



# A Practical and Applicable Visual Literacy Lesson

by Mark Mizell, Seaside High School



Mark Mizell and other teachers participate in Luisa Sermol's drama session at OCTE's Fall Conference.

AS I WRITE THIS I'm sitting at my computer after the Monday of the first day of Homecoming Week. Under normal circumstances, I would be totally exhausted, but I had something happen today that got my week off to a good start.

Thanks to a workshop from Luisa Sermol at last Friday's OCTE conference, I had some fresh material to share with my ninth graders. Sermol, a Julliard graduate and genuine drama enthusiast, took us through an activity that was so memorable that I was able to take my students through it today and they really enjoyed it.

She gave us each three index cards and asked us to partner up. Then she asked us in turn to draw each other.

The catch was that you had to draw the picture while only looking at your partner. The partner wasn't allowed to look at the picture either.

We partnered up three different times. When we were finished, everyone contributed pictures to various "galleries" that were set up around the room. She asked us to choose the picture of us that best captured us. (In truth, I also gave my students today the option of explaining which picture they liked best and why).

At any rate, every single student in every single class participated, even in the part at the end when they were asked to share with the entire group.

In the workshop, Luisa promised us that every student would want to share

with the group even if they pretended that they didn't want to and she was absolutely right.

Many thanks to Luisa and to OCTE for another quality conference. ■

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

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NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
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TEACHERS OF  
ENGLISH



Oregon Council of Teachers of English Fall Conference 2008

# Success!

by Janna E. Reid, South Middle School, Grants Pass



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MY THOUGHTS are neck deep in sticky Shakespeare translations... because—seriously—how do you tell an 8th grader that Demetrius made love to Helena before trying to marry Hermia, without getting angry phone calls and emails? Methinks, if I could just give my students a little bit of this and that—some Shakespeare, a classic poem, a little theatre, a bit of grammar—they might find their own passions; in fact, my hope is that writing and reading might cause entire worlds to appear where before only boredom and cynicism existed.

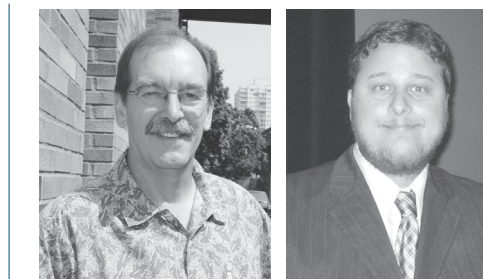
OCTE'S Fall Conference about Visual Literacy had a million "this and thats." In case you missed out—or for those of us who need constant reminders—here are a few highlights from keynote speakers and session presenters:

• **Bucky Carter:** Comic books in the classroom? The possibilities are endless... not only do the 2000 words in the average comic book lend themselves to a major vocabulary study; but students can discover hero genre studies, create story boards, revise and edit with peers (using pictures to show and tell body language), pair novels with comics... and the list goes on. On an inspirational side-note, Bucky's parents both dropped out of school, and when an audience member asked how he came to accomplish his doctorate, he earnestly spoke this wisdom: make sure that your students are being read to—even if it's comic books.

• **William Lang and the Oregon Encyclopedia Project:** Check out this interactive resource online at [www.oregonencyclopedia.org](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org). Look for more information in an upcoming *Chalkboard*.

• **Susan Fletcher:** Amazingly genuine presenter and author. Fletcher received the Oregon Spirit Book Award and did a passionate session on how her travels to Iran allowed the writer in her to see the color of the dirt, smell the dusty air, meet a drooling donkey, and experience the simple surprises of life in order to gain back her writing confidence.

• **Workshops by real teachers:** Look inside this issue for a practical drama exercise that you could use in your class tomorrow. ■



Top row: William Lang and Bucky Carter, keynote speakers at the OCTE Fall Conference; Bottom: Paul Gregorio awards author Susan Fletcher the Oregon Spirit Award.

## Thank You, OCTE Fall Conference Presenters

THE OCTE BOARD wants to thank all of those presenters who made our Fall Conference a quality conference. The autumn leaves are fickle, and soon the daffodils will awake in the spring soil.

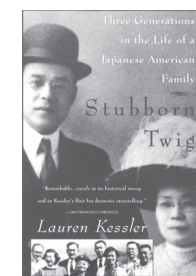
Plan ahead! OCTE's Spring Conference is in Ashland, Oregon on April 17th and 18th, and we are making a call now for program proposals. Do you have an idea for a presentation? An instructional model you've developed? Strategies that have worked well in your classroom?

Presenting at an OCTE conference is an excellent way to share your expertise, to meet other English Language Arts teachers, and to help shape the future of our organization and our profession. Submit your program proposal today. **Go to [www.octe.org](http://www.octe.org) and fill out a proposal form by January 30th.** ■

## Oregon Reads 2009: GET THE WORD OUT!

WHAT IF 50,000 Oregonians read the same book in our sesquicentennial year?

Celebrate Oregon's 150th year of statehood by participating in **Oregon Reads 2009**, focusing on the Oregon experience.



Sponsored by the Oregon Library Association, this event is a community reading program that will take place in nearly every public library county in Oregon during the state's sesquicentennial, January through April

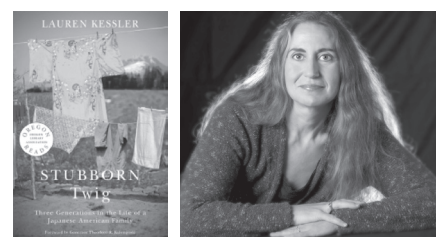
2009. We could make this happen in every school too!

The selected book is *Stubborn Twig* by Eugene author **Lauren Kessler** and it is the true story of three generations of a 20th century Japanese-American family with members living in Hood River, Portland, and Eugene.

The titles for younger readers are *Bat 6* by **Virginia Euwer Wolff** and *Apples to Oregon* by **Deborah Hopkinson**.

All three titles are written by Oregon authors who will visit libraries throughout the state from January through April 2009.

Also, an online blog and book discussion groups will be available through the



Lauren Kessler, author of Stubborn Twig

Oregon Reads website—check it out online at Oregon Reads 2009 at [www.oregonreads2009.org](http://www.oregonreads2009.org).

These make great read-aloud books for all ages, and you could teach your class about the importance of community as you participate in a state-wide reading event. ■

## Happy 150th Birthday, Oregon!

OUR VERY OWN Oregon is turning 150 years old! In a unique effort to celebrate Oregon's sesquicentennial on February 14, 2009, **Oregon 150** is calling for stories.

"We want to remember Oregon's past, celebrate the present, and inspire people to dream of the future. This is our mission, and we invite all of Oregon-young and old, urban and rural, lifetime residents and recent arrivals-to join us in accomplishing it."

Join Susan Castillo (are you or your students "accidental Oregonians" like her?), and get in on the fun by visiting [www.oregon150.org](http://www.oregon150.org).

Tell others what life in Oregon means to you through your stories of joy, hardship, struggle, perseverance, and laughter. ■



Susan Castillo, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, writes her story in Oregon 150.

## CHALKBOARD IS A NATIONAL HIT!

OCTE's publication *Chalkboard*, the way that OCTE keeps in touch with all of our members, has won a national honorable mention award from NCTE this year.

*Chalkboard* was chosen by the judges because it had "high scores for consistency and timeliness, formatting and readability, professional graphics, and purpose of publication."

The overall winner of the award was *Scribbles 'n Bits*, published by Georgia Council of Teachers of English, and the other honorable mention winner was *The Needle's Eye*, published by the Virginia Association of Teachers of English. All three winners were recognized and applauded at the Affiliate Breakfast in San Antonio at NCTE's National Conference in November. Previous issues of *Chalkboard* are available online at [www.octe.org](http://www.octe.org). ■

*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.

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OCTE Fall Conference Highlights



1. Bob Bumstead from Pacific University presented "Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird." 2. Marla Charlton from Pendleton High School presented "Young Adult Literature/Literature Circles." 3. Mary Palmer Nowland from Southern Oregon ESD presented "How to Actually Enjoy Revision and Editing."

EDUCATORS' TOOLKIT for Implementing Oregon's Diploma Requirements NOW ONLINE

THIS RESOURCE was developed by teachers to assist educators with the implementation of the new Oregon Diploma requirements.

Each document within the toolkit is a concise aid to help you learn more about the diploma requirements.

As you begin the implementation process, the toolkit may be useful as a quick reference for individuals or as a resource for teams. Information also exists for elementary and middle school teachers. Visit www.ode.state.or.us/go/diploma information on the Oregon Diploma. ■



Calendar

OCTE CALENDAR

January 2009

30 Deadline for OCTE Spring Conference program proposals

February 2009

1 Deadline for Oregon English Journal submissions

2 Deadline for OSPA Student Poetry submissions

April 2009

1 Pre-registration deadline for OCTE Spring Conference at Ashland Middle School

17-18 OCTE Spring Conference at Ashland Middle School Ashland, Oregon

17 Noon. Executive Board meeting at Southern Oregon University. Open to all OCTE members.

May 2009

2 25th Annual Oregon Writing Festival, Portland State University

Oregon English Journal Selected for National Distribution

THE Oregon English Journal, Spring 2008 issue on "Ecological Literacy: Tending the Untended Garden," was selected for national distribution by NCTE. This is the 20th OEJ issue so selected.

The journal is edited by Ulrich H. Hardt and OEJ is always looking for quality articles and submissions. In fact, its Spring 2009 issue is on the theme of The Books That Made a Difference.

If you are currently teaching or have taught elementary, middle, high school or college, what one book have you looked forward to teaching each year? How have students responded? What are some techniques you've used to excite and involve your readers? Why do you think this work has had such an appeal or impact?

As an adult reader, is there a book in your personal library that you reach for from time to time? Have you been part of a reading/discussion group with a book that you couldn't wait to share? What is it about this book that separates it from others that you've read?

Or, return with us to those thrilling days of childhood reading. What did you read,

and how did it help make you who you are? Describe which series of novels—of particular or of even mediocre literary value—caught you where you lived, that had you reading like a mad-child until you'd consumed the whole series. What made you the reader you were and the reader—and, perhaps, teacher—you are today?

Submission deadline: February 1, 2009.

Please submit to: U.H. Hardt, Editor Portland State University-GSE P.O. Box 751 Portland, OR 97207-0751

Suggested submissions should have 1500-2000 words. Submit two hard copies (with no author identification on them) double-spaced and titled. Please use a cover sheet for your name, address, email, and a brief biographical sketch (two to three sentences).

Check out www.octe.org for more information on the OEJ. ■



OSPA's Winning Poems

Oregon State Poetry Association's 2008 Student Poetry Contest Winners

My Dad Was Brewing Wine

My dad was brewing wine He made it by the ton. And when I asked him why, He said "Because it's fun!"

He made it in the kitchen, He made it on the porch. And when it got too dark, He would light a torch.

But then there was an accident, It happened on the hour. My father dropped and broke a bottle, It made my mother sour.

My dad WAS brewing wine, He made it by the ton. But when he broke that bottle, His wine-making was done.

Wendy Deptula, Grade 8 Honorable Mention, Category III Grades 6-8

Dandelions

Dandelions look like a star in the green sky with lightning striking all around.

Declan Sleator, Grade 2 Third Place, Category I Kindergarten-Grade 2

The Old Religion

I was born loving the insanity of human experience Yet understanding—with detachment—the absurdity of all endeavor

My mother sang to me until I grew too old and sang for myself What followed was what I chose to be and do and listen to I read avidly.

Who is it that will come in the rainy night? Who is it that will take communion while campuses explode? Who is it that will count ballots bleary-eyed and see it doesn't matter in that country?

Who is it that will make a rubbing of my headstone in seven hundred years?

I rose in an unfortunate time when the republic was falling And men created sin to punish natural tendencies. I learned to talk when language was being simplified into yes and no

And those who recognized the gulf between came to understand isolation.

What was left I rejected and what was gone I chose to follow I wrote conveniently.

Who is it that will wear out the rocks with one finger? Who is it that will gesture madly to immigrant taxi drivers? Who is that will answer the door when an unknown fist knocks? Who is it that will serve as a martyr to opinion stabbed and torn in good-natured fun

I discovered my place after studying ordinary man as he went about his ordinary day Through readings in mythology—with cynicism--until all the people I became dissolved And my mother tried to assure me of the continuance of optimism And my father tried to call me something different What followed was what I shaped out of ruined literature I lived absurdly.

Who is it that will announce the coming of new work? Who is it that will sing the dirge for what never was? Who is it that will be the pallbearer for a sinner? Who is it that will release me from the old religion?

Willa Bauman, Grade 11 First Place, Category IV Grades 9-12



2009 OSPA Student Poetry Contest

OSPA STUDENT CONTEST RULES

THE OREGON State Poetry Association's mission is to bring together and nurture the widest possible community of Oregon poets; to help Oregon poets, young and old, develop their talents and skills; to stimulate, at the grassroots level, a statewide appreciation of poetry; and to raise public awareness of Oregon poets, past and present.

One way OSPA accomplishes its mission is by working together with the poets of Oregon to hold poetry contests. Below is the information for the 2009 Student Poetry Contest. Get involved!

Submissions need to be postmarked no later than February 2, 2009.

The competition has four divisions:

- I: Kindergarten-Grade 2
II: Grade 3-Grade 5
III: Grade 6- Grade 8
IV: Grade 9-Grade 12

All 40 winners will receive certificates, and all 40 winning poems will be published in Cascadia: The Oregon Student Poetry Contest Anthology.

The winners also receive a certificate and a copy of Cascadia, in which their winning poems are published. Prizes will be awarded to the top ten poems in each division.

PRIZES ARE AS FOLLOWS: FIRST PLACE: \$30 SECOND PLACE: \$20 THIRD PLACE: \$10 7 HONORABLE MENTIONS: \$5

My Dog

Her teeth are like a thorn bush that closes in on you. Red at first and then a pink scrape. But that's another story.

She tears up my two-eyed stuffed animals. White fuzz and string, and one beady eye. But that's another story.

One garden umbrella, that doesn't go up, Several seeds that won't ever exist, And my Dad's glove that doesn't have a thumb. But that's another story.

That dog of ours, her name is Molly. She loves her people. Of course, she's mine. But that's another story.

Katie Mahorney, Grade 2 First Place, Category I Kindergarten-Grade 2

Midnight Hour

Coffee beans drop from moonstruck skies As flies lose business and return to streets. Cool water rushes over blood stained grounds, The blood that is soiled into underground taverns, Harvesting food to shove at the broken down. Acid winds burn the shields of good and evil. Exposing kings from peasants and jokers from thieves. Rest is where our minds are at, Not thinking of the blood on our hands.

Matthew Hutchinson, Grade 12 Honorable Mention, Category IV Grades 9-12