

OLA

Quarterly

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Making Connections*

... and more!



Photograph by Marion Obar

*Summer 1999
Vol 5 • No 2
Oregon Library
Association*

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Upcoming Issues

Fall 1999

The Heart of a Librarian

Guest Editor

Juanita Benedicto

University of Oregon Knight Library

***OLA Quarterly is indexed in
Library Literature.***

OLA QUARTERLY

Writing Oregon

Serving as guest editor for this issue of the *OLA Quarterly* gave me an excuse to immerse myself in the writings of Oregon authors. Hoping to gain a renewed sense of what makes our literature unique, what gives it that sense of "Oregonness," I read, and read some more: Barry Lopez, Lars Nordstrom, Molly Gloss, John Daniel, Robin Cody, Shannon Applegate. I found some answers, many more questions, and an ever-increasing number of works to add to my reading list.

Though I grew up in Oregon and have read voraciously all my life, it is only in recent years that I have been drawn so strongly to the writings of Oregon authors. Is this because these writers are more visible now? Perhaps; certainly the efforts of those who work hard to promote local authors are paying off. Yet there is more. As we become more connected to the great wide world every day, as we routinely and instantly communicate with colleagues in all parts of the globe, as advances in technology rush us into an exciting and unfamiliar new future, the need to feel a strong sense of place, of home, of community, grows ever stronger. The writings of our local authors can help satisfy that yearning.

Here is a glimpse of the Oregon literary landscape: from the voices of writers, readers, editors, and librarians. Here is a look at the organizations and people who work to nurture and support Oregon writers, to build a community of writers and readers, and to raise public awareness of our rich literary heritage. I hope this issue inspires you to add an Oregon author or two to your summer reading list.

Lori Robare, University of Oregon Knight Library
Guest Editor

www.olaweb.org

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My wife has a friend who followed her graduation from the UO by suspending herself in trees in protest of imminent logging. Loggers would gather a hundred feet below her to shout, threaten, try to talk her down. Given her training in the liberal arts, she found herself following these shouted conversations in all kinds of directions, usually resulting in mutual affirmations of life in Oregon, in the woods, in a common sense of home. One day, a logger heading back to town from felling trees asked her if he could bring her anything.

Two Stories Becoming One

by Kim Stafford
Director
Northwest Writing Institute
at Lewis and Clark College

"I'd love a book," she shouted down to him.

"I'll bring you my favorite," he called back.

The next day, when she lowered a cord the hundred feet down to him, he tied on his book for her. She spent the day, suspended on her three-by-six-foot platform in the forest canopy, reading David James Duncan's *The*

River Why. This is one of many stories about our common ground.

I believe in the common story we are trying to live in Oregon. I believe in the conversation among us all, the search for the story of our future, which we will write together. We are many stories becoming one.

Photograph by Marior Obar



What is this place called Oregon? What principle gathers this place into one idea? It can't be weather, despite what strangers say. We are a land of rain and a land of sun. On the coast, expect rain. But out in Willowa County they say, "We've got four seasons-every day." And it can't be the economy. We were timber; we were wheat. Now we are those and many other things. The principle of our Oregon identity is not weather, and it is not work. It is, instead, a contradiction. Our identity in the Oregon country consists of two stories that must be healed into one.

I find these two stories everywhere in our state, two versions of our character and our mission. These are the twin stories of the traveler coming to this place, and of the resident in this place. These two stories are at war in us. We must make peace between them.

In one story, we are a band of travelers newly arrived in the promised land. We come in a ship under sail, two centuries ago, with Robert Gray, viewing and naming the coast. We arrive in hatchet-carved canoes with Lewis and Clark, skidding off the mountains and hurtling down the great river of the western slope. We ride the undammed waters of the Lochsa, the Clearwater, the Snake, and the Columbia. Like young salmon, we find the salt taste of the sea for the first time. We marvel at the gray and the green land, its rain and sun, its birds, its pure waters, and its people: Klickitat, Chinook, Molalla, Clackamas. We write a long letter home, a report to our president, describing the place, its sparkling treasures, its dangers.

In this same story, we are a band of pioneers who follow a deepening rut of dust and mud across the continent. In our wagons we hold hives of bees. We hold our families. We hold apple saplings. We grip books of Genesis that explain our mission. We have guns and plows, axes and spinning wheels. We have pigs to root deep in the camas fields, to prepare them for wheat.

In this same story, this odyssey peopled with travelers, we are Woody Guthrie, come to this place for a month of creation in the Great Depression to write songs like "Pastures of Plenty" and "Roll On, Columbia." We are my own parents, Dorothy and Bill, arriving here indirectly from the Midwest by way of World War II. We are a band of refugees, boat people on their own kind of Mayflower from Vietnam, we are Old Believers, we are Finns, we are Palestinian, Hmong, Ethiopian, Russian Pentacostal. We have heard that this is a safe and beautiful place, sometimes prosperous, sometimes welcoming. We are a story of arrival in hope.

This story is a young one. It has only been happening here for a couple of centuries. It happens today. In this story, we arrive from California, refugees from a prosperity, a golden dream that went somehow askew. We hear that there is a jade green dream to the north, and we seek it. We want to start over, and

because we are new to Oregon, we make a few mistakes in our effort to live right. We donate a tithe to the Sierra Club, then cut the trees in our yard so we can have a clear view of the mountain. We believe our wants are simple: a home, a job to do, a mountain to view and to visit. What else will we need in a place this fine?

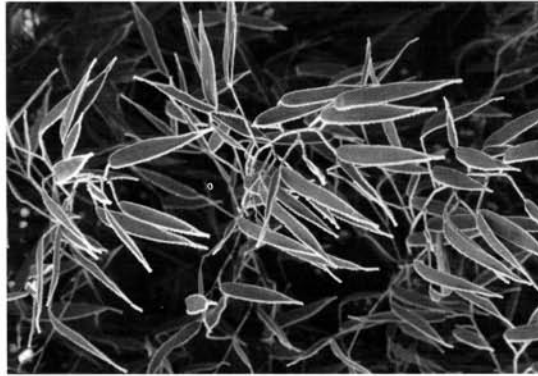
The answer is this: We will need understanding. We will need to learn to care for the things we brag about. We will need to know, and then to live, the second story of this place.

For there is this other story in Oregon: it is secondary, and it is older, and it is the future. It is a story that has been battered, assaulted, but will save us when we learn to tell it and to live it. This other story I do not know well. I am only forty-six. It is the story of longer residence, of the Native way matured by more winters than there are bricks in Pioneer Square, more summers than there are sticky children at the Rose Parade. We glimpse this story sometimes, those of us who have come to the Oregon country to stay.

I glimpsed this one Sunday at the giveaway at Nespelem, when the dancing stopped, and a fancy dancer Native man stepped forward into the ring, holding up a bridle, calling out the name of a certain child. "To honor the passing on of traditional values," he said, "I would give to a certain grandmother and a certain granddaughter the gift of this bridle, which was my grandfather's, and a saddle which was my father's, and a mare that is mine, a young one, and fertile." He called the name of the granddaughter again and again, until she came out from the darkness, a young one, shy, maybe eight years old in her long skin dress and beads, came out from the shadows and took the bridle without a word, and disappeared.

In this story, this Native way, we do not live by the sale of commodities. We live by an exchange of gifts. We live by recognizing that this place is giving gifts to us, every day, every moment of sun and clear rain, and we can only live here by giving to each other, and giving back to the land. That is how we heal the two stories: by giving and giving back.

We have to look each other in the eye and tell this story with care, for we live in a place where the two stories are at war. In these two stories, two eras coexist, two ways of being. The two carry with them the desire to change the place, and the necessity of living with those changes for seven generations. A logger with his grumbling saw meets an old cedar. A fisherman pulls an ancient Chinook from the river. A farmer harrows the camas prairie. A dam's turbine swallows the oldest river of our land. Someone young meets something old. The traveler meets the resident. Our prosperity is based on the meeting of these two stories, and we need to learn to carry out this meeting. If one story kills the other, we have nothing.



Photograph by Marior Obar

Carl Jung once made a prophecy about us. Americans, he said, will finally become Indians, natives of their place. If they don't, they will die and their place will die. He was talking about us, we who care about the place we live, who care about it beyond ourselves, we who gather in this work. And I want to ask us now, we who are both travelers and residents, how do our two stories get healed into one? How do we arrive, finally, in this place, and act simply in the matured character of the Oregon country?

I can only answer this question by telling a story, Lloyd's story. Lloyd Reynolds, the international citizen of Portland, spent his last days in pain, silent, unable to speak or to write, lying in his hospital bed inwardly composing a story in his mind to give to a child. He lay on his sheet, in each waking segment of his pain, putting together the particular telling of a story he wanted to give to a slow child named Christopher. Lloyd wanted to tell Christopher the story of St. Christopher, the strong monk boy who could do nothing right. That monk boy kept praising God in odd ways. He delighted in the seeds of dandelion, and sang as he scattered them in the garden of the monastery.

Finally, in Lloyd's telling, the exasperated abbot sent monk Christopher down to the river to wait and stay out of trouble. Christopher goes hulking down the river and begins his vigil, and finally, after some days, he sees on the far bank a little child waiting to cross. Christopher strides into the water and easily wades the torrent, and he lifts the child to his shoulder to start back, but when they reach the deepest place, Christopher staggers. The child is heavier and heavier, crushing, and Christopher has to summon the deepest roots of his strength to carry the child to dry land, and set him down there. Then a light comes around them, and Christopher sees it is the holy child, who says to him, "You have been carrying all the grief of the world."

In the last hours of Lloyd's life, he summoned his deepest strength, and managed to write that story down, and after his death it became a small book for the boy Christopher. They have this book at the Cen-

See Two Stories page 20

Brian Booth, Portland lawyer and founder of Literary Arts and the Oregon Book Awards, compiled this list of his favorite "Oregon books" by Oregon writers. He is the editor of *Wildmen, Wobblies & Whistlepunks: Stewart Holbrook's Loubrow Northwest* (1992), chosen as one of 20 books on the "Essential Northwest Reading List" by *Pacific Northwest Magazine*.

JANUARY

Honey in the Horn (1935) by H. L. Davis

Set in rural Oregon in 1906 to 1908, this Northwest version of Huckleberry Finn was called the "best first novel written by an American," by H. L. Mencken. It helped change the course of Northwest literature and won Davis the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

FEBRUARY

Skookum: An Oregon Pioneer Family's History and Lore (1986) by Shannon Applegate

A distinctive and powerful

narrative of the Applegate family, from 1843 to the present, written by a fifth-generation descendant.

MARCH

Trask (1960) by Don Berry

The clash of two cultures when a former mountain man and two Clatsop Indians journey to the land of the Killamooks in 1848; written when he was 27, this is the first of Berry's three acclaimed Oregon novels.

APRIL

Stepping Westward: The Long Search for Home in the Pacific Northwest (1991) by Sallie Tisdale

A personal, opinionated and very readable view of the region's history, people, geography and natural resources.

MAY

A month for Oregon rivers: *River Notes* (1975) by Barry Lopez; *The River Why* (1983) by David James Duncan; *Riverwalking: Reflections on Moving Water* by Kathleen Dean Moore; and *Voyage of a Summer Sun* (1995) by Robin Cody

The Lopez stories describe the physical and spiritual relationship of a river with humans, herons, fish, animals and wilderness. Duncan's epic of Oregon fly fishing was the first novel published by the Sierra Club. Moore's essays originated on the rivers she hiked and floated. Cody's book describes his solo canoe trip down the length of the Columbia River.

JUNE

Stories that Could Be True: New and Collected Poems (1977) by William Stafford

A collection by Oregon's poet laureate and National Book Award winner whose work "in the American grain" used everyday language to probe relationships among the individual, the family and nature.

JULY

A month for books on different aspects of the Native American experience in Oregon. *Coyote Was Going There: Indian Literature of the Oregon Country* (1977) by Jarold Ramsey is a collection of Oregon Indian myths and tales from every region, presented with imagination, humor, history and wisdom. Terence O'Donnell's *An Arrow in the Earth: General Joel Palmer and the Indians of Oregon* (1991), is the sad story of the Oregon Indian wars of the 1850s. *The Sky Fisherman* (1995) by Craig Lesley is a powerful and compassionate contemporary novel of the landscape and people east of the Cascades where white and Native American cultures co-exist. Don't overlook *Cathlamet on the Columbia* (1906) by Thomas Nelson Strong, a moving and melancholy book of recollections of Indian life and villages along the lower Columbia River.

AUGUST

Sometimes a Great Notion (1964) by Ken Kesey

This massive tale of the Stamper family and conflict in an Oregon coastal town is considered by many the greatest Northwest novel.

SEPTEMBER

Hole in the Sky (1992) by William Kittredge

A memorable "New West" memoir of a ranching family and their land in Southeast Oregon.

OCTOBER

A Heaven in the Eye (1984) by Clyde Rice

Written when he was 81, this exuberant and colorful autobiography of a working man on the fringes of society between 1918 and 1934 won the Western States Book Award for creative nonfiction. For the ultimate contrast with Clyde Rice, read *A New Life* (1961) by Bernard Malamud, who drew upon his 12 years at Oregon State College for this delightful and humorous tale of transplanted New Yorker Seymour Levin's "new life" in academia in a fictional Corvallis.

NOVEMBER

Searoad, Chronicles of Klatsand (1991) or *The Lathe of Heaven* (1971) by Ursula Le Guin

Two very different books written by perhaps the most versatile living Oregon author: *Searoad* examines the lives of residents in a beach community from the 1890s to the present; *Lathe* is the story of a Portlander whose dreams come true.

DECEMBER

Winds of Morning (1952) by H. L. Davis

Not as well known as *Honey in the Horn*, this novel of the journey of an old horse herder and a young deputy sheriff in the mid-Columbia River country in 1926-1927 may be Davis's best work.

BONUS

Heckletooth 3 (1969) by David Shetzline

This impressive 1960s novel involves loggers, a great forest fire and what happens when a bull elk is killed out of season; praised as "extraordinary and always deeply moving" by Thomas Pynchon.

A Year of Oregon Books

by Brian Booth

Founder of Literary Arts
and the Oregon Book Awards

Who are Oregon's Writers?

by George Venn
Eastern Oregon University

Question: What unique Oregon series is 2,100 pages deep, took six years to complete, cost around \$500,000 and includes 580 Oregon authors selected by 11 editors? Hint: the Oregon Library Association endorsed this anthology. In 1991, then President Michael K. Gaston wrote, "We anticipate great interest in this series on the part of Oregon's libraries... We applaud your innovation and wish you well with this important project." Second hint: the *Oregonian* described this collection as "Probably the most remarkable endeavor in the state's literary history." Last hint: this anthology received a Multicultural Publishing Award from the National Council of Teachers of English in 1995. If you said the Oregon Literature Series, sponsored by the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OCTE) and Oregon State University Press, you're right.

HERE—BRIEFLY—IS HOW IT HAPPENED.

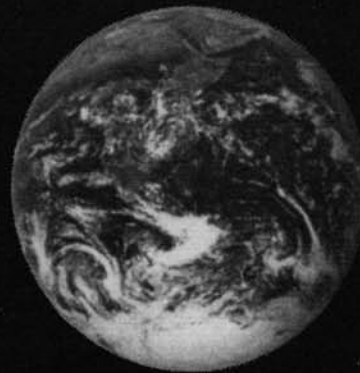
The idea for The Oregon Literature Series, six anthologies of the best Oregon writing, was first proposed to the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OCTE) in 1988. At that time, OCTE decided to depart from the conventional state literary anthology—a monolithic tome put together by a few academic volunteers and generally intended for libraries and adult readers. Instead, OCTE decided to create six shorter, genre-based anthologies: prose, poetry, autobiography, folk literature, letters and diaries, and short fiction. OCTE would publish a public "Call for Editors," and the most qualified individuals would be hired for their expertise and treated professionally—honoraria, expenses, research assistance, travel, etc. The anthologies would be intended as classroom/reference texts for students and teachers, and as introductory readers for the general public. Books would be designed to be easily held, carried, and read.

Numerous arguments were raised against this innovative proposal—most of them signaling Oregon's 150-year status as a literary colony. No one had ever done this before. Oregon's literature was non-existent. There wasn't much writing of merit. Most scholars and critics have ignored Oregon literature—even in the best histories of Western literature. There's no literary history of Oregon. It will take years to find this work. No one will read these books. In Oregon, literature has the least financial support of all the major arts. We had no publisher. It might rain.

Nevertheless, in 1989, Ulrich Hardt and I were appointed by OCTE to complete the Oregon Literature Series. The work began when we signed a publication contract with Oregon State University Press, our first and most important professional collaborator. Next, from a pool of 130 applicants, OCTE chose these editors to discover Oregon's literary heritage: Shannon Applegate, Stephen Dow Beckham, Gordon Dodds, Primus St. John, Suzi Jones, Glen Love, Terence O'Donnell, Jarold Ramsey, and Ingrid Wendt. Appointed in August 1990, those individuals began the search for Oregon writing that eventually spread beyond every corner of the state—from ranch houses to university archives, from oral storytellers in longhouses to Chinese miners in museums, from Desdemona Sands to Burns. Some editors traveled thousands of miles. Others corresponded with hundreds of authors. Most read thousands of pages. Poets, historians, folklorists, critics, scholars, and editors—they all benefited from and shared their research expertise. Even though honoraria were small, editors gave generously of their time.

While the editors looked for Oregon writing, Ulrich Hardt and I sought out and received endorsements from many major cultural and arts organizations. Financial support seemed like rain in the time of drought, but we attracted a few wise, faithful, and generous patrons:

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Oregon State University Press (OSU), \$54,000
Oregon Council for the Humanities, \$40,000
Portland State University, \$33,000
National Endowment for the Arts, \$39,000,
Oregon Arts Commission, \$4,000
Oregon Center for the Book, \$3,000
Jackson Foundation, \$2,500
Eastern Oregon University, \$2,000

Once the editors had discovered this vast, unstudied, and unknown body of writing, they assembled their manuscripts by using the following guidelines—guidelines that challenged them to choose writing—in its broadest sense—that might reveal the Oregon experience to both students and the public:

- (1) The volume must include a representative sample of the best Oregon writing from all periods, regions, occupations, genders, genres and sub-genres, ethnic, religious, political, and cultural backgrounds.
- (2) Oregon birth should not be used as a single criterion for inclusion. Oregon residence is important, but no arbitrary length of stay is required for a writer to be included.
- (3) Works about experience in Oregon are preferred, but editors are not limited to that criterion alone.
- (4) "Oregon" will be defined by its changing historical boundaries—native American tribal territories, Spanish, Russian, British, U.S. Territory, statehood.
- (5) One or more translations and original from non-English languages may be included—when appropriate—to show linguistic multiplicity has always been a part of Oregon.
- (6) Controversial subjects such as sexism and racism should not be avoided. Multiple versions of events, people, and places should be included when available.
- (7) Length of works must vary; limit snippets when possible. Meet the need for diversity in reading—from complex to simple.
- (8) New, unknown, or unpublished work should be included.
- (9) Works will be edited for clarity but not necessarily for correctness. Editors may invent titles, delete text, and select text as appropriate and with appropriate notation.

Once assembled in draft, most of these manuscripts were two to three times longer than could be published by Oregon State University Press, so much fine writing had to be omitted—which all editors

and our publisher regret. After being reduced to the requisite size, the manuscripts passed through two separate reviews: first, a different Advisory Board for each volume read and rated all selections; second, the Editorial Board composed of all fellow editors, read, responded, and eventually voted to adopt the manuscript for publication. At all stages, both Ulrich Hardt and I worked closely with editors in many ways: readers, critics, administrators, arbitrators, secretaries, grant writers, researchers, coordinators, pollsters.

Since 1993, this unique series of anthologies—with beautiful color covers by Oregon artists—has been creating for Oregon literature a legitimate place in Oregon schools and communities, where the best texts that celebrate, invent, evaluate, and illuminate the Oregon condition had been invisible for too long. For the first time, students have books that actually include writing by Oregonians; teachers can find original, whole, local, and authentic texts from all regions, periods, and peoples in the state. Librarians have been able to recommend the best Oregon reading to their patrons; the new reader and the general reader alike have found answers to the question that haunted this project like a colonial ghost: "Who are Oregon's writers, anyway?" **Q**

THE OREGON LITERATURE SERIES

Published by Oregon State University Press

The World Begins Here: An Anthology of Oregon Short Fiction, edited by Glen Love. Volume 1, 1993.

Thirty-three Oregon stories ranging from a Nez Perce tale to stories by many contemporary writers including Ursula Le Guin, Craig Lesley, Barry Lopez, and Ken Kesey.
0-87071-369-8 (cloth)
0-87071-370-1 (paper)

Many Faces: An Anthology of Oregon Autobiography, edited by Stephen Dow Beckham. Volume 2, 1993.

Here forty Oregonians, from the prominent to the plain, tell their own stories.
0-87071-371-X (cloth)
0-87071-372-8 (paper)

Varieties of Hope: An Anthology of Oregon Prose, edited by Gordon B. Dodds. Volume 3, 1993.

This wide-ranging anthology of speeches, essays, and works of biography, history, and journalism, profiles the Oregon experience.
0-87071-373-6 (cloth)
0-87071-374-4 (paper)

From Here We Speak: An Anthology of Oregon Poetry, edited by Ingrid Wendt and Primus St. John. Volume 4, 1993.

This historical anthology opens with Native American texts and ends with a broad sampling of Oregon's finest contemporary poets.

0-87071-375-2 (cloth)
0-87071-376-0 (paper)

The Stories We Tell: An Anthology of Oregon Folk Literature, edited by Suzi Jones and Jarold Ramsey. Volume 5, 1994.

These traditional stories, songs, tales, and sayings—from Native American creation myths to spotted owl jokes—reveal the richness of Oregon's oral traditions.

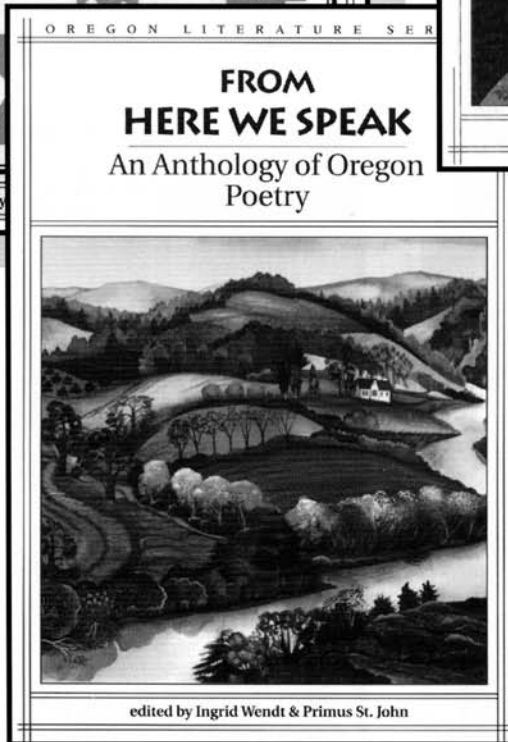
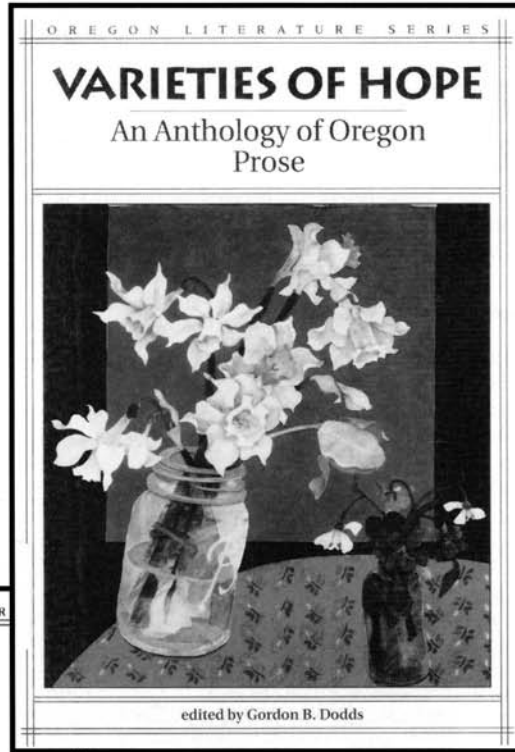
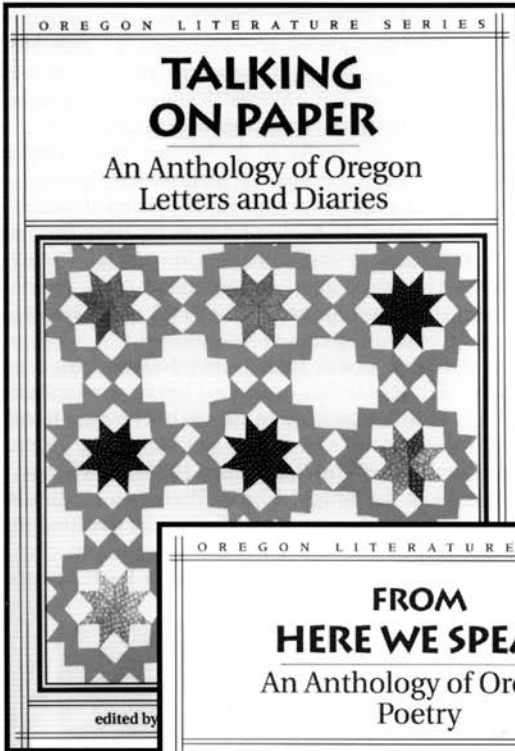
0-87071-379-5 (cloth)
0-87071-380-9 (paper)

Talking on Paper: An Anthology of Oregon Letters and Diaries, edited by Shannon Applegate and Terence O'Donnell. Volume 6, 1994.

These writings by ordinary Oregonians reveal a personal side of Oregon history, filled with the concrete details of everyday life.

0-87071-377-9 (cloth)
0-87071-378-7 (paper)

All volumes are available from library wholesalers or directly from the distributor, University of Arizona Press, at 1-800-426-3797.



Oregon artists provided cover art for titles in the Oregon Literature Series: *Varieties of Hope* features *Light Changes* by Carol Riley; *From Here We Speak* features a detail from Jennifer Joyce's *Southern Exposure*; and *Talking on Paper* features a detail of a quilt (ca. 1876) donated by John Lawrence and probably made by his grandmother, Sarah Hawley.

At a time when the library world seems totally consumed by the issues related to electronic information resources, the University of Oregon Libraries have decided to establish a press to produce works which celebrate the technology of printing and the graphic arts. With the financial support of a private donor and the enthusiastic backing of the University Librarian, George Shipman, Sandy Tilcock was appointed, in January of 1999, to the position of Director of the Knight Library Press in the Division of Special Collections and University Archives at the University of Oregon.

The Knight Library Press

by Bernard McTigue

Director, Division of Special Collections
and University Archives,
University of Oregon

Ms. Tilcock, the printer-proprietor of the lone goose press in Eugene, has been producing fine books and broadsides featuring the texts and images of Northwest writers and artists for more than ten years. She is also an accomplished book-binder and box maker. A graduate of the Book Arts

program of the University of Alabama, where she studied with the acclaimed printer, Richard-Gabriel Rummonds, Ms. Tilcock has taught classes and workshops throughout the Northwest. The writers with whom she has worked include Barry Lopez and Kim Stafford and the artists include Susan Lowdermilk and Margaret Prentice.

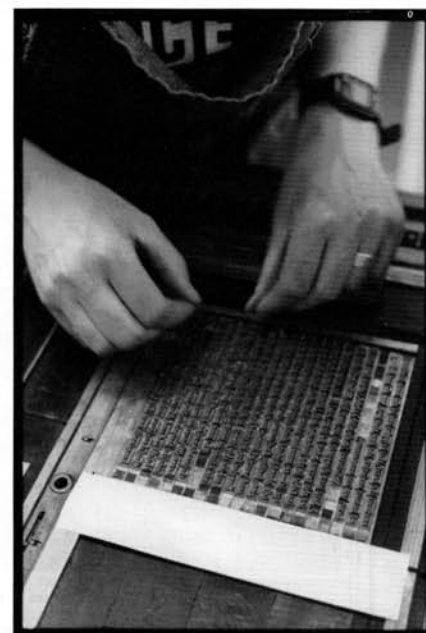
Ms. Tilcock's work comes out of the tradition of modern fine printing that grew out of an earlier reaction to the pressures and pervasiveness of new technology. In the latter part of the nineteenth century,

the Arts and Crafts movement in England and the U.S. arose to confront the triumph of the mass-produced object over the handcrafted production of an artisan class. The men and women active in this movement (most of them educated and middle class) were not so much Luddites as Romantics who perceived a nobility in artisanship and a spiritual, as well as material, satisfaction to be gained by creating and living with objects which gave evidence of the individuality of their creators. Though middle class in its origin, this movement was not some prototype of Yuppie consumer durable fetishism, but was grounded in the desire to create a harmonious mode of production that would reflect a fair and equitable society.

The leading proponent of this naive and unthreatening variant of socialist ideology was William Morris, a man of formidable wealth and apparently unlimited creative energy. Morris designed and produced furniture, textiles, and, most notably, books. His Kelmscott Press, active in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, produced magnificent limited edition, hand-printed books in a medieval style that have appealed to bibliophiles since they first came off the press. Printers in the United States, such as Elbert Hubbard, gave an American twist to Morris' vision that soon spread throughout the country.

On the West Coast, John Henry Nash set up a press in San Francisco that produced books and ephemera in the Morris tradition. In the 1920s he was hired by the University of Oregon as the University Printer, a position he held until the early 1930s. In a sense, the creation of the Knight Library Press is a continuation or a re-establishment of the fine press tradition at the University of Oregon after a 60-year hiatus. But the press is more than an exemplar of a local phenome-

Sandy Tilcock in her studio at the lone goose press (left); Tilcock adjusts a block of type (right).



non. In the post World War II period there has been a flowering of fine printing in this country; most, but not all of it, has been connected with the university environment. Printers like the late Harry Duncan at Nebraska, Walter Hamady at Wisconsin and Kim Merkur at Iowa have amply demonstrated over the last fifty years that the finely crafted book is alive and well.

In more recent decades, women have taken on an important role in the world of private press printing and the book arts generally. MacArthur Fellow Claire Van Vliet is probably the best known of these artists, but the list of those who have produced notable work in this field is a long one and includes bookbinders, such as Carol Joyce, and "all-arounders," such as Julie Chen.

Sandy Tilcock falls squarely within this recent tradition, having collaborated with Ms. Chen and having produced a remarkable series of books and broadsides. Her work may be characterized as collaborative and collegial as well as beautiful. She chooses her authors and artists carefully so as to be sure that text and image will not only be compatible but will also help to create an object which is greater than the sum of its components. Each book also varies its format according to the occasion provided by the text and its accompanying image. Grounded in the writers, artists and ethos of the Pacific Northwest, the output of the lone goose press has itself become a contemporary cultural phenomenon.

It is the intent of the Knight Library Press to build upon this contribution to the culture of the book established by the lone goose press. The Knight Library Press will produce books and broadsides

that will reinforce the library's role as the custodian of the culture of the book. The press makes manifest the balance the library intends to strike in the coming millennium between new and traditional modes of communication. Further, the press expands the library's role as a locus of cultural production, a space in which ideas achieve a concrete presence rather than a space in which the material for concretization is drawn together. The library, through the press and its advisory board, will also take on the role of patron of the literary and visual as well as the book arts, thereby filling a noticeable void in the cultural world.

While some of the work produced by the press will be, because of its labor intensiveness, rather expensive and therefore geared to the private and institutional collector, it is our intention also to produce works which are inexpensive and therefore accessible to a wide audience of book lovers. **Q**



(Far left)Tilcock and author, Barry Lopez, ink a printing plate for an illustration for Lopez's book, *Apologia* (1997).Tilcock positions the paper for the author and his Toyota.



The author's Toyota in the process of making a good impression.

The Oregon Authors Committee:

Documenting Oregon's Literary Heritage

by Jey Wann
Oregon State Library

For many years, amid the hustle and bustle of the annual Oregon Library Association conference, a small publication has appeared: *Oregon Authors*, a bibliography listing works published by Oregon authors in the previous year. Taken for granted by many, this bibliography can trace its beginnings back over 50 years.

The earliest ancestor of *Oregon Authors* was a list in the 1933/34 edition of the *Oregon Blue Book*, compiled by the Oregon State Library (OSL). Through the 1954 edition, OSL continued to provide the *Blue Book* with information on Oregon authors. Various titles *Oregon Writers of Today*, *Oregon Writers of Today Recognized*, and *Who's Who of Oregon Authors*, the lists were generally only a few pages long. The early lists included brief biographical information about the authors, but later lists were simply annotated bibliographies. The 1937/38 list was compiled by the

Federal Writers Project. OSL also published periodic supplements to *Who's Who of Oregon Authors* from 1949 to 1955.

The predecessor to the current OLA Oregon Authors Committee was the Current Biographical Data on Oregon Authors Committee, which was formed in 1950 to work with the Current Biographical Data Committee of PNLA (Findley, 1955). The Committee was closely tied to OSL, which supplied personnel and supplies for the work of collecting data on Oregon authors. In fact in 1952 the State Librarian sent a letter to the OLA president stating that "Data col-

lected belongs to the Oregon State Library and not to OLA, although the results of the research are given to OLA" (Findley, 1955).

In 1952, the committee became a standing committee of OLA. Initially called the Bibliography Committee, its name was changed to the Committee on Oregon Authors in 1953 (Findley, 1955). What caused the switch from biography to bibliography isn't clear. The published reports of both OSL and the committee have always emphasized bibliographical, rather than biographical, information. At this writing, the OLA Executive Board is considering many changes to the procedural section of the OLA bylaws, including one to change "biographical" to "bibliographic" in the description of the work of the Oregon Authors Committee. There may have been confusion in the written description, but it's obvious from half a century's worth of documentation that the committee, in whatever form, has always been dedicated to collecting bibliographic information on the works of Oregon authors.

The close cooperation between the committee and OSL is reflected by the fact that for the bibliographies published between 1961 and 1967, it's unclear exactly who was responsible. The 1961/63 and 1967/68 edition are titled *Report of the Oregon Authors Committee*; the 1964/65 through 1966/67 bibliographies give no information about who published them, but the State Library classified them as publications of OSL, not OLA.

Another indication of the close ties between the committee and OSL is another section of the OLA by-laws also due for change. The current by-laws state that the committee chair is "usually... a member of the Oregon State Library staff." Until OSL's recent change in mission, this did make sense, as OSL had a significant commitment to collecting works by, and infor-

A selection of 1985 Oregon authors.



mation on, Oregon authors. However, a review of the committee rosters over the years shows that committee chairs have come from all types of libraries in all parts of the state. Committee membership has also been diverse. Until recently, school librarians regularly served as members. The 1970/71 committee included Winifred Layton, representing the Oregon Poetry Association. From 1972 to 1976, Oregon author Walt Morey was a committee member.

The amount of information in the bibliography has increased over the years. The 1965 edition included the first necrology, listing Oregon authors who had died that year. This feature remained through 1980, with a few exceptions. The 1965 edition also included news and a list of Oregon authors who had received awards. The only other edition to include this information was the 1986 edition. The 1985 edition included a short directory of Oregon publishers. The 1986 edition added codes indicating Oregon content, juvenile reading level, and honor or award winners. The Oregon and juvenile codes are still used. The title index first appeared in the 1989/90 edition.

The definition of "Oregon author" has been consistent throughout the decades. To be included, an author must have lived in Oregon when he or she wrote the work. Textbooks and very technical publications have always been excluded. The length of the bibliography has varied greatly. Early editions frequently were only a few pages, including perhaps 30 or 40 books. Recent editions have been nearly 30 pages, listing over 400 works. The increase is obviously due in part to the increased population of the state, but inconsistencies between editions indicate that there has also been a difference in the amount of information gathered by different committees.

Recent editions have been consistent in the information provided: author's name and place of residence; title of book; place of publication; publisher; number of pages; price; ISBN; address for small publishers; and occasional annotations. This is merely an expansion of the information included in the early editions and *Blue Book* lists.

There has, however, been a major change in the appearance of the bibliography. Some of OSL's early *Who's Who of Oregon Authors* were attractive, professionally printed pamphlets. But most editions were serviceable typed and mimeographed lists: useful, but not particularly nice to look at. In 1985, committee member Rebecca Hassman decided to change that.

Hassman wanted to give the bibliography a more professional look. She located what she called a "budget-friendly photographer," who provided photographs of artistically-arranged Oregon author books for the cover. Hassman and her committee, along with staff from the State Library, keyed the bibliography into a word processing file, which they gave to a professional printer. The printer provided



*Oregon
Authors
1995*

camera-ready copy, which the Committee then manually cut and pasted, and returned to the printer. The result was the first eye-catching edition of *Oregon Authors*. The next year, Hassman switched to doing the input and design on PageMaker. The most recent editions have used word processing software such as Microsoft Word.

The bibliography has maintained the professional look since then. The 1989/90 edition has a colorful cover designed by staff at the Albany Public Library. The 1990 edition utilized the talents of an artist who was doing community service work at the State Library. The covers of the 1991-1995 editions were designed by staff and family of staff at the State Library. For the 1996 and 1997 editions John Hawk used art from older Oregon books in the University of Oregon's special collections. For the 1998 edition Craig Smith solicited designs from art students at a Salem high school.

For years, *Oregon Authors* was distributed free of charge. That changed when the more professional look resulted in higher production costs, and the bibliography has been sold ever since. Libraries are the obvious buyers for such a publication, but Dee Iltis took the marketing efforts beyond the library community. Iltis built two mailing lists: one of Oregon authors and publishers, and one of Oregon libraries and other potential buyers of the annual bibliography. Since these lists were compiled in the early 1990s, the committee has sent out two annual mailings: one to authors and publishers, asking for information on works by Oregon authors published in the previous year, and one to libraries and other buyers, announcing availability of the new bibliography. To compile the lists, Iltis used information from previous editions of the bibliography and the State Library's Oregon library mailing lists, and shared mailing lists with Literary Arts, Inc. Iltis also

contacted Oregon college and university public relations offices for information on faculty who are Oregon authors. The two mailings have ensured that the Oregon literary community and libraries are kept abreast of the activity of the Oregon Authors Committee. In fact, Literary Arts, Inc. frequently requests an early draft edition of the bibliography to use in helping select nominees for the Oregon Book Awards.

Especially since the establishment of the mailing lists, much of the information that is eventually published in *Oregon Authors* comes from the authors or publishers themselves. For much of its history, however, the Oregon Authors Committee has also relied on a press clipping service to which the State Library subscribes for information on new works by Oregon authors. The clipping service is particularly useful for getting information about small, self-published works, frequently dealing with local history. And, of course, a major task for committee members is seeking out information on Oregon authors.

Much of the information, especially that submitted by authors and publishers, is complete and ready for inclusion in the bibliography. The same can't be said for information from clippings, or even for information in the books themselves. Clippings may not include the name of the publisher, date of publication, or any ordering information. Dust jackets of books are notorious for saying the author "lives in northwest Oregon," or other phrases equally unhelpful to bibliography editors trying to pinpoint the author's home town. Tracking down and verifying information is one of the major jobs of committee members.

Rebecca Hassman, in reminiscing on her time on the Oregon Authors Committee, referred to "the excruciating process of trying to get every detail right." As co-editor of *Oregon Authors* from 1991 to 1997, I experienced an increase in the amount of information that was easily available. For the first few editions I edited, *Books in Print*, OCLC, and the phone were my main resources. Phoning, while time consuming, frequently resulted not only in the specific information I was seeking, but also in discovering information about new Oregon authors, or additional books by the author about whom I was inquiring. The advent of the World Wide Web greatly expanded the resources available for verifying information. Amazon.com, Powell's website, publishers' websites, and shared catalogs such as Orbis provide valuable bibliographic information. And, when all else fails, directory sites such as Switchboard made verifying an author's city of residence much easier. In fact, I suspect that I'm not the only editor who has had trouble knowing when to quit when searching the vast resources of the Web: surely I'll be able to find out how many pages that book has if I just search one more place!

Less interesting, but no less important, is the work of laying out and proof-reading the bibliography. The

Committee has made changes to the font and layout over the years in order to improve readability. Then there are the thorns in the side of many editors: the column break that insists on occurring in the middle of an entry, or the late, but important, addition that throws off most of the page breaks in the entire publication. Once the publication is in its nearly-final form, proof-readers take over. It's impossible to say too much about these folks, who sometimes have been innocent by-standers who were talked into helping out. Proof-reading text can be hard enough; proof-reading ISBNs is a real task!

The Web has changed the way editors verify information for *Oregon Authors*. In the near future, it may also change the way the bibliography is published. 1998/99 committee chair Craig Smith is investigating using the Web for an online, frequently-updated version of *Oregon Authors*. Smith hopes that the online version could become just one piece of an Oregon Authors Clearinghouse, which would include cumulative editions of the bibliography plus information from the State Library's and other libraries' Oregon authors files. The 1977 edition of *Oregon Authors* included an "Oregon author list cumulation progress report." While recognizing the immense amount of work involved, the committee recommended that a cumulation should be undertaken, and that "the resulting effort should be made part of a computer-access system and maintained in a data bank for future on-line access." Over 20 years later, this vision may soon become a reality.

Writing in 1902, John B. Horner speculated thus on the future of Oregon literature: "Of the future literature of Oregon it may be said that peace, home, and prosperity will be the probable themes—agricultural and pastoral life will not be slighted. Nor will the sons of the men who made the country permit to be forgotten the legends incident to the life of the settler, and the trials of the Indian who was gradually crowded out of his home" (Horner, 1902). In almost a century, Oregon's literature has fulfilled that prediction and more, giving voice to poets, philosophers, historians, storytellers, diarists, and others from diverse backgrounds and cultures. OLA can be proud that the Oregon Authors Committee has helped document that heritage for over half a century. **Q**

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AND all of the editions of *Oregon Authors* I could lay my hands on!

The Oregon Center for the Book at the State Library

by MaryKay Dahlgreen
Oregon State Library

Because it is more a state of mind than a place, the Oregon Center for the Book at the State Library is perhaps the least known service of the Oregon State Library. The Oregon Center for the Book (OCB) was created in 1986 as an affiliate (there are currently over thirty state centers) of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress.

In fulfilling our purpose "to stimulate public interest in books, reading and libraries," the Oregon Center for the Book is involved in a variety of activities which provide opportunities to work with individuals and organizations around the state and nation.

The Oregon Intellectual Freedom Clearinghouse, an activity of OCB, provides intellectual freedom information to libraries and gathers accounts of challenges to public and school library materials. A report detailing those challenges is produced annually. The Clearinghouse was created in 1978 by Jim Schepke and Mary Ginnane.

The OCB participates in *Partners in Literacy*, which promotes and advocates for collaborative linkages between Oregon's public libraries and family support programs, including the child care and education community, to ensure optimum language and literacy development, social and emotional development, cognitive development, and the physical well-being of children. *Partners in Literacy* is an outgrowth of the national Library/Head Start partnership sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Oregon's participation in this partnership was begun in 1993 by Ellen Fader, who was Coordinator of the Oregon Center for the Book at that time. *Partners in Literacy* networking has resulted in a variety of collaborations between Oregon libraries and Even Start, Head Start, and other family literacy and early intervention programs.

Since 1995, the OCB has worked with Literary Arts, Inc., sponsor of the Oregon Book Awards, to promote the Book Awards in public libraries around the state. Participating libraries are provided with bookmarks, sample press releases and selected complimentary copies of the Award finalists. The libraries promote the award through displays and other means in the month before the Awards are announced. Multnomah County Library is also a

partner in this activity and has provided the printing for the bookmark for the past two years.

One of the most successful and far-reaching projects of the OCB is participation in the *Letters about Literature Contest*. This contest is sponsored nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress and *Weekly Reader Magazine*. In Oregon the co-sponsors include OLA's Children's Services Division and Oregon Young Adult Network, Oregon Educational Media Association, Oregon Council of Teachers of English, and Oregon Reading Association. The contest asks students in grades 4 to 12 (divided into two levels, 4 to 7 and 8 to 12) to write a letter to an author explaining the impact the author's work has had on the student's life. In 1999, 532 Oregon students entered the contest. A panel of judges reviewed Oregon's 58 semi-finalists and selected a winner, runners-up and honorable mentions for each level. The students were honored in April at a celebration at the Capitol Building during National Library Week.

In 1997 and 1998, the OCB began a cooperative project with the Oregon State Poetry Association which brought together Oregon poets and families in thirteen public libraries around the state. At each day-long event, two Oregon poets conducted a poetry writing workshop for child/adult pairs, and books containing the participants' poetry were produced. Poet honoraria and materials were funded with grants from the Oregon Community Foundation and the Collins Foundation. Local library staff time was an in-kind contribution and each community matched the amount allocated for materials. Additional programs are currently being planned for 1999-2000.

In 1998 the OCB began another exciting project for families that was created and disseminated by the Vermont Center for the Book. *Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* provides at-risk parents with a series of discussion/activity programs combining quality children's literature and science activities which they can then share with their children at home. The Vermont Center for the Book obtained funding in 1998 from the National Science Foundation to expand the model to 14 other states for a three-year pilot project. Oregon will reach 100 parents during each of those three years through the work of Renea Arnold in Early Childhood Resources at Multnomah County Library, BJ Quinlan at the Salem Public Library and Kim Wolfe and Pat Blair at the Jackson County Library.

The Youth Services Consultant, MaryKay Dahlgreen, currently devotes approximately 10 percent of her time to the coordination of the Oregon Center for the Book, while Phyllis Lichenstein, former OS� Board of Trustees member, volunteers her time to OCB projects on a regular basis.

See **The Oregon Center** page 20

Literature has traditionally been the least visible, least well-supported segment of the non-profit arts community. Literary Arts, Inc. is trying to change that scenario and move the literary arts away from the margins of Oregon's cultural life and more toward center stage.

Many librarians know Literary Arts, Inc. as the sponsor of the Oregon Book Awards, but the small, dedicated group of people behind this non-profit organization is responsible for several outstanding programs that help support local writers and build the literary life of Oregon. Executive Director Julie Mancini believes that reading, writing, and a love of language are fundamental to any real understanding and appreciation of culture: "We think this is important work, not only because it makes us more civilized and enlightened, but because it will help to make us a better community.

In the process, we hear good minds and ideas, and we can connect to the voices and stories that come from Oregon."

It all began when Portland lawyer Brian Booth, sensing a need for some way to celebrate local writers, created the Oregon Institute for Literary Arts (OILA) and the Oregon Book Awards. In 1994, OILA merged with the Portland Arts & Lecture Series to form Literary Arts, Inc. The merger brought these two ventures together and resulted in a stronger foundation for support of the literary arts. "In 1994, nationally and internationally acclaimed writers were not making stops in Portland," Mancini notes. Now the literary arts have taken a more prominent place in the local cultural scene.

The Oregon Book Awards capture the attention of many librarians each fall; simply browsing the list of nominees in each category provides fodder for many a reading list and a checklist for collection development. The awards are presented annually to honor the year's finest accomplishments by Oregon writers in the areas of fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry, young readers' literature, and drama. Authors, publishers and members of the public may nominate works in these categories. To be eligible, a work must be written by a resident of Oregon and have an original publication date within the 12-month period ending March 31. Nominated works are reviewed by a panel of out-of state judges selected for having expertise in a specific area. The judges select five finalists and one winner in each category.

The awards are presented at a ceremony in November, a celebration of Oregon's writers and literary life

in a warm and appreciative setting. The general public is welcome, and admission is modestly priced. Each winner receives \$1000 and a certificate from Literary Arts. Of course, the impact of winning an Oregon Book Award goes far beyond the financial—some recipients describe it as a turning point in their own identity as writers.

"I was thrilled to win the award, because the Northwest writers I most admire have won it; it was something to shoot for," says Robin Cody, who won in 1995 for *Voyage of a Summer Sun*. "I would always go to the awards ceremony and listen to these writers I admire—and this time I was the one up on stage. It was a real validation of my work." Cody also noted that winning the award helped convince his toughest critic that what he was doing was worthwhile. "My mother still has trouble believing that I'm really a writer," he chuckled. "I tell her that I know guys like Craig Lesley, and she thinks I'm making it up. When I won the Oregon Book Award, it was harder for her to deny!"

Lars Nordstrom, who won the prize for literary non-fiction in 1998 for *Making It Home*, notes, "Writing a book is a lonely thing; you don't have a sense of what your readers will think. When you receive something like the Oregon Book Award, suddenly there is an affirmation that yes, you're doing something that speaks to people. It's different, more objective, than having your friends say they like your book." Nordstrom also appreciated gaining an increased sense of connection with readers and other writers after receiving the nomination. His book was published by a small, independent press and the publisher was not able to do much promotion through book signings and readings. "Once I received the nomination, I was able to participate in readings throughout the state and was put in touch with my audience in a way that wouldn't have happened otherwise. I met a lot of fellow writers this way too, and for the first time felt that I was part of a community of writers."

Literary Arts, Inc. also sponsors three special awards to recognize significant contributions to Oregon literature. The C.E.S. Wood Retrospective Award is presented in recognition of a distinguished career in Oregon letters. The award is named for Charles Erskine Scott Wood, a writer, poet, soldier, lawyer, orator and bibliophile who had a great impact on Portland's cultural life. Past recipients include Walt Morey, Terence O'Donnell, Damon Knight, and Eloise McGraw. The Stewart H. Holbrook Special Award is presented to a person or organization in recognition of current contributions to the advancement of Oregon's literary life. Holbrook was a colorful, popular historical writer from Portland, known as "Lumberjack Boswell" for his writings on loggers and the timber industry. It seems fitting that one recipient of the award was Brian Booth, who wrote Holbrook's biography, *Wildmen, Wobblers & Whistlepunks: Stewart Holbrook's Lowbrow Northwest*. Other recipients include Ruth Gundle and Judith Barrington, George

Literary Arts, Inc.:

*Bringing the Literary Arts
to Center Stage*

by Lori Robare
University of Oregon

Venn, Katharine McCanna, Walt Curtis, Clyde Rice, and Calyx.

The Walt Morey Award was presented for the first time in 1998 in recognition of contributions to young readers' literature. Barbara McKillip, founder and president of the Libri Foundation and long-time member of OLA, received the award for her work in providing new children's books to small rural libraries. She was overwhelmed to receive a standing ovation upon being presented with the award.

Nominations for any of these special awards can be made on an entry form available from the Literary Arts, Inc. Web site: www.literary-arts.org/index.html. The site also provides information about the other programs sponsored by Literary Arts.

Several literary fellowship programs encourage the development of new voices in Oregon literature by providing financial support to emerging writers and small independent publishers. Emerging Writer Fellowships provide funds to initiate, develop or complete writing projects in the areas of fiction, poetry, drama, literary non-fiction and young readers. Women Writers' Fellowships place special emphasis on funding writing that explores experiences of race, class, physical disability or sexual orientation. Fellowships to publishers are awarded to independent publishers, presses and magazines that demonstrate a commitment to publishing literary works.

The awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,000. "It's not enough to allow anyone to quit their day job," notes Julie Mancini, "but the fellowships do provide the recognition that what they're doing is good work." Mancini believes that the fellowship programs will be the enduring legacy of Literary Arts, long after other programs have come and gone, for their role in nurturing and supporting Oregon's writers.

Other Literary Arts, Inc. programs focus on promoting appreciation of the literary arts in the Portland area.

Portland Arts & Lectures brings distinguished authors and artists to Portland for a seven-part series of lectures. Speakers for the 1998/99 season included Charles Frazier, Kaye Gibbons, Richard Ford, David Remnick, Barbara Kopple, Julie Taynor, Caryl Phillips and Julian Barnes.

Writers in the Schools (WIS) combines a residency program in three area schools—Grant High School, Beaumont Middle School, and Vancouver School of Arts & Academics—with visits from authors who are on book tours or speaking in the Portland Arts & Lectures Series. The program aims to connect kids with writers in a meaningful way, beyond what is possible when authors visit schools and merely speak to large groups at assemblies. With WIS, kids form a relationship with an accomplished writer in ongoing classes and learn to tell their own stories. WIS classes have expanded beyond traditional writ-

ing seminars to encompass such courses as screenwriting, poetry for geometry students, and performance poetry.

Teachers also grow through the WIS program. Writers in residence offer writing workshops to teachers, and each summer WIS sends 2 to 5 teachers to their choice of the many excellent writing workshops available throughout Oregon, such as Fishtrap, Flight of the Mind, and the Oregon Writing Project. Literary Arts hopes to add more schools to the WIS program for 1999/2000.

Commuters in the greater Portland area may happen upon evidence of another Literary Arts program: Poetry in Motion! which places 20 poems on Tri-Met buses and MAX trains each year. Ten of this year's poems were selected from over 1,200 submitted by Oregon poets; the remaining ten were drawn from the *Poetry in Motion!* anthology. The Oregon component of this national project is coordinated by Literary Arts and co-sponsored by several organizations including Tri-Met, Starbucks, and the Poetry Society of America.

Through all of these programs, Literary Arts, Inc. is helping to bring the literary arts to the same level of visibility as the visual and performing arts and to ensure that writing and publishing are not relegated to the margins of our cultural life. Literary Arts, Inc. relies upon the contributions of individuals, businesses and foundations to fund its programs. **Q**

Critics tell us that literature is rather an image of the spiritual world, than of the physical—of the internal, rather than the external—that mountains, lakes and rivers, are after all only its scenery and decorations, not its substance and essence. And it is true that a man will not necessarily be a great poet because he lives at the foot of a great mountain—a Hood, a Jefferson, or a Shasta; nor being a poet, that he will write better poems than others because he lives where he can bear the thundering falls of the mighty Willamette. ...But, while mountains, rivers, and valleys do not create genius, no one can deny that they aid in developing it. ...No man or woman with the least poetic impulse can entirely escape and resist the inspiring influences of luxuriant vegetation, balmy air, and delightful scenery.

With a state drained on the north by the mighty Columbia, measured on the east by rivers and prairies and gold, guarded on the south by the sky-kissed Siskiyou, bathed on the west by the sunset seas; a state dotted here and there by the everlasting peaks—the sentinels of the world bound together with great mountain chains, reveling in delightful valleys beautifully tessellated (sic) with charming traceries—crystal streams winding like silvery threads from the glaciers far above as if seeking the violets, the daisies, and the witcheries of the lowlands, ours is not the scenery that makes warriors and bandits, but it is the taming, refining, elevating influence of the milder, gentler, environments that will in the coming days produce a literature most admired for the gentleness of its sentiment and the grace of its art. With us the perfection of the literary art will attain its zenith in approximating the perfection of the sweet nature and rich landscapes about us.

—John B. Horner, *Oregon Literature*, 1899

When I was first approached about writing an article on resources for Oregon writers, I wondered what I could possibly have to offer. Sure, I am a writer, and I happen to be a librarian. But I am not a published author, though that is most definitely my aspiration. On further introspection, I realized that I have been involved in the writing scene in Oregon for quite some time now—about nine years. I am currently finishing my fifth novel (a romantic comedy), with the goal of crossing over into mainstream in my next novel, which I am currently researching. It has taken me many years to absorb and fine-tune the craft of writing. It is not an automatic thing—at least, not for most of us!—and it could not have happened in isolation. So, with that thought in mind, I would like to share some of my experiences for other aspiring writers in our state, be they librarians or library users.

Resources for Oregon Writers:

Making Connections

by Laine Stambaugh
University of Oregon

In this article, I will discuss how I got involved in the Oregon writing scene; my experiences attending local workshops and conferences; the importance of sharing your writing with other writers; and finally, a selected bibliography of writers' resources in Oregon to help you get started.

GETTING STARTED

I have written all my life, as far back as I can remember. My mother even saved those atrocious stories from my elementary school years. You know, like the one about a girl and her horse? Consequently, by the time I was a freshman in college and enrolled in my first official creative writing class, I thought I knew what it was all about—this writer's life. After all, I had written 35 novels by that time (we are not talking quality here). Then I met Elliott, the instructor. I never knew his last name, or if I once did, I have obliterated it from my mind, due to the trauma. The one thing I do remember was that I came to class one day, excited about reading aloud my short story about a not-yet famous tennis player having his racquet stolen by a tennis groupie at Wimbledon. OK, so maybe it wasn't the most scintillating plot, but I couldn't have anticipated the malicious attacks conducted by Elliott and my classmates during the critique process. My masterpiece, my personal pride and joy, was left in shreds, and so was my trust in ever sharing my writing with anyone again. Unfortunately, this experience is not unusual for most beginning writers. We all have our "Elliott" stories.

It was not until many years later that I summoned the confidence to give it another try. Soon after moving to Oregon, I enrolled in a local community college course entitled "It Was a Dark and Stormy

Night," that focused on creating imaginative settings. One component of that course was a weekend retreat at the Oregon coast. OK, so my motives were suspect, but it got me back into the swim of things. Elizabeth Lyon of Lyon's Literary Services in Eugene taught the class. Based on the unconditional support and acceptance of that group, I was off and running, and haven't stopped since. A few more classes under my belt, a few more stories, and eventually Ms. Lyon invited me to join a select professional critique group that she leads one night a week each term. That was in 1990. It is within the confines of this group that I have experienced the sustenance to keep me going all these years—oh, and the deadlines they impose help, too.

WHY A CRITIQUE GROUP?

So, what about critique groups? What's the big deal? Do we sit around and tell each other how wonderful we are? Not entirely. Interestingly enough, Elizabeth Lyon is now writing her third non-fiction book on the craft of writing for Blue Heron Publishing which, coincidentally, focuses on critique groups and their importance to the writer. You may already be familiar with her work, *The Sell-Your-Novel Toolkit: Everything You Need to Know About Queries, Synopses, Marketing & Breaking In*, (1997), which, by the way, contains many quips and quotes from local writers in various stages of their careers. You might keep an eye out for her new book, *Writers Helping Writers: The Power of Community, Critique, and Connections*, due out in April 2000 from Blue Heron Publishing, if you want to discover the real nitty-gritty of critique groups.

It is easy enough for an aspiring author in Oregon to write in isolation, whether you live in Portland, Eugene, or La Grande. But until you share your writing with others, whether they are other writers, family, or friends, you cannot grow and learn. Within a supportive critique group, where ground rules were established at the very beginning, I have had the pleasure of seeing phenomenal growth among the members of my group. We always start out by saying something positive about the individual's reading; then we offer helpful suggestions to make it even better. Our genuine interest in each other's projects builds pride and confidence—sometimes fragile commodities for writers. Each writer's individual success story is a shared celebration for all.

Although some of the actual members have changed over the years, our group is now more or less at the same level of expertise and understanding of the craft of writing, which makes it a smoother, more enjoyable process. Not only that, we assist each other with marketing ideas and experiences. Learning to be a good critiquer facilitates the writing process as well. And did I mention the trust factor? There are no "critique piranhas" in our group, and that's what keeps us all writing.

GETTING OUT & ABOUT

So, once you are confident in your writing abilities (or on your way) and want to find out more about the business of writing, where do you go? This may surprise you, but Oregon is a writer's Mecca. At the end of this article you will find a list of writing workshops, conferences, and regional associations. Just to give you an idea of what attending a conference is like, and why you should bother, let me share some of my experiences with you.

I attended the Pacific Northwest Writers Conference in Tacoma, Washington in 1992. One of the keynote speakers was author Craig Lesley, who was beginning to market his new anthology, *Talking Leaves*. Although the workshops and panels of speakers that included agents and editors were extremely valuable, I would say that the highlight of the conference came for me at the very end, when authors sat at tables and signed autographs. I debated about whether or not to make a complete fool of myself, and decided, what the heck. When I handed my copy of *River Song* to Mr. Lesley to sign, I launched into a story about how my Uncle Larry had been one of his high school teachers, and how my uncle ended up being a pallbearer at his Uncle Oscar's funeral. As I spoke, Mr. Lesley nodded politely. At the end, his face lit up and he said, "I remember your uncle!" Of course, he could have just been saying that to be kind to a foolish fan, but I suspect my Uncle Larry and his Uncle Oscar had a lot in common. In any case, here was a wonderful, published writer who was willing to just shoot the breeze with me—something I'll never forget.

There was an informal "chat with the author" scheduled between meetings at that same conference. Writers could just stop by and hang out with the authors, asking questions or listening to what they had to say. I remember approaching romance writer Julie Garwood, who held court in the hotel lobby. Some of the other conference participants were dressed in what I considered romantic, "frou-frou" type dresses, obviously marking them as wanna-be romance writers. My immediate reaction was: "I am not like them! What am I doing here?" I recall wearing something hot pink, so that I could stand out in a crowd. Something modern and "with it." As it turned out, it didn't really matter. You don't need to dress or act a certain way to write a certain way, or be accepted by a specific genre of writers. That day, Ms. Garwood looked directly at me and smiled, and I sank to the floor beside the other writers, soaking up every word (she was talking about how she got her inspiration for the beginning of her current novel at the time, *Saving Grace*). I came away from that very informal gathering with the blessing that I must write what I felt, not what I thought people wanted me to write. I already knew that, of course, but this published author only reinforced my own fledgling instincts.

Several years ago, I attended a local Eugene meeting of the Heart of Oregon Chapter of the Romance

Writers of America (which, unfortunately, no longer exists), where I had the good fortune to meet Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch, two local science fiction/fantasy icons. As I waited for Ms. Rusch to autograph my copy of *White Mists of Power*, I told her how fascinated I was with her complete plot twist at the end—something I had never seen happen in a book before. (I won't give away the ending here, as I tried not to in front of the other local writers, but I did want to express my appreciation of her craft). She beamed back at me in appreciation, obviously pleased that I had picked up on this. If you want to be a writer, you must be a reader. There is no way around that, and any published author will tell you so. Read whatever you can get your hands on that is similar to what you want to write.

The guest speaker at another Heart of Oregon meeting was Frank Ratti, a forensic expert with the local police department. That particular "adventure" resulted in my picture appearing on the front page of the *Eugene Register-Guard* with other writers, our rapt attention glued to the morbid slides Mr. Ratti had brought along—showing scenes such as close-up gun-shot wounds. I sat there wondering why I was there and what it had to do with romance writers. I left, however, thinking that I might indeed someday wish to write a thriller or suspense novel, and would need to do my research thoroughly to make it believable.

At regional conferences, such as the Pacific Northwest Writers Conference (usually held in the Seattle-Tacoma area) or the Willamette Writers Conference (generally held in Portland), there is also the opportunity to meet and talk to agents and editors from many major literary agencies and publishing houses. As part of the conference registration fee, or for a reasonable additional fee, you can often sign up to meet with one or two of these agents or editors. Sometimes these are group meetings, where you sit in a room with several other writers and pitch your story. Other times, you have a separate assigned time slot with an agent or editor to specifically discuss a manuscript you think might be of interest to them. But be forewarned: do your homework before you sign up for one of these! Know who represents or publishes the kind of book you are writing. Otherwise, it can be a waste of your precious time and theirs. Not that they are rude or unkind in their remarks, or that their feedback won't be valuable, but agents are definitely there for a reason: they are looking for new writers that they can sell.

On another occasion at another conference, I was standing around waiting for lunch. Right next to me stood Amy Tan's (*The Joy Luck Club*) agent, Sandra Dyckstra. Even though I didn't have an appointment with Ms. Dyckstra, a very high profile, high-power agent, I approached her and casually pitched my story. She was very polite, even seemed interested, and invited me to send her a query and sample chapters. The feedback you receive can be worth its

weight in gold, whether or not the agent or editor asks to see the whole manuscript (and they often do not). Your job is to keep on writing.

One of the greatest benefits you can receive by attending a conference is not only mingling with other writers, agents, and editors, but coming away with a solid go-ahead to submit your material in a way that guarantees it will not end up in a slush pile somewhere. The first time I was able to put "solicited material" on the outside of my envelope, I thought I had arrived. Well, I had arrived at the dock, perhaps, but not on the boat. The journey continues. And to arrive at that destination, like any other writer who succeeds, I must get out and about-right here in Oregon. Right here in my own community, every chance that I can.

CONCLUSION

So, in conclusion, look around you. Read your local newspaper for writers' groups or book-signings, workshops, conferences, or contests. Being a contest winner may gain you the attention of a publisher or agent, who might otherwise have overlooked you among the mass mailings of manuscripts they regularly receive. If you're not currently in a critique group, put an ad in the newspaper and see if you can find other writers like yourself willing to establish one. Or take a class and get a critique group started from there. Pull yourself away from that computer screen or typewriter and get involved in the local writing community. If you live in a remote location, hook up to the Internet. There is a rich, wide world out there, full of resources for you to tap into. Check out local affiliates of Romance Writers of America, Science Fiction Writers of America, Mystery Writers of America, and so forth. Writers supporting writers are your greatest resource of all. **Q**

SELECTED RESOURCES FOR OREGON WRITERS

A sampling of local workshops, conferences, and associations.

WORKSHOPS:

Fishtrap Gathering

P. O. Box 38
Enterprise, OR 97828
(541) 426-3623
www.fishtrap.org

Summer and winter gatherings at Wallowa Lake feature outstanding Western writers addressing the pressing issues of writing and living in the West.

Flight of the Mind
622 SE 29th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214

Email: soapston@teleport.com
www.teleport.com/%7Esoapston/flight
Summer writing workshops for women in a camp-like setting, held at St. Benedict's retreat center on the McKenzie River. Workshop leaders bring a feminist philosophy to their work

as writers and teachers and encourage the creation of a cohesive and supportive group.

Haystack Writing Program

Cannon Beach, OR
(503) 725-4027 or (800) 547-8887, ext. 4027

Email: summer@ses.pdx.edu
www.haystack.pdx.edu

Weeklong and weekend summer workshops in Cannon Beach, taught by distinguished Northwest writers. Organized by the Portland State University School of Extended Studies; PSU credit is available for many classes.

Mountain Writers Series

3624 SE Milwaukie Avenue
Portland, OR 97202

(503) 236-4854
Email: pdxmws@aracnet.com
www.aracnet.com/~pdxmws

A comprehensive program featuring authors of regional, national, and international reputation presenting readings, lectures, discussion sessions and workshops in a variety of locations throughout the region.

Neahkahnie Institute

P. O. Box 447
Manzanita, OR 97130
(503) 368-7878

Oregon Writers Colony

P. O. Box 15200
Portland, OR 97293-5200
(503) 827-8072

www.teleport.com/~witch/owc/owc.htm

A non-profit literary organization, dedicated to nurturing the writing skills of its membership, OWC maintains a house in Rockaway Beach as a haven for writers and sponsors workshops, conferences, contests, and a list of resources for writers.

Oregon Writing Project

(contact information varies by campus)
www.gse.berkeley.edu/research/NWP/States/Oregon.html

A collaborative effort by Oregon schools, colleges, and private foundations to improve the teaching of writing and literacy at all grade levels throughout the state. Intensive summer workshops are available at five campuses: University of Oregon, Lewis & Clark College, Willamette University, Southern Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University.

ASSOCIATIONS:

An Association of Writers

P. O. Box 1101
Winchester, OR 97495
Email: owdykema@mcsi.net
www.oregonwriters.com

Pacific Northwest Writers Association
2608 Third Avenue, Suite B
Seattle, WA 98121
Executive Secretary: (206) 443-3807
www.pnwa.org/opening.htm

Society of Children's Book Writers &
Illustrators, Oregon Chapter
P. O. Box 336, Noti, OR 97461
(541) 935-4589
Contact: Robin Michal Koontz
Email: Robink@rio.com

Willamette Writers Association
9045 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 5A
Portland, OR 97219-4027
(503) 452-1592
Email: wilwrite@teleport.com
www.teleport.com/~wilwrite

IN PRINT:

Writer's Northwest Handbook: the Market Guide to the Pacific Northwest (6th ed., 1995). Portland: Media Weavers.

READING OREGON

Selected Recent Books with an Oregon Setting or Theme.

LITERARY NON-FICTION:

Carey, Robin. *North Bank: Claiming a Place on the Rogue*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-87071-448-1

Drake, Barbara. *Peace at Heart: an Oregon Country Life*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-87071-455-4

Lopez, Barry. *About This Life: Journeys on the Threshold of Memory*. New York: Knopf, 1998. 0-679-43454-2

Nordstrom, Lars. *Making it Home*. Portland: Prescott Street Press, 1997. 0-915986-27-2

Paetzel, Mary. *Spirit of the Siskiyou: the Journals of a Mountain Naturalist*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-87071-449-X

Ramsey, Jarold. *Reading the Fire: the Traditional Indian Literatures of America*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999. 0295977876

Wollner, Craig and Dillon, Tracy W. *A Richer Harvest: the Literature of Work in the Pacific Northwest*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1999. 0-87071-465-1

REFERENCE & BIOGRAPHY:

Battaile, Connie. *The Oregon Book: Information from A to Z*. Newport, Oregon: Saddle Mountain Press, 1998. 0-9657638-2-X

Drukman, Mason. *Wayne Morse: a Political Biography*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1997. 0-87595-263-1

TRAVEL, WITH A DASH OF HISTORY:

Atkeson, Ray. *Oregon, my Oregon*. Portland: Graphic Arts Center in cooperation with the Oregon Historical Society, 1998. 1-55868-321-6

DesCamp, Meg. *Slug Tossing and Other Adventures of a Reluctant Gardener*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1998. 1-57061-044-4

Douthit, Nathan. *A Guide to Oregon South Coast history: Traveling the Jedediah Smith Trail*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1999. 0-87071-462-7

Houchen, Amy. *Green Afternoons: Oregon Gardens to Visit*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-87071-429-5

Peterson-Nedry, Judy and Robert M. Reynolds. *Oregon Wine Country*. Portland: Graphic Arts, 1998. 1-55868-318-6

Sullivan, William L. *Hiking Oregon's History: the Stories Behind Historic Places You Can Walk & See*. Eugene: Navillus Press, 1999. 0-961815-27-2

Widerhold, Kathleen M. *Exploring Oregon's Historic Courthouses*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-87071-436-8

YOUNG ADULT:

Holcomb, Jerry Kimble. *The Chinquapin Tree*. Marshall Cavendish, 1998. 0-7614-5028-9

Olson, Gretchen. *Joyride*. Honesdales: Boyds Mills Press, 1998. 1-56397-687-0

MYSTERIES:

Henry, April. *Circles of Confusion: a Claire Montrose Mystery*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999. 0-06-019204-6

Micheltree, Tom. *Dataman: a Mystery*. Aurora, Colorado: Write Way, 1998. 1-885173-52-0

Thrasher, L. L. *Dogsbody, Inc.* Aurora, Colorado: Write Way, 1999. 1-885173-65-2

Wilhelm, Kate. *The Good Children*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 0-4499-22556-9

Wilhelm, Kate. *Defense for the Devil*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 0-312-19854-X

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT:

Maser, Chris. *Mammals of the Pacific Northwest: from the Coast to the High Cascades*. Corvallis: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1998. 0-87071-438-4

Oregon's Living Landscape: Strategies and Opportunities to Conserve Biodiversity. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1998. 0-926549-01-4

Two Stories

(continued from page 3)

tral Library in Portland, safe in the stacks, and the book ends with this thought: "We are all pilgrims traveling a path that frequently is filled with suffering. But if we share St. Christopher's loving helpfulness with each other, wild flowers will bloom along the way."

But this story doesn't end where Lloyd's life ended. It ends like this: on his last day at home, as his wife scurried to pack his suitcase for the hospital, Lloyd made his way outside to the garden, and there she found him on his knees, with a spoon, awkwardly planting flower bulbs.

"Lloyd," she said, "you will never see these flowers bloom."

He smiled at her. "They are not for me," he said, "they are for you."

The salmon coming home? They are for you. The calls of wild geese? They are for you. The last old trees? They are for you and your children, to the seventh generation and beyond. They are all blooming into being for you.

When I was a visitor in Venice, my Italian friend Pino Zennaro, whose family has been in that city for 700 years, was showing me a series of drawings he had made as a young man. His drawings showed his love for the light, the water, the bridges and windows, the boats and the soft sunlight on his native place.

"Why," I asked him, "do you not do this art now?"

He looked at me. "When I was young," he said, "I would observe things, and make a drawing of them. I would do art on paper, and give it away. I liked that work very much, but it is not enough alone. Now, I am an architect. I restore the buildings of my city. Venice is the city of history, and the city of the future. There are old ways to do things here that will be the model for the new. We are making the future vision of how people can be together. My art is my city."

We can say this: My art is my city. My art is Oregon. My art is the seventh generation. The problems of our time are political, economic, and environmental, but their solutions are cultural. For the solution to war is not war; it is knowing other people as neighbors, as common citizens of earth. The solution to poverty is not wealth; it is learning true value. The solution to environmental crisis is not scientific only; it is following the stories of our lives in this place to some convergence with the many lives sharing this place. Who will bring the two stories into one? Who will become native to this place? Who will plant the roots of color and plenty for another generation?

The true citizens of this place are those who say it this way: My art is the place I live and the people I live with. I have a job, but my art surrounds it, goes beyond. My art is my family, my tribe, my valley, my watershed: my long embrace of the Columbia's waters. Two stories? One life. This place says over and over, "My friend, I am not for me. I am for you." **Q**

Kim Stafford is Director of the Northwest Writing Institute at Lewis & Clark College. This article originally appeared in the Oregon Quarterly, Winter 1996, and is reprinted with permission.

The Oregon Center

(continued from page 13)

So it seems that the Oregon Center for the Book doesn't house "the book" but is in the business of doing what we can to see that books, reading, and libraries remain in the public consciousness. **Q**

Oregon Center for the Book:
www.osl.state.or.us/libdev/ocftbpurp.html

Center for the Book at the Library of Congress:
lcweb.loc.gov/loc/cfbook



Check out the Children's Services Division Web site at www.olaweb.org/csd/ for division events, activities and information, or to download the 1999 Summer Reading Program artwork and order your ReadQuest materials.

Oregon Library Association
PO Box 2042
Salem, OR 97308-2042

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