

OCTE



Volume 1, Issue 1

August/September 2013



OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Fall Newsletter

Native Learners theme for OCTE Fall Conference

The Southern Nazarene University English Department will host the OCTE Fall conference September 28, 2013, with Oklahoma author Sonia Gensler offering our keynote address.

The conference theme is Native Learners with an emphasis in two areas: Native American literature in the English classroom and tools to help those entering the teaching profession either through internships or a first year in the classroom.

OCTE is looking for speakers in any area of

English pedagogy; however, we are especially wanting speakers who have served as mentor teachers or speakers who have developed Native American literary units. Individual sessions or panel discussions are welcome.

Of course, if you wish to propose a session outside our theme, feel free. Go to the OCTE website (<http://octe.ecok.edu/index.htm>) to submit your proposal. Presenters will receive one-year free membership in OCTE.

Please see back page for more details.



Sonia Gensler will speak with English teachers at the fall conference at SNU

Young Writers Contest

Last year, during our spring conference, OCTE recognized young Oklahoma writers who entered and won a spot in our Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English *Young Writers Anthology 2013*. Students could enter writings in the categories of short story, poetry, essays, or descriptive writing.

Teachers are again invited to enter their students writing for entry into our anthology and recognition during our 2014 spring conference held at OCU in April. This year the contest chair will be



2013 YW contest winners with poet Terrance Hayes.

Photo courtesy of Randy Baker

Jonathan Atchley, language arts teacher in Mustang. Deadline for entry is December 1, 2013. Contact Atchley at Atch-

leyjo@mustangps.org for updated contest information.

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Save the Date:

- ◆ Fall Conference September 28, 2013
- ◆ Young Writers Contest Deadline
December 1, 2013
- ◆ Spring Conference April 2, 2014

Gensler's *The Revenant* brings suspense to Indian Territory



Sonia Gensler will be featured at OCTE's fall conference

The Revenant

When Willie arrives in Indian Territory, she knows only one thing: no one can find out who she really is. To escape a home she doesn't belong in anymore, she assumes the name of a former classmate and accepts a teaching job at the Cherokee Female Seminary.

Nothing prepares her for what she finds there. Her pupils are the daughters of the Cherokee elite—educated and more wealthy than she, and the school is cloaked in mystery. A student drowned in the river last year, and the girls whisper that she was killed by a jealous lover. Willie's room is the very room the dead girl slept in. The students say her spirit haunts it.

Willie doesn't believe in ghosts, but when strange things start happening at the school, she isn't sure anymore. She's also not sure what to make of a boy

from the nearby boys' school who has taken an interest in her—his past is cloaked in secrets. Soon, even she has to admit that the revenant may be trying to tell her something.



What are you reading right now?

Whether reading for pleasure or to stay up-to-date on the latest research, English teachers

always have one or more books on their bedside table or in the corner of an overly cluttered desk, ready to draw them away from the



stacks of essays to grade.

What about you? What are you currently reading?

OCTE treasurer Laura Bolf-Beliveau, UCO, is reading Kelly Gallagher's *Readicide* which analyzes "the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools." We English teachers know that a love of reading is

intimately connected to critical thinking and life-long learning. Gallagher's book provides evidence to support this connection while focusing on the actuality of standardized testing. One of the best sections provides a 50/50 approach to ending readicide. Gallagher suggests developing both recreational and academic readers. Using this model, all students win the race to the top.

Meet Josh Flores SDE English Language Director



Welcome back to school!

My name is Josh Flores and I'm the Director of Language Arts in the Office of

Instruction for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. I joined the OSDE in

October, 2012, to support Oklahoma teachers. It's been quite a learning experience and I've met a lot of new friends along the way. I hope to connect with you this year as we kick off a second season of regional meetings starting this August. We can also connect and collaborate using social media, including the #ELAOK Facebook group,

#ELAOK Twitter (@mrjoshflores), or email - josh.flores@sde.ok.gov. I look forward to meeting you!

Josh Flores, M. Ed
Director of Language Arts

Nathan Brown, Oklahoma Poet Laureate, for 2013-2014

Nathan Brown has served OCTE in the capacity of Young Writers contest judge for several years. We always knew we were blessed to have someone of his remarkable talents. Now Oklahoma schools and classrooms will have the opportunity to benefit from his knowledge of writing as well. Brown is the 2013-2014 Oklahoma State Poet Laureate. Schools interested in having Brown speak with students can fill out an application found on the Oklahoma Humanities Council (OHC) website (<http://www.okhumanities.org>).

Brown is a distinguished speaker, musician, songwriter, photographer and award-winning poet, author eight books. His most recent book is entitled *Karma Crisis: New and Selected Poems*. According

to the OHC, "Nathan seeks to make poetry more accessible to people who do not easily connect with this sometimes perplexing art form. His ability to engage diverse audiences, along with his passion, knowledge, and talent, makes him an ideal ambassador for



poetry throughout the state." As poet

Nathan Brown,
Oklahoma
Poet Laureate
2013-2014

laureate, Brown will travel around the state and nation sharing his love of poetry and music with audiences of all ages. Brown will facilitate poetry workshops in high schools, museums, universities, and senior education programs.

Brown, who won the prestigious 2009 Oklahoma Book Award for Poetry awarded by the Oklahoma Center for the Book for his book *Two Tables Over*, will be guest speaker for the OCTE spring conference in April. For more information about Nathan Brown, please visit his website at www.brownlines.com.

For information on arranging an appearance, contact [Kelly Elsey](mailto:Kelly.Elsey@okhumanities.org), Program Officer, for the Oklahoma Humanities Council, at Kelly@okhumanities.org.

Fund for Teachers and other grants

Whenever I start thinking about teacher pay in comparison to other professional careers, I try to stop and think of the perks of being a teacher. Besides having nights, weekends, and summers off, I think about grant opportunities. Grants for teachers are there for the taking. And as English teachers, we are primed to grab them. We know how to write to achieve our purpose. And our purpose should be to take full advantage of what is out there.

I have no grant writing training, yet I have been awarded local school foundation grants, a \$25,000 Cherokee

grant for a learning project, curriculum and professional development grants including College Board, Fund for Teachers and state grants for AP teachers. My favorite, of course, is the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and Fund for Teachers grant because teachers develop their own professional development proposals. I have received two FFT grants, one to study journalism in Austria and this summer, I traveled to Ireland to study James

Joyce as well as the Irish potato famine.

The Fund for Teachers grant applications open in October and the deadline is the end of January. As I return to school this fall, my goal is to organize a Fund for Teachers group that meets every two weeks to help each other work on

these grant applications. If you are interested in joining us or want to form your own group, contact me at nancykunsman@gmail.com.

*Design your own professional
development with Oklahoma
Foundation for Excellence and
Funds for Teachers*

OEJ

The Oklahoma English Journal, an OCTE publication, is published twice a year and serves members of OCTE. We publish a variety of types of articles, including theoretical based articles that are pedagogically applicable, book reviews, short essays and brief teaching tips. We also accept some poetry appropriate for our readership. Please consider submitting an article for OEJ. The deadline for the Spring 2014 issue is February 1, 2014. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the editor, Deborah Brown, djbrown@uco.edu.

OCTE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Kristin Wyckoff and Jonathan Atchley, both teaching in Mustang, have joined the OCTE executive board. Kristin will serve as the 3rd vice president and Jonathan will serve as 2nd vice president. The two new members will oversee the Young Writers contest and anthology.

OCTE FALL CONFERENCE INFO

<http://octe.ecok.edu/>

The fall conference, sponsored by the Department of English at Southern Nazarene University, will be held on the SNU campus at the Herrick Building & Auditorium on the corner of NW 39th Expressway and N. Asbury Ave. in Bethany, on Saturday, September 28, from 9:00am—2:30pm with a break for lunch at area restaurants.

Schedule:

8:30-8:55	Registration
9:00-9:25	Opening Session: Sonia Gensler
9:30-10:15	Breakout Session 1
10:20-11:05	Breakout Session 2
11:10-11:55	Breakout Session 3
12:00-1:15	Lunch at area restaurants
1:30-2:00	Closing Session: Oklahoma language arts director Josh Flores
2:00-2:30	Door Prizes & Certificates



Registration

Registration is exclusively online [on this Google form](#). You can also access registration on the OCTE website (<http://octe.ecok.edu/index.htm>). Please register by Thursday, September 26, 2013. Contact Laura Bolf-Beliveau, OCTE treasurer, with any registration questions at octetreasurer@gmail.com. Registration fee includes morning coffee, tea, and snacks and all breakout sessions. Lunch is on your own. Some restaurants are within walking distance.

Cost:

We are unable to accommodate registration at the door, so please register early. Those who are not members of OCTE are required to purchase a year's membership to attend the conference; however, first-year teachers and college students get free OCTE membership. No reimbursement can be offered for cancellations.

SNU Campus Map & Parking

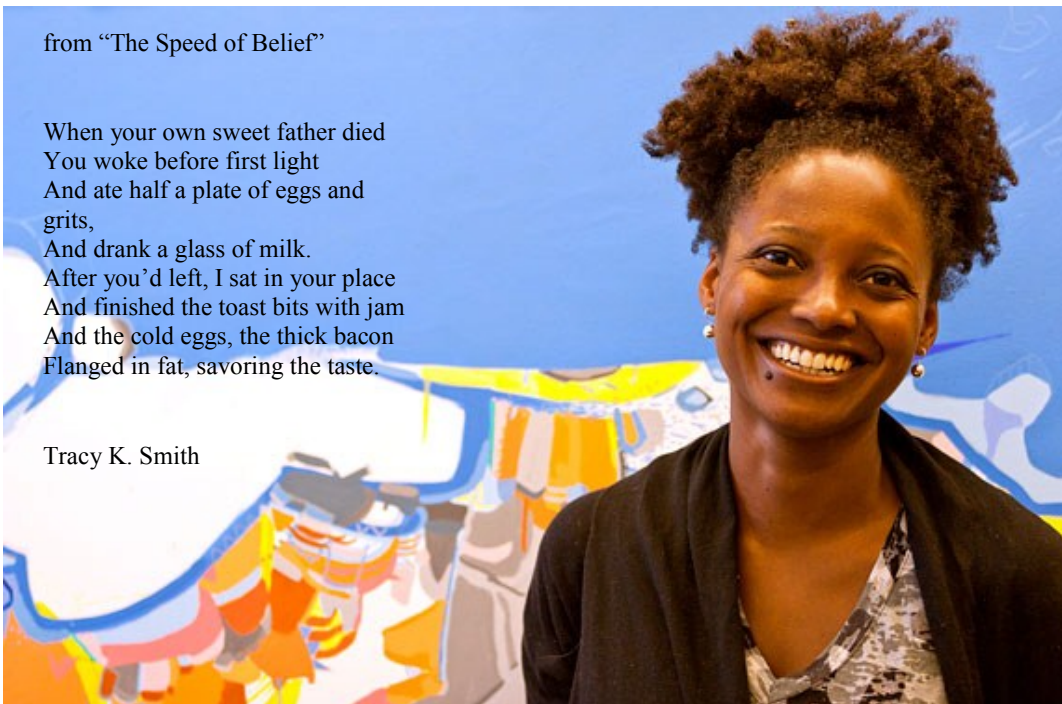
The Herrick Building & Auditorium is located at #1 on the SNU campus map. Free parking is available on the street and one block west of the building in the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene parking lot.

Save the date for the OCTE Spring Conference

from "The Speed of Belief"

When your own sweet father died
You woke before first light
And ate half a plate of eggs and
grits,
And drank a glass of milk.
After you'd left, I sat in your place
And finished the toast bits with jam
And the cold eggs, the thick bacon
Flanged in fat, savoring the taste.

Tracy K. Smith



The OCTE 2014 spring conference will be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2014, at Oklahoma City University. Two poets will be featured: Pulitzer-prize winning poet Tracy K. Smith and Oklahoma poet laureate Nathan Brown. As always, the spring conference will also be a time to celebrate the student winners in our young writers contest. Mark your calendars now, and we'll see you in the spring! Check the OCTE website for details on proposal submissions and conference registration.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/28/books/review/life-on-mars-by-tracy-k-smith-book-review.html>