



Eta Epsilon Chapter Newsletter

Fall 2018

Editor: Blake West

VOL. 10 ISSUE 1

The Amazing Race **By: Brooke Jennings**

Sigma Kappa Delta kicked off the Fall semester by participating in the Amazing Race on September 28th and decided on a team name, "The Word Herd." Beginning the race with a starter pistol fire, the Amazing Race was on! Teams ran to each obstacle to try and finish the games with the fastest times.

Starting the race with the Giant Sack Race, the Word Herd trampled to the finish line starting off with a victory. As the day went by, the Word Herd finished many more obstacles such as Walk the Plank, Water Relay, Ninja Warrior, Tug of War, an Obstacle Course, Hoop de Loop, Crab Soccer, an Invisible Maze, Tangramania, Minute to Win It, Big Khauna's Wheel of Fortune, Brain games, and to top it all off a Team Spirit contest. For the Team spirit contest the "Word Herd" made up a cheer yelling, "Oh no, Here Comes the Word Herd... Stampede!"

Overall, the day was very fun, interesting, and exciting. The SKD officers had an opportunity to learn how to work together and learn about each others strengths and weaknesses. Even though the Word Herd did not come in first place, we all had a blast together (out of 27 teams we came in 13th). Next year we hope to beat the records and come up in the charts with everyone's help to make the team bigger and better! Stampede!!!



The Word Herd Getting ready to compete

Pioneer Day History **By: Dianna Hyde**

Jefferson State Community College commemorated its 53rd birthday on September 28, 2018 with the annual Pioneer Day celebration, an occasion of festivity, fellowship, and food (English Egghead rocking the alliteration!). Campus organizations comprised of students, staff, faculty and alumni formed teams to compete in JSCC's ode to The Amazing Race, a series of physical and mental challenges testing speed, agility, teamwork and Pioneer spirit.

Sigma Kappa Delta fielded a team of five (plus one on-the-spot-recruit) known as the Word Herd, and we ran, crawled, tug-of-warred, sack raced, face-planted in whipped cream, ate a questionable concoction, and answered trivia questions to finish the Race respectably in the middle of the pack of the twenty-eight teams competing—not showing off, but not bringing up the rear. Interested SKD'ers should plan to join the team next year for the STAMPEDE of the WORD HERD!

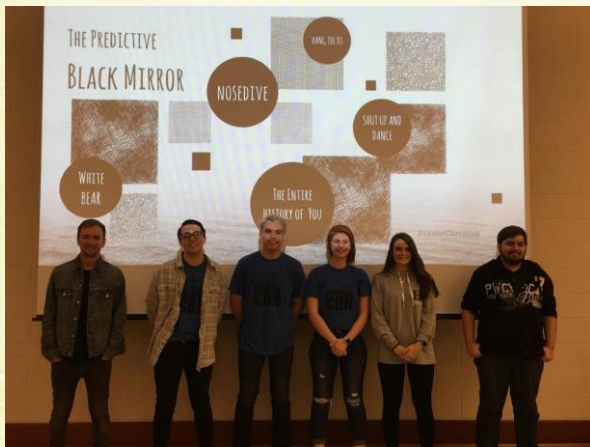
Jefferson State Community College

Jefferson State Community College follows equal opportunity admission policies and employment practices. College facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Pioneer Con Overview By: Katie Boyer

SKD's third annual Pioneer Con took place at the Shelby campus on October 17, with nearly 180 attendees. The daylong event featured both entertaining and academic activities, centered around a keynote presentation by novelist Phoebe North, author of *Starglass* and *Starbreak*. This "celebration of all things geeky" included a dozen presentations throughout the day.

Sessions in the morning heavily featured academic work by Jefferson State faculty and students. Clanton sponsor Ashley Kitchens served on a panel with students Alyssa Glass and Erica Powell to discuss classic science fiction stories and the relationship between humans and machines. Clanton captain Blake West moderated this panel as well as a later one on "The Anatomy of a Dragon." Pell City captain Ben Wilson served on a panel discussing the *Black Mirror* television series, along with other students from the Pell City campus and English instructor Jacob Melvin.



Black Mirror Panel

Shelby co-captain Danita Miniex extended SKD's warmest hospitality to keynote

Phoebe North by picking her up from her accommodations and bringing her to campus just in time for her lecture on the topic "Write What Only You Know: Five Stories from My Writing



Phoebe North
begins her
lecture

Career." Jefferson captain Austin Armstrong also chatted with Phoebe for an exclusive interview (see p. 6).

While participants lunched on pizza, Shelby sponsor Dianna Hyde and Shelby co-captain Brooke Jennings reprised their roles as trivia mavens. Along with Physical Therapy instructor Vanessa LeBlanc, they led three rounds of sci-fi and fantasy trivia and distributed prizes that included campus bookstore gift cards, coffee, and T-shirts.



Students eagerly await the next question in the trivia game

Afternoon sessions branched out to presenters from academic worlds beyond Jefferson State.

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Pioneer Con Photo Fun

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The chair of the University of Montevallo's Game Studies and Design Program, along with several graduate students, discussed "Gaming at a Liberal Arts University." Other sessions were led by a University of Alabama Huntsville graduate student and a member of Magic City Gaming Mods.

Throughout the day, guests also enjoyed free face painting and two Dungeons & Dragons mini-campaigns with dungeon master (and English



Eugene Cuevas, the "dungeon master"

instructor) Eugene Cuevas. Head Over Heels aerials silks troupe also presented a colorful and dramatic presentation in the building's lobby, and students in costume made use of the photo booth.

Pell City sponsor Jamie King and Jefferson sponsor Katie Boyer kept an eye on the schedule and made sure the event ran smoothly.

In short, the event was a success, and officers and sponsors look forward to geeking out again in 2019.



A Panel for All: Pioneer Con Sessions

By: Ashley Kitchens

This year's Pioneer Con 2018 saw the largest crowd SKD has seen with this event, proving that offering such a fun, academic, and worthwhile conference will see growth!

Signage pointed PiCon visitors to sessions



The panels offered this year were just one of the many features that drew crowds this year. SKD sponsors and officers were excited to see the variety of proposals and the variety of presenters for the sessions. Proposals included sci-fi and fantasy in the subjects of not only English and literature, but also in biology, theater, mass media, and game or role play. Presenters included an array of students from Jefferson State Community College and other colleges like the University of Montevallo, and the University of Alabama at Huntsville. Instructors at Jefferson State, including English instructors Eugene Cuevas, Ashley Kitchens,



and Jacob Melvin; theater instructor Leslie Warren; and biology instructor Erin Arnold presented or worked with students to present panel discussions or lead RPG sessions. All the panels had something different to offer in the way of academic discussion or presentation.



Session one held a choice of panels that, one, illustrated a dramatic reading of *She Kills Monsters* by Qui Nguyen, and two, examined the complex relationship between humans and machines in literature and movies. Session two



She Kills Monsters presentation

saw lots of opportunity for conference goers as it added a Dungeons & Dragons mini-campaign and aerial silk presentations along with the academic choices of the "Anatomy of a Dragon" and "The Predictive Elements of Black Mirror."



Aerial performance by Jessica Bonds from Head Over Heels and session lecturer Dr. Erin Arnold

After the keynote address and lunch, session three offered attendees another chance at a D&D campaign, and two discussions: one session gave practical advice and planning and spending tips for cosplay, and the other session



Student Ali Whittemore presents

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looked at gaming in a liberal arts university.



UM Professor Benton Tyler and students present

The last session of the day continued a look into game play with a panel on using gaming to facilitate social discussions and a panel on law and order in games like Persona 5.



Daniel Walters
presents

Overall, survey results show students and other attendees enjoyed the sessions they attended. SKD hopes to continue this wonderful tradition called Pioneer Con in order to give students, faculty, and the academic community a

chance to be a part of something fun and engaging.

Abby Vaughn, a student of one of the faculty member presenters, Eugene Cuevas, summed her experience up as such: "It took me by surprise how interested I was by the whole event. My experience with the Dungeons and Dragons room made me think about how I just assumed Jefferson State would not have any events like this because it is a community college. I assumed that I would not be a part of any groups, or that anyone else would be either

for that matter. I was wrong, and Pioneer Con helped me realize that." It is this kind of realization that makes putting on such an event worth every bit of time and effort that goes into it.

SKD looks forward to more panels, more diverse topics, and more submissions from students, faculty, and members of the community all over Alabama for Pioneer Con 2019!



A student group plays D&D



Face
Painting



Students Erica
Powell and
Alyssa Glass
present

Pioneer Con Featured Keynote Speaker: Phoebe North By: Austin Armstong

This year Jefferson State's English honor society, Sigma Kappa Delta, had the privilege of hosting Phoebe North, author of *Starglass & Starbreak*, as the keynote speaker of Pioneercon 2018. Those that attended were able to enjoy our featured presentation where the novelist of the hour shared her topic of "Write What Only You Know: Five Stories from My Writing Career." Phoebe was also open to many questions and held a book signing afterward. While the crowd was mesmerized by the free pizza and trivia, I was able to sit down and conduct a quick interview with our guest to learn more about her life and the journey of becoming a writer.



Phoebe is originally from New Jersey but now lives in upstate New York. She shares her home with her husband and daughter along with their feline friend. As a child, Phoebe was a passionate reader and science fiction fan. Her love for *Star Trek* and otherworldly travels inspired her to begin storytelling which eventually evolved into creative writing. After earning an MFA in Poetry from the University of Florida, she began experimenting with writing fiction eventually leading to the creation of her first novel, *Starglass* (2013), followed by its sequel, *Starbreak* (2014). Her transition from being a student and part-time writer flourished into her dream of becoming a full-time writer.

While within the writing process of her books, Phoebe usually spends only about one to a couple hours a day, what she calls "butt in chair time", writing her works. Most of the other time she is out of the chair brainstorming and building upon her ideas. She usually finds inspiration within many television shows, movies, and books while also taking mental notes from simple conversations with people. While some novelists may find writing a challenge at first, adjusting to what is new, Phoebe found it to be energetic and exciting. The real challenges ended up revolving around times of editing, promotions and traveling.

Preferably, Phoebe finds it better to start her books from the beginning and continue from there. She rarely has to deal with the writer's kryptonite, or block, due to the number of ideas that are present. Her characters also tend to come to be before the plot, usually by making them stand out on their own but they can sometimes be inspired by someone. One task she does find time-consuming is the amount of research needed to be done. Of course, it is to be expected if you're creating a sustainable biodome that travels through space for generations. Additionally, Phoebe enjoys implanting many Easter eggs within her works that only a selected few might find. So, for those that have read her books and have been puzzled by it, you weren't mistaken that was a David Bowie reference.

Gearing towards the end of our conversation, I asked Phoebe if there is anything she would like to let readers know before starting her books. Her response, besides having an open-mind to the galactic adventure that awaits, she simply wants readers to enjoy the quest and all it has to offer. Lastly, I asked if there was any advice she could offer for amateur writers, or better yet, what she would tell her younger self and other young writers starting out. She advised that it is totally possible for anyone. More importantly, it takes time, patience is keen on achieving this art and dream.

Photos From Pioneer Con



SKD Officer Blake West and student Alyssa Glass

SKD Officer Ben Wilson facilitates a lecture session



Above: Co-sponsor Katie Boyer announces a lecture session



Left: Sponsor Dianna Hyde moderates trivia

Below: Art student poses with her work



Right: Student enjoying the ability to dress in character: Jack Skellington



Follow SKD on Social Media!

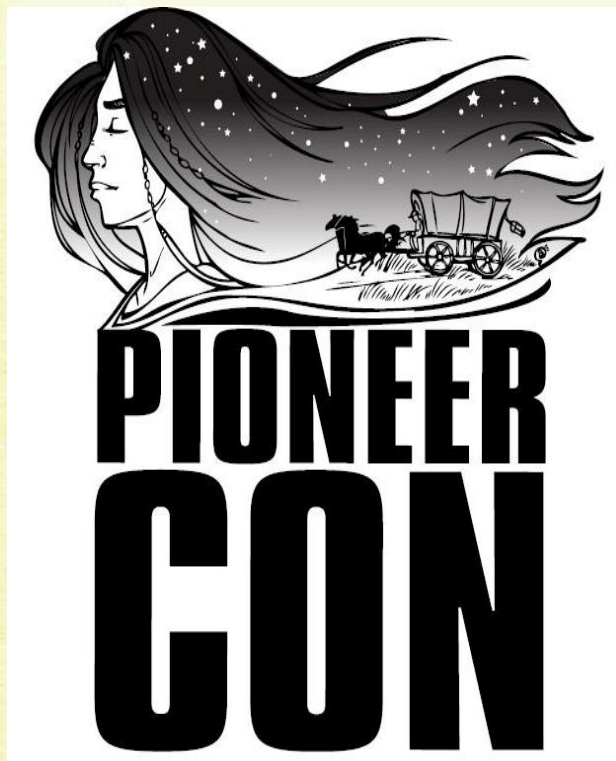
**Instagram: JeffStateSKD
(@jeffersonstateskd)**

**Facebook: Search “Jefferson State
SKD”**

Twitter: JeffstateSKD

To visit the SKD Pioneer Con landing page for information on previous years' conferences or upcoming information, use the recently created home site:

<https://jsccpioneercon.wixsite.com/home>



Special thanks to Brian Parker for his work on this year's Pioneer Con logo!

**Our website is also available for those who are interested in National Convention or want more information about available scholarships.
(English2.org)**

Do you have an item of interest to share with your fellow members? Do you want to be an active member of SKD, but do not know where to start?

Contact us for further information.
(skd@jeffstateonline.com)

Check out our Facebook page for reminders of upcoming events!
(Jefferson State SKD)