



OREGON ARTS
COMMISSION

Contact: Deborah Vaughn, (503) 986-0085
deborah.vaughn@state.or.us
Shannon Planchon, (503) 229-6062
shannon.planchon@state.or.us

For Immediate Release
February 27, 2009

Poetry Out Loud Competitions in Final Stretch Just One More School Contest before the March 14 Statewide Competition

The competition for *Poetry Out Loud*, the poetry recitation contest for high school students sponsored by the Oregon Arts Commission in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, is in its final stretch. Nearly all of Oregon's 22 participating high schools have announced their winners. The last school competition, at **Madison High School in Portland**, takes place Tuesday, March 3. The statewide competition takes place Saturday, March 14 at **Salem's Grand Theater**, 1900 High St. NE.

At stake is more than \$50,000 in scholarships at the state and national levels, including over \$20,000 for the national winner. The winner of the statewide contest wins a \$200 scholarship, \$500 for the school library to purchase poetry books, and an all-expense paid trip for two to Washington, DC to represent Oregon at the April 26 – 28 national contest. April is National Poetry Month.

Oregon's 2008 State Champion, Sophia Soberon from Brookings-Harbor High School, took second place in the 2008 national competition. She won \$10,200 (\$200, state; \$10,000 national) in scholarships for her education at Southern Oregon University, while her school received \$1,000 (\$500 each, state and national) to purchase poetry books for its library. She will be one of the judges at this year's statewide competition.

Twenty-two Oregon high schools in 14 communities are competing this year in *Poetry Out Loud*. Communities involved in the statewide competition are: **Arlington, Bandon, Condon, Eugene, Grants Pass, Gresham, Hood River, Medford, Newberg, Portland, Prineville, Redmond, Salem** and **Sherwood**. With the Oregon School for the Deaf being among the competitors, Oregon enjoys the distinction of being the first state in the nation to host a deaf student at the state contest. Students to compete at the state level are:

Arlington High School: **Kirsten Stephens**, age 16, grade 10
Bandon High School: **Caitlyn McLaughlin**, age 16, grade 11
Cascade Christian School, Medford: **Tori Francis**, age 16, grade 11
Centennial High School, Gresham: **Amanda Watson**, age 17, grade 11
Center for Advanced Learning, Gresham: **Natalyia Payne**, grade 11
Condon High School: **Elise Heidy**, age 18, grade 12
Crook County High School, Prineville: **Nathaniel Dunway**, grade 10
Grants Pass High School: **Jessica Petersen**, age 18, grade 12
Hidden Valley High School, Grants Pass: **McKenzie Mitchell**, age 17, grade 11
Hood River Valley High School: **Patrick Sadil**, age 17, grade 11

Metropolitan Learning Center, Portland: **Elena Hess**, age 16, grade 11
Oregon School for the Deaf, Salem: **Tiffany Hinano Hill** (from **Eugene**), age 17, grade 11
Redmond High School: **Monica Brown**, age 16, grade 11
Salem Academy: **Katharine Hormann**, age 17, grade 12
Sam Barlow High School, Gresham: **Theresa Tyree**, age 17, grade 12
Sherwood High School: **Hilary Forster**, age 17, grade 12
South Medford High School: **Sadie Burt**, age 16, grade 10
Sprague High School, Salem: **Merry Borchers**, age 17, grade 11
Veritas School, Newberg: **Jordan Enobakhare**, age 15, grade 12
West Salem High School: **Jackie Lubbers**, age 17, grade 11
Woodburn Arts & Communications Academy: **Brianna Eamons**, age 17, grade 12

To cover the Madison contest, please contact the school coordinator.

Tue Mar 3 12:30 - 2:15 PM

Madison High School
2735 NE 82nd Ave., **Portland**
Coordinator: Daniel Fredgant
503-916-5220, dfredgan@pps.k12.or.us

The state *Poetry Out Loud* Contest takes place:

Sat Mar 14 9 AM – 3 PM

Grand Theater
1900 High St. NE, **Salem**
Coordinator: Deb Vaughn
503-986-0085, deborah.vaughn@state.or.us

Poetry Out Loud, now in its fourth year in Oregon, involves the memorization and recitation of classic poetry and culminates in a statewide competition. Nationwide, more than 200,000 students are expected to participate.

Oregon's 2009 competition will be judged by Lawson Inada, Oregon poet laureate; Sophia Soberon, 2008 national *Poetry Out Loud* runner-up and Oregon state champion; Scott Poole, poet-in-residence, *Live Wire!*; Mindi L. Logan, theater professor, University of Portland; Scott Wildenstein, poet and sign interpreter, Oregon Shakespeare Festival; and Howie Seago, a noted deaf actor.

Poetry Out Loud seeks to foster the next generation of literary readers by capitalizing on the latest trends in poetry – recitation and performance. The program builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, as seen in the slam poetry movement, and brings aspects of slam poetry, spoken word and theater into the English class.

“Learning great poetry by heart develops the mind and imagination,” observes Dana Gioia, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “*Poetry Out Loud* isn’t just an arts program. By immersing themselves in powerful language and ideas, students develop their ability to speak well, especially in public. This is a skill they will use in the workplace and the community for the rest of their lives.”

The Oregon Arts Commission, the NEA and the Poetry Foundation partner to sponsor *Poetry Out Loud*. The Arts Commission has developed an Oregon Curriculum Guide that can be used to

connect *Poetry Out Loud* classroom activities to Oregon’s Content and Performance Standards in Language Arts and the Arts/Drama. For further information on *Poetry Out Loud*, contact the Oregon Arts Commission at 503-986-0082, or visit the national website at www.poetryoutloud.org

.....

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 Economic 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 and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. For more information about the Oregon Arts Commission: www.oregonartscommission.org.