



Sigma Tau Delta

Fall 2006

THE PITTSBURGH FORECAST: MOSTLY SUNNY WITH A CHANCE OF BRILLIANCE

Kevin Stemmler, Convention Co-Chair, Clarion University, PA ■ ■ ■



Pittsburgh's weather can be unpredictable at the end of March, but we're never a "fair weather" city. Whether convention attendees will experience a lingering trace of snow flurries, an early batch of spring warmth, or premature April showers, I cannot forecast. Even with Punxsutawney Phil, the national weather predictor, just two hours away, Pittsburgh weather is subject to change. One thing that remains constant, though, is Pittsburgh's ability to shine in any weather.

Many of you know Pittsburgh as the home to some amazing sports teams and sports legends, including the five time Super Bowl winning Steelers, Mario Lemieux and the Penguins, Roberto Clemente and the Pirates (or, more recently, the record setting Freddy Sanchez), but many people do not know about Pittsburgh's rich cultural history. Among the literary legends who walked our streets are August Wilson, Gertrude Stein, Rachel Carson, Annie Dillard, Gerald Stern, and Michael Chabon. Many credit the Pittsburgh nightclubs for the success of jazz, especially since the city produced musical giants like George Benson, Mary Lou Williams, and Billy Strayhorn, but Pittsburgh is also the birthplace of Stephen Foster, Gene Kelly, Perry Como, and Bobby Vinton. We've also produced our share of Broadway and Hollywood talent, including director Rob Marshall and his choreographer/director sister Kathleen Marshall, George Romero, Jeff Goldblum, and Michael Keaton. Did I mention Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, and Mary Cassatt? All of them spent some portion of their formative years in our city. Perhaps most important in terms of shaping many of our lives, Fred Rogers made Pittsburgh his and everyone's neighborhood.

Remember that line from *To Kill a Mockingbird*, when we're told not to judge a person until we've walked around in his shoes? I like to think I applied that advice to Mister Rogers, too. Having walked around Pittsburgh in his sweater for many years, I've come to embrace my cultural heritage. To this day, Pittsburgh remains culturally active. Our universities and colleges produce many of the world's leading stage and screen actors, prize-winning writers, and social activists. These are among the many reasons I invited Sigma Tau Delta to experience its own confluence in our city.

Having worked with Sigma Tau Delta on the national level for the past seven years, I understand the commitment the organization makes to its membership, providing meaningful and valuable opportunities to share knowledge, celebrate literacy, and serve the profession. I am confident that your visit to Pittsburgh will allow you to experience all of the above.

Our featured speakers include Sharon Olds, David Rakoff, and Jim Daniels. Sigma Tau Delta's commitment to providing its members access to established and emerging writers is evident in this roster. We will also provide workshop opportunities to explore student and faculty leadership and professions in the field of English, as well as informal discussions with writers. Most of all, the convention provides a showcase for highlighting student achievement in literature and writing. By presenting papers and serving on panels, our members have the chance to participate in an on-going, yearly discussion of the values of an English education. Invoking Andy Warhol's famous adage, each presenter will have his or her own "fifteen minutes of fame," a chance to demonstrate individual scholarship and talent. I predict there will be many brilliant moments.

The convention co-chairs selected *Confluence* as the theme for this year's gathering because of the many applicable definitions it provides. For me, personally, it is a word that embodies the spirit of my city. Our coming together, joining in a celebration of the literary arts, is an opportunity to continue the work that makes our society valuable.

confluence

n 1: a coming or flowing together, meeting, or gathering at one point
2: a flowing together of two or more streams
3: the combined stream formed by conjunction, e.g., the Ohio river formed by the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers; "the lost generation" formed by American expatriates in post World War I Europe; the Bloomsbury group; Andy Warhol's Factory; the 2007 international convention formed by the members of Sigma Tau Delta and the city of Pittsburgh.

CONTENTS

PAGE 2

- ◆ President's Corner
- ◆ 2007 Convention
Speaker: Sharon Olds

PAGE 3

- ◆ 2007 Convention
Speakers (cont.)
David Rakoff
Jim Daniels
- ◆ Walking with
Shakespeare: Ryan Fletcher

PAGE 4

- ◆ For the Love of Books:
Branda Maholtz
- ◆ Andy Warhol on STD?

PAGE 5

- ◆ Why I Write: Deborah Dessaso
- ◆ Opportunities and
Deadlines

PAGE 6

- ◆ Scholarship and
Award Winners
- ◆ 2006-2007 Writing
Awards

PAGE 7

- ◆ Leadership Workshop
- ◆ All About Books
- ◆ Poem by Jim Daniels

PAGE 8

- ◆ The Common
Reader: *Strike Sparks*
- ◆ Historian's Reminder

Peter A. Scholl, Luther College, IA



One of the most important reasons why I wanted to organize a ΣΤΔ chapter where I teach, Luther College, had to do with my experience in study abroad.

My wife, Diane Scholl, is also an English professor, and in 1987-88 our family lived in Nottingham, England, where Diane and I were resident directors of Luther's Nottingham Study Centre. That year seventeen students lived in an old duplex near our small house. Our family and the students took turns cooking and eating collectively every evening. We were together a lot since Diane and I taught two of their courses, acted as advisors, lead frequent field trips, supervised internships, and went through all sorts of ups and downs over the school year.

Our little Nottingham group became a community of learning and friendship unlike anything I'd previously experienced in classroom teaching. Meeting the students so often outside the classroom led to strong ties and a richer teaching and learning environment. About a dozen or more of the original group came to a tenth year anniversary some years ago—accompanied by babies, partners, spouses—and we continue to stay in touch.

I thought that a ΣΤΔ chapter could provide similar meeting points and experiences, on a more limited scale. A chapter could share some meals, have some parties, meet in homes and other places outside the classroom. And so we started up a chapter in the first years of the nineties.

But it wasn't until 1995 that we tried the first ΣΤΔ Regional Conference. It was a real turning point.

In fall 1995, the chapter president and another student asked if we could attend a Midwest Regional Conference sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. I was snowed under with work, but told them they should get a college car and drive themselves—about five hours to the east. They were up for it, but learned they needed a teacher to drive the car. Reluctantly, I said I'd do it.

Things didn't start so well, however. Rushing to get off, I left my overnight bag in the trunk of my own car when switching to the college vehicle. Three hours down the road it was raining, foggy, and dark when we reached the interstate highways just past Madison, Wisconsin. No one noticed when we slipped by the exit towards Milwaukee and Lake Michigan and headed off north instead of east—and continued that way some forty minutes or so before we started seeing signs for places that definitely were nowhere near UWP.

It must have been 9:30 or so by the time we finally found the campus—a lot of empty parking lots and lonely sidewalks, as this is a largely commuter school. We found the union—almost deserted—and followed some signs upstairs. And behold! There was a noisy party going on, complete with heavy hors d'oeuvres (we were starving after driving about seven hours through the rain), a lot of “non-trad” ΣΤΔ folks, and a loud and bawdy Irish music group. There to greet us, wearing a ΣΤΔ medallion with his blazer, was the beaming UWP sponsor, Professor Andrew McLean. Things were definitely looking up.

Even though I had no change of clothes that weekend, had to buy my toothbrush and some shaving supplies at a gas station, and got a speeding ticket on the way home, it was a wonderful weekend. My students were nervous and exited but thrilled to have an audience and some discussion of their poetry in their breakout sessions. The banquet speaker was Wisconsin Public Radio's Jean Faraka, host of a stimulating interview show called *Here on Earth*, who recalled growing up Italian-American and spoke of the glories and benefits of her English major.

The UWP students, on the whole, were not “traditional college age,” and the way they talked about their papers and their academic interests impressed us tremendously. These were people with jobs and families who were excited about writing papers! We also heard talk about the spring Convention in Albuquerque, and I immediately knew that this was something we had to go for.

And we did. Five Luther students attended that 1996 convention and two of them tied with each other, winning an award for the best critical essay read in the sessions.

I've been to every convention since, our chapter hosted its own regional in 2000, and with five of my students, I am traveling to the Midwest Regional at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire a few weeks from this writing.

The student chapter president who got me to attend my first regional conference went on to earn her MFA, came back to teach for a year with us at Luther, and continues to work as a writer. Moral: go to your nearest regional conference and plan to attend the International Convention in Pittsburgh!



2007 Convention Speakers

SHARON OLDS



Sharon Olds probably needs no introduction. Michael Ondaatje contends that her poetry is “pure fire in the hands,” and David Leavitt claims that her work is “remarkable for its candor, its eroticism, and its power to move.” Olds is the author of eight volumes of poetry, including

Satan Says (1980), San Francisco Poetry Center Award; *The Dead and the Living* (1983), Lamont Poetry Selection and winner of the National Book Critics' Circle Award; *The Gold Cell* (1987); *The*

Father (1992); *The Wellspring* (1995); *Blood, Tin, Straw* (1999); and *Strike Sparks: Selected Poems 1980-2002*. *Strike Sparks* is Sigma Tau Delta's Common Reader for 2007.

Olds was born in San Francisco, studied at Stanford University, and received a PhD in English from Columbia. She lives in New York City and teaches graduate poetry workshops at New York University and helps run workshops at a state hospital for the severely disabled. Her numerous honors include a National Endowment for the Arts grant, a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and she was named New York Poet Laureate in 1998.

2007 Convention Speakers, cont.

DAVID RAKOFF



"I do not go outdoors. Not more than I have to. As far as I'm concerned, the whole point of living in New York City is indoors. You want greenery? Order the spinach." So begins David Rakoff's essay "In New England Everyone Calls You Dave" from *Fraud* (2001), a collection of

humorous essays that, according to the book jacket, "raises self-deprecation to an art form." *Publishers Weekly* writes that Rakoff "showcases his rapier wit, slashing in all directions with slice-of-life insights and cutting remarks, sometimes nicking himself . . . in his dexterous duello with the American experience. Born Canadian, Rakoff's latest work is *Don't Get Too Comfortable: The Indignities of Coach Class, the Torments of Low Thread Count, the Never-Ending Quest for Artisanal Olive Oil, and Other First World Problems* (2005). The title says it all! Rakoff is a regular contributor-writer to *The New York Times Magazine* and *GQ*, and he is often featured on Public Radio International's *This American Life*. Ira Glass, host of *This American Life*, describes Rakoff as follows: "Like a whore with a heart of gold, David Rakoff says all the nasty things we want to hear and then reveals that, actually, it's all about love." Tough, brutal, and hilarious love, one might add.

JIM DANIELS



Jim Daniels has been called an "urban poet" influenced by the blue-collar factory workers in his hometown of Detroit. Carolyn Forché writes that his poems "hiss and steam with the streets' vibrant hardness, the effort to look around the corner, pain in the eyes after a long day's work." Daniels has written nine books of poems, including *Show and Tell: New and Selected Poems* (2003), which was a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize, and *Street* (2005), poems written in response to photographs by Charlee Brodsky. But Daniels doesn't stop there: *Detroit Tales* (2003), a collection of short stories, received a bronze medal in short fiction from the ForeWord Book of the Year awards. Another collection of stories, *Mr. Pleasant*, will appear from

Michigan State University Press in 2007. He has also written and produced two independent films—*Dumpster* (2006) and *No Pets* (1994)—and his one-act play, *Heart of Hearts*, was produced in 1998 at the 13th Street Repertory Theater in New York. Daniels is the Thomas Stockman Baker Professor of English and director of the creative writing program at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

Please see a sample of Daniels's work from Street on page 7 of this newsletter.

Walking with Shakespeare: A Study Abroad Experience

Ryan Fletcher, University of Central Oklahoma, Student Advisor



Stepping off the bus, I approached Anne Hathaway's Cottage in Stratford. I was barely able to sleep the night before because of my excitement about seeing so much associated with Shakespeare the following day. When I finally arrived, beautiful English gardens surrounded the cottage, and a small walkway led me to the front door. Everything I had

previously learned about Shakespeare was about to become more real than ever.

For the most part, Stratford is a quaint little town that is growing because of its appeal as an English hamlet. And on that particular day, I was not only able to see Anne Hathaway's Cottage, but Shakespeare's birthplace and the Holy Trinity Church where Shakespeare was baptized and buried as well.

To study abroad simply means to immerse oneself in a particular culture. While studying literature as English majors, students become concerned at times with only the words on the page. But if one is to visit another country, one more readily recognizes the themes and surroundings of a specific novel, play, or poem. For instance, seeing the places of Virginia Woolf's famous character, Clarissa Dalloway, in London can only enhance one's experience in reading and understanding the novel. Also, to walk in the footsteps of Robert Langdon in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* creates a vicarious experience that enhances the novel.

The particular study tour I was a part of was directed towards the life of King Arthur; we explored the area around London and Bath in England and Edinburgh, Scotland. The many museums and castles were also a treat to the eye. More specifically, standing in front of paintings like Caravaggio's *Last Supper* in the National Gallery in London was a surreal experience, and to climb to the top of Tintagel Castle, which overlooks the Atlantic Ocean, was also a moment to be treasured.

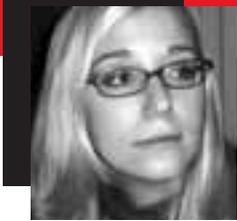
Some of the literary experiences included time spent at Tintern Abbey, Dover Beach, and Canterbury Cathedral. During each of these visits, the lines from well-known works of literature were recited by students who were attending the study tour. We heard from William Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

The relationships forged during this time also made the trip that much more worthwhile. In traveling and spending time together, friendships were made and colleagues were found who share and enjoy the study of English.

Study tours give life and meaning to the study of literature, so when the opportunity arises, take a trip and open yourself to a whole new world of understanding.

For the Love of Books

Branda C. Maholtz, Editorial Assistant at Penguin, USA



The most common question I encounter from students is this: How did you become an editor? It's as if there's some secret password to get into this ultra exclusive society. There are so many

talented English majors, but even I, as a student, never considered being an editor as an option. I felt like my options were very limited; although appealing to me because of my love of books, they were not *quite right*. Instead, I decided that I either needed to write a best-selling book of poetry (still working on that goal) or become a teacher (which I did for a little while).

Editors are glamorized, like many things, in the media—and we book lovers are especially vulnerable to this fantasy of living in New York and reading books for a living. Apparently no one really considers this a *real* option. Why not? My simple answer is that not many people stop and think about how a book is not only physically made but how it ends up on the best-seller list, as required reading for your literature class, or as some secret favorite in your own collection. More so, I'm sure many of you are wondering what an editor actually does.

The next time you're in a book store take a moment and think about how that book actually got to the shelf. Take any book and *really* look at it. What publisher is it from? What edition is it? What's the trim size? Look at the descriptive copy on the back—(who writes this stuff?). Who designs the cover? Now, look back at where you pulled the book from—was it spine-out or front-out? Now the real question: Are you ready to buy it?

We all have that semi-jealous sensation when we know we've read something fantastic and we wish we had written it ourselves. We all share one basic thing—we have some sick and beautiful fascination with books. We all love to pick them up and to smell them, to feel their pages as we turn to devour the contents.

For the love of books, we can go into a bookstore with the purpose of buying just one title, but then end up with two, three, four, or more in our arms as we approach the checkout counter, knowing all too well that more would have been purchased if only we didn't keep dropping and fumbling with the ones already as we try to pull another find off the shelf. (Note to self: send letter to

the sales team and to chain bookstores to suggest shopping bags or baskets for easier indulgent purchases.) And even though we meant only to buy one book because we still have a stack of still-to-be-read books at home, we all can justify spending more than our allowance.

How about when we see some stranger reading a book we've read? For the love of books and those of our kind, we approach, we interrupt his or her private reading space, and we ask what he or she thinks. Most of the time, we get funny looks and we slink away with our head hung low thinking to ourselves, "But... I love the part where..."—but sometimes we get a reader who is just as passionate as we are and we make friends.

How about my own personal dysfunction for the love of books: I buy books in multiples because I want all my friends to love the same books that I love. I buy one for myself. I buy one to lend. And if the book is really something spectacular—I buy another to have signed by the author (thank you Dr. Kevin Stemmler for adding that little habit to my book neurosis). And, yes, sometimes I buy another because I admittedly carry favorites around until they nearly fall apart—I dog-ear, I write in the margins, I read in the tub, I read while on lunch break...and you just can't have a waterlogged, crumbed up, broken spine book on your shelf in case someone wants to look at your collection.

If you find yourself laughing or nodding at these descriptions, you may be best suited for a career in publishing. If you feel a little lost in your final years as an English major, maybe you need another option. How many of you are only applying to graduate school because you still aren't quite sure what to do? There are career choices that involve books and reading and writing that aren't limited to the classroom. And if you show up at the spring conference in Pittsburgh (my hometown!), you might just find me giving a talk about careers in publishing. You will find me telling you about different types of editors and how to pursue their line of work. And I will give you the secret passwords: *for the love of books*.

Branda Maholtz was a member of the Rho Iota chapter of Sigma Tau Delta at Clarion University, PA.

Andy Warhol on STD? ■ ■ ■

Famous Quotations

"I have Social Disease. I have to go out every night. If I stay home one night I start spreading rumors to my dogs."

It's the place where my prediction from the sixties finally came true: "In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes." I'm bored with that line. I never use it anymore. My new line is, "In fifteen minutes everybody will be famous."

Andy Warhol on Studio 54



Deborah A Dessaso



Move over, Joan Didion, while I join you and George Orwell in yet another essay about why writers write.

Whoever said that writing was one of the last, great, free activities was absolutely right. Writing frees me from the terror of my tongue which usually is at its worst when I'm trying to make a point. And while it may be true that talk is cheap, writing is risky business—which is probably why people often say, "Be careful what you commit to writing." When you write, people know you're serious, you're not jiving around, you're in it for the long haul, you're strictly business.

Joan, you call writing an act of bullying. And like most bullying, writing can be a cowardly act. What better place to hide than behind a piece of writing while taking potshots at people's characters, motivations, lifestyles (and even dress styles)? And if you throw in a few citations, you're labeled an "expert," even though your information may be incomplete, if not downright inaccurate. What's important is that you wrote it down. That's your ground of credibility.

I wrote my first poem in sixth grade. We were asked to write an original poem, and while I don't remember any of it, I do remember that one of my classmates tried to pass off the poem "Who Has Seen the Wind?" as his own and got into trouble. I wrote my first essay in junior high school when we were asked to write a descriptive paper. I believe I described a sunset. I don't remember any of it either, but whatever I wrote impressed the teacher, and she read it to the class. I was first published in high school when my English teacher had several of my poems included in an anthology.

My writing always astounds me. Often, after writing something, I'll ask myself, "What was my part in the process?" Or, ala Steve Urkel, I'd ask: "Did I do that???" Either way, I always end up

feeling like a conduit.

So why *do* I write? Frankly, I've been fascinated with words since I was three years old and would sit on my father's knee as he read the newspaper and, to his amazement, read to him the weather forecast.

When my parents purchased a set of encyclopedias, my love of words lured me to children's books, my favorite of which was *Treasure Island*. I still remember the phrase "thundering apoplexy," young Jim Hawkins's vow that "oxen and wainrope will never again bring me to that accursed island," and the book's last words—squawked by Long John Silver's parrot—that rang in Jim's ears whenever the pounding surf would wake him in the middle of the night: "Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!"

I write because writing lets me talk unchallenged and uninterrupted. I can assume any persona I like and blab about things I wouldn't dare say otherwise—all without being cut off or ignored. I can be brazen, preachy, arrogant, indignant. I can frame questions and pose solutions, join a debate and choose sides, point fingers and righteously accuse. I can scoff at leaders and snub the powerful and none of them can stop me. I can control my world.

So there.

Deborah Dessaso is a member of Alpha Epsilon Rho's alumni chapter, Alumni Delta. Her essays and poems have appeared in the national press and several literary magazines. She holds a BS in Business Administration from Southeastern University and a MA in English Composition and Rhetoric from the University of the District of Columbia.

OPPORTUNITIES AND DEADLINES

. November 2006 .

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|-------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| November 30 | Chapter Website Awards: Individual Chapter |
| November 30 | Convention Call for Papers Deadline |
| November 30 | Isabel Sparks President's Awards |
| November 30 | Elaine W. Hughes Outstanding Sponsor Award |

. January 2007 .

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|------------|-------------------------------|
| January 30 | Regnery Internships (Round 3) |
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. February 2007 .

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| February 15 | Regents' Common Reader Awards |
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. March 2007 .

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| March 30 | Study Abroad Scholarships (Round 2) |
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. April 2007 .

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| April 30 | Submission to Sigma Tau Delta Journals: <i>The Rectangle</i> <i>The Sigma Tau Delta Review</i> |
| April 30 | <i>The Rectangle</i> and <i>The Sigma Tau Delta Review</i> Writing Awards |

. May 2007 .

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| May 30 | Regnery Internships (Round 1) |
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. September 2007 .

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| September 30 | Service Awards |
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. October 2007 .

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| October 30 | Critical Journal Awards |
| October 30 | Delta Awards |
| October 30 | Literary Arts Journal Awards |
| October 30 | Non-Sigma Tau Delta Paper Awards |
| October 30 | Outstanding Chapter Awards |
| October 30 | P. C. Somerville Awards for Future Teachers |
| October 30 | Project Grants |
| October 30 | Regnery Internships (Round 2) |
| October 30 | Regnery Scholarship |
| October 30 | Scholarships: Junior Senior Graduate |
| October 30 | Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship |
| October 30 | Study Abroad Scholarship (Round 1) |

. March 2008 .

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| Sigma Tau Delta Convention Louisville, KY |
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Please see www.english.org for further details.

SCHOLARSHIP & AWARD WINNERS



Award winners from left to right: *Belinda Wheeler, Erika Strandjord, Lydia Fletcher, Stefanie Jochman, Andrea Murphy, Katherine Pavel, Lynsey Pope, Maya Stoilova, Sara Anderson, John Monahan, Sandra Shorey, and Sarah Schultz.*

Graduate Scholarship Awards |

In honor of Edward L. Stockton, Jr., the fourth National President of Sigma Tau Delta, these awards recognize current graduate students who will continue to pursue a graduate degree. *Katherine Pavel* from South Dakota State University is this year's winner. *Ryan Fletcher*, University of Central Oklahoma, is the runner-up.

Senior Scholarship Awards |

Given in honor of Elva Bell McLin, these scholarships reward student members applying during their senior year. Dr. McLin served as Southern Regent and National Historian of Sigma Tau Delta. Winners this year are *Donna Gregory* of Oklahoma City University, and *Erika Claire Strandjord* of Luther College (IA). *S. Pearl Brilmyer*, University of Scranton (PA), is the runner-up.

Junior Scholarships |

In honor of E. Nelson James, these scholarships recognize student members applying during their junior year. Dr. James served as Second Executive Secretary of Sigma Tau Delta and as editor of *The Rectangle*. This year's winners are *Lynsey Rae Pope* of Mount Vernon Nazarene University (OH), *Sandra J. Shorey* of Columbus State University (GA), and *Christina Lee Conway* of Texas A&M University, Kingsville. The runner-up is *Andrew Erkkila*, The College of New Jersey.

Henry Regnery Scholarship |

Endowed in 1992 in honor of Henry Regnery, founder of Regnery Publishing, this scholarship is awarded to *Maya Stoilova* of The American University of Paris. The runner-up is *Judith Ann Hicks*, University of Scranton (PA).

Study Abroad Scholarships |

Study Abroad Scholarships award undergraduate members studying for an academic term or year in a certified undergraduate program outside the country in which their chapter is located. This year's winners are *Stefanie Jochman*, St.

Norbert College (WI), *Caitlin Elizabeth McAndrew*, Western Michigan University, and *Sara Elizabeth Anderson*, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse.

P.C. Somerville Award for Future Teachers |

These awards recognize members who have demonstrated academic scholarship, chapter service, and have an aptitude for teaching. The awards this year go to *John Zachary Monahan*, University of Scranton (PA), and *Sarah Elizabeth Schultz*, Luther College (IA).

Scholarly Paper Awards |

These awards, recognizing the best student papers presented at a non-Sigma Tau Delta professional convention, were received by the following Sigma Tau Delta members: Undergraduate award: *Belinda Wheeler*, Purdue University, North Campus (IN). Graduate award: *Tiffany K. Boddie*, Boise State University (ID).

Best Scholarship Application Essay Awards |

These awards were given to *Maya Stoilova*, The American University of Paris; *Donna Gregory*, Oklahoma City University; and *Erika Claire Strandjord*, Luther College (IA).

The Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship |

The Sigma Tau Delta Scholarship recognizes academic excellence and outstanding service to Sigma Tau Delta. *Andrea Kay Murphy*, Old Dominion University (VA), is this year's recipient.

The Regents' Scholarships |

The Regents' Scholarships were awarded to the following Sigma Tau Delta members: Eastern: *Lynzie Biggs*, Alvernia College (PA) High Plains: *Amanda Rose Jones*, South Dakota State University
Midwestern: *Cynthia Marie Arnold*, Illinois College
Southern: *Natalie Lorin McCall*, University of Alabama, Birmingham
Southwestern: *Lydia Alene Fletcher*, University of Texas, San Antonio

2006 - 2007 Writing Awards

Sigma Tau Delta Review and The Rectangle

■ Elizabeth Holtze Creative Nonfiction Award

Jillian Bateman, "The Sounds of the Sea"
Ithaca College (NY)

■ Frederic Fadner Critical Essay Award

Jenna Dodenhoff, "Bad Blood: Moriarty, Holmes, and Lombroso's Criminal Man"
The College of New Jersey

■ Herbert Hughes Short Story Award

Adrienne Musu Jackson-Buckner, "Cornrows"
Oneonta State College (SUNY) (NY)

■ Eleanor B. North Poetry Award

Tristin Hooker, "Thursday Morning, Driver's Seat"
William Jewell College (MO)

■ Judson Q. Owen Award for Best Piece Overall

Adrienne Musu Jackson-Buckner, "Cornrows"

Ryan Fletcher

Student Advisor, University of Central Oklahoma

CONFLUENCE: MERGING FOR SUCCESS

AT THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Lynzie Biggs, Student Advisor, Alvernia College, PA

Does your chapter want to raise more money? Publish a literary journal? Or plan a service project? Join the student leadership committee, along with Sigma Tau Delta chapters from all over the country, on Thursday, March 28, 2007, for this year's leadership workshop—*Confluence: Merging for Success*.

The student leadership committee is already busy planning this year's workshop, where chapters can gather and share ideas on how we can come together for the success of our own chapters and the society as a whole. The workshop will be divided into six different breakout sessions; chapters can choose which sessions will be the most beneficial for them. It will include some of our most popular sessions, but we will also develop some new additions to help further your chapter's potential. The sessions will include: Fundraising; Service; Chapter Administration; Regional and National Involvement; and our most recent additions, Small Chapter Development and Publishing a Literary Journal.

The Fundraising session will bring chapters together to share past experiences and for the development of new ideas for effective fundraising strategies. The service session

will focus on the benefits of running a service project and how to get your chapter involved in service on many levels. The Chapter Administration session will help you organize your chapter at the administrative level in order for it to function most effectively. In the Regional and National Involvement session, students will learn ways to become an integral part of Sigma Tau Delta on the regional and national levels. The Small Chapter Development session will focus on the unique needs and concerns of running a small chapter to its fullest potential. The session on Publishing a Literary Journal will offer ideas, techniques, and advice for chapters wishing to start a literary journal on campus or to improve an existing publication.

In addition to the six student-centered breakout sessions, we will also hold a session for sponsors to meet and share ideas. This session will be run by Marybeth DeMeo from Alvernia College, PA, and Sandra Mayfield from the University of Central Oklahoma, two of Sigma Tau Delta's highly motivated and successful chapter sponsors.

Join us on Thursday morning of the convention for a merging of minds, ideas, and inspiration, so you can lead your chapter to success!



Bookdrive:

Although our time in Pittsburgh, PA, will be short this spring, let's make a difference in children's lives. Sigma Tau Delta's efforts to promote learning can be expressed by sharing our love of reading with others. This year during the convention, we have chosen to partner with a group to help children in the Pittsburgh area. The Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF) is a non-profit organization that promotes learning and development in children's education. A cash donation will also be made to HCEF in the name of one donating chapter (to be selected by a drawing). Please bring items from the suggested list below to the convention this spring and donate to this worthy cause:

- Reading books (age-appropriate)
- Picture books
- Beginning readers
- Books that depict diversity and urban life
- Bookmarks
- Art Supplies
- Crayons
- Construction paper
- Colored pencils
- Pens/pencils

Sigma Tau Delta's Book Corner: This fall each regional newsletter will bring something new to your region. Within each regional newsletter there will be a section entitled "Sigma Tau Delta's Book Corner." More specifically, each regional newsletter will feature a book and/or author chosen by the Student Representatives and the Associate Student Representatives from their own specific region.

The twin packages of the feet
to be unwrapped by love or exhaustion.

The twin packages of movement
and rest. Like some odd spelling rule,

they stay together even when apart.
How many of us have ever been

swept away? Lifted up, and away?
Even the occasions of the white dress

cannot transport us off this earth.
Even the shiny twin packages

even the pointed toes,
even the high heels.

Nothing ever heals completely.
Thus, the breeze. Thus, the sway.

Breeze



Poem by Jim Daniels
Photograph by Charlee Brodsky
Reprinted from *Street* (2005) with kind
permission from Bottom Dog Press

2007 Common Reader Selection: *Strike Sparks*

Sharon Olds



Strike Sparks
Selected Poems, 1988-2001

Kevin Stemmler, Service Committee Chair, Clarion University, PA

Virginia Woolf's *The Second Common Reader* concludes with a moving vision of Judgment Day, when Woolf imagines how readers of books will be greeted: "The Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, 'Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.'"

The idea for Sigma Tau Delta's Common Reader was inspired by Virginia Woolf's work, and it is fitting to call on her to introduce this year's selection. I envision our membership descending on the convention site with Sharon Olds' *Strike Sparks* under arm, ready to reap the rewards of having read the book. And the reward? Being able to discuss, with other members, particular poems from the

book. Remember the first time you read "The One Girl at the Boys' Party" (page 31) and you felt you absolutely had to talk to someone about it? But your enthusiasm fell on your roommate's disinterested ears and you were left to consider, on your own, that sole girl in the poem, possessing a power that only you and the poet understood.

The value of participating in the Common Reader program is that you and your chapter members share a common text. You are encouraged to hold campus or community discussions of the text so you can examine individual poems and discuss the larger issues. This is the society's attempt to provide the groundwork for our commitment to literacy. Perhaps your chapter will devise a service project around the reading of the book, either inspired by a particular poem or a general theme that emerges from Olds' work. The Sigma Tau Delta Service Committee also suggests that your chapter make arrangements to meet with members of another chapter in your area and have a common text to discuss. Or perhaps you can find a way to turn your reading into a fundraiser for a community project or a group in need of attention.

Your chapter should have recently received a notice from your Regent, informing you of a cash award for creative projects involving the Common Reader. For more information, visit the website: http://www.english.org/pdf/awards/awd_commRdr.pdf. There will be a separate award given in each region, and I encourage your chapter's application.

For those of you fortunate enough to attend this year's convention in Pittsburgh, March 28-31, you will have the chance to hear Sharon Olds read from her books and to secure an autograph. Being able to hear a writer read from her own work is one of the pleasures of experiencing a text. Knowing the work in advance further heightens the experience.

At the very least, in the course of reading *Strike Sparks*, you may pause to consider the ending of "Little Things," knowing that a common reading, among members, across chapters, around the world, may be just enough "to bind ourselves to this world."

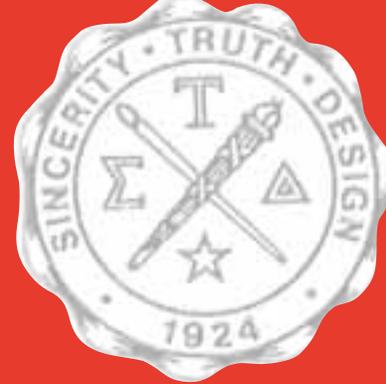
Historian's Reminder: **Save-Our-Stories Project**

As promised at the previous convention, I'm writing to request your help in the preservation of Sigma Tau Delta. I'm asking chapters to write down their favorite convention stories and share their favorite convention photos. Some of these stories and photos will be available for viewing as part of a new display at the Pittsburgh convention.

Participate in saving the rich heritage of Sigma Tau Delta!

Please send your materials by December 1, 2006
to Carrie Fitzpatrick at carrie.fitzpatrick@alvernia.edu.

Visit us online at www.english.org



The International English Honor Society

Sincerity • Truth • Design

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

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