

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2

Chalkboard

Quarterly Newsletter for the Oregon Council of Teachers of English

www.octe.org



Chalkboard

The OCTE newsletter, *Chalkboard*, is a print and digital publication produced four times a year to communicate news from language arts teachers across Oregon, as well as book reviews, conference reflections, announcements, and more.

Chalkboard was awarded NCTE's Affiliate Newsletter Award of Excellence in 2020, 2019, 2017, and 2003 and won Honorable Mention in 2008.

Editors:

Jeanne Sheets-Sagoo
Donna Sheets-Mathew

Contact:

publications.octeorg@gmail.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

OCTE SPEAKER SERIES EXPLORES
UNTOLD STORIES - 2

BOOK REVIEWS - 6

WRITING FESTIVAL #36 - 8

OCTE PROJECT GRANT WINNER - 6

BOOKMARKS

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2

OCTE Speaker Series Explores Untold Stories

BY LAURIE DOUGHERTY



Everything is held together with stories.
That is all that is holding us together,
stories and compassion.

BARRY LOPEZ

We've just completed an exciting spring speaker series that has been available both synchronously and asynchronously. Our five speakers gave voice to some of the untold stories of Oregon. These stories were not really untold, but often unheard in the mainstream narrative. This was our opportunity to help "give voice to voices seldom heard."

The series confirmed the importance of opening our minds—and hearts—to Oregon's wealth of voices. We hope you will join us for our next conference this October.

Keep checking our website and Facebook page for details.

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2



J.R. Lilly

J.R. Lilly Diné (Navajo) Nation began our series with a land acknowledgement, inviting us to think of the people with whom we are engaging and asking, "In beauty may I walk." His welcoming message focused on the roles of guest and host and stressed that all of us are going to make mistakes. We have to make them, and then we can move forward.

He shared the Indigenous world view as circular vs. linear thinking, community vs. individualized, and interconnected vs. compartmentalized. Through the power of story, J.R. has discovered ways to fit into this non-indigenous world and helps youth understand the two different worlds they live in.



Linda Tamura

Our next speaker Linda Tamura grew up in Hood River, Oregon following the internment of Japanese - Americans during World War II. Linda shared with us many untold stories of support that managed to change hearts and minds.

Her message to "Speak the truth, but speak it with love," helps us chart a course forward in challenging times. She chooses to celebrate the "unheralded heroes" and focus on those who stand up, not only on the marginalized, as we work to empower our students for a different future.

Recommended resources for J.R. Lilly:

[Living Nations Living Words](#)

[All My Relations Podcast](#)

Recommended resources for Linda Tamura:

Linda Tamura

The Hood River Issei

Nisei Soldiers Break Their Silence

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2



Jane Kirkpatrick

New York Times and CBA best selling and award winning author, Jane Kirkpatrick joined us as our featured speaker on April 21. Her popular novels tell the stories of “well-known extraordinary women and extraordinary women who are little known.” With Kirkpatrick, we explored novels to “look inside stories to see ourselves and find forgiveness.” She used an alphabet story with the word votes (V-vulnerable, O-open, T-tools, E-engagement, S-seeker) to share these lessons from Oregon Activist and Suffragist, Abigail Scott Duniway, and others. With her warm and engaging style, she shared stories worth remembering.



Amanda Coven

Amanda Coven from the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education presented “Oregon: A History of Discrimination.” She used the OJMCHC original framework “tools of discrimination,” to reveal how discrimination works outside of any particular issue or group and instead demonstrate how they interact to create systemic oppression.

Her lively and interactive presentation helped us gain a deeper understanding of the many ways that people have oppressed different marginalized groups, discrimination that continues today.

Among Jane's must read recommendations are:

Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir

Waa'aka': The Bird Who Fell in Love with the Sun

Recommended resources for Amanda Coven:

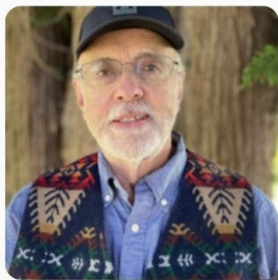
Home - Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education

Digital Experience Resources

Teaching for Black Lives

Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Yhttpsour American History Textbook Got Wrong by James W. Loewen

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2



Dick Basch

"We have been told that we are extinct, that we no longer exist. We have grown up in a non-native culture and have worked hard to 'make space' for who we are, especially in our homeland - the north Oregon coast." Clatsop - Nehalem Elder Dick Basch. For our bonus session Dick Basch was joined by his daughters Charlotte and Lorraine to share his work with the National Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation Bicentennial Commemoration, the Honoring Tribal Legacies curriculum he helped to develop with the University of Oregon, the restoration work he did with Elizabeth Furse and the reclamation of tribal lands he helped to secure.

Charlotte and Lorraine shared insights into their lives as young Native Women including the conflict around "passing for white" vs. "not being Native enough." Through their eyes, we saw the pain of invisibility and the importance of sharing current and modern stories of Native Americans.

Recommended resources for Dick Basch:

Clatsop-Nehalem tribes 'dreaming again' with return of ancestral land

Honoring Tribal Legacies

Lewis and Clark Trail-Tribal Legacy Project

The Journey of the Clatsop- Nehalem Canoe

Native American Heritage Month - King County Library System

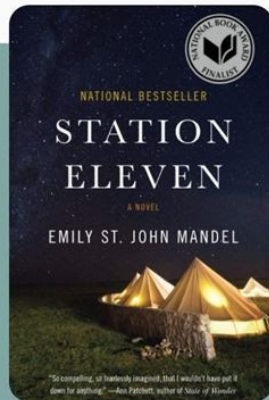
Native American Fiction

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2

Book Reviews

Thanks to our readers for submitting some great book titles in honor of National Women's History Month.

Please check out two of the reviews below!



Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel

Emily St. John Mandel is a Canadian and American author whose five novels make a distinguished contribution to contemporary literature. *Station Eleven* was a finalist for the National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award and the winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award for science fiction. Science fiction has often been used to warn readers now of a possible future.

In the near future a flu-like pandemic has struck the world. All of the electrical sources are down, there are no media, no internet, no phones, no government, and no borders. Set in the cities and rural areas of Canada and the US, people are trying to adapt and survive.

The author has done something unique here. She has bridged the divide between a young adult novel and a novel aimed at adult readers. Part of *Station Eleven* seems like a YA novel with a focus on coming of age concerns, creating an identity, and the absence of parents. Aimed at adult readers, older characters deal with job changes and retirement, influencing the youth, and creating a legacy. These combined concerns are crucial both for survival and to create a new society. Mandel accomplishes this bridging by presenting two protagonists. We meet Kristine Raymond as a child and follow her through life. Arthur Leando we meet as he dies and travels back through his life. This is a challenging read since these two narrative arcs are not linear. We meet both protagonists at different times in their lives. And for much of the novel, we are not sure that they are the protagonists as a dozen engaging secondary characters are vying to capture our interest.

Literature within the novel is utilized extensively. Much of Arthur's life and death is informed by *King Lear*; he was performing it as he collapsed on stage. One of the themes in *Star Trek*, the insufficiency of just survival, motivates Kristin; she has it tattooed on her arm. And the novel's title *Station Eleven*, refers to a graphic novel created by Miranda, a former wife of Arthur. As a novel within a novel, it highlights the effect of different interpretations of literature in the lives of readers.

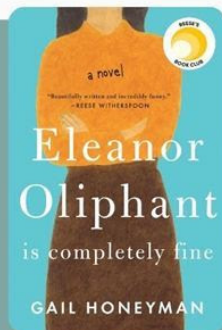
SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2

As in her most recent novel *The Glass Hotel*, everything here is connected. Coincidences and details that loop around the characters and connect for meaning make for a satisfying read. Mandel takes readers beyond the limits of YA fiction as both youth and adults are joined against common foes and are concerned with survival and the future. Youthful idealism and adult experience extend this dystopian novel to a hopeful one as a Museum of Civilization is established, oral histories and a newspaper created, and a traveling troupe presents costumed Shakespeare dramas that alternate with classical concerts.

Kristin is strong, sensitive, artistic and concerned for the good of all. This empowering combination of traits is just what the new society needs for life after the pandemic.

Reviewed by Paul Gregorio

Paul Gregorio has taught Young Adult literature to pre-service teachers and librarians in the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University. He is currently on the Oregon Spirit Book Award Committee.



Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman

In our study of the hero's journey, I ask students to broaden their concept of the traditional grand epic with its limiting landscape of exclusively male heroes. Cast yourself as the unsung hero in your own journey, I tell them. Do not wait for demigods to swoop in and save you; choose to save yourself, one quiet act of courage at a time. The interior journey of the heart and soul is just as transformative and often more harrowing than tales of beast-battling warriors.

Enter the title character and unassuming hero of Gail Honeyman's debut novel *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, who reminds us that sometimes the most heroic feat is to simply keep going. We meet the 29 year-old self-described "sole survivor" and "self-contained entity" in the midst of her very small and almost pathologically independent existence.

Socially oblivious and hilariously deadpan Eleanor crafts a plan to change her life by pursuing a narcissistic musician, yet her real call to adventure comes in the form of the bumbling office IT guy enlisting her reluctant aid to a stranger who collapses on the street. She is then nudged out of isolation by mentors and guides who eventually galvanize her to face the horrors of her past, speak the truth about them aloud, and learn to open her heart. At one point, Eleanor asks, "How do I fix me?" to which the answer is, "You're doing it already, Eleanor. You're braver and stronger than you give yourself credit for. Keep going." Like Eleanor, we all long to "solve the puzzle of me." In this story, the hero's choice is not whether to sacrifice herself for others in the vein of the classic epic, but whether to sacrifice her carefully constructed world in order to save herself.

Reviewed by Stacy Carleton

Stacy Carleton (M.Ed.) is a freelance writer, editor, ELA teacher, and tutor. She lives and creates in Portland with her husband and two children.

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2

Writing Festival #36

BY RICK HARDT

"Can't you offer some version of the Festival this year? We missed not having anything last year." That was the question from several participating schools after canceling our 36th annual Oregon Writing Festival in 2020, due to Covid-19.

PSU tech people accepted the challenge and drafted a proposal for a virtual festival, modified in scope, and supported by the usual cast of actors, including PSU profs Maika Yeigh and Rick Hardt, retired teacher/administrator Janice Bahns, and Barb Wiegele, retired PSU staff.

Janice Bahns, past president of OCTE, has been with the OWF for 31 years, first as Day Group Leader and for the last 26 years as Coordinator of these volunteers. She organized the 45 teachers we needed for our 26 breakout groups this year.

Barb Wiegele, OWF Registrar for 30 years, contacted all the schools on her list of past participants and signed up 268 students (grades 4-12) from 30 schools. That is down from 673 students and 69 schools in 2019, which was itself down from 801 students and 78 schools in 2018.

As festival chair, I was able to persuade our three keynoters from last year's canceled festival to do a virtual presentation this year. Jane Kurtz talked to grades 4-5, Roland Smith to middle schoolers, and Emily Suvada to our high school group. Their sessions were expertly hosted by Karin Kayfes, Lynette Gottlieb, and Mariko Walsh, OCTE board members and President. Reports on the presentations were overwhelmingly good, but we missed having authors sign their books at an in-person festival.

As vitally important as all these participants are, there is another extremely important group the day of the Festival, our Red Vesters, who make the day run smoothly. They are a collection of teachers and administrators (art, English, special ed, speech pathology), with a total of more than 150 years teaching experience. There are also two university tech students (one a "graduate" of seven festivals) and an attorney. Obviously, we are in good hands, this year especially, given these teachers' experience in the virtual classroom.

We are looking forward to what comes next year!

SPRING 2021 | VOLUME 44, NO. 2



OCTE Grant Project Winner!

OCTE offers annual grants to assist teachers in the classroom. These grants are available to develop curriculum, purchase materials, or otherwise enhance instruction in language arts/ literacy. Look for this grant to appear in the fall!

**One of this year's grant winners is
Dan Jones,
a 7th grade ELA teacher from J.W. Poynter
Middle School in Hillsboro, OR.**

Check out his great project below:

Diverse Books for Book Clubs

My idea for an OCTE Grant Project was to provide for my 7th graders book club experiences with the latest and greatest in diverse books. I wanted my young readers to authentically engage in the critical thinking and conversations around social justice issues that such books can spark. Mostly, though, I wanted to offer book club books that would affirm, educate, and inspire my students.

With OCTE's generous help, I've recently purchased from my local independent bookstore multiple copies of 12 titles, including:

- *Amina's Voice*, by Hena Khan
- *The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora*, by Pablo Cartaya
- *Efren Divided*, by Ernesto Cisneros
- *Other Words for Home*, by Jasmine Warga
- *Ivy Aberdeen's Letter to the World*, by Ashley Herring Blake
- *Tight*, by Torrey Maldonado
- *From the Desk of Zoe Washington*, by Janae Marks
- *Front Desk*, by Kelly Yang
- *A High Five for Glenn Burke*, by Phil Bildner
- *Black Brother, Black Brother*, by Jewell Parker Rhodes

I strongly recommend to all teachers Sonja Cherry-Paul's and Dana Johansen's recent release *Breathing New Life into Book Clubs*. It has given me countless ideas for in-person and online book club creation/management and will continue to guide me as I work to improve the quality of my classroom book clubs.



Bookmarks

- **OCTE Reads**

OCTE Reads returns this summer in July. This year in addition to our Facebook group posts, moderators Laurie Dougherty and Trish Emerson will invite members to chat face-to-face on voluntary Zoom get-togethers. We look forward to this added opportunity to connect through a shared story.

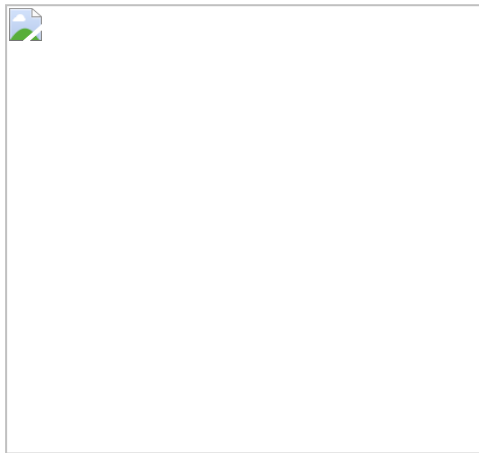
Now for the all-important question: Which story? We'd like your help in selecting the book.

Here's [a link](#) to a survey with a list of several possible titles and their authors as a starting point. We welcome your input to help us choose!

- **Oregon Encyclopedia**

Read about the Asian American/Pacific Islander experience in

[Oregon Encyclopedia](#)



Hawaiians in the Oregon Country

- **Book Review**

Have you read a great novel or work of nonfiction by a Asian American/ Pacific Islander author about an issue that empowers Asian-Americans or Pacific Islanders? May is National Asian American/ Pacific Islander History Month, so consider sharing a book review with your colleagues! Use the following criteria to guide you:

- A book by an AAPI that addresses an issue of AAPI empowerment
- Adult and youth audiences are both encouraged
- A review that is 200-300 words in length
- Deadline: June 20th

Send your book review to publications.octeor@gmail.com

[Unsubscribe](#)