

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 OC TE activities, programs of the National Council of Teachers of English, conferences and learning opportunities for students, research tidbits, book recommendations, and more.

Volume 42, No. 1
Winter 2017

Peter Thacker, Editor
Jenny Gapp, Layout

Visit Our Website

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

OC TE News



[2017 Spring Conference Invitation & Workshop Descriptions](#)

Saturday, April 22, 2017

[Oregon Writing Festival, 2017](#)

Saturday, May 6, 2017

[English Teacher of the Year Nominations](#)

Nomination deadline April 6, 2017

News From You



[Using Blackout Poems for Creation and Revision](#)

by Anna Crandall, Rock Creek Middle School

[Examining Personal Ethics through Stories in Elementary Classrooms](#)

by Natalie Janson, Battleground Elementary

[**2017 Spring Conference Invitation & Workshop Descriptions**](#)



Seaside High School

A Conference for the Writer in Each of Us

We want to entice you to our spring conference, Saturday, April 22nd at Seaside High School. We are changing our format to allow you to create. We will have three, maybe four, workshops, all of them facilitating your self-expression. What better place than the coast to give yourself a break from the everyday? Write yourself to sleep and find how your pleasure sneaks itself back into your classroom. Paulann Petersen, Oregon Poet Laureate Emerita, will lead off the day reminding us of our imaginative talents in her address "Our Domain: Teachers as Creators." We can't wait to see what you produce in the two workshops you join. Maybe you will share with us over a beach fire, s'mores, cocoa and more. Join us for some fun. Below are the descriptions of the three firm workshops:

Writing Workshop: Nonfiction

Kimberly Campbell, Lewis and Clark Professor

In order to teach writing well, English Language Arts teachers need to write. Many of us love to write, but finding the time is challenging. In this workshop we will use writing prompts and mentor texts as entries into our own writing. Our focus will be nonfiction-telling the stories of our lives. We will come together to find the humanity and warmth that are the cornerstones of quality nonfiction. We will leave with strategies to use in support of our own writing practice and to engage, develop, and support students in their writing.

Using Nature and History as Inspiration for Writing Along the Fort to Sea Trail

Cathy Peterson, Education Program Coordinator, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park

Explore timeless rainforests and majestic coastal vistas. Discover the rich heritage of the Clatsop Indians. Unfold the dramatic stories of America's most famous explorers. The park encompasses sites along the Columbia River and the Pacific Coast. Follow in the footsteps of the explorers and have an adventure in history. As you hike along the Fort to Sea trail with Cathy, you'll learn about the rich history of the park along with the natural surroundings. You will have plenty of opportunities to stop and write as you are inspired by Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

Anyone's Domain: A Writing Workshop

Paulann Petersen, Oregon Poet Laureate Emerita

About the workshop, Paulann says this:

"Poetry is not the domain of just a few.
It's as natural and accessible as heartbeat and breath.
Writing poetry requires nothing more than a love of words
and a willingness to let your pen move across a page,
following language wherever it takes you."

Join her in a workshop devoted to generating new poems. Using innovative springboards, you'll make exhilarating plunges into language.

All levels of experience are welcome. The only requirement is your willingness to spend time writing as part of a supportive community of other writers.

Paulann's goal is for each participant to leave the workshop with both new writing and the inspiration to shape that new work into poems or prose. Because she expects each participant to do considerable writing, she urges you to bring a reasonably large notebook or journal.

[Back to Top](#)

Oregon Writing Festival 2017

Saturday, May 6, 2017

Portland State University

[Go to the Oregon Writing Festival website for more information.](#)

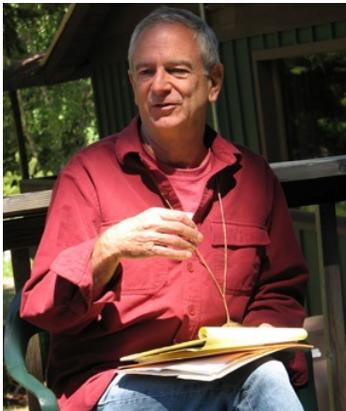
Student Registration Form :
Available through School District contact only.
For additional information please contact:

Barbara Wiegele
bjwiegele@aol.com
503-723-6275

Rick Hardt
Festival Chair
hardt@pdx.edu



Susan Hill Long will be talking to 4th and 5th graders. Susan is the author of many books for middle-grade readers, including *The Magic Mirror* and *Whistle in the Dark*. For this last book she received the 2015 Oregon Book Award and was praised for her well developed characters, rapid plot development, and interesting scenes. "The novel sings with graceful recurring motifs and true emotions," wrote *Publishers Weekly* in its starred



Robin Cody is a former high school teacher of creative writing and literature and won an Oregon Book Award for *Voyage of a Summer Sun*. His popular *Ricochet River* is the riveting story of three high school students in an Oregon logging town and is just being re-released with a new teacher's guide and background material. He will talk with high school students about writing in a speech entitled, "Whaddaya Love? Write It!"



Award-winning author **Lisa Schroeder** will address grades 6-8. She is a native Oregonian who now lives in Beaverton. Some of her books for teens are *The Bridge from Me to You*, *All We Have Is Now*, and *The Day Before*, which was a finalist for the Oregon Book Award. Sarah Ockler describes that book as "lyrical, vivid, and poignant-like hidden gems that sparkle in the

review. The title of her talk at the Writing Festival will be "Just Add Water."

sand." Schroeder will speak on "Seven Writing Secrets Revealed."

[Top](#)

[Back to](#)

English Teacher of the Year Nominations

Oregon Excellence Awards in Teaching the English Language Arts

To recognize excellence in teaching, the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OCTE) invites any Oregon school to nominate one outstanding English language arts educator for one of these prestigious annual awards. A strong equal opportunity organization, we welcome nominations from anyone at any level of education—elementary, middle, secondary, two-year college, four-year college or university—but nominations 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 do the following:

To nominate, [submit an online form](#).

OCTE invites all Oregon teachers to submit completed Nomination Forms and Paragraphs to the OCTE Executive Board for review and selection of annual Finalists. **Nomination deadline is April 6.**

After receiving nominations, the Council will call on experts to select finalists. Those teachers selected as finalists will be required to submit additional supporting evidence. Finalists and award winners will be recognized at the Fall OCTE conference.

[Back to Top](#)

Using Blackout Poems for Creation and Revision

by Anna Crandall, Student Teacher, Rock Creek Middle School, Happy Valley, OR

Blackout Poems are "written" by taking an existing text and blacking out, usually with a permanent marker, all of the words except for a few chosen words or phrases. They can be made using newspapers, magazines, book excerpts, print ads—you name it. These poems are a great way to get started with creative writing, especially for reluctant writers, as they use others' words as a jumping-off point.

I do not know the origin of Blackout Poems, but they have probably been best popularized by artist and writer Austin Kleon (<http://austinkleon.com/category/newspaper-blackout-poems/>) who published a book of newspaper blackout poems he creates every morning.

I plan to use this technique in my sixth grade student teaching placement as a culmination of work with a particularly challenging text. Students will have written a thesis-based essay about their interpretation of the text's theme, and, as a final activity,

they will create a Blackout Poem using the original text. This will allow them to pull out the words, moments, images, and phrases that have become most important to them over the course of the unit.

Using the Blackout technique can also be very effective in revision. Students read their writing (or a peer's writing) selecting only the most vibrant or key words and phrases, tossing out all else, to gain a new understanding of their work. Marking up an original essay can be scary and final, so make sure to use photocopies of work leaving the original intact!

In order to create a Blackout Poem, choose a text to work with. Using a pencil, underline or circle words or phrases you particularly like or seem to go together (regardless of the original intent of the piece). Then cross out the rest of the text with a marker, leaving only the chosen words on the page. The finished product is visually appealing and creative. You can either leave the piece as-is on the original document, or type the poem into a more traditional format.

Below are poems created in my English Methods English class at the University of Portland. We created them using excerpts from *National Geographic Magazine*.

Poem 1

darkling beetles
this placid giant
worst nightmare name:
big beetle
armored spider.
no amount of skeletal
armor would have
protected rodent teeth
the beetle memory of
that narrow escape sultry
darkness lone beetle,
illuminated
amazing grace.

-Caleb Gayman

Poem 2

"this routine is
not for everyone,"
a thousand miles
but the pay is good
life is hard
not like it used to be
I'd vanish
to map the coast of
Siberia.

-Bekah Kolb

Poem 3

Get Brittle
waiting to tow a round
island out to sea
its bright orange hull
has to withstand
foot waves like a cork
string undermined vision
to break even
scuttle
there's still no good way.

-Rae Freudenberger

Poem 4

removed his glasses
he said softly
to what had happened
young woman
the stones
had been placed.
Ioana Hociota
newly married
completing thru-hike
of the canyon
set her sights on
stretch of ledges in the
middle of Owl Eyes.

-Carol Lam

Poem 5

The day
on the battlefield
captured near a
narrow stink of
cigarettes
shoeless,
sulking, stooped
discolored ink
to sign his
confession.

-Lindsey Brown

Poem 6

Disco Soup
What's the goal of the disco
soup?
This squishy stuff works.
Charities hungry for
their excess rescue
wonky-looking fruit from
burial.
A disco soup at a Colombian
banana plantation will
probably succeed.

-Anna Crandall

Examining Personal Ethics through Stories in Elementary Classrooms

by Natalie Janson, Battle Ground Elementary, Battle Ground, WA

Young children are natural philosophers, evident in their almost constant barrage of questions. As a third grade teacher, I want my students to consider issues and push that philosophical thinking. One great way to do that is by considering ethical decision-making through themes found in children's books. As a novice ethics teacher, I designed a four-lesson literacy unit that brought children's literature and ethical dilemmas together. Each unit was driven by one of four moral ideals: honesty, helping others, work ethic, and following social norms. The four children's books I chose were: "Edwurd Fudwupper Fibbed Big" by Berkeley Breathed, "The Cats in Krasinski Square" by Karen Hesse, "The Little Red Hen" by Paul Galdone and "Frog on a Log?" by Kes Gray and Jim Field. Individual lessons started with the presentation of a children's book, philosophical discussion of the ethical dilemma within the book, and independent student-written reflections combined with a pre-post survey of how kids saw a variety of ethical dilemmas attached.

For example, we read "Cats of Krasinski Square," focusing on the ethics of helping others. We talked about the historical setting of the story first, World War II Poland. During our discussion we established that Poland's leader thought certain people shouldn't be free, so the police and army put those people (Jews and Gypsies) in concentration camps or ghettos where they suffered.

After reading the story, students were asked: "In the story, 'Cats of Krasinski Square' the narrator is trying to sneak food into the ghetto. On a scale of 1-5, how wrong is this action?" A student, who ranked the action a 5 (perfectly okay), wrote the following rationale:

"I think whoever is responsible for the ghettos should be the people getting punished. It is very wrong to judge people on the color of their skin, which doesn't make sense to me. Couldn't white people have been slaves? Why them? The people who decide to do this are not terrible, awful people. But only the people who decide to love people based on their characteristics should be admired. There should be no rulers, but only good people. There should be peace and love to everyone, not hate and disgust. I think this because everyone is not an awful person. In fact, no one is always an awful person. If I am talking about you, the one who thinks slaves is a good thing, you are not an awful person. You can change. This is why choice is what matters. Just choices. A lot of people who want peace think everyone who believes in slaves is awful. To me that doesn't make sense. As I said people can always change. And weren't they trying to make peace with everyone?"

This particular student examines the importance of choice. She acknowledges that the leader who initiated the ghettos, should be punished, but rather than condemning him, she voices her belief that the individual can change. She explains that the person can choose to continue to hurt others or choose to make a positive difference. Even if a person has made 'wrong' choices in their life, she believes that they can overcome the negative and choose to have a more positive influence in the world.

As my students discussed the moral dilemmas in each story, their responses became less about good and bad decisions and more about the context of the decision. I am excited to continue to probe literature through the eyes of an ethicist and see how students build a new sense of right and wrong. I found that my young students' critical thinking skills increased and that they were more able to see the nuance in a given situation. Additionally, their writing provides evidence that students were thinking about the many different layers of ethical issues, rather than viewing situations as dichotomous. You, too, can encourage your students to become young philosophers. Give it a try.

[Back to Top](#)

STAY CONNECTED:

