chickens beat TV.

Excerpt from *COOP: A Year of Poultry, Pigs, and Parenting* (HarperCollins, Spring 2009) by Michael Perry;



The International English Honor Society

Sincerity • Truth • Design

Member of the Association of College Honor Societies, Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society is chartered in Illinois in accordance with the laws of the United States as a non-profit, educational organization. Founded in 1924, the society serves university and college chapters, providing recognition for academic excellence in the study of English.

Executive Committee

Robert Crafton, President
(Slippery Rock University, PA)
Sidney Watson, Vice-President/President-Elect
(Oklahoma Baptist University, OK)
Peter Scholl, Immediate Past President
(Luther College, IA)
Shannin Schroeder, Secretary-Treasurer
(Southern Arkansas University)
Carrie Fitzpatrick, Historian
(Alvernia College, PA)

Regents

Roger Stanley, Southern Region
(Union University, TN)
Christopher Flynn, Southwestern Region
(St. Edward's University, TX)
Gloria Hochstein, Midwestern Region
(University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)
Gwendolyn Morgan, High Plains Region
(Montana State University-Bozeman, MT)
Ralph Speer, Far Western Region
(Northwest Nazarene University, ID)
Sarah Dangelantonio, Eastern Region
(Franklin Pierce College, NH)

Student Advisors

Micah Hicks
(Southern Arkansas University)
Stephanie Schiefelbein
(University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)

Alumni Representative

Daniel P. Hardy
(University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire)

Executive Director

William C. Johnson
(Northern Illinois University)

Director of NEHS

Dave Wendelin
(Northern Illinois University)

Director of Communications & Chapter Development

Deb Seyler
(Northern Illinois University)

Website Facilitator

Elfrida Gabriel
(Northern Illinois University)

Publications

Karlyn Crowley, Editor
Bridgette Flasch
Paul Utterback, Editorial Interns
Jennifer Scharenbrock, Graphic Intern
(St. Norbert College, WI)

The Sigma Tau Delta Newsletter is published twice during the academic year (fall and spring) by Sigma Tau Delta International. News items and queries should be addressed to: Editor of Publications, English Department, St. Norbert College, De Pere, WI 54115, or karlyn.crowley@snc.edu.

Copyright © 2008 Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society. Executive Office, Department of English, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115 or sig-matd@niu.edu. Website www.english.org.

Sigma Tau Delta is grateful for the continuing generous assistance of Christopher McCord, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, (Northern Illinois University); and Michael Marsden, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, (St. Norbert College). Third-class postage paid at DeKalb, IL, and elsewhere.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Sigma Tau Delta, English Department, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115.