



OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

## Spring 2008 Language Arts & Reading Conference

**April 4-5, 2008  
in Pendleton, Oregon**

**Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute  
& Pendleton High School**

### Friday afternoon

2:30 p.m. **Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute**  
The interpretive center for the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes chronicles tribal heritage and the impact of Western migration from the Indian perspective.

### Friday evening Slick Fork Saloon

“Attitude Adjustment” at Hamsley’s historic Slick Fork Saloon

### Saturday morning Pendleton High School

8:30 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.  
Presentations for elementary, middle, and high school teachers in all areas of the language arts

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Cedric and Tania Wildbill** on “American Cowboys”  
Producers of a documentary on Indian cowboy Jackson Sundown and African American George Fletcher—two great rodeo cowboys who broke the color barrier at the turn of the 20th century.

**Pre-registration deadline:** March 21, 2008

**Registration fees:** \$60 OCTE members  
\$70 for non-members • \$25 for full-time students or retirees

**Conference information** at [octe.org](http://octe.org)

1 graduate credit through Portland State University available.  
Register separately at the conference.  
Earn six PDUs for continuing licensure.

For more information, contact **John Scanlan**  
[john.scanlan@pendleton.k12.or.us](mailto:john.scanlan@pendleton.k12.or.us) • 541-276-3621, ext. 3838

OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH  
**OCTE Chalkboard**  
PO Box 9126  
Portland, OR 97207-9126

## OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH Spring Language Arts & Reading Conference

APRIL 4-5, 2008 • PENDLETON, OREGON

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### PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Pre-registration deadline: March 21, 2008

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
School \_\_\_\_\_

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

	No. Attending	Registration Fee	Amount
OCTE Members	_____	@ \$60	_____
Non-members	_____	@ \$70	_____
Full-time Students, Retirees	_____	@ \$25	_____
Total	_____		_____ \$ _____

**Academic Credit/PDUs Available**  
Earn one graduate credit from PSU  
(separate registration at the conference).  
Earn five Professional Development Units  
for continuing licensure.

**On-site registration will be \$75 for everyone.** A group pre-registration for 5 or more OCTE members is available at \$50.00 each. Must request a group form (e-mail address below). Pre-registration deadline: March 21, 2008. **For information:** [bjwiegele@aol.com](mailto:bjwiegele@aol.com)  
Make checks payable to **OCTE** and send to: Barbara Wiegele • 14867 SE Orchid Avenue • Milwaukie OR 97267-2454

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THE  
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ENGLISH



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*Chalkboard* is the newsletter of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, an organization that has existed for more than 60 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.

*Chalkboard* is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange.

For inquiries, please contact:

**OCTE**  
P.O. Box 9126  
Portland, OR 97207-9126  
Editor: Janna E. Reid  
[jereid@grantspass.k12.or.us](mailto:jereid@grantspass.k12.or.us)



## Can One GAP Ad Change the World?

by Janna Reid, editor

**N**EW YORK, NEW YORK! What a perfect city to gather with more than 8,000 English teachers to discuss the future of education, to share effective pedagogy, and to realize the similarities among students. Not only did those teachers experience the Big Apple and its world-renowned landmarks—Lady Liberty, the Empire State Building, Broadway (despite the strikes, some shows did indeed go on), Central Park, Fifth Avenue, and, my favorite, Times Square—but the conference itself had its own famous landmarks of education.

Among the notable speakers during the week were Nancie Atwell, Kylene Beers, author Jerry Spinelli, and Oregon’s own Joanne Yatvin, NCTE President. I anticipated hearing about cutting-edge research results, new books to teach, and instructional strategies, but my expectations were surpassed, and I was genuinely inspired again and again.

Very simply, all speakers and attendees that I listened to and spoke to reminded teachers to do what we do best—make learning relevant AND fun, ask hard questions, listen to our students’ stories, and teach our students how to tell those stories through many modes. Poetry and narratives are a natural way to tell a story, but one session even encouraged mixing expository writing and narratives to fulfill a research paper standard. What an idea! Take something that many teachers and students dread, put a new spin on it by writing it in a narrative form, and actually enjoy reading research papers on the weekends.

The job of teaching literacy in the 21st century can be exhausting and discouraging: dealing with the demands of countless IEP and 504 meetings, big-stakes tests, small budgets, standards next to impossible to meet, apathetic parents, students who can’t spell “does” (dose!), and lack of time to plan and partner with other educators. As we look to lead the leaders of the next generation, we know first-hand that there is always something happening about which we might have reason to complain.

But as I sat at one of the many corner Starbucks studying the swarming sidewalks of bundled New Yorkers, I caught sight of a GAP ad that shed some perspective on my list of educational complaints. The ad wondered, “Can ONE voice change the world?” and I realized, again, that that question is



Janna E. Reid received the NCTE/Pearson Prentice Hall Leadership Development Award for 2007.



OCTE board members Janna E. Reid, Ulrich H. Hardt, and Karen Johnson attended the NCTE Affiliate Roundtable Breakfast and accepted the Affiliate Excellence Award for OCTE.

answered every day in our classrooms. Of course one voice can change the world! But that voice is doing more than just complaining.

The leaders at NCTE are teachers first. They challenge us to stick with what we know best—taking interest in who our students are as readers and writers; teaching them to produce instead of consume, to think creatively so that their voices will count when it is their time to tell their stories.

Why do we go to conferences? Because one voice can change your world if you dare to listen, and you can be that voice of change for your students. ■

**LOOKING AHEAD: 2008 Annual NCTE Convention** will be in San Antonio, Texas, and the theme will be “*Because Shift Happens.*”



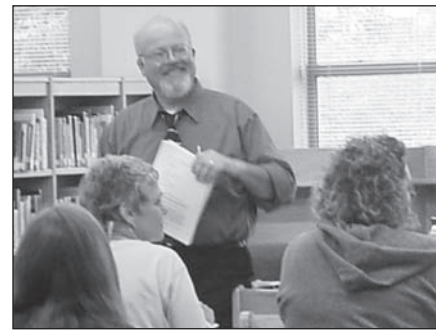
### Tim Gillespie of Lake Oswego High School Named 'Teacher of Excellence' by NCTE

TIM GILLESPIE, Lake Oswego High School English teacher, has been named one of 24 National Teachers of Excellence by the National Council of Teachers of English. Based on documentation of excellent teaching of English at the high school level, the award recognizes and celebrates exceptional classroom teachers.

A graduate of Stanford University, Gillespie began his career in 1971 in Oakland. He moved to Oregon in 1973 to teach English at Parkrose High School and to help establish an alternative program. As language arts coordinator for Multnomah ESD in the 1980s, he also taught 5th grade and 8th grade language arts classes in Portland schools. He served as President of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English from 1986 through 1990.

In 1994, Gillespie came to Lake Oswego High School, where his colleagues describe him as multi-talented, enthusiastic, creative, generous, and compassionate. Senior Rachel Milliron characterizes her experience: "Mr. Gillespie is a pretty cool guy. He has an uncanny ability to make even the most mundane topics engaging and discussable. I love going to his class—we work hard, but we never feel stressed out."

Although he technically retired two years ago, Gillespie, who holds an MAT from Lewis and Clark College and an MA in English from the University of New Hampshire, returned to LOHS to continue to teach two Senior Honors/AP Literature classes. He is working on a book about teaching literary criticism in the high school English classroom, to be published



Tim Gillespie in classroom

by Stenhouse in August 2008. In his off hours he writes and plays harmonica in Big Blind, a blues band comprised of Lake Oswego School District educators.

Gillespie was recognized at the Secondary Luncheon at the NCTE convention in New York City in November. ■



## Oregon Student Writers Recognized

*"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." – Mark Twain*

TWAIN characterizes the power of the written word in the hands of a talented writer. For fifty years the National Council of Teachers of English has recognized young writers whose work demonstrates such power. High school English departments nominate outstanding juniors for consideration. Nominees submit two compositions—a sample of

their best writing and an impromptu essay written under supervision—to an NCTE-designated committee of English teachers, who select the award winners.

In support of the NCTE awards program, the Oregon Council of Teachers of English provides a \$200 scholarship to each of the three Oregon students whose writing receives the highest scores

from the judges. Lauren Cummings, Max Ehrenfreund, and Tucker Reed are this year's OCTE scholarship winners. ■

The **2008 NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing** deadline is February 1, 2008. For more information and nomination forms, visit the **NCTE website** at [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

#### Eight Oregon seniors have been named winners of 2007 NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Ashland High School</i><br><b>Tucker Reed</b>         | <i>St. Mary's High School, Medford</i><br><b>William Dibb</b>   |
| <i>Centennial High School</i><br><b>Alex Macomber</b>    | <i>The Northwest Academy, Portland</i><br><b>Jessa Rianelli</b> |
| <i>Lake Oswego High School</i><br><b>Max Ehrenfreund</b> | <i>Tualatin High School</i><br><b>Lauren Cummings</b>           |
| <i>Lake Oswego High School</i><br><b>Sylvia Ferguson</b> | <i>Tualatin High School</i><br><b>Hillary White</b>             |

#### Moment Before Breakfast

Even sitting in the kitchen as sunrise came through the window the dust motes pieces of light the wood table-top blazing with the coffee-pot gurgling into silence watching the sunlight frame his hand and fingers as he turned them with complete freedom beneath the window there wasn't a way to be convinced it was all unreal no even there he thought my life is happening now even there his life surrounded him in its urgency

—Max Ehrenfreund



## What Are the Essential Skills that Every Student Must Have Before Graduating?

— Jay Rishel, Wilsonville High School

ON NOVEMBER 6, I attended the meeting of the Oregon Department of Education's Essential Skills Task Force. This is a group of secondary and postsecondary educators, students, business professionals, and ODE representatives responsible for outlining what graduating seniors should know and be able to do in a postsecondary academy and/or work place, recommending how students should be assessed, and determining when students are proficient with these skills.

ODE currently defines Essential Skills as "...important for success in college, work, and civic life in the 21st century... [and] that every student must be able to demonstrate proficiency in these skills to graduate from an Oregon high school. School districts must ensure that every student has acquired and is proficient in the essential skills to receive an Oregon diploma.... The Essential Skills are process skills that cross academic disciplines and are embedded in the content standards. The skills are not content specific and can be applied in a variety of courses, subjects, and settings.

"The State Board identified the following as essential skills:

- Read and interpret a variety of texts
- Write for a variety of purposes
- Speak and present publicly
- Apply mathematics in a variety of settings
- Use technology
- Think critically and analytically
- Demonstrate civic and community engagement
- Demonstrate global literacy
- Demonstrate career-related learning: communications, problem solving, personal management, teamwork, employment foundations, and career development."

I served on the committee that discussed the Essential Skills for reading, writing, and speaking. This group was composed of community college and university professors, a special programs coordinator

at the secondary level, one high school senior, and me (a secondary English/Language Arts classroom teacher of juniors and seniors). On the whole, it was a wonderfully productive and stimulating meeting. Discussing literacy skills with teachers at various levels was enlightening and rewarding; I came away with a new understanding of what teachers and business professionals expect from my students. For example, the postsecondary educators told

*"...the committee believed that narrative writing was not of crucial importance to a graduating senior."*

me that they were less concerned about having students write structurally-sound essays and more concerned about having students thoughtfully develop an idea using a variety of expository strategies. I was able to place my curriculum and my students' performance into a new, more focused context as result of the conversations. And I am confident that the outcome of these meetings will do the same for most secondary educators in Oregon.

Although we were largely in agreement, we did at times squabble over what qualified as "essential" in terms of literacy and what an exiting senior needs to know to be literate and successful in college and the work place. Most notably, the committee believed that narrative writing was not of crucial importance to a graduating senior. Narrative has always been a hallmark of my classroom and many of my colleagues; it is a vehicle for students to explore complex concepts and practice thoughtful self-reflection. But many at the table felt that telling stories and examining oneself are not fundamental skills in a secondary education. Some wondered how plumbers would really use narrative in their daily work, while others declared that advertisers attempt to tell the story of their product and build a mythology around it.



Jay Rishel

Narrative will always maintain an important place in our culture: politicians will always use anecdotes to win votes, Americans will always use myths to understand their history, and people will always have the urge to announce their trials and tribulations through an engaging (and sometimes exaggerated) story. Regardless of ODE's decisions, we at the secondary level will certainly have the opportunity to use the narrative genre and will continue to offer it to our students as a way to understand themselves and their world. However, we also have to wonder how all of this prioritization of Essential Skills will prioritize our curricula. ■

- **What are your thoughts** on essential skills needed for graduating?
- **Could you defend the narrative** and why you teach it in your classroom?
- **How have you adapted** the essential skills listed by the ODE into practical classroom activities and assignments?
- **Be a part of the continuing dialogue** by emailing Janna E. Reid, editor, at [jereid@grantspass.k12.or.us](mailto:jereid@grantspass.k12.or.us)



## 2008 Oregon Writing Festival

The 24th Annual Oregon Writing Festival is right around the corner!

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2008 AT PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Carmen Bernier-Grand, Graham Salisbury, and Michele Glazer

The Oregon Writing Festival takes place annually at Portland State University in the spring.

- Accenting writing as an art, craft, and basic skill for Oregon students, grades 4 to 12
- Honoring outstanding student writers
- Recognizing writing teachers for high level student achievement in writing
- Encouraging effective classroom practices and home support to improve writing
- Increasing the interest and involvement of students and teachers in writing
- Promoting writing activities and festivals in local districts and communities
- Connecting student writers with Oregon authors and other student writers

Volunteer as a **Day Group Leader** of a group of 10 students (grades 4-5, 6-8, or 9-12), including facilitating the session where students read the writing sample they brought for critique by the group.

Needed are **Workshop Leaders** who will briefly present a writing task to students (grades 4-5, 6-8, or 9-12), have them write, and then lead a read-around and group critique.

For information about the Oregon Writing Festival, please contact: Barbara Wiegele at [bjwiegele@aol.com](mailto:bjwiegele@aol.com) or 503-723-6275



### Oregon English Journal

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

Are you and your students green?

What **conversations, study materials, or projects** have you done with your classes regarding the **hot topic of our environment?**

#### Submit manuscripts to:

Ulrich H. Hardt, Editor  
Portland State University-GSE  
P.O. Box 751  
Portland, OR 97207-0751

Deadline for manuscripts is FEBRUARY 15



### OCTE CALENDAR

#### February 2008

- **8-9** Oregon Reading Association Annual State Conference Portland, Oregon
- **15** Oregon English Journal manuscript deadline

#### March 2008

- **21** Pre-registration deadline for OCTE Spring Conference in Pendleton, Oregon

#### April 2008

- **4-5** OCTE Spring Conference in Pendleton, Oregon

#### May 2008

- **3** Oregon Writing Festival, Portland State University
- **4-8** International Reading Association 53rd Annual Convention, Atlanta, Georgia