Are you looking for an excellent children’s book? The Oregon Council of Teachers of English presented the 2010 Oregon Spirit Book Awards at its fall conference on Oct. 1, 2011. The Oregon Spirit Book Award is given yearly to the author of a distinguished contribution to children's or young adult literature that engages and encourages readers’ imagination, discovery, and understanding, reflecting the spirit and values held by Oregonians. Priority is given to books that present

- respectful portrayals of diverse populations
- tolerance of various individual and cultural perspectives
- peaceful, innovative, and equitable solutions of conflicts
- respect for ecosystems and environmental sustainability

The recipients of the 2010 OSBA awards are:

**Children’s:**
- *Joha Makes a Wish: A Middle Eastern Tale* by Eric A. Kimmel

**Middle Readers:**
- *Calvin Coconut: Dog Heaven* by Graham Salisbury
- *Harmonic Feedback* by Tara Kelly

**Young Adult:**
- *The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy)* by Barbara Kerley

Special Category - Nonfiction:
- *The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Susy)*

**Honor Books were awarded to:**

- **Children’s:**
  - *Aggie the Brave* by Lori Ries

- **Middle Reader:**
  - *After All, You’re Callie Boone* by Winnie Mack

- **Middle Reader:**
  - *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword* by Barry Deutsch

- **Young Adult:**
  - *The Last Great Getaway of the Water Balloon Boys* by Scott William Carter
  - *The Candidates* by Inara Scott

For a list of prior year’s award winners, please visit [www.octe.org](http://www.octe.org) in the Awards link.
Manuel Mateo and Wendy Weber

The Friday evening workshop conducted by Oregon Shakespeare Festival staff Joan Langley and Kirsten Giroux was energizing and outstanding, setting a high bar for the rest of the conference. By engaging participants in some close contextual reading of sections of *Macbeth*, through active kinesthetic introductory activities, ice-breakers and conversation, there was more than one attendee who couldn't wait to introduce the “Scottish Play” to their classes.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NCTE PROMISING YOUNG WRITERS PROGRAM
http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/pyw
Contact: John Scanlan, John.Scanlan@pendleton.k12.or.us

NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING
http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/aa
Contact: Ricky Korach, DrMrsK@comcast.net

OCTE SPRING CONFERENCE—APRIL 21, 2012
Ashland High School, and a weekend of Oregon Shakespeare Festival plays • info@octe.org

28TH ANNUAL OREGON WRITING FESTIVAL
May 5, 2012, at PSU. Grades 4-12.
Info: bjwiegele@aol.com

OCTE LITERACY PROJECT MINI GRANTS
Application Deadline: May 1, 2012
http://www.octe.org/awardsandprograms_grantopportunities.html

Tim Gillespie opened Saturday’s conference with an inspiring keynote address, “My Vocation: What I Learned.” Recently retired from a 37-year career as a public school teacher and winner of the National High School Teacher of Excellence Award from NCTE, Gillespie has written many articles for educational journals and recently published *Doing Literary Criticism* with Stenhouse Publishers.

Gillespie asked himself during his career, “What are you doing and what's it for?” Ultimately, the answer is that it’s about the students. He told about a Hawaiian restaurant that has the slogan, “Go blasphah or go home!” meaning, go big or go home! Gillespie said teachers need to focus on the big questions and not get bogged down in all of the details.

He was able to maintain enthusiasm throughout his career by remembering that one of the greatest gifts of teaching is that it provides endless opportunities to learn. He also kept a teaching journal, maintained relationships with colleagues, and always remembered how important the job of teaching is. “This work can be rigorous; it can also be joyful…the magic dust you sprinkle sticks longer sometimes than you know.” By the end of his talk, there were few dry eyes in the audience.

In her presentation, “Gendered Rhetoric: Using Writing to Explore Gender,” Beth Lifson described a unit she uses at The Center for Advanced Learning, a charter school in Gresham. This unit uses gender roles as a focus for teaching the skill of rhetorical analysis.

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Join us on Facebook! This is the fastest way to stay in touch and see what the English community is doing across the state. “Like” us and share with a friend!
Peter Thacker’s presentation on the deconstruction of William Saroyan’s “Gaston” revealed layer upon layer of the short story’s meaning, and he modeled how a class can bring a wide variety of meaning to any published text, with only a little prompting by an instructor. We were all a little surprised when the session drew to a close, as we could have been content to share and discuss strategies for easily an hour longer.

Both Kristin Le Mon of Beaverton (“Critical Thinking through Literacy”) and Patricia Smith of Clayton State University in Georgia (“Getting around Stumbling Blocks: A Differentiated Approach to Teaching in the Content Areas”) emphasized the importance of and strategies for presenting material and giving assignments in a variety of modes. For some activities, students were in small groups consisting of individuals differing in learning styles.

Jan Priddy from Seaside High School presented “Making Students Work Harder without Making Your Eyes Bleed.” She offered attendees practical strategies for reducing time teachers spend scoring writing and specific “low stress” assignments that get students writing frequently.

The conference was bookended by the keynoter address of Jim Burke of Burlingame High School in San Francisco, “Thinking about Reading/Reading Is Thinking.” He said that the most important model that teachers provide is being readers ourselves. And the best way to address comprehension, literacy, and student engagement is through rigorous, effective classroom discussion. Such discussion can occur in small settings or larger ones.

And different types of questions and answers can be used, but the most important type is the essential question. That is, what larger issue can be examined in terms of a piece of literature or an historical event, or this theme or that notion? Providing essential questions—and teaching students how to create them—can lead to deep discussion and deep learning.

Texts can disorient, confuse, inspire, awe, or otherwise affect students. How can we use that disorientation, that confusion, that inspiration to get students to engage in inquiry and learning? By focusing first on smaller, factual questions and then building toward analytical and then evaluative questions, students and teachers can extend the learning from the text to the Larger Areas of Life.

These were just a few of the more than 35 presentations given by 50 speakers at the Sept. 30 - Oct. 1 OCTE conference at Sunset High School in Beaverton.

(Jean Mittelstaedt and Molly Gillcrist contributed to these reviews)
OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
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BARRY LOPEZ, keynote speaker
Author of numerous books, including
Arctic Dreams (National Book Award).

Conference Schedule:
8:00 a.m. - Registration
8:30 a.m. - 11:40 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions
11:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. - Barry Lopez
2:00 p.m. - 4:05 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

Oregon Shakespeare Festival Plays:
Friday, April 20, at 8:00 p.m.
Romeo and Juliet; Seagull
Saturday, April 21, at 8:00 p.m.
Troilus and Cressida; Medea / MacBeth / Cinderella
Sunday, April 22, at 1:30 p.m.
Seagull; Animal Crackers

Order tickets: 800-219-8161 or
www.osfashland.org/plays/index.aspx

You may register on-line at octe.org

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