



Sigma Tau Delta High Plains Newsletter Fall 2005

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Greetings from your Student Representative:



Hello all High Plains Chapters!

In case you hadn't noticed, I did get married over the summer and was able, to the appreciation of many, to change my horrendously long last name to Mead. As you receive correspondence from me, please be aware that I am no longer Amanda Syljuberget.

Our chapter here at Montana State University is currently inducting members and preparing for the upcoming convention, more on that to follow. It seems only yesterday that we were handing our papers to Dr. Morgan for editing before last year's convention. My, the time does fly!

I am thrilled to be registering for classes for the very last time on October 31st, and marking the beginning of the end of my undergraduate career! I wish everyone luck who is in a similar situation! To those of you with a few semesters or years left, I wish you luck as well as you plow through.

As always, I love receiving emails voicing your questions and concerns, so please do not hesitate to email me! I hope to see many of you at the 2006 Sigma Tau Delta Convention in Portland, Oregon March 29 through April 2! Good luck with your semesters everyone!

Amanda Mead
High Plains Student Representative
amandavmead@yahoo.com

"A man cannot be comfortable without his own approval."

- Mark Twain

"Over here it's a drug trade: we die from drugs. Over there they die from what we buy from drugs: the diamonds, the chains..."

- Kanye West

Greetings from your Regent:

Crown'd with the sickle, and the wheaten sheaf,
... Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on.

James Thomson (1700-1748)

Dear High Plains Deltans,

It is a golden and jovial time of the autumn here in Denver, warm days and crisp nights. A golden and jovial time of the semester, too, a time when all of the new courses are familiar and the challenges of final tests and papers seem distant. Please take the opportunity that this mid-point of the fall semester affords to plan some special Sigma Tau Delta activity. Here at Metro State, our chapter will be having a used book sale to raise money for the Portland convention and also hosting a marathon reading of Edgar Allan Poe to celebrate Halloween. Our officers are also planning a membership drive and thinking about the initiation ceremony that will follow.

Last spring I surveyed the chapter advisors of the High Plains, soliciting ideas for different sorts of initiations. Much to my surprise, I got more e-mails requesting ideas and seeking help than those telling me of new, creative ways to hold an initiation. From this small survey, I conclude that it is much more important to have an initiation of whatever sort than to have none at all. You all know, of course, that there are models for ceremonies in the Handbook. In the almost fifteen years I've been involved with our chapter, we have run the gamut: sometimes we have had elaborate dinners with speakers, candles, and photographers, at other times a get-together in our student union coffee shop after hours. The important thing is to mark this important occasion with some ceremony that the local members feel is appropriate. Five or six years ago, our student officers embraced the old-fashioned language and thoughts of the vows and motto of the Handbook; last spring the student officers were more comfortable with a much-abbreviated version of that text. So, let me urge you to think about what sort of initiation you want for your new chapter members, have that initiation—and then write to me about your choices and how they turned out.

All my best to you this jovial autumn!

Elizabeth Holtze
Metropolitan State College of Denver
High Plains Regent
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*"Action is
eloquence."*

- Shakespeare

Put the FUN in Your Fundraising!

Thinking about funding can be extremely taxing on the brain. Don't get bent out of shape. Instead make it fun and enjoyable. Look at your campus, look at other groups, find what works, and don't continue with what doesn't.

At Metro State College of Denver, Alpha Psi Chapter we have done huge book sales each year. These sales increased greatly when we considered one important fact: Location. Instead of placing the sale up in the English Department on the fourth floor of one of the many buildings, we investigated other options. The idea was to put it somewhere there would be more students, faculty, and staff coming by. We called and found out that our student organization could reserve any room in our student union for free. We found a beautiful room right next to a major entrance. It was a lounge, so students would come and just relax, and they could look through our books. It became a huge success. We would hang up posters on all the doors, and we would send out a campus wide email. We were so blessed with people that sometimes even the campus police would stop by and look for books. Not to mention I love making deals, so my treasure came up with the \$10 box of books sale. The customer would pick a box and choose any books he/she wanted and it cost \$10. This was due to having so many books donated and we didn't want to waste an opportunity. This book sale has become so successful that we ended up offering it twice a year. It is one week long, and local libraries, students, faculty, and staff donate all the books.

Another interesting idea is –a-thong activities. However, this is an English Honor Society. There is no reason for a bike-a-thong, or a rock-a-thong. However, what about a read-a-thong. Choose a long piece of important literature; for instance, Shakespeare's sonnets, Beowulf, Leaves of Grass, or a short novel. Find out who on campus or in the local community will provide an atmosphere that would be best. Like if you wanted to read a Jane Austen novel pick a location where there is coffee or tea, candles, pillows, perhaps a fireplace, to help with a mood. Then advertise the event like crazy. Put it in the paper. Get your members to get sponsors for reading a chapter, and invite them to the event. The most important thing is to get everyone involved.

Spelling bee's were horrible as students. However, what if faculty members did it? There could be a cover charge for viewers, and this would just need a lot of promotion. School newspapers, email, posters, invitations everything you could do.

Another idea is to start making appearances at university events. If you start making a network around the campus with different organizations then they might help with a co-event. The problem is you split the proceeds. However, if you are a small chapter it helps to cover all the hours of the events.

Don't be afraid to try something new. Sometimes the new things are what succeeds so well.

Rachel Christina
ASR of High Plains

"As a matter of principle, I never attend the first annual anything."

- George Carlin

So I've Graduated, NOW WHAT?

In 1996, LaNette Schmeidler moved from western Kansas to San Francisco, CA without a job or local contacts, with her B.A. and M.A. in English and a determination to succeed. Nine years later, LaNette was named the Young Alumni Award Winner for Fort Hays State University. She came back to campus in Hays, Kansas on September 28, 2005, to talk with current students about the question, "What can you do with an English major?" Her answer: "Almost anything!"

LaNette began her professional career while an undergraduate, when she was an office manager for home health services. LaNette seized many opportunities in the university, becoming a member of Sigma Tau Delta, being active with the English Club, serving in Student Government, and even winning the campus election to become Student Body President. As LaNette told the thirty-eight students and faculty who came to hear her presentation, the interpersonal abilities she developed through co-curricular activities proved essential to her later career development.

Furthermore, her M.A. in English, which she pursued immediately following her B.A., helped her to advance professionally and was an excellent investment. LaNette mentions that, looking back, the only thing she would have done differently in college was to have fit creative writing courses into her busy schedule, as she hopes to write novels.

Moving to California, LaNette used her clerical and administrative experience to get a "temporary" job as an operations and human resources assistant for an Oakland law firm. Once the bosses recognized LaNette's writing skills, LaNette says, she was given more responsibilities and additional training. Her new experiences combined with her solid grounding in textual analysis and careful expression to make her into a highly trained writing professional. In 1999, LaNette joined the international law firm, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, as a human resources project coordinator, and in 2000, she became manager of human resources communication. Her current position is a Communications Consultant for the law firm Towers Perrin. In California, LaNette also met her husband, industrial engineer Brion Parker.

LaNette's work as a communications consultant involves explaining human resources issues in ways employees can understand. She helps companies large and small to explain employee benefit issues. To succeed in what she terms "corporate storytelling," LaNette must combine technical language with accessible content to create content for employee brochures, official memos, and policy summary. Collaborative work is also an important, regular function of her job. She reports a very high job satisfaction from her work as a communications consultant.

LaNette Schmeidler Parker emphasizes that her English degrees were an advantage for her success in the business world. The Sigma Tau Delta members at Fort Hays State University are proud to honor her achievements and her recognition as a Young Alumni Award winner of 2005.

Amy Cummins
Fort Hays State University

"Measure not the work until the day's out and the

*"Humor is the only
test of gravity and
gravity of
humor..."*

- Aristotle

Hilton Here We Come!

The 2006 Sigma Tau Delta Convention is being held in Portland, Oregon from March 29 through April 2. The Portland Hilton and Executive Towers is our destination of choice, so be sure to register for convention and get those travel arrangements out of the way early! The postmark deadline for submissions is **November 25**, and to receive the early registration discount, you must register by **February 24**.

Submission categories have been expanded so be sure to check out the convention brochure located on the convention web page:

<http://www.english.org/portland/convention.shtml>.

This year's keynote speaker is none other than Poet Laureate, Ted Kooser! Kooser is a professor at the University of Nebraska (yay for the High Plains!) and is serving his second term as Poet Laureate for the U.S. We have three other outstanding speakers for the convention: Mark Salzman, Kim Addonizio, and Katja Esson. Salzman's book *True Notebooks* is the common reader for this year's convention, so be sure to pick one up! To learn more about these three wonderful speakers, please visit the convention page (link provided above).

BOOK DRIVE

As always, Sigma Tau Delta will be hosting a book drive during convention to help raise funds for local Portland charities. This year's recipients of all donations are S.M.A.R.T. (Start Making a Reader Today) and the Cedar Mills Library. The chapter who donates the largest amount will have a monetary donation given in their name! Be sure to bring a book!

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

Scholarships and Awards: October 31

Convention Submission: November 25

Common Reader Contest: January 31st

Early Registration: February 24

*"He told me all
romantics meet the
same fate:
someday cynical
and drunk and
boring someone in
some dark café."*

- Joni Mitchell

"The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated."

- Oscar Wilde

"No one said it would be easy. No one said it'd be this hard. No one said it would be easy. No one thought we'd come this far. Oh, and look we've come this far."

- Sheril Crow

COMMON READER WRITING CONTEST

The common reader for this year's convention is Mark Salzman's *True Notebooks*, the true story of his experiences teaching writing skills to juvenile delinquents. A riveting and inspiring account of the troubles facing today's youth, this book is sure to enthrall you from the moment you open the first page!

Just in case that wasn't incentive enough, the High Plains Regent, Elizabeth Holtze, is hosting a common reader contest for members who cannot make it to this year's convention. Below are the guidelines:

- the submission may be in any genre accepted at the convention,
- it must conform to all convention submission guidelines for that genre,
- it must be accompanied by a submission form identical to the convention submission form,
- it must be mailed to your Regent (addresses below), and it must be postmarked by January 31st.

The Regents have said this about the contest: "These contests are completely separate from convention submissions. There will be a first-place prize of **\$100.00** in each region and, depending upon the number and quality of submissions, there may be other prizes.

Although all members are encouraged to attend the annual convention, these contests will be a way to share a convention-related experience for those who are unable to do so. The Regents hope that they will give individuals experience in the process of academic submissions (remember, names appear only on the cover sheet) at the same time that it fosters a sense of community within the regions. And, last, they will give each of us space to reflect on the power of writing both in our own lives and in the lives of the violent juvenile inmates that are at the center of Mark Salzman's book."

Those of you who will not be able to come to Portland, be sure to participate and win the \$100.00!

Send submissions by January 31st to:

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