



OREGON ARTS  
COMMISSION

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## Oregon Brookings Harbor HS Senior Wins Poetry Out Loud: Sophia Soberon to Represent Oregon at National Competition in Washington, DC

*Nicole Hernandez, Woodburn Arts and Communications Academy Senior, is Runner-up*

March 15, 2008 – Salem, ORE. — The Oregon Arts Commission announces that Sophia Soberon, 17, of Brookings-Harbor High School, Brookings, has won Oregon's 2008 statewide Poetry Out Loud competition. The state competition took place this afternoon, from 10 AM – 2 PM, in Loucks Auditorium of the Salem Public Library. Poetry Out Loud is a collaborative project of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation and the Oregon Arts Commission.

As winner of the Oregon competition, Sophia wins \$200 and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC for herself and a chaperone. Her school receives a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. Nicole Hernandez, 17, of Woodburn Arts & Communications Academy, was declared the state runner-up. Her prize is \$100, with her school library receiving \$200 for poetry purchases. Every participant received a hardbound copy of *From Here We Speak*, an anthology of Oregon poetry edited by Primus and St. John and Ingrid Wendt and published by Oregon State University Press, personalized Poetry Out Loud bookplate.

In Washington, Sophia will represent Oregon against 52 other contestants, from the states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. The national competition takes place April 28 - 29 at George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium and awards a total of \$44,000 in prize money to 12 finalists (\$20,000 for the winner; \$10,000 to the first runner up; \$5,000 in to the second runner-up; and \$1,000 each to the other nine finalists). Their schools receive another \$500 for their libraries. In all Poetry Out Loud awards more than \$100,000 at state- and national-level contests.

Oregon had 2,000 students at 19 high schools participate in Poetry Out Loud this year; 13 schools sent winners to the state competition. All the state-level contestants prepared three

poems from a 400-poem anthology provided by the National Endowment for the Arts. Each recited two poems, with six finalists reading a third. The contestants were judged by Oregon Poet Laureate Lawson Inada, poets Judith Barrington and Primus St. John, and theater director Scott Palmer. The criteria included accuracy, voice inflection, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty and eye contact.

The six state-level finalists were:

Sophia Soberon, 17, Brookings-Harbor High School, Brookings (Artie Dingle, coordinator)  
Caren Sims, 17, The Center for Advanced Learning, Gresham (Rita Ramstad, coordinator)  
Claire Smith, 17, Hood River Valley High School (Regina Rafelson, coordinator)  
Senia Monger, 17, Veritas School, Newberg (Megan Hills, coordinator)  
Jasper Alto, 17, Metropolitan Learning Center, Portland (Steve Lambert, coordinator)  
Nicole Hernandez, 17, Woodburn Arts & Communications Academy (Desiree Kiesel, coordinator);

with the remaining school-level winners being:

Caitlyn McLaughlin, 15, Bandon High School (Ellen Howard, coordinator)  
Sarah Hansell, 16, Madison High School, Portland (Daniel Fredgant, coordinator)  
Erica Deffebach, 15, Northwest Academy, Portland (Brian Christopher, coordinator)  
Anna Wilson, 16, Crook County High School, Prineville (Anita Hoffman, coordinator)  
TiAnna Holt, 18, Salem Academy Christian (Sara Patrick, coordinator)  
Jon Lakey, 17, Sherwood High School (Jared Jones, coordinator)  
Danielle Mayberry, 16, South Medford High School (Clancy Rone, coordinator)

Sophia recited "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold, "Bilingual Bilingüe" by Rhina P. Espailat and "The Meaning of the Shovel" by Martín Espada. Nicole recited "To the Desert" by Benjamin Alire Sanz; "Sonnet CXXX" (My Mistress' Eyes Are Nothing Like the Sun) by William Shakespeare, and "Bilingual Bilingüe" by Rhina P. Espailat.

Sophia is accomplished in English, speech and language but her passion is theater and dance. In the fall, she will attend Southern Oregon University, where she hopes to merge her interest in cultural studies with performance.

Poetry Out Loud encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition. More than 200,000 students across the country are expected to take part in Poetry Out Loud this year. For more information: [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org).

For more information about Poetry Out Loud in Oregon, contact Deb Vaughn, arts education coordinator, Oregon Arts Commission: 503-986-0085, [deborah.vaughn@state.or.us](mailto:deborah.vaughn@state.or.us).

### **About the National Endowment for the Arts**

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the

Arts Endowment is the largest national funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases.

### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. One of the largest literary organizations in the world, it exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. In addition to launching a major new poetry Web site, the Poetry Foundation recently conducted the first-ever study designed to find out where poetry stands in American culture. For more information, please visit [PoetryFoundation.org](http://PoetryFoundation.org).

### **About the Oregon Arts Commission**

The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department in 1993 in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development. The Arts Commission is supported with General Funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature, federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust.