

Sigma Tau Delta

English Honor Society



the high plains regional newsletter

spring 2008

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Hello!

Another newsletter, and a new staff as the year for us Student Representatives (SR) and Assistant Student Representatives (ASR) begins. Here at High Plains we have one old face and one new face. In the role of SR, Jessica Snavlin from Metropolitan State College of Denver steps up to the plate, and, fortunately for us all, last year's SR Kristofer Adam Speirs from Metropolitan State of Denver has chosen to be ASR to keep her in check. (Anyone who was around in Louisville might remember bad poetry night, after all.) Last year's regent and ASR, both from Metro as well, Dr. Jason Eric Miller and Tameca Coleman have left us this year, however we are fortunate to be joined by Dr. Gwendolyn Morgan as our new Regent. Surprisingly, she is *not* from Metropolitan State College of Denver, and in fact comes to us from Montana State University at Bozeman.

"Dogs know that men
who have no bottoms
don't really know how to
sit."

- Igbo Proverb

As you'll soon see the theme of this dispatch is *connections*, so without further ado:

If you'd like to contact your SR, Jessica Snavlin, you may reach her at shadow.apple@gmail.com.

"If you can do a half-
assed job of anything,
you're a one-eyed man in
a kingdom of the blind."

- Kurt Vonnegut

If you'd like to contact your ASR, Kristofer Adam Speirs, you may reach him at speirs@mscd.edu

If you'd like to contact your Regent, Dr. Gwendolyn Morgan, you may reach her at morgan@english.montana.edu

What Does it All Mean Take I

jessica snavlin - metropolitan state college of denver

The pen, the torch and the star in our logo are as mysterious to one member of Sigma Tau as they are to the other - well here's a stab at shedding the light on this astronomical puzzle - puns intended.

The Torch: The flames of our burning passion for the English language when bound, unbound, and in someway morphophonemic.

The Pen: The necessity to record such passion in a way that is elegant and understandable - the communicative part of language, and the most basic principle of loving words: using them.

The Star: A single star on our logo - with its deep-rooted spiritual symbolism throughout cultures and ages - indicates the infusion of our passion for words with our very bodies as members of Sigma Tau Delta.

Individual Connections: Reaching beyond American Mythos

kristofer adam speirs, metropolitan state college of denver

American mythology is built on the individual, and this is probably the biggest catastrophe that we, as a culture, could possibly suffer. This is not to say that the indomitable spirit of the American maverick is such a terrible thing in and of itself - I happen to find the mantle more than absorbing when it's worn - but rather that the bootstrap pull-up we view as an ideal, the privacy we hold as an absolute, and the competitive verve that's our magic elixir are all corrosive to the idea of community when we take them too seriously, as we often can.

The great big idea is to have people form groups wherein their common interest is explored and promoted. If you have a particular aim within the scope of the interest of the group, that group can help you meet that goal. Groups have many more eyes than you do, many more ears and many more brains. Your potential is magnified by the group. You want to be part of a group. Everyone wants to be part of a group. Groups are good.

Here's why I say this: Left to my own devices, I probably would have gone through my undergrad doing not much more than the work in front of me, and perhaps making a couple of new friends along the way. But, I had some small twist of luck, in that my sophomore year I shared two classes and a lunch break with who was then the president of our school's chapter. We had many conversations about many things, but it was awhile, maybe a couple of months, before Sigma Tau Delta was even mentioned. I've been casually wondering about that small fact for a while.

When the president of an organization feels trepidatious in mentioning her own standing, a potential member can start to get a little curious.

Here's what I've decided: The deeply held American respect for privacy encourages us to keep out of other's affairs where they do not concern us.

This is, to me, a good thing.

However, the shades of meaning inherent in anything good imply a contradictory existence to the beneficial nature of privacy. Should we be so private as to be unreachable? The benefits of privacy probably stems from the amount of advertising to which we are constantly exposed, leading quickly to the desire for privacy from the advice of others on what exactly we should want or do. The parallel can be quickly drawn between not wanting advice on clothing from American Apparel and not wanting advice on extracurricular activities from the president of a student organization. The unfortunate side effect is a corroded view of the benefits of solitude: by escaping the pressures of corporate advertising and invasiveness, we also dodge connection in our day-to-day lives.

And it is incredibly easy to forget that not everyone is aware of the same matters. I consider myself a very active student on campus, but I couldn't name more than three other student organizations out the fifty some there are. Just not my circle. Probably that's the case in a lot of places. Probably there's a bunch of people just wandering around, wondering where they fit, right now. And they are English majors. Help them.



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What Does it All Mean Take II

jessica snavlin, metropolitan state college of denver

When the initial challenge of the High Plains Newsletter was presented to this fledgling SR, it was accompanied with a challenge: *what do those symbols mean, anyway?* Knowing the newsletter was coming up, I decided that I'd hold a contest. Who better to ask than the High Plains region, after all? I put my money where my mouth was, offered a prize, had Adam build me a flyer, and copiously messaged the High Plains facebook in hopes of at least a minor turn out.

Here's the results: no one submitted.

Not one, single soul.

Not only did not a single soul submit, I received no articles of any other sort save the article printed from Adam Speirs at left. A series of unfortunate e-mail tragedies left me without contact with my Regent *or* templates, and a heavy semester for all officers in Sigma Tau Delta left Adam and I stranded, not only from fellow officers but from each other.

In the end, the only article I received *was* Adam's - and his article's message lends a tone of serendipitous irony to the story. After reading his article, I realized what led to the lack of articles and communication with the fellow High Plains Region members wasn't a faulty e-mail, a misplaced word in the ad, or an overly zealous offer of a kitten in exchange for written words. (The proof that I did indeed offer kittens is on the facebook.) What was lacking was not initiative, nor was it members, nor was it avenues of communication. What was lacking was the actual *connection*.

Adam's right - it's all too easy in this day and age to feel as if one is intruding by expressing one's interest, but it's also all too easy to close one's avenues of interest off to what is a perceived burden. An article of no more than five hundred words would have been no stretch for an English

major, but the mythos works in a two-way street: sometimes, asking for help can be perceived as passing off one's work.

In the English community, I've found the following has become the ever presentiment: "Why can't they just do it themselves?"

In no way do I even condemn this reaction. Truly, without a connection between those you are asking for help and yourself, there is certainly no reason why you should even *want* the kitten. What had I ever done for you, stranger High Plains reader? Certainly, nothing, outside of offer you a fuzzy ball of love in jest and a Starbucks gift card.

There's a reason I've placed this article directly next door to Adam's rather inspiring article about individualism and separation. I myself found that I *wouldn't* ask for help the closer the deadline came - I'd feel this strange pressing guilt, sadness, and defeat. On both sides of the coin, from those asking for help and those prepared to help them receive it, we English-major types should strive to overcome the lack of connection between members and reach for a better understanding of what it truly takes to make things like Sigma Tau Delta possible.

From one harried student out there to another, if we don't connect, what else can we do? Reflecting back on my self-disappointment in my inability to connect to all of you all, I've made it my mission to somehow cohesively connect us, and, hopefully, we can do it through the vast resource of the internet.

In this way, we *can* help - each other, equally, and without that humming isolation that so often prevents us.

Congratulations High Plains! + Dates to Remember

all stars on our logo, obviously.

Original Fiction/Drama Awards

Honorable Mention

Jamie Walborn (\$50) Metropolitan State College of Denver (HP) Alpha Psi chapter

Regent Scholarships (\$1000 each)

High Plains

Denis Illige-Saucier

University of Denver (HP)

Alpha Delta Kappa chapter

Outstanding Literary Arts Journal Awards

Third Place (\$150)

Fort Hays State University (HP)

Rho Psi chapter

Outstanding Chapter Award (\$350 each)

Metropolitan State College of Denver (HP)

Alpha Psi chapter

and now, some poetry!

Metallurgy

tameca l coleman, metropolitan state college
of denver

I will wear all black in the summertime,
Craving much more heat than I can sustain.
Give me more cayenne, more temper, more salt,
More fire for the embers that remain.

I will collapse for lack of water,
Forgetting what that feels like on my tongue.
Let the sun dry me out, make me hotter.
Make me malleable to hold and dumb.

Out of that I will be yours before you;
Mixed elements cooled, hardened and smoothed.
My former body's integrity
Shaped as you've willed it by the red hot kiln.

I want to be strung around your salt neck,
A pendant that sways with your every step.

Due September 30 2008

Annual Chapter Report

We recommend starting this now, before it slips
your mind after Spring Semester's through!

Due April 30 2008

Submissions to The Rectangle

Due May 30 2008

Fall Regnery Internship Application

Due October 30 2008 (there's a lot!)

Outstanding Chapter Award applications due

Service Award applications due

Project Grant applications due

Outstanding Literary Arts Journal Award applica-
tions due

P.C. Somerville Award for Future Teachers ap-
plications due

Junior/Senior/Graduate Scholarship applications
due

Henry Regnery Endowed Scholarship applica-
tions due

Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship applications due

Sigma Tau Delta Study Abroad Scholarships ap-
plications due

Scholarly Paper Awards applications due

Regnery Internship applications due

Due November 30 2008

Int'l Annual Convention, Minneapolis - Call for
Papers and Panels deadline

Individual and Chapter Website Award applica-
tions due

Elaine W. Hughes Outstanding Sponsor Award
applications due

Convention 2009 (you know you want to go!)

March 25-28 Hyatt Regency Minneapolis
Minneapolis, MN

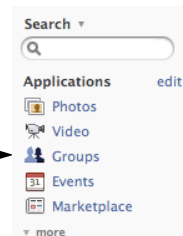
Common reader: Michael Perry's Population 485:
Meeting Your Neighbors One Siren at a Time.

Get Connected!

ways that you can connect between each other and sigma tau delta
the easiest way: join the book of faces!

Groups

It's real easy to do. Check it out.



- First you click on the **Groups** application button.
- Then **+ Create a New Group**
- Fill in all the required info. Choose either **School** or **Global** as your **Network**, depending on the level of privacy you wish. Under **Group Type** choose **Student Groups** and then **Clubs and Societies** to make your chapter easier to search for.
- Click **Create Group**.
- The next set of options are for customizing the structure of the group page. I would recommend keeping everything as open as possible, restricting access or making the group "by invitation" only in the event of serious misuse.
- Now you're ready to invite other members. Once you've done so, click on **Save and View** to admire your new chapter group.
- Do note the administrative options on the right side of the screen. To transfer administrative capabilities to someone new, or more than one person, go to **Members** and click **Make Admin** next to their name. This way the group can continue to function year after year.
- Take some time and play around, there is very little that can't be undone. And the stuff that can't... you get a big **Are you sure? Because this can't be undone** thing show up as warning.
- Enjoy communications galore!

Not yet on?

- Go to www.facebook.com and click on the green sign up button.
- Fill in the appropriate information.
- Check your email for the link back.
- Once back at the site, skip any steps you don't feel like going through yet. You can always go back to them later.
- Viola! you are on **facebook**. Now you have all the options available for editing your profile and finding friends, et cetera.

So easy!

Groups to note:

Sigma Tau Delta -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2204906697>

Southwestern Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2257309248>

Midwestern Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2362501672>

Eastern Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=3057315296>

Southern Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2371128784>

High Plains Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=2368559771>

Far Western Region -

<http://facebook.com/group.php?gid=5275501341>

As this flier indicates, making a group for your chapter is easy and quick, and groups for the regions are already active and looking for your attention! Facebook is the largest growing social network on the web, and is one of the premiere ways to stay in contact with unwieldy e-mails and miscommunications! Go on, give it a shot. *flyer copyright kristofer adam speirs*

What if you're graduated/ing?

never fear, alumni epsilon is here!



Alumni Epsilon is the chapter for those of you, myself included, who dread graduation and are hoping to find some way to keep in contact with the program that has brought such enriching experiences to us, in any region. Focused on maintaining connections with graduated alumni and allowing them continued access to conferences and other Sigma Tau Delta goodies, Alumni Epsilon just might be the program for you if your graduated and looking for a way in.

If you're interested in Alumni Epsilon, the best place to start would be with the brand new Alumni Representative, Daniel Hardy, who can be reached at hardydp@uwec.edu

Interested in submitting articles for next issue?

Articles should be emailed to either Kristofer Adam Speirs or Jessica Snavlin at speirs@mscd.edu or shadow.apple@gmail.com respectively.

Articles should center around Sigma Tau Delta, English, writing, and cool stuff your chapter has done! I know there's cool stuff out there you're dying to share, and we're dying to hear it. Try to keep articles between 250 and 750 words, submitted in .doc (not .docx or .wps!) and include any images you'd like to include in the article.

Have any complaints/corrections? You can email those to Jessica Snavlin directly, care of shadow.apple@gmail.com!



our mighty region!