

## OCTE Chalkboard

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
OREGON COUNCIL OF  
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH



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Conference Details  
Page 1-2



News & Articles  
Pages 1 - 4

*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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### OCTE Fall Conference, Virtual

**DON'T MISS THIS!**

by Laurie Dougherty  
Conference Chair

We would like to invite you to join us for our fall speaker series. With our theme, "**Courage Hope and Humanity: Meeting Our Students Where They Are,**" we are creating a space to explore culturally sustaining and antiracist English language arts education. Our speakers represent a variety of voices and genres to give us new ways of reflecting on the world our students are navigating.

Join us for a free virtual conference with a unique blend of live and on-demand workshops— timely, relevant, and responsive to the needs of today's literacy professionals.  
Free Registration is open now through our website [OCTE.org](http://OCTE.org). Registrants will receive a Zoom meeting link and have access to the recordings for 30 days.

### Sessions

Live sessions will be available from 4:00-5:00 each Wednesday for 4 weeks, beginning October 7, for all registrants. The recording link will be sent out the following Friday. **PDU**s will be available following live sessions. To obtain PDUs for asynchronous recorded sessions, there will be a four-question quiz embedded in EDPuzzle.

Our first session featured Dawnnesha Lasuncet, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator for the Clackamas Education Service District. Her work with students and families includes participation in and employment with non-profit organizations and grassroots communities dedicated solely to the wellness of historically under-served populations, as well as addressing educational inequities in systems and institutions. Her presentation helped us to examine our beliefs about racism and what it means to be culturally responsive.

### Recent additions to OCTE Board of Directors



**Cindy Coe** is entering her 30th year teaching secondary ELA and SS. After attaining her doctorate in 2012, Cindy started teaching in Schools of Education in the Portland area as an adjunct professor. Currently, she teaches in MAT programs at Portland State University and Eastern Oregon University.

**Cameron Scott**, with degrees in English and Creative Writing from Eastern Oregon, U of Arizona, and Whitman College, teaches at Wallowa High School and as an adjunct at EOU. He has been writer-in-residence and Youth Program manager at Fishtrap since 2012, actively serving more than 800 students in over 50 classrooms in Wallowa County.



**Jeanne Sheets-Sagoo** has been an ELA educator for 30 years, teaching at Sam Barlow HS, The Center for Advanced Learning, and Mt. Hood CC. She currently serves as the Secondary Humanities Instructional Coach for Gresham Barlow School District. She is a dedicated advocate for literacy, problem-based learning, and educational innovation.

**Maika Yeigh** teaches at Portland State University where she supports students' goals of becoming amazing middle and high school teachers. She teaches courses in English/Language Arts and literacy strategies. Maika is a former middle and high school Language Arts teacher and K-12 Reading Specialist and the proud mother of two emerging adults.



### The OWF: 35 Years & 30,000+ Young Writers



The 35th anniversary of this annual event was a good time to write about the genesis of the Oregon Writing Festival and its development through the decades, and the people that make it happen. Look for the fascinating history in the fall issue of the Oregon English Journal, an article written by Tim Gillespie and Rick Hardt.

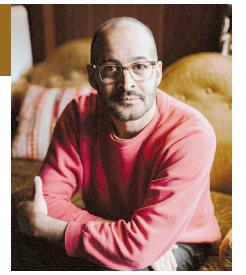
**Please note:**

Having had to cancel the OWF in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we tentatively scheduled the next festival for May 1, 2021, but it seems more and more likely that there may be a second consecutive cancellation of this annual event. We will make a firm decision after consulting with state health and school officials, and with our host, Portland State University, after the first of the year 2021. For up-to-date information, see [octe.org](http://octe.org)

### Spotlight on Oregon's Poet Laureate, Anis Mojgani

**Join Anis Mojgani, featured presenter, Wednesday, Oct. 14, at OCTE's free virtual Fall Conference, from 4:00-5:00**

Born in New Orleans to Black and Iranian parents, **Mojgani** has called Oregon home since 2004. His work has appeared on HBO, NPR, and many journals. Author of five books of poetry, he has also done commissioned work for the Getty and the Peabody Essex museums, and in April 2021 we will see the premiere of his first opera libretto, *Sanctuaries*. Mojgani has performed at universities, festivals, and venues around the world for audiences as varied as the House of Blues and the United Nations.



### Spotlight on Chris Crutcher

**Chris Crutcher, "author and loudmouth" (self-described), presents at OCTE's Fall Virtual Conference on Wednesday, Oct. 21, from 4:00-5:00**

The American Library Association has named eight of **Crutcher's** young adult books, to date, "Best Books for Young Adults," and four of his books appeared on Booklist's Best 100 Books of the 20th Century, compiled in 2000 – more than any other single author on the list. Crutcher received the ALAN Award in 1993, the NCTE SLATE Intellectual Freedom Award in 1998, the Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000 and Writer Magazine's Writers Who Make a Difference Award in 2004.





## Spotlight on April Henry

**April Henry, featured presenter, Wednesday, Oct. 28, at OCTE's free virtual Fall Conference, from 4:00-5:00**

*New York Times* bestselling author **April Henry** has published 24 mysteries and thrillers for teens and adults, with more to come. She is known for meticulously researching her novels to get the details right. Today's high school seniors were born into 9-11 and are graduating into COVID-19. In the middle of those years, they have experienced lock-downs and watched school shootings on the news. Many of our students are anxious today, and some of them appreciate the control they feel in unraveling a mystery or thriller when reading an April Henry book. She will share how she navigates the topics in the trauma-reality world of teens today.

## 2020 NCTE Virtual Annual Convention November 19-22, 2020

**"This fall, when we come together online, let's read, write, speak, listen, and view with curiosity. Together, we will be a confluencia of our songs."** See: [convention.ncte.org](http://convention.ncte.org)  
--Alfredo Celedón Luján, NCTE President

### General Session Speakers

At NCTE's first-ever virtual Annual Convention you'll have the opportunity to hear from inspiring speakers who care about literacy as much as you do. The art of teaching and learning writing, reading, speaking, and listening is multifaceted, complex, and rich with possibility. That's why each year we select speakers who bring a range of perspectives to the mic: 2020 is no exception. We're thrilled to share this stellar lineup with you.



Kali Fajardo-Anstine



Joy Harjo



Andrea Davis Pinkney



Patrisse Khan-Cullors



Jeff Chang



Juan Felipe Herrera

## A Fresh Look at Teaching the Canon

by Ulrich Hardt

My most challenging assignment during student teaching at Franklin High School many decades ago was teaching the required *Romeo and Juliet* to a class of then-called "special ed seniors." No alternative text allowed.

Fortunate for us, we now encourage the pairing of young adult and classic novels and plays, since many YA books, like canonical texts, address the essential human questions and themes. Teens need to read books that reflect their diverse world and struggles; it adds opportunities to engage even the most reticent readers.

Today, I might pair *R & J* with John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*. In Shakespeare's romance/tragedy, the lovers are torn apart by the feud between their families; in Green's contemporary novel, the lovers are torn apart by cancer.

The predicament presented in Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* may be difficult for today's young readers to understand, but what about pairing it with Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*? Public rejection as a result of rape (*Speak*) and adultery (*Scarlet Letter*) are parallel themes in these novels.

Sara Benincasa's *Great* is a glossy update of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* with its issues of class, sexuality, and ambition in American society—but it does that with a largely female cast that will appeal to many young readers and be a great introduction for the classic.

Pair Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* with Chris Crutcher's award-winning *Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes*. Crutcher's YA novel can serve as a scaffold to the classic work, helping students understand the terrible decision that George is forced to make in *Of Mice and Men*. Or, Jennifer Brown's *Perfect Escape* would present a variation on Steinbeck's theme through a sibling relationship constrained by both economic hardship and mental illness; in *Escape*, the teenager Kenra "gets away from it all" by going on a road trip with her acute-OCD-brother Grayson.

Brontë's independent and spirited survivor, *Jane Eyre*, may present a challenge to modern teen readers, but introducing her with Margot Livesey's young woman's struggle to take charge of her own future in *The Flight of Gemma Hardy* will fascinate readers of the Gothic original.

For further reading:

Herz, S., & D. Gallo, From *Hinton to Hamlet: Building Bridges between Young Adult Literature and the Classics*. Greenwood Pr., 2005.

Rybakova, K. "Connecting the Canon to Current Young Adult Literature," *American Secondary Education*, 44 (2), 31-45. 2016.

## NCTE Recognizes Oregon Affiliate

### Journal Award

The *Oregon English Journal*, Kimberly Hill Campbell, editor, has received the 2020 Affiliate Journal Excellence Award, given by the National Council of Teachers of English. The Spring 2019 themed issue was a tribute to Ursula Le Guin, and the commendation read in part

"What a wonderful tribute to Ursula Le Guin. The focus on this incredible author allowed for a variety of content, from stories about Le Guin's personal impact, to analysis of her writing, to suggested works for students, to details about how teachers have used her literature to spark reading and thinking. These allowed readers to truly understand her impact on writing, on classroom practice, and on the humans who came into contact with her."

### Newsletter Award

OCTE's newsletter, *Chalkboard*, edited by Lynette Gottlieb of Ashbrook Independent School, Corvallis, has been named as a recipient of the 2020 Affiliate Newsletter of Excellence Award, given by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Among other winners were affiliates of Connecticut, New York, Indiana, and Montana.

### Membership Award

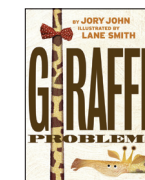
Oregon Council of Teachers of English has been named one of nineteen recipients of the 2020 Kent D. Williamson Affiliate Membership Recruitment Award, given by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Awards are calculated as a percentage of increase based on membership lists submitted by the affiliates in both the year of and the year prior to the award.

### Favorite Books for Kids

Do you know that OCTE has a book award for Oregon authors? That's a great place to start for recommendations for kids. There are awards in many categories: children, middle reader, and young adult, as well as special categories such as non-fiction and graphic novels. Check out past winners on our website at this link: <https://oregoncouncilofteachersofenglish.wildapricot.org/Oregon-Sprit-Book-Awards>

Here are a few examples of recent winners:

*Giraffe Problems*, *The Turning*, *Rewind*, *Be Prepared*, *Sleeping in My Jeans*, *What Do They Do with All that Poo?*



## Fount of Information

OCTE is a partner with Portland State University and the Oregon Historical Society in **The Oregon Encyclopedia** (*The OE*), a digital history project, which offers definitive, authoritative information about all things Oregon, including significant individuals, places, cultures, institutions, events, and peoples. Visit *The OE*, for instance, to learn about rural topics like the St. Paul Rodeo, Lebanon, the Umatilla and Rogue rivers, Denny Jones, William Kittredge, Bernard Daly, and many more Oregon rural topics.

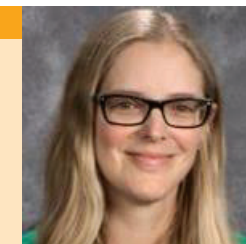
*OE* "History Minutes" can be used to introduce students to significant people, places, and events, such as

Ken Kesey  
Walt Morey  
Sacagawea  
Sarah Winnemucca  
York  
Eva Emery Dye

Early Voting Rules  
Fort Rock Sandals  
Crater Lake  
KKK in Oregon  
Oregon's Exclusion Laws  
Abraham Lincoln and Oregon  
Tualatin Peoples

[oregonencyclopedia.org](http://oregonencyclopedia.org)

## Thank You, Dr. Lynette Gottlieb



For your service on the OCTE Board of Directors (2017-2020); for your many contributions to the *Oregon English Journal* over the years; for chairing the 2019 Spring Conference at Ashbrook Independent School in Corvallis, introducing us to author and keynote George Estreich; and thank you for your editorship of the OCTE newsletter, *Chalkboard* (2018-2020). During that time, *Chalkboard* was honored with the NCTE Newsletter of Excellence Award in 2019 and 2020.

With the information you shared and in your editorial columns you challenged us to recommit to what we are doing for our students, and in this time particularly to revisit what we are doing "for our students of color and to nurture a community where all learners are loved and safe." We thank you and will miss our day-to-day interactions, but we look forward to many more years of learning from and with you in various venues.

## OCTE Reads Summer Book Club

Laura Dougherty, OCTE President Elect



Emerson & Orange

As school ended and we all retreated to our homes to battle the pandemic, I began to feel a need for connection and conversation. I wanted a chance to explore ideas and themes in my reading with others. Just in time, our second OCTE Reads book club joined in a private Facebook discussion group to explore Tommy Orange's Pulitzer Prize-nominated novel, *There There*.

Moderated by Trish Emerson, 22 of us joined for rich discussions, reactions, observations, insights, and ideas around the story and characters Orange has created. We marveled over his ability to weave modern reality with cultural themes in a commentary on human nature and the risk of losing touch with one's culture. Sharing together in the book club was just what I needed for the summer! We're already looking for good books to explore next. Send us your ideas through Facebook or email: [octeorg@gmail.com](mailto:octeorg@gmail.com)

