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Chalkboard is the newsletter of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, an organization that has existed for more than 65 years to support teachers of English and the language arts in Oregon elementary and secondary schools, community colleges, and universities.

Chalkboard is our way of keeping our members and friends informed about OCTE activities, programs of the National Council of Teachers of English, conferences and learning opportunities for students, research findings, book recommendations, and more.

Chalkboard is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange.

For inquiries, please write:

OCTE
P.O. Box 9126
Portland, OR 97207-9126

Chalkboard

WWW.OCTE.ORG

OCTE *Now more than ever!*

*No Child Left Behind is ignoring the needs of many children.
Budget cuts are devastating many excellent school programs.
Lack of voter support is cutting school years shorter than ever.*

At a time like this, the service orientation of OCTE is all the more significant. School districts are relying on OCTE more than ever for providing those all-important inservice offerings.

The OCTE Constitution lists these purposes for the organization:

1. Stimulate professional development and improve the quality of English language arts instruction.
2. Provide opportunity for group study and discussion of problems.
3. Act as a clearing house by circulating information of value and informing teachers of current trends and research findings.
4. Stimulate and promote research in the study and teaching of the language arts.
5. Publish significant findings in journals and newsletters.
6. Bring leaders in the language arts and literary field before the Council.
7. Participate in other language arts activities in the region and maintain national affiliation.

Even as you peruse this newsletter, you will see how we are meeting the purposes of OCTE with the various programs we are announcing. *It is a very exciting year.*

Your OCTE Executive Board is made up of 25 highly dedicated and talented professionals from all parts of the state and from all grade levels of teaching. Together they have 157 years experience as board members, yet half of them are in their first term of service—thus we have made sure that new points of view are brought in. All six officers are in their first term of office but have several years of experience on the Board, and many years of experience as educators.

W E L C O M E

New OCTE Board Members

James R. Dott,
Clatskanie
Elementary
School



Kathy Haynie,
Oregon City
High School



Penny Plavala,
Multnomah
ESD



Jay Rishel,
Wilsonville
High School



Returning OCTE Board Members

Robert Hamm,
West Linn-
Wilsonville
School
District



Teri Houghton,
Grants Pass
High School





OCTE, OWP, SOESD, & Ashland School District bring Literacy Workshop to Southern Oregon

Mark your calendars for April 2-3, where Ashland, Oregon, is the designated site for the upcoming OCTE-sponsored Literacy Workshop with Linda Christensen on "Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word." This exciting topic embraces

Linda's text *Reading, Writing and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*, a publication of Rethinking Schools.



Linda Christensen

The workshop promises to show teachers how to examine the patterns of home language vs. Standard English, ultimately mentoring students toward the power to make language meaningful in their daily lives.

A twenty-year veteran language arts teacher from Portland, Oregon, and currently the Language Arts Coordinator for Portland Public Schools, Linda Christensen writes, "My students walk out the school door in a social emergency. They are in the center of it. I believe that writing is a basic skill that will help them both understand that emergency and work to change it." How we embrace and respond to our students' voices in the written work can either silence them or empower them; Linda's work sheds light on the miracle of helping our students discover that language gives them the power to have a voice in the world.

In her fall 2003 article in *Rethinking Schools* "The Politics of Correction," she poses the question that is at the heart of her curriculum. "Will we use our power to help students understand that Standard English is our dialect of many, or will we use it to whittle away students' voices and home language one error at a time?" This exciting workshop promises to encourage interactive teaching that embraces connecting our students to the world of language, literature, and society.

The Ashland High School library is the workshop site. A social gathering and introduction will be held Friday evening, April 2, from 6:00 to 7:30, followed by a six-hour workshop on Saturday, April 3, from 9:00 to 3:00.

Registration is \$75.00, which includes the text and lunch. This workshop is co-sponsored through support from Oregon Writing Project, SOESD, and the Ashland School District.

For more information, contact Kathi Bowen-Jones at Ashland High School, 2001 S. Mountain Ave., Ashland, Oregon 97520, 541-482-8771, ext. 197 or at kathi.bowen-jones@ashland.k12.or.us

For more information about Linda Christensen's publications, go to www.rethinkingschools.org



Kathi Bowen-Jones

OCTOBER 2 OCTE FALL CONFERENCE

The 2004 Fall Conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 2, at Wilsonville High School. The OCTE Program Committee is planning a rich offering of dozens of sessions for teachers at all grade levels, K-16. The focus will be on reading, writing, literature, and teaching strategies.

Keynote speakers will be Eric Kimmel and Allen Webb.

Eric A. Kimmel is the author of more than 60 books, including *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, *Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock*, *Three Samurai Cats*, *Iron John*, *Gershon's Monster*, and *I Took My Frog to the Library*.

He has received many prestigious awards, such as Caldecott Honor Book, Zena Sutherland Award, IRA's Children's Book Council Award, Sydney Taylor Award, and the Oregon Book Award.



Eric Kimmel

His topic will be: "So You Want to Be an Author: The Writer's Life for Students (and Teachers)."

Kimmel is professor emeritus at the Graduate School of Education at PSU.

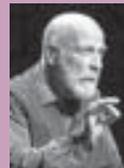
Allen Webb is Professor of English Education at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo. Formerly a teacher at West Linn High School, he earned his Ph.D. at the University of Oregon and has been at WMU since then.

Allen Webb has published a number of books, including the popular *Literature & Lives: A Response-based, Cultural Studies Approach to Teaching English*, published by NCTE 2001. His appearance at this conference is co-sponsored by NCTE. The title of his keynote address is: "Literature's Special Power."

Allen's book brings together reader response and cultural studies approaches, while telling lively stories out of classrooms. He connects Shakespeare, Twain, Dickens and other canonical figures to multicultural writers, popular culture, film, politics, and issues relevant to contemporary youth.



Allen Webb



Clemens Starck



Linda Crew



What's "INN" for Spring?

Friday evening, April 16, & Saturday, April 17

OCTE invites you to The Inn of the Seventh Mountain, Bend, Oregon, for a Spring Conference.

Keynoters: **Clemens Starck**, winner of the 1996 Oregon Book Award for Poetry, and Finalist for the 2003 Award. Author of *Journeyman's Wages* and the recent *China Basin*.

Linda Crew, author of children's and young adult fiction, including bestseller *Children of the River*, and her recent *Brides of Eden: A True Story Imagined*, a riveting novel based on the cult that wreaked havoc on the entire town of Corvallis.

Plus numerous presentations on reading, writing, teaching strategies, and literature.

Announcements coming to all schools soon. Registration and hotel reservations deadline April 5. Ask for special OCTE rates at the Inn: 1-800-452-6810.

For more information write: hardtu@pdx.edu



20th OREGON WRITING FESTIVAL

The twentieth annual Oregon Writing Festival, co-sponsored by OCTE and the PSU Graduate School of Education, will take place at Portland State University on Saturday, April 24, 2004. PSU Professor Rick Hardt is Festival Chair.



Eric Kimmel

The Festival brings students from grades 4-12 from throughout Oregon together for a day-long practice and celebration of writing. Their admission ticket is a sample of their best writing, which is read and critiqued by fellow students in small groups of 10, under the supervision of a teacher.

Students also participate in two hour-long workshops designed to give them further practice in writing.

For the day, students are divided into three age groups: grades 4-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. In addition to the activities described above, each age group



Susan Fletcher

listens to a keynote speaker. This year's authors are: Eric A. Kimmel (gr. 4-5), Susan Fletcher (gr. 6-8) and Judith Barrington (gr. 9-12). These authors also participate in leading

a workshop.

A Children's Place bookstore of Portland will sell books of these three authors at the Festival, and the writers will be available to autograph them.

Close to 100 adults assist with the day's activities for the estimated 550 students. Festival Committee members are Janice Bahns (Tillamook School District), Rick Hardt (PSU), Jay Rishel (Wilsonville High School), Amy Welch (Portland Public Schools), and Barbara Wiegele (PSU). Any school or school district interested in participating should contact Registrar Wiegele at bjwiegele@aol.com



Judith Barrington

Technological and Cultural Integration

Jay Rishel,
Wilsonville High School

With a growing population of Hispanic students at Wilsonville High School, we, as a largely white administration, staff, and student body, continually seek systemic ways to integrate all cultures. Of course, we stumble in our attempts. There is a latent tension, a prejudice that breathes within the student body and staff.

White students and staff often negate and alienate Hispanic students without being fully aware of it. White students often express either a confused anger or sense of regret at what they see as the Hispanic students' segregation from the dominant school culture. Hispanic students gather together out of sense of comfort and security, all the while growing angry that white students make few attempts to connect with them. The students bring these conflicts and confusions to my American Literature classroom every year.

In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. writes:

Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

As a teacher of American literature, I am a gadfly. My job is to help students voice their buried tensions. However, I am far from fluent in even Spanglish and have difficulty in providing opportunities for my Hispanic students to share their voice. Helping Hispanic students become full participants in the community of my classroom is a continual challenge. The nuances of dialect in *Huck Finn* and the sophistication of language in *The Great*

Gatsby push Hispanic students further onto the margins of the community. However, our final unit focuses on answering the through-line question: how does the landscape of diverse races and cultures shape our identity as individual Americans and as a nation?

To answer the question and unleash the tension I use the Internet. Nicenet

[<http://www.nicenet.org>] is a

free Internet resource for educators, which provides a threaded discussion board where teachers can spark student-centered dialogues. I establish the discussion board as a space for students to address the issue of integrating Hispanic students. Using this site, white and Hispanic students express their anger and regret in diplomatic and meaningful ways. Here's an example of a dialogue:

Hispanic students and families have not been integrated into the Wilsonville community at all. How can we say we are an accepting nation when this problem has never even been formally addressed in our school district? Students and few teachers rarely realize that Hispanic students are at a disadvantage that is not because of a language barrier. Cultural differences are keeping students segregated in schools other than WHS, and it seems like we should have learned the first time with African-American integration that simply time will not cure all. Students, teachers, and the community can help integration by making an effort to develop relationships with Hispanic families and making orientation mandatory for new culturally diverse students. However, in my opinion, if the situation was just addressed, more people would be aware of the problem and not just ignoring it.

A Hispanic student replies:

I am one of many Hispanics at WHS. The Hispanics from this school don't speak with white boys, because they don't feel comfortable with them. To me it is very nice to meet new people from other countries because I like to learn new cultures. In the future I hope to see more people from other countries at WHS, but specially in the future I would like to see more Hispanics at THIS SCHOOL.



Jay Rishel



OC TE Excellence Awards in Teaching the English Language Arts 2004

To recognize excellence in teaching, the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OC TE) invites any Oregon school to nominate one outstanding language arts educators for one of these prestigious annual awards. A strong equal opportunity organization, we welcome nominations from anyone at all levels of education: elementary, middle, secondary, two-year college, four-year college or university, but nomination must be limited to one per school. To be nominated, the educator must have taught at least five years in any Oregon school at any

level. In the opinion of the nominator, the educator must have created a particularly noteworthy record in teaching the English language arts. The nominator, with or without the assistance of the candidate, should complete the following items. After receiving nominations, the Council will call on experts to select finalists. Those teachers selected as finalists will be required to submit additional supporting information. Finalists and award winners will be recognized at the 2004 Fall OC TE Conference. E-mail for further information: hardtu@pdx.edu

Part I

Name of Nominee _____ Position _____

Home address/phone/e-mail _____

Currently teaching at _____

School address/phone/e-mail _____

Number of years teaching full-time _____ Part-time _____

Level: Elementary ___ Middle ___ Secondary ___ Two-year college ___ Four-year school _____

Part II

Nominator's Name and Position _____

Home address/phone/e-mail _____

School address/phone/e-mail _____

Checklist of Nomination Requirements:

1. _____ completed Parts I and II above with accurate, legible, complete information
2. _____ wrote and attached a paragraph summarizing the nominee's noteworthy practice, mss form, 12 point type, 250 words maximum
3. _____ included a self-addressed, stamped return postcard for nomination acknowledgment
4. _____ mailed these items in an envelope postmarked by May 24, 2004 to:

U.H. Hardt
OC TE Teaching Award
PSU-GSE
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751

Friday evening and Saturday, April 2-3, 2004
Literacy Workshop, Ashland
Linda Christensen, Portland
"Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word."
Kathi.bowen-jones@ashland.k12.or.us

OC TE Spring Conference
Friday evening and Saturday, April 16-17, 2004
Inn of the Seventh Mountain, Bend
hardtu@pdx.edu

April 24, 2004
20th Annual Oregon Writing Festival, PSU, Portland
bjwiegele@aol.com

May 2-6, 2004
International Reading Association Convention, Reno-Tahoe
www.reading.org/2004

September 1, 2004
Oregon English Journal, Fall issue manuscript deadline

October 2, 2004
OC TE Fall In-service Conference
Wilsonville High School
Keynoters: Eric Kimmel, Allen Webb
www.ote.org

November 18-23, 2004
NCTE Convention, Indianapolis
www.ncte.org

February 1, 2005
Oregon English Journal, Spring issue manuscript deadline

February 11-12, 2005
Oregon Reading Association Conference, Portland
www.ora.org

March 16-19, 2005
NW Regional NCTE Conference, Lewiston, ID
"Voices and Visions: The Core of Discovery"
Crag Hill
orion@pullman.com

April 23, 2005
21st Oregon Writing Festival, PSU

Oregon Council of Teachers of English Mini-Grants for Teaching and Learning in English Language Arts (K-college)

Call for Mini-Grant Proposals

In keeping with its mission of supporting professional development for English language arts teachers, the Oregon Council of Teachers of English offers its members the opportunity to apply for mini-grants of **up to \$500** each to improve instruction. **The deadline for submission is March 22, 2004, for grants to be completed by October 1, 2004.**

The grants should reflect current best practices in the teaching of language arts and should target any one (or a combination) of the following areas:

- improving instruction through the development of innovative curricular projects in English language arts;
- improving student reading skills, strategies, and comprehension;
- improving instruction in diversity and diverse approaches to multicultural English language arts;
- improving instruction in English language arts for ESL students;
- improving English language instruction through smart uses of technology (excludes capital expenditures for purchases of equipment);
- improving instruction in writing and literacy.

Criteria

Applicants must be members of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English. Applicants must agree to publicize the results of the project individually or collaboratively through available venues such as *Chalkboard* newsletter, *Oregon English Journal*, presentation at OCTE in-service, NCTE presentation.

Awards will be based on:

- quality (significance and relevance);
- likelihood that the proposal will have an impact on improving instruction;
- degree to which the proposal celebrates and dignifies student learning;
- likelihood that the proposal will be completed during the time period;
- willingness of the applicant to document and present results of the work.

Ideally, mini-grants should be awarded to projects that go beyond the boundaries of business as usual through innovation and effective uses of best practices. Typically, in recent years, OCTE has funded two projects each year.

A committee of OCTE Board members will evaluate applications. Proposals should include

provisions for project assessment, which will be the responsibility of the recipient.

To apply for an OCTE mini-grant, please submit a mini-grant proposal of no more than 2 pages (3 including the signature page) by the deadline.

Prepare three copies addressed to:

Anita Helle, Chair of Research Committee
c/o Moreland Hall 244
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331 (ahelle@orst.edu)

Each proposal will be assigned a number and will be blind-reviewed by a team. Please note that the signature page should be a separate page, so that it can be separated from the proposal to assure anonymity.

1. **GOALS or OUTCOMES:** What do you want to accomplish with this mini-grant proposal?
2. **PROBLEM or ISSUE:** What problem or issue does this mini-grant proposal address, and what makes this issue significant to language arts instruction in your school and/or community?
3. **TIMELINE and PLAN OF WORK:** What concrete actions or activities do you propose in order to accomplish the goals of the project? How will you go about it? (What will happen first, what happens after that, to completion?)
4. **BUDGET:** What do you propose to use \$500 for? (Be specific: break down items if more than one item.)
5. **EVALUATION:** How will the project be evaluated? (open-ended survey, peer review, student reflections, etc.)

Signature page (please respond to the following and attach as a separate page)

1. Are you willing to publicize the results of this project at an OCTE conference or in an article for *Chalkboard* or the *Oregon English Journal*?
2. Name, Address, Phone, Current E-mail:
3. Signature: _____
Date: _____

Rewards Earned & Lessons Learned

by Susan Murai,
Conestoga Middle School,
Beaverton



Susan Murai

After receiving my OCTE mini-grant last fall to help buy materials for a literature circle unit I was creating, the hard work began. The unit centered around young adult novels with the themes of bullying, and I needed to begin the tasks of deciding what books to buy and planning the unit. All of the work was well worth it, as the unit was a success. That's not to say it

won't look a lot different this year when I teach it, but for the first time through, it went well.

The books the students could choose from were *The Misfits* by James Howe, *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher, *Hidden Talents* by David Lubar, *The Girls* by Amy Goldman Koss, *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli, and *Visiting Miss Caples* by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel. I presented a book talk to introduce the various plots, and then students indicated on a ballot what were their first through sixth choices. Amazingly, most kids received their first choice!

The best part about this unit was the discussions. On the discussion days, I would visit each group and spend about five minutes listening in and taking notes. There were times when I didn't want to leave, because the conversations were so compelling and insightful! Hearing students ask clarifying questions, make astute observations and connections to their own lives was rewarding. That they, for the most part, were polite and respectful while doing it was the icing on the cake. I even had one young man in class exclaim after reading *The Girls*, "I never knew that this went on! Why do girls make everything so complicated?" Hearing the four girls in his group try and explain the culture of girls and friendship was priceless—he had to attempt to stand in the opposite sex's shoes and try to see the world through a whole new perspective.

The other aspect that was exciting to behold was the thoughtful and introspective journal entries students wrote. In the privacy of their own journals, they were able to talk about times when they had bullied other kids "not knowing how much it hurt" or share that reading about a sympathetic victim in a story would make them "think twice before walking by and ignoring a situation" where another person was being victimized.

One of the things I am planning to change this year has to do with the novel choices. I am adding five titles to the current selections. Four of these five are higher-level books as I realized that I needed more titles which would challenge my students. The titles of these four are *Alt Ed* by Catherine Atkins, *Shattering Glass* by Gail Giles, *Who Will Tell My Brother* by Marlene Carvell, and *The Battle of Jericho* by Sharon M. Draper. The fifth book is a collection of short stories called *On the Fringe*, edited by Donald R. Gallo; it will serve as a supplement to groups who want to add another layer to their discussions by comparing or contrasting stories.

Oregon Council of Teachers of English

CHALKBOARD

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PORTLAND, OR 07207-9126

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Announcements

Membership Committee Report

OCTE membership is currently 356. We are pleased that elementary and middle school membership has increased. Our purpose is to encourage and support Language Arts teachers, and we would like to be of service to many

more of our dedicated Oregon teachers. If you know teachers who would be interested in OCTE membership, please give them copies of this application form or have them contact Fawn Erickson-Bragg at membership@octe.org or P.O. Box 9126, Portland, OR 97207-9126.

OCTE MEMBERSHIP FORM

Type of Membership:

- New Renewal Three-year membership (\$60.00)
 One-year membership (\$25.00) Full-time Student one-year membership (\$10.00)
 I am interested in purchasing copy/copies of the Oregon Literary Map at \$10.00 each.

Mail this form to:

OCTE Membership Committee • P.O. Box 9126 • Portland, OR 97207-9126

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Name of School or Affiliation: _____

Address of School: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Name of School District: _____

SEND ALL MAILING TO: HOMESCHOOL

PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE LEVEL OR POSITION

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> High School Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School/ | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator | <input type="checkbox"/> Aide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junior High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Media Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Student |

JOIN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

1 YR. OCTE MEMBERSHIP (\$25.00) PROVIDES:

- Four issues of the OCTE newsletter, *Chalkboard*
- Fall and Spring issues of the OCTE journal, *Oregon English Journal*
- Annual fall and spring conferences throughout Oregon
- Annual Teachers as Writers Contest
- Summer scholarships for teachers
- Scholarships for Oregon high school students
- Annual Oregon Teaching Excellence Awards

Contact: OCTE Membership Committee
P.O. Box 9126
Portland, OR 97207-9126