

Chalkboard is the newsletter of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, an organization that has existed for over 100 years to support teachers of English and the language arts in Oregon elementary and secondary schools, community colleges and universities.



# Chalkboard

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

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Peter Thacker, Editor  
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**PUB CLUB** Monthly meet-ups for English teachers to collaborate, share resources, and build community

First Thursday of every month at 5:00 pm

Portland: Green Dragon Bistro  
Salem: The Governor's Cup



OCTE  
Oregon Council of Teachers of English

## 2016 Fall Conference Chair Invites Your Participation



Laurie, Dougherty ~  
Conference Chair



Wilsonville High School

I invite you to join me at the OCTE Fall Conference on **October 8, 2016**. We will be back at beautiful Wilsonville High School. The Fall Conference is my favorite way to start off the school year, connecting with colleagues, hearing authors speak about their writing, and getting great ideas from workshops and presentations. Start planning now to get your school year off to a great start interacting and learning with language arts colleagues deeply committed to our profession.

Award winning Oregon author Graham Salisbury will be our keynote speaker this year. His books - *Blue Skin of the Sea*, *Under the Blood-Red Sun*, *House of the Red Fish*, *Eyes of the Emperor*, *Shark Bait*, *Jungle Dogs*, *Lord of the Deep*, *Island Boyz*, *Night of the Howling Dogs*, and his very popular *Calvin Coconut* series - have been celebrated widely. Through his writing, Salisbury explores the emotional journey kids, especially those who are challenged by events that place them as outsiders, take to become adults in a challenging and complicated world. His address, "Wild Boy: No One Is Born to Lose," will be about creating a meaningful life and the importance of teachers in this effort.

Another highlight of the conference will be the Oregon Spirit Book Awards. Established in 2005, 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. A free OSBA award-winning book by one of these authors will be included with your member registration. And almost every single award winner will be there to inspire you and autograph their books.

In addition we will be offering a full day of conference sessions for all grade levels K-Post-graduate. Conference sessions will include book talks, teaching strategies, and practical classroom lessons geared at all levels.

This conference is an excellent value and includes membership in OCTE. This is a great opportunity to be involved in a state-level organization devoted to the teaching and learning of English and the language arts. PDUs will be given and Graduate Credit is available through PSU.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in October at Wilsonville High School.  
Save the date!

Laurie Dougherty,  
Conference Chair

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## Preview of Fall Workshop Topics

- New and Notable Books for the Classroom K-12
- SSR: Read More with Your Common Core
- Detailed Feedback in Less Time: Use Google Classroom!
- Good News from the National Assessment of Educational Progress K-8
- Language in Song: Using Music in the English Classroom
- Something Old, Something New: Bridging High School and College Writing through a Proficiency-based Approach Mining a Novel for STEM Connections; Two Authors' Perspectives
- No Excuses: The Case for Low Skill Peer Reviewers
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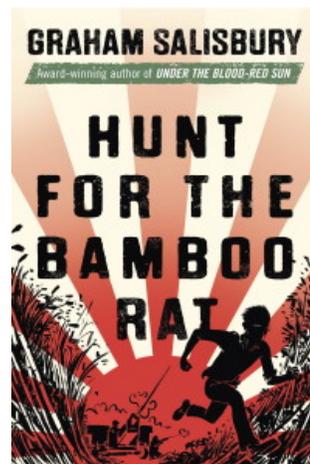
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## *Getting to Know Graham Salisbury and His Books*

by Dorothy Courtox, St. Anthony Catholic School, Tigard, OR



**Graham Salisbury, author**



"As I have grown as a writer of books for young people, I've come to realize that writing stories is only part of my responsibility. Sure, writing is an art, and I treat it as such. But when I am out among my readers, I find something far more important

going on: connection. I have been especially moved by those with little to count on in their lives. When they look up at me with eyes of wonder, I am humbled. To them I am more than a writer; I am someone who cares. Caring is my mission." Graham Salisbury

Salisbury grew up on the islands of Oahu and Hawaii. He was a songwriter and musician in the late 1960s. He graduated from California State University and has an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts. He helped establish their MFA program in writing for children. His experiences as a deckhand on a deep-sea charter fishing boat and a teacher in a Montessori school lend authenticity to his stories. He now lives in Portland, Oregon and continues to thrill us with his stories of courage, loyalty, duty, and responsibility. His books have received numerous awards including the Oregon Spirit Book Award, the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, the Oregon Book Award, California Young Reader Medal, and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

Graham Salisbury is renowned for his young adult novels set in Hawaii that address the tensions after Pearl Harbor revealing the bravery under extreme scrutiny of Nisei (Japanese- American) citizens and soldiers in World War II. His series including *Under the Red Blood Sky* (released as a major motion picture in 2014), *House of the Red Fish*, *Eyes of the Emperor*, and *Hunt for the Red Bamboo* all probed the lives of Nisei children and adults in a skeptical community. Salisbury's sensitive, revealing portrayals of patriotic "aliens" convinced the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans' Club to make him an honorary member in 2015.

For younger readers, the Calvin Coconut series explores Calvin's present-day life as a 4th grader in Hawaii. In fact, Calvin goes to the same elementary school that Graham attended! Graham brings to life Calvin's trials, tribulations, joys and the adventures of living in a single parent family with a younger sister and the annoying older daughter of his mom's best friend who comes to live with them. He is constantly bullied in school and tries to come up with ways to deal with the bullying. He has a group of close friends who rally around and are always ready for a new adventure. His experiences are real and kids can easily identify with Calvin.

Graham's books *Under the Blood Red Sun* and *House of the Red Fish* follow Tomikazu Nakaji's family whose parents and grandfather immigrated to Hawaii from Japan. Retaliation for Pearl Harbor affects all the Japanese families living in Hawaii. Tomi's father's fishing boat is sunk and his father and grandfather are sent to an internment camp. It's a fascinating story as the war progresses and Tomi tries to salvage his family's business and honor.

Picture yourself as a Japanese-American young man in Hawaii, in the days just before Pearl Harbor. Tensions are high among the islanders and talk of war is in the air. *Hunt for the Bamboo Rat* is the story of Zenji Watanabe, a first generation Nisei young man recruited by the Army for his ability to speak Japanese. You are immersed into Zenji's world as war begins and he is trapped in the Philippines. You will find yourself riveted as he learns to adapt and survives.

Graham Salisbury will share not only his books, but also the empathy he has for all children, particularly those that struggle. Join us!

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## ***Review of "Novels with Your Nonfiction " Eryn Willow's Fine Session at our Spring OCTE Conference***

**by Kailyn Kent, MAT Student, Lewis & Clark College**

"I miss teaching novels," educator Eryn Willow confessed at the beginning of her workshop at the OCTE Spring Conference in Silverton, Oregon. As teachers prepare students for an increasingly complex, media-saturated world, standards and lesson plans have shifted toward reading and analyzing "information texts."

Fortunately, Eryn's session, "Novels With Your Nonfiction," was a treasure trove of insightful recommendations on how to integrate these information texts, stipulated by the Common Core, into an English Language Arts classroom based around literature.

Eryn, a middle school teacher at Mark Twain Middle School in Silverton, introduced an extensive library of young adult novels with an international and contemporary focus, whose settings ranged between war-torn Afghanistan, the streets of New Delhi, and homeless shelters on Main Street, USA. Eryn related how different books had opened the eyes of her students while becoming class favorites. Each whole class novel grounded students in a deep, detailed experience of a contemporary theme or issue like poverty, discrimination, or war. This theme could be previewed and explored more broadly through news articles or primary source documents. In addition to providing a list of potential whole-class novels, Eryn catalogued useful news outlets and search engines geared toward adolescents, and pointed attendees toward the RAFT writing strategy, developed by Dr. Carol Santa and colleagues. RAFT is a strategy that prompts students to creatively respond to a text by essentially writing their own "primary source document" like a letter, editorial, or advertisement. Information texts can become great "mentor texts" for future RAFT responses.

Historical novels, even when based on real-world situations, are not information texts. To meet Common Core standards, historical novels must be paired with a robust selection of these texts. Here, Eryn's thoughtful choice of novels branches off into a million research opportunities. Supplementing novels through integrating thematically-related primary and secondary sources into a unit invites interdisciplinary connections, even with STEM, as teachers can help students access patents, entries from medical dictionaries, health labels, research studies, and statistical infographics for more focused, real-world discussion. Stories set in far-away places can be brought closer to home by including related, local news stories. This approach also aids differentiation as individuals or small groups can "jigsaw" and present articles that match their current reading level or personal interests. Best of all, Eryn's approach can't help but be relevant to students, inviting them not only to tackle real world conflicts, but to personally connect with them.

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## ***A Smarter Response to SBAC: Using a Workshop Model to Produce Inspired Work Samples*** **by Cristy Weggelaar, Sherwood High School**

Several years ago, ODE began requiring students who didn't meet essential skills benchmarks to create work samples to demonstrate proficiency. As a teacher of writing, I chose to use this policy change as an opportunity to ignite passion for writing in students who are often unmotivated by or are otherwise unsuccessful in traditional language arts programs. In the words of Penny Kittle (2008), I believe that "my students...are the most powerful forces in [the] classroom, not the tests."

I implemented a writing workshop model, which challenges students to find their voice through ownership of their writing by developing their own process, topics, and structures. This results in students becoming writers, expressing their most profound loves and losses in their lives. Instead of viewing essay writing as an unsavory task, my students now view essay writing as an art form, as a way to tell their story to a world that doesn't always want to listen.

In my writing workshops, I:

1. teach students to look carefully at their own lives for writing inspiration. Instead of giving them prompts, I use guided exercises such as Nancie Atwell's writing territories to support this process.
2. support good writing by "reading like a writer." We explore mentor texts by popular essayists such as Stephen King, Barbara Kingsolver, Dave Barry, and David Sedaris.
3. provide time in class to write each day. When students are not drafting work samples, I set aside time for one-on-one conferences and peer review.
4. as needed, use mini-lessons of five to twenty minutes in length to teach discrete skills such as "show, don't tell" and using transitions.
5. approach grammar as a tool to enhance voice. We study mentor sentences (see Jeff Anderson's work) for inspiration and experiment with punctuation in our own writing.
6. establish a safe learning environment on the first day of class. I often ask students to share their writing in risk-free ways. I also provide space for students to share their writing publicly, but only if they want to.

It all comes down to this: Throw out the conventional rules and structures of academic writing and celebrate the process and the craft of writing essays. So, in celebration of student voice, I share with you these passages from students the system said couldn't write:

"I had never experienced true rage. The way my teeth gritted and my fist clenched. That day my whole life changed" (CB, 2015).

"One, your pulse rate begins to quicken. Two, your teammates' roaring victory in the background. Three, moving out on the the field quicker than rain, and thunder roaring, and the ice cold rain pelting your skin as if it were knives falling from the sky" (KV, 2015).

"Breathe in. Breathe out. Put the straw in your nose. Move up to the line, plug your nostril and inhale the powder through the straw. Wash it down with some water and wait 5 minutes for it to hit you. This became my recipe for happiness. One would think that joy comes from completing achievements and making loved ones proud of yourself. My smiles are forged from straws, spoons, razor blades, and pills. It was like cheating the system, cheating life" (JK, 2014).

"The littlest things hold violent memories. Condolences for a burnt sanity, crisp and black, it looks like a funeral" (CT, 2015).

Kim Stafford said, "The things that move you-turn toward them." In a writing workshop students cannot craft an essay without learning about what moves them, then finding the courage to turn inward-often producing work that is raw, vital, and sometimes a little painful. It is through this intensely personal process that they learn the value and the promise of the written word.

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## Stronger Than Ever: An Appreciation of This Spring's Oregon Writing Festival



"Stronger than ever!"

That's how Rick Hardt, chair of the Oregon Writing Festival and PSU professor, described the May 6 event at Portland State University. The thirty-second annual event brought 860 students (gr. 4-12) from across the state to PSU to work with 147 teachers and writers to hone their writing skills.

For eighth grader Kylie, "the favorite part was when all the kids shared their papers. They were awesome." Claudine said: "My favorite parts were getting Bart King's autograph and sharing my story. I also loved the workshop where we had to write a six-word memoir."

This year's keynote speakers were Bart King (gr. 4-5), Roland Smith (gr. 6-8), and Cat Winters (gr. 9-12), all award-winning Oregon authors. Reports from students were incredibly positive, and there were long lines getting the newly purchased books autographed.

Mikhaila Bishop of Wilsonville High School set a new record by attending her ninth OWF; the previous record of eight years was held by a student from Lebanon, Oregon. Lindsey Williams, a participant in the 2015 festival from Abiqua Academy in Salem, wrote one of the two best pieces by a U.S. high school freshman in the Scholastic Art & Writing Award program this year.

This did not surprise Tim Gillespie, OCTE Past President and one of the visionary creators of the OWF 32 years ago. "I cannot begin to explain how important this event has been for nurturing and encouraging our state's young writers. Year after year, I've had students tell me how transforming it was when they were selected to attend at a young age and had the opportunity to learn from prominent authors, sit in workshops to hone their skills, and bring a favorite writing project to share with other young writers."

"That's exactly what students from Pendleton High School did. On returning home, they conducted their own writing workshops for peers and for children in our elementary schools," reports John Scanlan who has brought students on over-night trips to Portland for decades. "The OWF is a life-changing event for students."

"It's my favorite teaching day of the year," says Ed Kline of Oregon City High about getting to work with these enthusiastic writers. "It's on a Saturday, and I don't even get paid for it."

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