



Volume 2, issue 2

April 26, 2007

## A Word from the President, Allison Burris

My year as president of Sigma Tau Delta was a wonderful and strengthening experience. It was an honor to stand as head of a committee filled with members like Caroline Cole, Jonathan Callis, Katherine Watkins, and Allison Brown. Their love for literature, the smell of dusty library books, and the lives of great authors kept me inspired to carve out time for reading, always. Their insight at meetings, their rhetorical skills, their well-crafted e-mails to members kept me constantly aware of the skills that an English major bestows. Serving our department along side them was most certainly the

highlight of the experience. Our work together has funded a scholarship for a high school student to the Writing Institute this summer, and for that I am both proud and humbled by the strong efforts of our membership to make and meet goals. Sigma Tau Delta was never petty, never stingy, never closed-hearted. It is a society made of truly intelligent, strong, and forward-looking students; it was nothing but a pleasure to serve as their president.

### Inside this Issue:

British Studies Symposium	2
“Poetry Night”	2
Spring Induction	3
Campus Involvement	3-4
Premier!	4
STD’s Class Picks	5
Mission Statement	6
Next Year	6
Summer Reading	6

### **Sigma Tau Delta Officers, 2007-2008:**

President, Allison Burris  
 Secretary, Jonathan Callis  
 V.P. of Campus Activities, Caroline Cole  
 V.P. of Community Involvement, Allison Brown  
 Treasurer, Katherine Watkins  
 Alumni Advisor, Michelle Hope

## British Studies Symposium 2007

By Jonathan Callis

With institutions from the Associated Colleges of the South participating, over thirty students gathered at Rhodes College on February 16 and 17, 2007, for the fourth annual British Studies Symposium. Because the conference commenced at 4:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon, students from visiting colleges arrived in Memphis early Friday afternoon or on Friday night, depending on whether they had to present on Friday or Saturday.

As a supplement to the British Studies at Oxford summer education program, the Symposium featured papers from various disciplines in British history. Dean of the British Studies program, Rhodes English professor Michael Leslie, organized the conference and set up both lodging and meals for all

presenters, whether from visiting colleges or from Rhodes.

Several Rhodes students took part, and three Sigma Tau Delta members, Rhodes seniors Jonathan Callis, Caroline Cole, and Elizabeth Story, presented papers addressing topics from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century English literature. Cole, who presented a paper entitled "The Authorial Voice in Walter Scott's *Waverly*," encapsulated the spirit of the event by stating, "I thoroughly enjoyed the British Studies Student Symposium. It was a great experience, and I loved meeting the other students from all over the South. Students presented papers from a variety of disciplines, allowing me to learn about British culture from a range of perspectives."

## Poetry Night with Professor Wood

by Caroline Cole

Many Sigma Tau Deltas gathered in the East Village Lodge on the evening of March 6<sup>th</sup> to hear retired Professor Wood read his poetry.



Professor Richard Wood attended Rhodes as a student during the 1940s and returned

as a professor in the 1970s. He read poetry about his reflections on the Civil War and World War II. Additionally, Wood regaled his audience with stories about his time at Rhodes. For example, according to Professor Wood, the entire library used to be on the third floor of Palmer. Wood also recalled memories of his fellow professors, including the professor who never wore socks and the professor who turned the pages of his book with his tongue. The event included delicious refreshments and proved an overall success.

## Sigma Tau Delta's Spring Induction Ceremony

By Alli Burris

Sigma Tau Delta held its annual spring induction on April 10, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. in East Village Lodge. The ceremony was attended by students and faculty who joined to honor and celebrate the achievements of the outstanding Juniors and Seniors in the department. It was our pleasure to add the following English majors and minors to our ranks: Alicia Buxton, Leigh Clasby, Thomas Cole, Diana Comes, Kristen DeLuca, Emily Popp, Daniel Price, Molly Ryan, and Rachel Stinson. These students met the rigorous requirements for membership and were supported in nomination by their professors and peers. They will provide the leadership for next year's chapter activities; they are an excited, dedicated, inventive, and passionate group of students. We expect only the very best from them all. In addition to induction, the Professor of the Year was also announced at the April 10th ceremony. Caroline Cole, a graduating senior, presented the award to Dr. Rebecca Newman, who was selected by vote for her outstanding commitment and service to her students. She is a great asset to the department, as the members of Sigma Tau Delta confirmed with their vote. The

ceremony concluded with the official presentations of the winning senior papers. Caroline Cole, the recipient of the senior paper award, read from her project focused on Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly*. Jonathan Callis, this year's sole honors graduate, presented his paper on Jonathon Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.



Caroline Cole and Jonathan Callis after reading.

Both presentations were directed and introduced by Dr. Newman, and the work that they showcased stood as a strong testament and tribute to the diligence and quality of the Rhodes College English Department

## Campus Involvement

By Caroline Cole

The 2006-2006 academic year has been an extremely exciting one for Sigma Tau Delta. As Vice President of Campus Involvement, I am happy to report that STD has engaged in numerous activities amongst the society, the department, and the entire campus. First, Sigma Tau Delta hosted a poetry night with

Professor Wood, a former student and professor. At a gathering in the East Village Lodge, Professor Wood read some of his poetry that he has written since his departure, and shared many stories about Rhodes. For example, the entire library used to exist on the third floor of Palmer! Numerous STDs

assembled to listen and honor Professor Wood and the evening was very entertaining and enlightening. Recently, Sigma Tau Delta joined with the Sou'Wester at their Second Annual Wine and Cheese Event, an event which premiered the new editions of the Sou'Wester and showcased the work of several talented students. Additionally, exceptional STD, Meredith Allison, has coordinated two Happy Hours with the faculty already this semester. These events have celebrated the senior papers

and the end of classes. Assembling at Bosco's and Quetzal, the faculty and students enjoyed a fun night away from Palmer. Finally, we have had two successful inductions and welcomed a new crop of STD's who will lead the society into the next years. On that note, STD also has brand new T-shirts which can be paid for and picked up at any time. Sigma Tau Delta has had a wonderful year and I know that the new slate of officers will continue our wonderful traditions.

## Premier of *Southwestern Review*

On April 18th, 2007, Sigma Tau Delta collaborated with the editors of *The Southwestern Review* to host the premier of the annual publication of *The Southwestern Review*.



Elizabeth Conner and President, Alli Burris

The *Southwestern Review* is Rhodes' journal of student literature and art, and this year its editor-and-chief was our very own Sara Rutherford. Her hard work and dedication, along with that of her staff, produced an amazing publication. Several of our department's best poets and fiction



Tara Schultz reads her poem "Interior."

writers were honored with inclusion and were asked to read from their work at the premier. Sigma Tau Delta took this opportunity to announce new officers. We also provided strawberry shortcake, fruit, and other light refreshments. Thank you to all who participated and help make the event a great success!

### **Executive committee for 2007-2008:**

President--Thomas Cole  
V.P. Community Service--Gwen Weil  
V.P. Campus Involvement--Diana Comes  
Secretary--Dan Price  
Treasurer--Emily Popp

## Classes: Sigma Tau Delta Picks

**221. Novel of Manners**, Professor Jennifer Brady

A close analysis of major authors included in the classic category of literature. Authors include Edith Wharton, Jane Austen, and Henry James.

**265. After Beckett**, Professor Stephen Schottenfeld

It should be called "Literature of Crazy." It was some of the most interesting literature I've ever read.

**320. Medieval Autobiography**, Professor Susan Uselmann

This course makes texts, not attempted by most students, accessible and interesting through the use of an original language, Middle English.

**341. 18th Century British Literature**, Professor Rebecca Newman

I enjoyed this course because Professor Newman used a wide array of texts and images to show how both Enlightenment ideas and the expansion of trade and the middle class produced a vibrant intellectual and artistic climate during the Neoclassical period. In particular, our class discussions of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Samuel Johnson's "Preface to a Dictionary of the English Language" became the germ of my senior Honors thesis, so it was especially enjoyable to see the ideas brought up in the course fleshed out more fully in my essay.

**361. American Realism and Modernism**, Professor Leslie Petty

Any class that Professor Petty teaches is worth taking. She's extremely well-versed in American Literature and works diligently with students to help them develop a nuanced understanding of texts. Plus, in this class you get to read about political corruption, recalcitrant adulterers and the symbolic eating of a gingerbread house—it's America in compact form, really.

**375. Postcolonial Literature**, Professor Edward Mallot

This class gives students a chance to experience literatures of cultures and social consciousnesses that are different than their own. It is a radicalizing experience.

**385. John Fletcher**, Professor Jennifer Brady

Very few colleges and universities teach an entire course on John Fletcher, yet this class was one of my favorites at Rhodes. Professor Brady did an admirable job communicating not only the interesting material, but also just how fortunate we were to even have such an opportunity. John Fletcher's work is vastly underappreciated. Yet, thanks to Professor Brady, I have had an opportunity to work closely with many of his plays some of which have not even been published in the last fifty years. Fletcher's works are extremely amusing and very unique. The class on Fletcher was informative and above all hilarious and all students should jump at the chance to take a course on Fletcher if the opportunity presents itself.

**400. Feminist Theory**, Professor Judith Haas This course should be mandatory. Almost all of the reading will burrow under your skin and stay there forever. It was one of the most memorable classes I've taken at Rhodes.

### **Ask Kat!**

**Madame Treasurer,  
Katherine Watkins,  
on Professor Brian  
W. Shaffer, Ph.D.**

A senior's advice to underclassmen: no one majoring in English at Rhodes College can really be said to have gotten the most their degree has to offer if they have not had a class with Dr. Shaffer.

Whether it was a semester that focused on the work of James Joyce, unreliable narration in modern fiction, or a survey of twentieth-century British Literature, students who have taken his courses unanimously agree that the experience was both intellectually rewarding and addictively enjoyable.

The only regrettable fact is that he usually only teaches one course per semester, so be sure to get him while you can!

## **Mission Statement**

Sigma Tau Delta is the national English Honors Society. It seeks to recognize exemplary scholarship and promote life long passions towards reading, writing, and the study of literature through its motto: "Sincerity, Truth, Design." The Rhodes Chapter has been active since 1984.

To be inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, you must be an English Major of good standing with a 3.4 G.P.A. and at least four 300-level courses on your transcript. Students who have met this requirement will receive an invitational application. If you feel you have met the requirements, but did not receive an invitation, please contact Professor Leslie Petty. We will review your claim and issue an application as appropriate.

## **Plans For Next Year**

**Thomas Cole, New President of Sigma Tau Delta**

As President of the Tau Sigma chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, I hope to focus on improving the two basic elements of any organization: community and participation. During the forthcoming academic year, my goals are to enliven interest in STD's commitment to not only the English language and its literature but also to our visibility in our community—campus and Memphis alike. Furthermore, I hope to see our honor society more integrated into the activities of the English Department, because without participation there is no community, and without community there is no need for participation. Thus, with these two aspirations, I think Sigma Tau Delta can enjoy a fruitful year at Rhodes College.

## **Summer Reading**

STD is currently compiling a list of "Professor Picks" for summer reading. Additional copies of the list will be available from Lorie Yearwood in the Dept. office. Below is a list of "Member's Choices" compiled by Sigma Tau Delta.

- The Remains of the Day*, Kazuo Ishiguro
- Middlemarch*, George Eliot
- Eureka Street*, Robert McLiam Wilson
- If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, Italo Calvino
- The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde
- Red Sky at Morning*, Richard Bradford
- The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy
- Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen