

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 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, research tidbits, book recommendations, and more.

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Karen Johnson,
Guest Editor

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Spring Conference 2018, Ashland Highlights - 3 articles



Photos by Karen K. Johnson

"Making Text Physical"

By Lea Mathieu

Rebecca Clark Carey makes her living by inviting actors at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival to "enter the text," and as the keynote speaker at OCTE's spring conference in Ashland in April, OSF's voice and text director energetically shared some practical ways teachers can lead their students of drama, speech, and poetry to do just that.

Start with the sense of the text, she advises. When working with poetry (certainly including Shakespearean plays), have students write down whatever the poem means to them, how they relate to it, or what it makes them think of. Imaging the sense of the text through drawing, acting it out, or signing it in the student's unique sign language all bring "physicalization" (a favorite word of hers) to the text, making the written word and its perhaps abstract ideas concrete to the student.

Then focus on specific parts of speech such as verbs, nouns, or adjectives. Students can, for example, act out verbs as they speak the text, further bringing meaning alive. Punctuation is also key, and she suggested that students carry something weighty--perhaps a bag--to and fro as they speak a text, switching direction with internal punctuation, and coming to a full stop and turning at the end of sentences.

More ideas can be found in the books that Carey has co-authored with her husband, David Carey: *Vocal Arts Workbook*, *The Verbal Arts Workbook*, and *The Shakespeare Workbook and Video*.

"Poetry in Motion"

By LeeAnn Schmelzenbach

Poetry is a genre I am not fond of; often I have signed up for a workshop at a conference only to experience a lulling boredom, wondering when the next session begins. This has not been the case even once since I began attending the OCTE in 2017, particularly this year at the Ashland OCTE Spring Conference. The workshop "Poetry in Motion" was helpful in my understanding of poetry and where to find excellent sources, and it pulled me out of my cynicism in a way that I can do the same for my students.

The first 30 minutes, an amazing list of poetry books for all ages was placed in my hand and then read out loud. I was floored when I learned of, and then listened to, *Big Talk : Poems for Four Voices* by Paul Fleischman, read by four of my colleagues. It was a reader's theater from ages past, but so much better and high quality in writing. Then, we went outside.

First, we gathered in a park and listened to a brief meditation poem about nature while listening to the birds and rushing water of the park's brook. Then we sat, reflectively writing the things we saw, heard, and smelled as they affected us in that moment. The best was yet to come. One of the instructors had set up a poetry treasure hunt - of sorts. The workshop leaders had chosen, copied, placed into zip-lock bags, and hidden more than 15 poems through a grove of trees. Our job was to wander, find the poems, read them, and if we found one we liked to take it. 15 minutes of wandering turned into a mini-gathering and sharing of the poetry that spoke to us.

The last activity was my favorite. We all gathered at Trinity Episcopal Church to walk the Labyrinth. I had never walked a labyrinth before and was surprised at its simplicity and deep intention of its purpose. We were given a poem to meditate on at the beginning of the path, and then there were more poems about nature and the state of the soul located at the center.

My own journey was accentuated by the quiet atmosphere and sunshine filtering through the trees. I was amazed. Not only was I able to participate in outdoor, moving activities, but each of them accented, punctuated, and focused on poetry. It truly was "Poetry in Motion," a workshop I didn't simply sit through but moved through and was moved by.

"Reading Like a Writer"

Steve Jones's session, writing samples from Amy Quattlebaum, Reynard Seifert, Lea Mathieu, and Jodi Sanderson

The OCTE *Chalkboard* editors selected a few pieces written by attendees of Steve Jones's Spring Conference session, "Reading Like a Writer," to share here. The popular session generated so many excellent pieces that the choices were not easily made. Our thanks to the writers who allowed us to use them.

Jones, referencing Francine Prose's advice from *Reading Like a Writer*, had participants look at sentences as the exquisite building blocks of excellent writing. They tried their hand at the one-sentence story in the Oregon Writing Project tradition of writing together, teachers teaching teachers, as a way to lead students to playfully put all the creative sentence-generative tools into their writing, including the essay or cumulative sentence with its trailing verb phrases. See SR Jones, OWP@GFU

Mushroom hunting is a matter of heading out for a soggy afternoon in the rainy November woods to search out storm-downed trees, to poke around the nebulous periphery of Doug firs, to spy the telltale flash of an unexpected orange chanterelle, to pounce on a likely log crammed with turkey tails, wet and victorious.

--Amy Quattlebaum

Endless Summer--days of camping beneath countless stars, with no need for cover nor want of fire, for there was plenty--when will you come back to me?

--Reynard Seifert

I fear stagnation and he fears change, so we meet in the balance of the familiar and the new.

--Lea Mathieu

Driving to Ashland on the way to the writing conference, our acceleration up the mountain starts decreasing and the red hazard light starts flashing--on the shoulder of the freeway with no cell phone service, no gas, Karin with a broken foot, and no idea how close we are to the next exit, we slowly begin to panic till Rick, our hero, pulls over offering to go get us gas--thirty minutes later our older friend returns, running across the four lanes of the freeway, leaping over the divider to save us.

--Jodi Sanderson

Oregon Writing Festival, 2018 recap
By Lea Mathieu



Pictured: Top Left - Laurie Dougherty, OCTE President, with Marvin Lynn, Dean, PSU Graduate School of Education. Top Right - Opening ceremony, PSU Ballroom. Bottom Left - Bart King's workshop. Bottom Right - Middle School Writing Workshop.
(Photos by Karen K. Johnson)

Over 800 students from 4th through 12th grade, representing more than 60 schools in the state, enjoyed the 34th annual Oregon Writing Festival at Portland State University on May 5. Also attending were approximately 150 teachers and writers who presented, guided, and otherwise helped the budding writers.

Students gained from the experience whether this was their first or fifth time. Tanner said he decided to try it this year because, "My teacher said it would be fun, and it would help me be a better writer." (His teacher was right.) Kiara was attending for the third time in a row, and she said she has used ideas from OWF in her classes. So far, her favorite workshop invited students to write stories based on the lyrics of popular songs.

Besides song lyrics, workshop presenters used other tools to inspire students. For example, Julie Asparro used Pablo Neruda's poetry; Selene Robinowitz used foam clay in her workshop on sculptural poetry, and I brought postcards of *New Yorker* covers to prompt ideas.

Students also gleaned ideas from each other in sharing sessions and in general sessions from published writers: Bart King, Fonda Lee, and April Henry (who shared that she comes from "a long line of murderers, arsonists, and pig bewitchers").

The OWF is sponsored by the OCTE and the Graduate School of Education at PSU. Festival Chair Rick Hardt is already planning for the 35th OWF, to be held on May 4, 2019. Keynote speakers will be Rosanne Parry (grades 4-5), Graham Salisbury (grades 6-8), and the newly appointed Oregon Poet Laureate, Kim Stafford (grades 9-12). Mark your calendars and bring students and/or ideas for this statewide celebration of writing.
<http://www.octe.org/oregon-writing-festival.html> .

Oregon Encyclopedia Update

By Rick Hardt



Encyclopedia Enlightens the World

The most widely read OCTE publication--The Oregon Encyclopedia of History and Culture (a joint project with the Oregon Historical Society and Portland State University)--had 583,995 site visits in 2017.

The busiest month was March with 76,651 visits and 109,740 pageviews; this compares with 55,606 hits and 88,358 pageviews in March 2016--the increase no doubt a result of the renewed focus on the Rajneeshees. 58% of readers accessed the website via their desktops, 42% on their mobile devices.

The authoritative website is a free resource for all: www.oregonencyclopedia.org
The OE has assembled hundreds of accomplished historians, geologists, anthropologists, journalists, writers, scholars, and local experts to write about Oregon people, places, groups and institutions, events, and biota, and has published a wealth of archival material, including thousands of maps, digital exhibits, bibliographies, and photographs.

Interestingly, hits have come from 206 countries, and entries have been read in 156 different languages. After the U.S. and Canada, countries with the most inquiries were the U.K., Russia, Australia, Germany, India, Japan, France, and the Philippines.

Top U.S. cities for inquiries were Portland, Seattle, Eugene, Boston, Salem, Beaverton, San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles.

And which 10 OE entries were of most interest?

- Exclusion Laws
- Blacks in Oregon
- Cascade Mountains
- Ku Klux Klan
- Rattlesnakes in Oregon
- "Animal House" (the movie)
- City of Antelope/Muddy Ranch
- Umatilla Army Depot
- Whitman Massacre
- Oregon Trail

Did You Know? - Oregon Literary Map

Did You Know . . .
that the Library of Congress has two copies of the "Oregon Literary Map" in its collections? One is in its main collection, and one in the Geography and Map Division.

Described as "this handsome map," it was also reproduced twice in the book *Language of the Land: The Library of Congress Book of Literary Maps*, in black and white in the regular text (p. 147), "and, because we liked it so much, in the color section" (p. 172), writes the author, Martha Hopkins.

OCTE gave permission for the reproduction in 1999.



Chalkboard Editor Change



As I retire from teaching at the University of Portland, OCTE is appointing Lynette Gottlieb as editor of *Chalkboard*. Lynette has co-edited the newsletter with me the past year, and I am excited for her stewardship of *Chalkboard*. She is a consummate, creative teacher of the language arts who has written numerous pieces for *Oregon English Journal* and presented often at OCTE conferences. She brings passion and joy to her work that I am sure will rub off on you as readers. Please help her by proposing articles about your classroom activities, books you've read, reactions to local, state, and federal initiatives affecting us E/LA teachers, models of fine student work and more. I thank the dozens of you who have contributed to *Chalkboard* during my tenure as editor. You show such professionalism!

I leave this position reminding you of the importance of OCTE and NCTE to your practice and our collective voice as English teachers. From my first OCTE conference in the late 1970s, I have been challenged and affirmed by the breadth of ideas and practices of fellow English teachers in a way that has enticed me to return and also partake in NCTE conferences. I have always added new lessons, found new books, and participated in conversations that bolstered my teaching from these gatherings. Professional associations are built both for you and with you. Join, rejoin, and, when you have the time, take a leadership role in a most essential organization.

Peter Thacker
University of Portland (retired)

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Oregon Sprit Book Award News

By Karen K. Johnson



The Oregon Spirit Book Award Committee is meeting early June to select 2017 winner and honor books. Once selected, we will post the winners on our website as well as on Facebook, and we will also send a short announcement to our members.

[Here is a link](#) to previous winners, as well as information about the award.

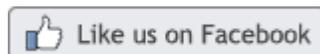
The committee is excited to announce a new committee member, selected from three interested candidates. Karin Kayfes is a teacher at Hayesville Elementary School in Salem, Oregon, and serves on the OCTE Board of Directors. Welcome!



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