

# *Sigma Tau Delta*

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MIDWEST REGION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2004

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## *Greetings from the Student Representative...*

Hello, Midwest Sigma Tau Deltans!  
I was recently elected to serve as your Student Representative at the National Convention in Daytona Beach, Florida. For the past year, we have been honored to have Reese Kirner from Northern Illinois University serve as our Student Representative. We wish her the best as she finishes her graduate studies in linguistics. I hope to continue to lead our region with the same enthusiasm she has shared with us.

I am currently majoring in English and biology at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Besides my involvement with Sigma Tau Delta, I am a resident assistant, a mid-fielder on the women's soccer team, and a writing tutor. I also enjoy running and attending the monthly poetry readings on campus. Check it out at <http://poetryproject.luther.edu/>!

Five other Luther students and I attended the convention in Florida in March. We greatly enjoyed the beach, the opportunity to hear the writings of fellow students, and the poetry reading by former U.S. poet laureate, Billy Collins. As a region, we can look forward to hosting next year's national convention in Kansas City. I hope all of the chapters will be able to attend! Todd, Traci, and I also hope to bring back a Midwest Regional Conference, as was done in 2001 at the University of Missouri-Rolla. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.

I hope everyone can take some time this summer to leisurely ponder the possibilities for fundraising activities, service

projects, and paper ideas. Perhaps you can contact another chapter within driving distance to start planning a service project or a poetry festival for the fall. Here at Luther, our chapter plans the English Department Halloween Party every October. We have fun decorating a professor's house with cobwebs and candles. Everyone attends in "literary" costume for an evening of food, games, and poetry recitations. I would love for you to share the escapades your chapter plans throughout the year. Please feel free to contact me with information about your chapter or if you have any questions or concerns. Best wishes!



Anne Thompson  
Luther College  
Student Representative  
[thoman01@luther.edu](mailto:thoman01@luther.edu)

## *Greetings from our Assistant Representative...*

Hi! I'm Traci Thomas, the new Assistant Student Representative for the Midwest. It was an honor to be elected, and I look forward to working with all of you this year.

I'm currently a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. I'm graduating in May with a bachelor's degree in Comprehensive English Literature and plan to attend graduate school at UWEC in the fall.

In Spring 2005, I will receive my certificate in Women's Studies. Eventually, I hope to earn my Ph.D. and combine my training in English and Women's Studies in the area of adult education.

I'm involved in many English-related activities. I tutor freshman English students in our Writing Center, and am currently a Student Mentor for an English 110 class. I'm also the Chairperson for the facilities Committee of the annual UWEC English Festival. I am currently serving as the President of the Theta Zeta chapter. After graduation, I will resign my post as President, but will continue to serve our chapter as our Public Relations/Membership Officer when I return in the fall. Please feel free to contact me if you should need anything!

Traci Thomas  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Assistant Student Representative  
[thomastl@uwec.edu](mailto:thomastl@uwec.edu)

## *Greetings from our former Regent...*

Farewell/Hello. I seem to remember that this is how Kurt Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians (little green people in *Slaughterhouse-Five*) say good-bye—and hello, for that matter. They see all time as simultaneous. I'm not in Tralfamadore; I'm in Iowa. But still, though I am going OUT as Midwest Regent, I'm still IN Sigma Tau Delta and will be serving as Vice President/President Elect. And so: Farewell, Midwest, and yet, Hello!

Welcome to Todd Martin, who was appointed to serve out the remainder of my term as Regent. Welcome also to Traci, the Associate SR and my own Luther chapter member, Anne, who is replacing Reese Kirner as SR. Going to miss Reese, who when last

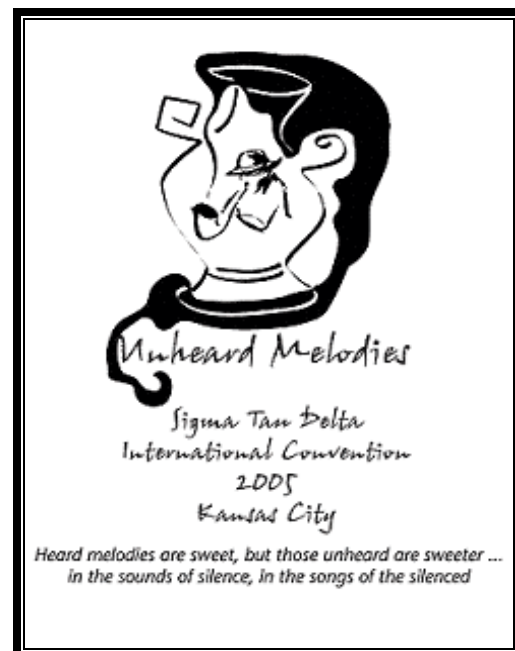
seen was studying linguistics in grad school.

I still retain one big job I got as a regent—I am the Chair of the Convention Committee and in that capacity will honcho the 2005 Kansas City event. The theme I chose is "Unheard Melodies" (thanks, Mr. Keats, for that phrase). And even though some Brits have named it as one of the 100 worst songs ever, I borrowed a Paul Simon title in my short gloss on the theme, and I think I'll keep it: "Heard melodies are sweet, but unheard melodies are sweeter . . . in the sounds of silence, in the songs of the silenced."

It was in Anaheim in 1997 when I first became regent and so I went from Disneyland to Daytona in my years as Midwest Regent, and it has been an awesome and entertaining ride! See you in Kansas City!

Dr. Peter Scholl  
Luther College  
Vice President/2005 Convention Chair  
[schollpe@luther.edu](mailto:schollpe@luther.edu)

## **2005 Kansas City Convention Logo**



### *Greetings from the Regent...*

As the newly appointed Regent for the Midwest region, I would like to introduce myself and to offer my services to your chapter. I am new to the position, but I would be glad to help in anyway that I can to enable you to strengthen and improve your chapter. Likewise, I extend the same offer to those who may be interested in starting a new chapter within the region.

I am currently Associate Professor of English at Huntington College, a small Christian liberal arts college which is located in northeast Indiana near Ft. Wayne, and three years ago I revived the previously defunct Alpha Beta Sigma chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. I have been the chapter sponsor since then and have been pleased to see the students continue to develop significant projects for the local chapter and the community. However, I really must defer any success to the student members.

My area of specialization is twentieth century literature, primarily American but also including British. So, I find myself skipping across the Atlantic one way or the other, depending on the semester: I teach both American literature and Modern British literature. I have published on a variety of American authors, including: postmodern author John Barth, E. E. Cummings—specifically his novel *The Enormous Room*, Southern author Clyde Edgerton, and most recently the Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat. I am currently working on an essay on Joseph Conrad's Nostromo. (When it comes to choosing writing projects, I'm fairly schizophrenic).

I also serve as a representative on the Editorial Board of the *Christian Scholar's Review* and am on the Executive Committee of the Advisory Board for the Christian Center of Urban Studies, located in Chicago. I hope to bring some of this experience to the

Board meetings of Sigma Tau Delta, where I will represent the Midwest chapters.

I hope to be an effective Regent and to serve the individual chapters however I can, and I hope that you will share your concerns with me so I can effectively represent the region. I also hope to work toward unifying the region. I am currently exploring some options on how to best accomplish this, including having a regional convention in the fall of 2005. If you have any suggestions on how best to work toward more interaction among chapters, I would value your input—even if it is a means of getting some closer, local chapters to interact with one another.

Sincerely,



Todd Martin  
Huntington College  
Midwest Regent

### *National Newsletter...*

To receive the latest Sigma Tau Delta news by e-mail every month, go to [www.english.org](http://www.english.org) and click on eNews Subscription. The password is blake5.

## *News from the Theta Beta Chapter...*

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Theta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will be hosting their annual Children's Writing Contest Ceremony. Each year, the Theta Zeta Chapter sponsors a writing contest that recognizes young writers throughout the Eau Claire area. The contest is open to students in Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> Grade, and submissions may be on any theme, in any style. The members of Sigma Tau Delta judge the entries and select up to four winners from each grade. Students, teachers, and families are invited to a ceremony held during the UWEC English Festival, one of the country's largest student-run annual Language Arts festivals. Check it out at [http://www.uwec.edu/English/English\\_Festival/](http://www.uwec.edu/English/English_Festival/). At the ceremony, winners are invited on stage to receive prizes and read their entries. The officers of the Theta Zeta Chapter host a reception following the ceremony, which gives us a chance to get to know the talented young writers in our area. This is such a rewarding activity, and we Sigma Tau Delta-Theta Zeta members highly recommend other chapters try it out. Please feel free to contact us via [thomastl@uwec.edu](mailto:thomastl@uwec.edu), if you have any questions or comments!

## *A Poem in honor of April as National Poetry Month...*

### American Sonnet

We do not speak like Petrarch or wear a hat  
like Spenser  
and it is not fourteen lines  
like furrows in a small, carefully plowed field

but the picture postcard, a poem on vacation,  
that forces us to sing our songs in little rooms  
or pour our sentiments into measuring cups.

We write on the back of a waterfall or lake,  
adding to the view a caption as conventional  
as an Elizabethan woman's heliocentric eyes.

We locate an adjective for the weather.  
We announce that we are having a wonderful  
time.  
We express the wish that you were here

and hide the wish that we were where you are,  
walking back from the mailbox, your head  
lowered  
as you read and turn the thin message in your  
hands.

A slice of this place, a length of white beach,  
a piazza or carved spires of a cathedral  
will pierce the familiar place where you  
remain,

and you will toss on the table this reversible  
display:  
a few square inches of where we have strayed  
and a compression of what we feel.

*Billy Collins<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Billy Collins, *Questions About Angels*, (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 3-4.

### *Opportunities to Consider....*

#### Regnery Internship

Deadline: May 30, 2004

Would you like to receive a \$3000-\$4000 fall internship at a publishing company in Washington, D.C.? Check out the national website, <http://www.english.org>, for more information and the application!

#### Service Award

Deadline: May 30, 2004

Does your chapter have a great idea for a service project? Make your chapter's vision a reality with funding through this award. Spurn your imagination by seeing what other chapters have done at the national website, <http://www.english.org>. Click on Activities under Chapter Information.

#### Promote Literacy

- Literacy connections provides links to programs by state as well as offering tips and guides to volunteers looking to create new literacy organizations. <http://www.literacyconnections.com>
- Family Literacy Program Directory provides a catalogue of literacy initiatives by state. <http://www.famlit.org/famlitnetwork>