

Oregon English Journal

By Tim Gillespie

Oregon English Journal, published twice yearly, is the award-winning publication of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OCTE), the state's professional association for teachers of English language arts from kindergarten through college. Copies of the journal are mailed free to all members of OCTE.

The journal was conceived by Robert Hamm, a West Linn teacher who launched the first issue in 1979. The aim of the journal was to provide a lively forum for English language arts teachers to share ideas about current issues and practices with colleagues in Oregon and around the nation. From its inception, the journal included classroom accounts, teaching suggestions, literary essays, research reports, advocacy articles, interviews, book reviews, poetry, and fiction. A volunteer board of Oregon teachers and writers reviews all submissions in a double-blind evaluation process.

Working Oregon teachers produce the vast majority of text and images in the journal, and Oregon high school artists have created many of the covers. In addition, *Oregon English Journal* has published the works of Mary Barnard, Robin Cody, Brian Doyle, Molly Gloss, Henry Hughes, Lawson Fusao Inada, Nigel Jaquiss, Ursula K. LeGuin, Barry Lopez, Phillip Margolin, Paulann Petersen, Barbara Scot, Floyd Skloot, Primus St. John, Kim Stafford, William Stafford, Mary Szybist, and Ingrid Wendt. The journal has published original contributions from Oregon-based writers of works for younger readers, including Susan Fletcher, April Henry, Deborah Hopkinson, Eric Kimmel, Graham Salisbury, Roland Smith, Renée Watson, and Virginia Euwer Wolff. All writers and artists allow their work to be published without compensation, and the journal's editorial staff works for no pay. As founding editor Hamm cheekily noted in 2004, "We pay handsomely...two copies of the publication. No money. Just glory."

Hamm was editor until 1984, when he was succeeded by Dennis Evans, an English professor at Oregon State University. Michael Wendt was editor of OEJ from 1985 to 1988, and Ulrich Hardt, an English educator at Portland State University, served from 1988 to 2017. During Hardt's tenure, some issues of OEJ were guest-edited by working teachers, including elementary specialist Daune Spritzer and Portland Community College teacher Joe Fitzgibbon. Kimberly Campbell, chair of Teacher Education at Lewis & Clark College, has been the editor of the journal since 2017.

Under Hardt's leadership, the *Oregon English Journal* published annual themed issues. Some were local in nature—on the literature of Oregon and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, for example, and on authors Beverly Cleary, Brian Doyle, Ursula K. LeGuin, and Walt Morey. Others focused on teaching concerns such as working with talented and gifted students, addressing conventions of writing, and nurturing poetry, and some examined topical matters such as ecological literacy. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) selected twenty-six of the themed issues for national promotion and distribution.

In 2011 and 2013, *Oregon English Journal* won the annual NCTE award for the best affiliate professional journal in the United States, specifically for issues on New Uses of Technology in Schools and Literature across Borders.

Sources

Hamm, Robert L., et al. "Reflections of Past Editors." *Oregon English Journal* 26:1 (Spring 2004): 6-11.

Hardt, Ulrich H. "Editorial." *Oregon English Journal* 26:1 (Spring 2004): 3-6.

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https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_english_journal/