



SIGMA TAU DELTA

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY

Spring 2012

CONTENTS

2 - [President's Corner](#)

3 - [Executive Director's Report](#)

[Treasurer's Update](#)

4 - [The Intersection of NEHS and Sigma Tau Delta](#)

[Market the Liberal Arts, continued](#)

5 - [Coming to the Convention as a Crowd](#)

6 - [Coming to the Convention as a Crowd, continued](#)

[A Brush with a Literary Titan](#)

7 - [Building a Better World with Books](#)

8 - [The Great \(Southern\) American Novel Writing Contest](#)

9 - [Eat Your Cake and Read It, Too](#)

10 - [Great Illustrations from Literature](#)

11 - [I'm an English Major: Now What?](#)

12 - [Suzanne Berne and the 2012 Writing Awards](#)

Market the Liberal Arts

Carrie Fitzpatrick
Historian
Alvernia University, PA



At the end of the first week of classes at Alvernia University, I walked through the hallways and overheard a group of students discussing their majors. One student said in an embarrassed and apologetic tone that she was majoring in English. Another student responded sarcastically, "Good luck with that." Usually when I hear such commentary, I ignore it and walk on. After all, I have what I believe are more important things to do. I have lessons to prepare, research to complete, committees to attend. I don't have the time to deal with seemingly trivial, inaccurate snide comments.

That day, however, something snapped inside me. Maybe my sudden lapse in pacifism can be attributed to funding cuts nationwide for liberal education; the persistent ill-conceived efforts to reduce general education core requirements across universities in favor of pseudo-liberal, vocation-oriented electives; or just the sense that we (especially those individuals involved in humanities disciplines) are under attack by individuals who hold an ill-informed and erroneous view that liberal education is antiquated and without purpose.

Turning on my heel, I walked back to the students. "Hey, I said, do you know what Diane Sawyer, Matt Damon, and Michael Eisner (Disney CEO) have in common? My audience blinked blankly at me, probably because they were startled to see me standing there next to them, let alone interrupting their conversation. "They were all English majors," I said, smiling like a Cheshire cat. "You know what else?" I asked rhetorically. "Many jobs of the future have yet to be established, so the most marketable people will be those with strong critical thinking skills, a penchant for creativity, and above average writing ability. In fact, if you're not an English major, you might want to consider picking up a minor, or even enrolling in a second major in English or a related field like communications or rhetoric." And then, I smiled again and walked away.

Many jobs of the future have yet to be established, so the most marketable people will be those with strong critical thinking skills, a penchant for creativity, and above average writing ability.

Admittedly, I've given this speech before, usually in my freshman composition classes as I stare out at a sea of reticent eighteen-year-olds. Am I a bit over the top? Nope. I have come to realize that I (and you) need to make time to celebrate and market liberal education generally, and our own disciplines specifically. We need to get serious about marketing our strengths and refuting ignorance.

The reality is that most of society believes that college students have a choice between selecting a major in the liberal arts, like English, and resigning themselves to a low-paying job or majoring in a professional program where they have a better chance of earning a high salary. I say poppycock! The belief is an either/or fallacy. Why is society saying this? Why are we allowing them to say it? Why aren't we fighting with what we do best, writing and research? According to a National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) study entitled *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America* (2004), "Nearly half of all Americans ages 18 to 24 read no books for pleasure," "the percentage of 18- to 44-year-olds who read a book fell 7 points from 1992 to 2002," and "Although reading tracks closely with education level, the percentage of college graduates who read literature has declined." The NEA stated in the report *To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence* (2007) that "With lower levels of reading and writing ability, people do less well in the job market. Poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for advancement." The NEA report was based on data analysis from approximately two dozen studies from the Federal Education department, the Federal Labor Department, and the Census Bureau, as well as surveys conducted by other academic and business institutions. Parallels can be drawn between the reduction of liberal education and poor literacy. Research indicates that liberal arts education should be strengthened, not reduced or eliminated.

A strong liberal education allows graduates to be chameleons among the changing colors of the jobscape. And it's not just the folks gathering in circles and wearing berets that are speaking out on the issue. Roger Smith, former chief executive of General Motors, said, "Liberal arts may ultimately prove to be the most relevant learning model. *Continued on page 4*

The President's Corner



Sid Watson
President, 2010-2012
Oklahoma Baptist University

A Look at the Road Behind Us . . .

Spring is a time of transitions in Sigma Tau Delta. Some of us are graduating and moving on to jobs or graduate school. Even if we're not among those buying commencement robes and mortarboards, most of us have friends or students who will be graduating, and so it's a time of change for us as well. Spring is also a time of transitions on the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors, as new regents and officers are elected at the annual convention. Every two years that transition includes a shift in presidencies. This is one of those years.

It has been an enormous privilege and honor to serve as your president for the last two years. We are in such an exciting period of Sigma Tau Delta's history. In the last few years our Convention Committee has led us toward ever larger and more exciting conventions. Our Scholarship Committee has revamped our application process, moving it online and simplifying the process for our members. They have also increased the numbers and amounts of scholarships that we offer. The Partnership Initiatives Committee works with Penguin and Better World Books to offer internships to our members and is currently pursuing other ways that we might support internships.

Thanks to the work of the Alumni Representative, the Associate Alumni Representative, and the members of the Alumni and International Chapters Committee, we've increased the voice of our alumni members in the Society. Our National English Honors Society is no longer a fledgling but a thriving, vibrant offering at hundreds of high schools around the country. We've established a network of English lovers—undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty members, alumni, high school students, and high school teachers—and we're just beginning to explore the possibilities that such a web of language and literature devotees might offer.

These are just a few of the activities supported by your very hard-working Board of Directors and the equally impressive staff at our Central Office. It's an exciting time to be a member of Sigma Tau Delta. For those of us who are in our own transitions, it's a good time to think about how we might stay involved with Sigma Tau Delta in the future.

. . . And a Glimpse of the Road Ahead of Us

Sarah Dangelantonio
President, 2012-2014
Franklin Pierce University, NH



On April 13, 1983, I was inducted as a student member to the Omicron Pi chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Little did I know that my association with the organization would extend through another 20-odd years! This spring I have the privilege of beginning my term as the organization's president.

There is much going on in the world of Humanities and English, and there is certainly some uncertainty about where these fields are headed. Here at Sigma Tau Delta, we'll be considering our future as an organization. With the continued development of our high school sibling, NEHS, we are growing every month and supporting the study of English on multiple levels. We'll need to consider how to deal with the benefits that come along with this growth as well as how to handle any "growing pains." We also need to consider how to best serve our college and university chapters so they can thrive and grow, as well as take into account what role our alumni play in the organization and how to best serve them. These considerations are certainly our task at hand, and I look forward to collecting your input as we move ahead.

Our next conventions are already on our plate, and plans and preparations are moving ahead with uncommon speed. With each convention seeing an increase in student participation, we'll need to find ways to engage as many members and advisors as possible, as well as continue to provide captivating speakers, thought-provoking sessions, and exciting venues.

This year has also seen an increase in the number and quality of the applications for awards and scholarships. We are so excited about the level of engagement of our members and chapters! With a healthy financial outlook, we'll be considering how we might demonstrate the organization's further commitment to such opportunities.

I encourage each of you to make your own connections to Sigma Tau Delta and to promoting our mission—share a good book, pass along a link to a nifty website, play a game of Words with Friends or Catch Phrase. Post a favorite quote, read to a child, submit a poem to the Convention, wear your Sigma Tau Delta pin . . . the choices are practically endless. Celebrate language and literature and revel in your role as a "word nerd," and those of us on the Board and in the Central Office will continue to provide support and guidance as we move forward.

In the next year I'll enter into my third decade with Sigma Tau Delta, and I'm as excited now as I was all those years ago when I first promised to "advance the study of the chief literary masterpieces; to encourage worthwhile reading; to promote the mastery of written expression and to foster a spirit of fellowship among students specializing in the English language and literature."

Executive Director's Report

Elitism and Honor Societies

I recently participated in a meeting of the Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS), of which Sigma Tau Delta has been a part for over 50 years. Among other topics discussed by the assembled directors of the 68 member societies was that of "honor societies and the charges of elitism." It occurs to me that most of us in $\Sigma\Delta$, at one time or another, have had this charge directed at us.

But let's face it: we wouldn't be members of $\Sigma\Delta$ if there weren't something of the elitist about each of us. I don't mean "snob," but elitist in the sense that we affirm we have some abilities others don't have (though we should never forget that others have abilities we don't have). And college students are an elite group among today's society. To be chosen, then, to be part of $\Sigma\Delta$, is to be chosen to be among the elite of the elite.

I admit that I *am* an elitist, and proud of it. I'm proud of what $\Sigma\Delta$ does and of my membership in this great Society. As the second largest of the ACHS societies, we provide large numbers of scholarships, have an annual convention that far surpasses what most other honor societies produce, offer publishing opportunities and awards, actively and consciously seek ways to honor the discipline of English—both in colleges and in our extended outreach program for secondary schools—and have an earnestly student-focused Board of Directors. We honor members in many ways, just as we honor great literature, great analysis, and fine writing. We do well, and better than many, with all of this.

What we need always to remember, though, is that we in $\Sigma\Delta$ are "in" only partly because of what we already have done; the larger part of our being here is because of what we are becoming and what we yet can do. We have selected (or have we been selected by?) a discipline incredibly rich in its abilities to stir us into a deeply involved, earth-moving life.

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William C. Johnson
Executive Director
Northern Illinois University



The real prestige in being a student of great literature, splendid writing, and intricate patterns of language is not to be accorded to us, but rather to the objects of our deep inquiry and study. The rare, the beautiful, and the curious; arcane theorems and lost languages; prehistory and contemporary politics; music that has moved great persons to

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weep and stirred armies to victories; poetry that has soothed and stimulated thoughts so deep they can be expressed only by the few who have studied long and hard, and who can express their awe of the subjects to admiring and hopeful listeners. These things have a potency that rubs off on us, since we, even if ineptly, must come to terms with them.

Our elitism is disreputable when founded on pretense, that is to say, on the attempt to acquire prestige without really acquiring the qualities to which it rightfully belongs. Insofar as prestige is attached to real values, and insofar as we seek prestige by cultivating those values in reality, the quest for prestige is completely reputable. And if that prestige comes by recognition of what we have done, are doing, and can do in the future, any elitism connected with that prestige is completely viable.

If $\Sigma\Delta$ has chosen us for inclusion, and if our English discipline allows us some distinction, they do so because they actually honor our productive utilization of superior talents and abilities, our maintenance of rigorously high standards, and our recognition and admission of our own subservience to the best that history, modern thinking, great literature, and elegant writing can provide. And so they should.

The Treasurer's Update

Finding Order in Ink Blots

The financial picture for the globe could be equated to a Rorschach test these days: look at these blotches of ink and tell us what you see. Then again, maybe finances always look amorphous to English majors. We squint—and can see a tree surrounded by pixies or the three blind mice *sans* tails. But smart people avail themselves of help when they're in unfamiliar territory, and our financial advisor at Wells Fargo need not squint to see the bigger picture for us.

Indeed, Sigma Tau Delta investment portfolio looks more like fine art. We finished 2011 with \$1,239,022 and \$122,935 in our main and NEHS accounts, respectively. The main account was down at the end of 2011 (3.38%), slightly more than the market, but the projections are beginning to come into focus: already this year we see our accounts up approximately 5%. As we watch, the blobs arrange themselves in neat order, marching into 2012 with confidence.

Shannin Schroeder
Secretary/Treasurer
Southern Arkansas University





Dave Wendelin
Director of NEHS
Northern Illinois University

The Intersection of NEHS and Sigma Tau Delta

With nearly 500 chapters of National English Honor Society (NEHS) spread across the United States and, indeed, with additional chapters in China and Turkey, the high school level of English honor societies, sponsored by $\Sigma\Delta$, has achieved impressive status as the fastest-growing and largest of the discipline-specific honor societies in existence. Populated by an active membership base that exceeds 15,000 students, these societies engage in admirable community service projects as well as educational and social activities that deepen appreciation of English studies for members.

Even with this enviable track record of growth, however, the interconnectedness of NEHS with $\Sigma\Delta$, quite frankly, languishes. Little evidence comes to the attention of either organization's leadership that the university and high school levels intersect; in fact, over the course of the past few years, only two or three chapters at either level have reached out to the other! As 2012 unfolds, might Sigma Tau Delta chapters accept the challenge to set a goal of investigating whether NEHS chapters exist in their immediate geographic vicinity and reach out to those chapters?

Imagine the impact of joint projects that link the colleges and universities with the high schools. Book drives, fund-raisers, tutoring efforts, and mentor initiatives would be enhanced. Participation in such projects as the fall "Read for the Record" program, in which both $\Sigma\Delta$ and NEHS engage, would reach so many more elementary students if honor society chapters

joined forces. Gathering supplies for impoverished schools in Africa, Latin America, or in the U.S. would be more effective and successful. Cross-level book clubs might flourish and the high school students might be enthralled with invitations to campus lectures or film festivals. The possibilities are infinite!

What if no NEHS chapters exist in the immediate area of a given $\Sigma\Delta$ chapter? What role might Sigma Tau Delta chapters play in encouraging local high schools to start chapters? What might be gained from high school students being invited to visit local campuses, sponsored by $\Sigma\Delta$ members, to learn about English studies at the university level? What if each $\Sigma\Delta$ member wrote a letter to her or his high school English teachers, introducing the concept of the National English Honor Society and suggesting the creation of a chapter?

Membership in an English honor society is an opportunity to indulge in the joys of English studies, to interact with like-minded individuals who share a passion for literature, language, writing, drama, and film. It's also an opportunity to serve the English discipline, to find younger students who will be the English majors and English teachers of the future. How much more might be gained by all involved if some of the inherent barriers between higher education institutions and secondary schools were breached by camaraderie between NEHS and $\Sigma\Delta$. Who will be the first to extend the hand of collaboration?

Market the Liberal Arts, Continued

People trained in the liberal arts learn to tolerate ambiguity and to bring order out of apparent confusion. They have the kind of sideways thinking and cross-classifying habit of mind that comes from learning, among other things, the many different ways of looking at literary works, social systems, chemical processes, or languages." In a similar statement, David Kearns, former chief executive of Xerox, has said, "We are reminded that the real challenge of today's economy is not in making things but in producing creative ideas. Today, the race goes not to the swift, but to the inventive, the resourceful, the curious. And that is what a liberal education is all about."

Some people proclaim that the liberal arts do not produce financial gains. Baloney! First, what is meant by financial gain? According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2009), many liberal arts majors, such as English, receive entry-level salaries that average about 35K across a variety of professions. However, ten to twenty years out, liberal arts graduates indicate that they are happy and appreciate the long-term value of their liberal education, and many of them find themselves in jobs with salaries comparable to their peers from professional programs.

Besides, if the payscale argument is put aside, most people admit that there are experiences that cannot be quantified or placed inside, heaven forbid, another graph or rubric. There are values other than money, and interestingly, they are the values that keep communities vibrant, and "butts in seats" at universities. Liberal arts majors and programs provide the very services that make a university a University and a community a Community. Imagine a world without music recitals, theatrical productions, creative writing contests, news publications, honors and writing programs. If we aren't careful, if we aren't vocal, communities and universities could end up looking like emperors without clothes.

The sad truth is that we (liberal arts advocates) don't market ourselves well. We are, at times, a melancholy bunch, and while we recognize the power of language, we rarely use it to promote our disciplines. It's time to wipe the corn chip crumbs from our smart devices and get angry. Take charge. Exercise persuasion. Write. Advocate the abilities and advertise the skills that can and do contribute to a variety of professional careers, including editing, public relations, advertising, copywriting, law, and many others. Promote English and related disciplines at your university through print advertisements. Give speeches, compose blogs, publish articles, post to social networks, make t-shirts, wear buttons, create petitions. It's time to inundate society with well-informed, positive messages about the liberal arts.

Coming to the Convention as a Crowd

Diane Steinberg
Sponsor, Alpha Epsilon Alpha Chapter
The College of New Jersey



How could your chapter benefit from coming to the Sigma Tau Delta Annual Convention as a crowd of a dozen or more? Since Portland in 2006, the Alpha Epsilon Alpha chapter at The College of New Jersey has come with at least three hotel rooms of students to each convention, and the costs have been outweighed by the advantages.

First off, coming to the Convention, especially for a student who participates in a panel or paper session, is excellent job training for any number of career paths in and out of academia. Undergraduates can be diffident, hesitant, or a trifle unsure of themselves in a public speaking role, and the Sigma Tau Delta Convention is a most welcoming venue for a first presentation. Faculty moderators, student chairs, and the audience of fellow Sigma Tau Deltans ask questions which expand on the ideas in the papers presented, and do not shun speakers with different perspectives or interpretations. Since the Convention is a good experience for any one of our student members, why not open up to as many student members as possible the opportunity to present their work and to meet their academic peers? Once a chapter begins planning for student travel, having a few more come along on a flight or train trip is not that taxing.

As soon as an institution has made the financial commitment to send a faculty moderator and a student member, subsequent student attendees cost much less. Virtually all students at the Convention will be sharing hotel rooms, and the Convention hotel rate for four students per room is no higher than it is for a single student. By traveling with four students per room, each student is responsible for only a single night's lodging cost. Students faced with a daunting schedule of events begin to plan each day's activities around the presentations of their roommates and fellow chapter members, guaranteeing all a core of familiar faces when they present.

More importantly, students from The College of New Jersey find the Convention to be a place at which they get to know other English majors outside of class and class-related activities. We have over 600 English majors, and majors in different tracks—the double major in Elementary Education and English, English Secondary Education, English Liberal Arts, and Journalism and Professional Writing—have little contact inside classes. We also like to travel to the Convention with both seniors and juniors, because the Convention is where the chapter leadership core for the following year find one another and begin to plan the next year's events and accomplishments. The Convention has much to offer, and if your students attend a variety of paper presentations, author presentations, workshops, and creative presentations, they will bring back to your campus a broad array of experiences to share with other students.

Coming to the Convention as a crowd builds bridges among many student members. Students who are English Liberal Arts majors may add a Professional Writing minor to their program after meeting those students. Younger students begin to use seniors as future job hunting resources, and chapters begin to build more diverse membership bases. Because many of our double majors in education are also invited to join Kappa Delta

Pi (the international honor society in education), they mistakenly believe that Sigma Tau Delta has little to offer them. When future primary school teachers come back from the Convention bubbling over with what they have learned, others will join us at future Conventions. I keep repeating, "One can join both Honor Societies. I myself am a member of both Sigma Tau Delta and Kappa Delta Pi." Students who are going to be teachers are very welcome at Sigma Tau Delta, and the Convention is not geared simply to future MFA's or future MA/PhD students.

At our first Convention, in 2005 in Kansas City, a junior member of our chapter won a \$75 "Honorable Mention" for a paper she presented on Jane Austen's *Emma*. The experience was, for both her and the chapter, life-changing. She began to realize that everyone who had told her that she should consider graduate school and an academic career was very correct, and to believe that she could compete nationally with her peers. She also inspired others to consider competing for national awards, scholarships, grants, and publication slots. Students love seeing their names in print, and a paper award at the Convention or a study abroad scholarship can give a student an advantage in this competitive job market. Once students attend an awards ceremony, they want to compete themselves. The young woman who earned the award at the 2005 Convention in Kansas City is now writing her dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania. She also helped her department chair at UPenn begin their chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, and at the Convention last March in Pittsburgh she won a graduate scholarship to help her pay for the 2011-12 academic year.

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Sigma Tau Delta has become the most visible Honor Society on our campus, largely because of the national convention each spring. Other campus honor societies are larger, but we have a reputation for being active and successful because our students participate on the national level as well as on the local level. Our chapter successes in getting student papers accepted is used to recruit new students to the college and to impress donors. Because we bring good publicity to the college, we are able to persuade our administration to fund much of our costs. Colleges are inherently competitive with one another, and helping administrators have students about whom they can boast can loosen purse strings. We begin each year's fundraising simply by asking what our administration is able to give. We schedule a second meeting as soon as paper acceptances are in, and our own chapter fundraising success often leads administrators to give even more because they see how seriously committed students are to going.

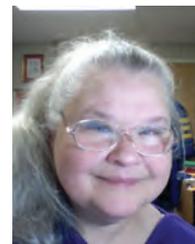
As a chapter, we do all we can to help our students submit the best possible papers so that they can earn places on the program. When we returned from Pittsburgh last March,

Continued on page 6

Coming to the Convention as a Crowd, Continued

we asked the Pittsburgh attendees to select the best four papers from our chapter and had the authors present them in a Mock Session at our Annual Celebration of Student Achievement during the final week of classes. Students who were planning to submit to the New Orleans Convention were asked to attend so that they would know what a Convention paper looks (and sounds!) like. As a chapter, we organize our own vetting of papers before students even submit nationally. While this choice is unusual, it has worked for us. We set up a chapter due date for Convention submissions about a month before the national due date, and faculty read the submissions, giving them a “ready to submit,” or a “make these changes” or a “you may not have funding.” We know that we will only be able to fund a certain number of student attendees, and if we think a paper is not right for the Convention, we make sure the student understands that he or she will be fully responsible for his or her expenses. Last year, we had only one student whose Convention paper was not accepted. We also create a Mock Class using our courseware system so that students may read one another’s submissions as soon as they are passed by the faculty readers. In February, we hold another series of Mock Sessions for everyone who has never read at a Conference, and we require students to bring a one page handout for their audience. We believe that this helps students really focus on their papers’ main ideas and that it helps their audience formulate friendly questions. By the time our students arrive at the Convention, they are confident and eager, and they return to campus ready to inspire next year’s attendees.

A Brush with a Literary Titan



Victoria Gaydosik
Former Southwestern Regent
Southwestern Oklahoma State University

The Southwestern Region of Sigma Tau Delta hosted a regional conference on the theme “Faces of the West” in Archer City, TX, on November 4th and 5th, 2011. Don’t glance at a map to find Archer City: you’ll need to drill deeply into Google Maps before it even pops up. But Archer City has more than its fair share of literary fame for a town of its size. It is the home town of the noted novelist Larry McMurtry, and the town itself provided the setting for, and was featured in the films of, *The Last Picture Show* and *Texasville*. Larry McMurtry still lives in Archer City and owns one of the largest used bookstores in the U.S., Booked Up. This tiny town south of Wichita Falls, TX, has far more books than people: the bookstore sprawls across four buildings around the courthouse square, and book-lovers from all parts of the world prowl its aisles and browse its shelves. Where else would English majors want to go for a cozy regional conference?

As regent for the Southwestern Region at the time, I made several calls to Archer City representatives, and among those calls was one to Booked Up to inquire as to whether the conference could hold a reading or a break-out session in the bookstore proper. The manager herself answered the phone, and I presented my request. “Just a minute,” she said, “I’ll ask Larry.” I could hear a muffled exchange of voices, and then the manager came back on the line with her regrets; the bookstore did not have a suitable space for a meeting. But while I had waited for her to come back on the line, the busy wheels in my brain were spinning crazily! How many Larrys could there be in Booked Up at any particular time? And how many of them would be making such an *authoritative* and *proprietary* decision? I pictured the young woman and the famous novelist seated in the cluttered office of the main building working on invoices and purchase orders, and when I asked the manager, in hushed tones, “Was the Larry you just talked to *Larry McMurtry*?” she answered in the affirmative and my little heart skipped a beat.

In a flash, I screwed my courage to the sticking point and said, “If you wouldn’t mind, could you ask him if he would like to address a small gathering of English majors—without financial remuneration, of course—on November 4th or 5th on any topic of interest to him?” She didn’t mind, and for about a half minute I dared to hope that I would hear another affirmative answer. But alas! Her news, when she came back on the line, was negative. On *that* date, Larry would be accepting an award in Baltimore, she told me. Not for the first time in my life, numbers were my downfall. If only I had uttered the right number, perhaps I could have scored a conference organizer’s dream speaker engagement: the biggest possible literary name for the smallest imaginable gathering at the lowest possible cost. But it was not to be.



Later, I made a visit to Archer City with the then Southwestern Student Representative, Jolie Hicks, so we could tour the town’s amenities. It didn’t take long. In the parlor of The Lonesome Dove Inn, a charming bed and breakfast in which the décor of every room reflects the theme of a different novel by Larry McMurtry, the owner allowed me to hold the Oscar Larry McMurtry won for the screenplay adaptation for *Brokeback Mountain*. On the other side of the room, another award glittered: was that a Golden Globe? An Emmy? And what material form might the Pulitzer Prize for *Lonesome Dove* take? Jolie snapped a picture of me and the Oscar, and we quickly switched places so she could also be immortalized with the little gold man brought to Archer City by a writer’s gift.

And that was our brush with a literary titan.

Jolie Hicks, Former Southwestern SR, holds Larry McMurtry’s Oscar

Building a Better World with Books

Becky Cressy
Alpha Kappa Pi Chapter
Plymouth State University, NH



My name is Becky Cressy, and I was the Better World Books/Sigma Tau Delta Summer Intern for 2011. I am currently a senior at Plymouth State University (PSU), in Plymouth, NH, and I have lived in New Hampshire all of my life. At PSU, I am an English Major, with an option in Teacher Certification in grades 5-12, and I am also pursuing minors in both Religious Studies and Women's Studies. When I am not in class at PSU, I am the student employee for the Women's Studies Council, a Peer Educator and office worker at the holistic health "Wellness Center," and the Vice President of PSU's Sigma Tau Delta chapter. PSU has a "Freshman Abroad" program, and so I spent my first semester of my freshman year studying at Limerick University in Limerick, Ireland. I am the youngest of five children, and my favorite book is *The Giver* by Lois Lowry.

When I joined Sigma Tau Delta in the spring of 2010, I had no idea that a year later I would find myself as an intern for **Better World Books** (BWB), in Alpharetta, GA. One of the larger projects our chapter has worked on over the past two years has been running book drives through Better World Books, a partner of Sigma Tau Delta. Working on my first BWB book drive with Sigma Tau Delta helped me to see that being in an academic honor society isn't just about doing well in your field of study—it's about helping others to understand and experience the joy and passion you have, as well. Through our book drives with Better World Books, we are able to help bring the joy of literacy to those who may have never had the chance to experience it before, while helping our school to be more sustainable. As a future English teacher, it only makes sense that my membership in Sigma Tau Delta should be about bringing the joy of reading to others.

However, the biggest opportunity by far has been my six-week internship with Better World Books. After our chapter finished

our second book drive, our contact at BWB told me about a cool opportunity for Sigma Tau Delta members. As a member of the English Honor Society, I was invited to apply for a summer internship offered by BWB at their Alpharetta office. In addition to working on research projects in the office, I met with the managers and VPs of several departments within BWB, as well as the CEO of the company, David Murphy. Spending time with these people has helped me to understand the company better, and see that it's truly the individuals and how much they care about the cause that makes BWB so unique. While I've learned a ton within the office, I've had some special opportunities outside of the office as well. For example, I traveled to Alabama for the first time, went to my first Atlanta Braves game, and helped out with the Amplifying Education book drive with the band Dispatch!

As I look back on my internship, I know that it was a meaningful experience. At BWB, I was constantly reminded that my thoughts and actions are meaningful. While some college students spend their internships making copies and delivering coffee, I never had to question whether I was a valued member of the team, and that the research I conducted was important to the company and to the better world they are striving to create. Everyone at BWB made a huge effort to reach out and welcome me into the office, while encouraging me to speak up and ask questions often. This experience has not only given me insight into the world of social enterprise and good business, but has also shown me that every single person involved in that business should be valued and encouraged. Working with BWB as both an intern and a book driver has given me many wonderful opportunities to learn and grow, and I'd like to thank both Better World Books and Sigma Tau Delta for giving me the chance to participate in this amazing internship!

2013 ΣΤΔ International Convention



A variation on a riddle: In the Sigma Tau Delta world, what is black and white and read all over? Answer: A book, of course! And that leads us to the theme of the 2013 Sigma Tau Delta Convention: *Open Book*. Riddle me this: Is that a command to read? A call to literacy? A description of an object? An assertion of transparency? A statement against censorship? All of these? Join us on March 20-23, 2013 at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower in Portland, Oregon, to think, talk, listen, and write about all things booklike. The common reader for 2013 is the witty and smart collection of essays about the love of words and reading and books: Anne Fadiman's *Ex Libris: Confessions of a Common Reader*. Proposals for the convention are due in November; visit www.english.org/sigmatd/conventions if you're interested in joining us in Portland.

The Great (Southern) American Novel Writing Contest



The Southern Region Congratulates Emerging Novelists

Sarah Fredericks
Former Southern SR
Auburn University-Montgomery, AL

During the fall of 2010, the Southern Region launched its first annual Great (Southern) American Novel Writing Contest. Hosted by the Omicron Psi chapter at Auburn University Montgomery, the contest invited active Sigma Tau Delta members throughout the Southern Region to send in manuscripts of at least 50,000 words. After careful review, the top two novelists were invited to read selections of their works at a special panel at the International Convention in Pittsburgh. Before the readings at the panel, Omicron Psi Chapter Sponsor Michel Aaij and outgoing Southern SR Sarah Fredericks spoke about the creation of the contest and encouraged other regions to adopt similar programs.

GRAND PRIZE WINNER: Andrew Wellman, from the Alpha Rho Beta chapter at the University of South Florida-Sarasota, received first place for his novel, *Alice*. Southern Regent Roger Stanley presented Andrew with a check for \$500 on behalf of the Southern Region. Andrew's manuscript was also submitted for possible publication.

RUNNER-UP: Susan Wright from Campbellsville, KY, read a selected passage from her novel, *The Scrolls of Magick*, and was awarded \$250 dollars for her literary excellence.

In the fall of 2011, Sigma Tau Delta members from all across the South were invited to participate in the second annual Great (Southern) American Novel Writing Contest, confirming this event's status as a Sigma Tau Deltan tradition.

For more information on the contest or winners, contact Dr. Michel Aaij at maaij1@aum.edu.



Southern Regent Roger Stanley (left) congratulates Grand Prize Winner Andrew Wellman (right)



Runner-Up Susan Wright reads a passage from her novel at the 2011 Convention in Pittsburgh

2012 Sigma Tau Delta Awards and Scholarships Winners

Congratulations to the Sigma Tau Delta members and chapters whose achievements were recognized at the 2012 Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana! Full listings of those who earned scholarships and awards can be found on the Sigma Tau Delta website:

Scholarship and Award Winners
Convention Award Winners

Interested in the funding offered by Sigma Tau Delta? A variety of scholarships, awards, internships, and grants are available for 2013; consider **applying** for one yourself!

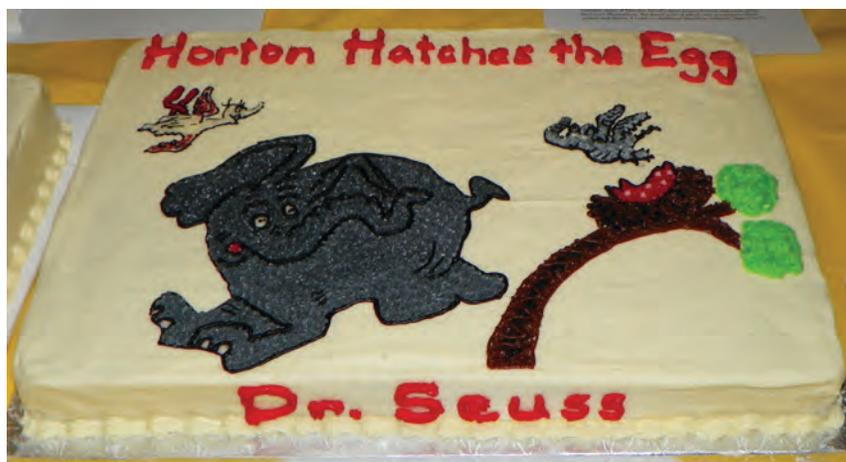
Eat Your Cake and Read It, Too



MeKoi Scott
Former Southern SR
Auburn University-Montgomery, AL

Last spring on April 23—Shakespeare’s birthday—Faulkner University in Montgomery, AL, hosted their first edible book contest. Sponsored by the university’s Sigma Tau Delta Chapter, Alpha Iota Alpha, The Incredible, Edible Book Bash invited book lovers and fans of baking to create cakes and other foods that integrated literary inspiration with culinary delight. Alpha Iota Alpha chapter sponsor Jonathan Wright encouraged contestants to satisfy “readers” (readers + eaters) in a way that would “increase their ‘appetite’ for good books, whether they be on the librarian or the baker’s cart.” The many entries on display at Faulkner’s Rotunda Auditorium titillated the senses as well as the mind.

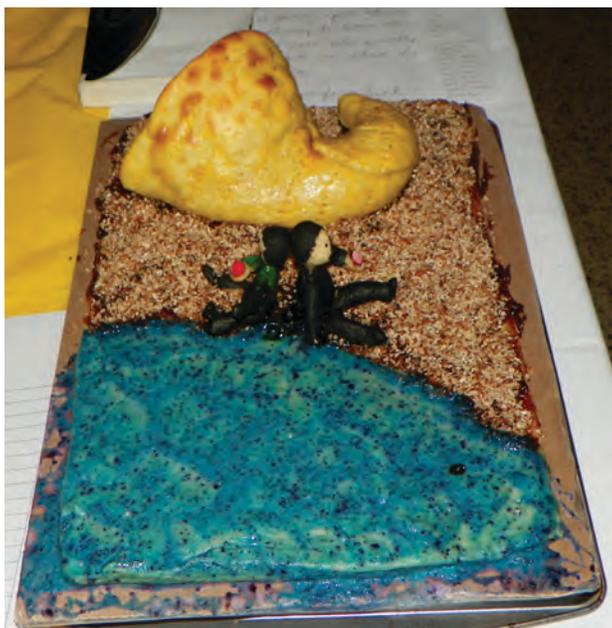
Members from our chapter at Auburn University Montgomery, which is just a couple miles away from Faulkner, were invited to judge. Sarah Fredericks and I found it a pleasure to judge—and later eat—the cakes. After the cakes were judged, they were auctioned off to the highest bidder, and the proceeds were donated to World Vision’s tsunami relief efforts in Japan. Because of this, the contest was not only a fun activity and a great opportunity for the Alpha Iota Alpha and Omicron Psi chapters to collaborate with each other, but also a chance for us to help others. Hopefully, The Incredible, Edible Book Bash will become an annual event.



Dr. Seuss’s *Horton Hatches the Egg*



Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*



Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games*



Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Great Illustrations from Literature

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Illustrations for Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, 1862



"Buy from us with @ golden curl"

"Buy from Us with a Golden Curl"

Wood engraving, 1862

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
 "Good folk, I have no coin;
 To take were to purloin:
 I have no copper in my purse,
 I have no silver either,
 And all my gold is on the furze
 That shakes in windy weather
 Above the rusty heather."
 "You have much gold upon your head,"
 They answered altogether:
 "Buy from us with a golden curl."
 - Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) illustrated the original edition of *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, which was written by his sister, Christina Rossetti (1830-1894). Rather than simply replicating his sister's words in visual form, Rossetti added his own creative touches as he interpreted the poems. For example, in "Buy from Us with a Golden Curl," Lizzie's hair is shaded as if it were dark rather than golden, presumably to better contrast with the golden lock Laura is selling to the goblin men. Another discrepancy occurs in Rossetti's illustration "Golden Head by Golden Head": four goblin men carrying baskets of fruit can be seen in the moon. Although this is not mentioned in the poem, by adding the goblin figures Rossetti emphasizes the power they now hold over Lizzie. These and other deviations from his sister's words suggest that Rossetti viewed his illustrations as neither stand-alone works nor as superfluous additions to the text, but rather as an opportunity to both mirror and enhance the poem's message.



"Golden Head by Golden Head"

Wood engraving, 1862

Golden head by golden head,
 Like two pigeons in one nest
 Folded in each other's wings,
 They lay down, in their curtained bed:
 Like two blossoms on one stem,
 Like two flakes of new-fallen snow,
 Like two wands of ivory
 Tipped with gold for awful kings.
 Moon and stars beamed in at them,
 Wind sang to them lullaby,
 Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
 Not a bat flapped to and fro
 Round their rest:
 Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
 Locked together in one nest.
 - Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"

Images scanned by George P. Landow; images and excerpts from "Goblin Market" courtesy of the [Victorian Web](#)

I'm an English Major: Now What?

It's a conversation most English majors have had at least once before:
Long-lost friend/well-intentioned relative: What are you going to school for?
You (cautiously): English.
Friend/Relative: So you want to teach?
If you do want to teach, the conversation can comfortably stop there. If you don't, though, you find yourself suddenly employing lots of "um"s and "ah"s and perhaps even some unintelligible muttering.

Hannah Schmitt
Alpha Tau Chapter
St. Norbert College, WI



Sound familiar? English majors are often criticized for the perceived impracticality of their degree. Despite this criticism, though, (and the strange idea that English majors are only good for teaching high schoolers) the *Princeton Review* lists English as the sixth most popular degree for undergraduates.

Part of the misunderstanding about English degrees stems from the kind of education an English major actually receives. Generally speaking, English majors receive skill training, not job training. While there are drawbacks to this approach, the benefit is that English majors are able to apply their skills to multiple fields. Most professions require some degree of on-the-job training. Though the kinds of jobs that are available will change, the skills one needs to succeed in the job market typically do not.

What's more, the skills English majors learn are skills employers value. According to a *2009 survey by Hart Research Associates*, employers wished their employees had received more training in communication, critical thinking, business ethics, collaboration, and creativity during college. In short, the employers who participated in this survey wanted their employees to have a better understanding of the skills mastered by English majors. English majors are trained to write clearly, creatively, and ethically.

Even if one does not choose to enter into the job market immediately after graduation, a degree in English expands the possibilities of graduate-level education. While one may automatically assume that all English majors who engage in post-baccalaureate degree programs take the GRE and go on to conduct graduate work in English, they actually go into a variety of fields. According to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences's website, *Humanities Indicators*, people who major in an area of the humanities tend to score competitively on the LSAT, MCAT, and GMAT, allowing them to go on to study law, medicine, and business.

Not every benefit to being an English major is quantifiable, though. As advocates of English are quick to point out, most English majors select their field of study because it's something they enjoy, not because they expect it to be profitable. An English degree is as much about passion and perseverance as it is about playwrights or poetry. English majors can become lawyers, doctors, or politicians. They can enter the worlds of journalism, business, or advertising. They can, in fact, succeed in virtually any field or profession. Ultimately, the question isn't what can English majors do with their degree, but rather what *can't* they do.

Interested in Submitting to the 2013 Sigma Tau Delta Journals?

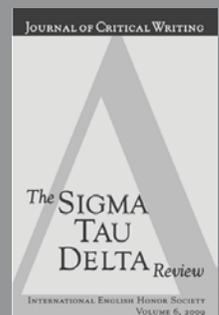
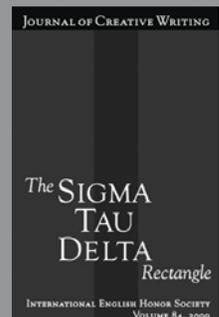
Submissions for the 2013 journals will be accepted between April 9 and May 14, 2012.

Who can submit? All currently-enrolled undergraduate and graduate members of active Sigma Tau Delta chapters are invited to submit their work to *The Sigma Tau Delta Review* and *The Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle*. Chapter sponsors, faculty members, alumni (including members of the Alumni Epsilon chapter), and honorary members are not eligible to submit. Contributors who win overall awards will receive monetary prizes as well as publication.

- *The Sigma Tau Delta Review* is an annual journal of critical writing that publishes critical essays on literature, essays on rhetoric and composition, and essays devoted to pedagogical issues.
- *The Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle* is an annual journal of creative writing that publishes poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction.

For more information about the journals, including instructions for online submissions, visit:

<http://www.english.org/sigmatd/publications>





Suzanne Berne

Judge of the 2012 Writing Awards

Suzanne Berne is the author of three novels and a book of nonfiction. Her first novel, *A Crime in the Neighborhood* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1997) won Great Britain's Orange Prize. Her other novels are *A Perfect Arrangement* and *The Ghost at the Table*; her most recent book is *Missing Lucile, Memories of a Grandmother I Never Knew*. She has written for numerous magazines and newspapers, including *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Ploughshares*, and *The London Sunday Times*. Berne is the judge for the 2012 Sigma Tau Delta journals and has generously allowed us to publish this excerpt from *Missing Lucile*.

Excerpt from *Missing Lucile*

One afternoon in the summer of 2005, while I was visiting my mother at her house on Cape Cod, she handed me a tin box embossed with Victorian-style cupids that had once held a fruitcake. "Here," she said. "I found this at the back of a shelf when I was going through boxes in the garage. I think it belongs to you."

She was wearing a bathing suit while cleaning out the garage, a blue-flowered affair; my mother is in her seventies and her confidence in bathing suits is still remarkable. I should mention that she was very beautiful when my father met her in the office of my uncle's advertising agency, where she was the secretary. So beautiful that during their honeymoon at the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Marlon Brando, who was staying there, too, while he filmed *Mutiny on the Bounty*, saw her on the beach building a sand castle and offered to help. My father was reading in a beach chair. My mother and Marlon Brando built their sand castle and chatted for a bit; then he asked if she'd like to take a shower with him, at which point my father prudently put down his book and got out of his beach chair.

So I was complimenting my mother on her bathing suit that afternoon in the garage a few summers ago, and not really looking at what she was handing me, until I got back inside the house. It was a tin manufactured in western Germany, made to look old, but not old, and undoubtedly saved for the cupids. I'd had it in my room all through adolescence, though I rarely opened its hinged lid. Still, I recall considering that fruitcake tin one of my significant possessions. In it I had placed a few odds and ends I'd taken away with me from my grandfather's attic after he died in 1973, items that I'd left behind when I moved out of my mother's house a year after she and my father divorced. Until that afternoon when I lifted the lid and caught a whiff of cork, I had not thought of my grandfather's attic in over twenty years.

2012 Writing Awards for *The Sigma Tau Delta Review* and *The Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle*

Judson Q. Owen Award for Best Piece Overall
Wil Norton

"The Collective Unconscious, Zen Buddhism, and Zeami's *Atsumori*:
Aesthetics as a Means of Transcending the Self"

Frederic Fadner Critical Essay Award
Wil Norton

"The Collective Unconscious, Zen Buddhism, and Zeami's *Atsumori*:
Aesthetics as a Means of Transcending the Self"

Eleanor B. North Poetry Award
Ainsley Kelly
"Firestorm"

Herbert Hughes Short Fiction Award
Sarah Tarkany
"One Hundred"

Elizabeth Holtz Creative Nonfiction Award
Margaret O'Brien
"Sweet Water"



The International English Honor Society

Sincerity • Truth • Design

A 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.

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