Readings and Celebrations Around the World

This is the banner from Poet’s Letters: The Correspondence of William Stafford, an exhibition held at the Multnomah Country Central Library. The exhibition overlapped with the Sand Mandala Project, in which Tibetan Buddhist monks drew a sand mandala picturing universal compassion. The culmination of the project was to pour the colored sand into the Willamette River. Stafford’s words at the bottom of the poster are “There is no way for a moving body, or mind, to avoid making mistakes. And staying still might be the worst mistake of all.”
Everywhere I go, I hear good news of you! Sometimes it's as if poets leave the little bread-crumbs chain...in Karachi, Pakistan / your old friends...Then a student writes of your recent reading at Cody's in Berkeley ("His poems filled my heart and tears filled my eyes")...Then Leonard Nathan writes of a good meal with you...Then Abilene Texas writes saying you'll be there in February, can I come? And I say yes indeed, if he's going to be there, I'll be there, you bet! So, I look forward to February & all the notices of you which may pass my way between now & then. Did you finish your home in the woods?

As you may have supposed, the idea of an oath bothered me, just in itself; and it is probably no news for me to report that I haven't seen or heard of one that accomplished its purpose for the state or improved the morals of teachers. There is something basically threatening, a kind of "credere, obbedire, combattere" sloganish atmosphere about the whole thing, that upsets almost everyone on the dotted-line end of the oath. But, as I say, this is probably no news to anyone around a university.

I looked at the Colorado oath, and could almost sign it; I even went so far as to formulate a statement that, when attached to the oath, could make me an honest man and a signer. That statement is enclosed as of possible interest to you (you said you liked to read about people and their facing of unusual situations); but I realize now that even with this qualification I could not sign. The oath itself is just too blunt an overriding of individual participation in our social life, and in its growing; no matter how careful an explanation I attached to the oath, its very existence would tend to quell a political openness which seems to me of value.

There are several sad things about the situation. First, the decision not to sign collides with my liking for Colorado, and my feeling of gratitude for the patience and understanding you have shown. Second, the decision does not carry any dividend of righteous feeling, for I know very well that many more righteous have made other decisions, and the situation is discouragingly complex. Also, we both know that the Colorado position was for me so marginal, as you put it, that I don't have the solace of making any fine gesture.

To teach poetry as it should be taught you'd have to start with Paleolithic hunting magic and the masked animal dancers. But, shortcutting that, young people (or just people who are alive?) are interested in two things: sex, and states of consciousness. Love, and magic. This is what poetry is about.

Teach the poems of the past using the strongest, sexiest poems in the tradition—and where the sexuality is made tricky, or the language is double; explain: to make sure students get the point. Their aroused interest will take it from there.

Teach far-out poets like Christopher Smart, or John Skelton, or Blake, and let the high and wild imagination come through. From there, the interested mind will find its own delight in probing the dryer[sic] measures and more intellectual side-trips of a Mat[t]hew Prior or Dryden.

In actual fact poetry is very much in the front of the spiritual and social revolution taking place in the United States. Youngsters are aware of this, but their teachers aren't. Teachers of English literature should find out what their students are listening to—Bob Dylan, The Jefferson Airplane, Ed Sanders, Tolkien—and then begin to teach.
Readings and Celebrations Around the World Honoring the Spirit of William Stafford

In the Portland Metro Area

Sunday, January 6th, 2 pm—Beaverton
Beaverton City Library, 12375 SW 5th St., Beaverton. www.beavertonlibrary.org. Hosted by FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Featuring Constance Hall, Rosemary Lombard, Christopher Luna, Fred Melden, Toni Partington, and Steve Williams. Contact: Linda Fallon lfallon@beavertonoregon.gov 503-526-2676 or Leah Stenson leahstenson@comcast.net

Saturday, January 12th, 2-4 pm—Milwaukie
Milwaukie Leeding Library, Pond House, 2215 SE Harrison (adjacent to the Leeding Library), Milwaukie. Hosted by Greg Chaimov and Tom Hogan. Featuring Gail Barker, Mary Dettmann, David Filer, Brett Kelver, Susanna Lundgren, Ron Rasch, Ron Talney, Jamie Wilks, and FWS Board Member Paulann Petersen. Refreshments will be served. For information and to sign up for this event, please contact Greg Chaimov gchaimov@comcast.net or Tom Hogan tomo@chagnal.com or 503-819-8367.

Saturday, January 12th, 2-4 pm—West Linn
West Linn Library, 1595 Burns, West Linn. Hosted by David Hedges. Featuring Tiel Aisha Ansari, Linda Appel, Jean Bennett, Rachel Pass, Scottie Sterrett, Marilyn Torson, Virginia Euer Wolff, and FWS Board Member Nancy Winklesky. Contact: Rebecca Mayer rmayer@westlinnoregon.gov or David Hedges david@hedges.name

Saturday, January 12th, 4 pm—Vancouver, WA
Cover to Cover Books, 6300 NE St. James Road, Suite 104B, Vancouver, WA. Hosted by Christopher Luna. Featuring FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Contact: Christopher Luna christopherluna@gmail.com or Cover to Cover 360-993-7777

Saturday, January 12th, 4:30 – 5:30 pm—Milwaukie
Karios-Milwaukie UCC, 4790 SE Logus Road, Milwaukie, hosted by Portland Fellowship of Reconciliation and Karios-Milwaukie UCC, William Stafford in Song and Dance: A Work in Progress, presented by Carolyn McDade, composer of Spirit of Life (Massachusetts) and the Portland-based Deep the Love Sacred Circle. Contact: Joanie McClellan, 503-777-2467 or joanmcclel@aol.com. Directions: http://www.kairosucc.org/html/map.html.

Sunday, January 13th, 7-9 pm—Portland
Stonehenge Studios, 3508 SW Corbett Ave., Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Leah Stenson. Featuring cellist and composer Daniel Sperry who will recite Stafford poems accompanied by original cello compositions. An open mic will follow. Attendees are encouraged to bring a Stafford poem or share an anecdote about the poet during the open mic. Contact: Leah Stenson leahstenson@comcast.net

Tuesday, January 15th, 7 pm—Lake Oswego
Lake Oswego Library, 706 4th St., Lake Oswego. Hosted by FWS Board Member Bill Howe. A celebration of William Stafford’s birth-

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day, his legacy, and of the vibrancy of the arts in Oregon, featuring readings by his gifted widow Dorothy Stafford, daughter Barbara Stafford-Wilson, friend and Oregon's current Poet Laureate Paulann Petersen, and his archivist Paul Merchant. Contact: Alicia Yokoyama, ayokoyama@ci.oswego.or.us or Bill Howe wjhowe@gevurtzmenashe.com 503-3480779

**Wednesday, January 16th, 7 pm—Portland**

Miracle Theater/El Centro Milagro, 525 SE Stark St., Portland. The third William Stafford Birthday Reading sponsored by Los Portenos, Portland’s Latino writers’ group. Hosted by Cindy Williams Gutiérrez. Featuring Frank Delgado, Catherine Evleshin, Joann Farias, Joaquín López, Octaviano Merecías-Cuevas, Emma Oliver, Olga Sanchez, Juan Antonio Trujillo, and FWS Board Member Susan Reese. In their 3rd annual Stafford Birthday Reading, members of Los Portenos will read their original poetry and prose written in response to a William Stafford poem. Audience members are invited to bring a favorite Stafford poem to share. Contact: Cindy Williams Gutiérrez cindy@grito-poetry.com

**Wednesday, January 16th, 6-8 pm—Oregon City**

Literary Arts Room, Roger Rook Hall, RR220, Clackamas Community College, 19600 S. Molalla Ave., Oregon City. Hosted by Elisabeth Miles and Trista Cornelius, Third Monday Authors’ Evening Group, and CCC. Featuring Carl Clapp, Ryan Davis, Kate Gray, Rose Lefebvre, Sue Mach, Jeff McAlpine, and FWS Board Member Nancy Winklesky. Refreshments will be served. Open Mic: People will share one or two poems by William Stafford, and, if they want, a poem of their own in the tradition of William Stafford, or an anecdote or remembrance about him. For information and to sign up for this event, please contact Trista Cornelius at tristac@clackamas.edu or Elisabeth Miles at bethiem@sbcglobal.net.

**Wednesday, January 16th, 6-8 pm—Vancouver, WA**

Community Room, Cascade Park Community Library, 600 NE 136th Ave., Vancouver, WA . Hosted by Christi Krug. Featuring David Benedicttus, Tom Kinzie, Jenney Pauer, and Joanna Rose. Contact: Christi Krug, c.krug@comcast.net, 360-213-6989 or librarian Teresa Torres ttorres@fvrl.org

**Thursday, January 17th, 7 pm—Oregon City**

Oregon City Library, 606 John Adams Street, Oregon City. Hosted by Christine Delea. Featuring Lyssa Tall Anolik, Karen Braucher, Cindy Williams Gutiérrez, Diane Holland, David Rutiezer, Laura Weeks, and FWS Board Member Nancy Winklesky. Contact: Library Director Maureen Cole mcole@orcity.org 503.657.8269 ext 1010 or Christine Delea christinedelea@cs.com

**Thursday, January 17th, 7 pm—Portland**

Broadway Books, 1714 NE Broadway, Portland. Hosted by Joanna Rose. Featuring Stevan Allred, Margaret Chula, Donna Prinzmetal, Suzanne Sigafous and FWS Board Member Don Colburn. Contact: Joanna Rose joannarose@earthlink.net or Sally MacPherson cyw-hidbey@comcast.net

**Sunday, January 20th, 2-4 pm—Portland**

Blackfish Gallery, 420 NW 9th, Portland. Hosted by Robin Bagai and Willa Schneberg. Featuring Francis Payne Adler, Constance Hall “M,” Philip Kenney, Emily Pittman Newberry, Mark Owens, and FWS Board Member Emerita Sue Einowski. Contact: Willa Schneberg, snowmntn@comcast.net, 503-248-4136

**Sunday, January 20th, 6:30 pm—Lake Oswego**

Moonstruck Chocolate Café, 45 S. State Street, Lake Oswego. Hosted by Joan Maiers. Featuring FWS Board Member Patricia Carver. Bring a Stafford story or poem written by William Stafford to share. Contact: Joan Maiers, jmaiers@yahoo.com or Moonstruck Chocolate Café 503-697-7097

**Tuesday, January 22nd, 7:30-8:30 pm—Portland**

Eliot Chapel, First Unitarian Church, 1011 SW 12th Avenue (corner of 12th and Salmon), Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Featuring Deborah Buchanan, Leanne Grabel, Michael McGriff, Paul Merchant, Karen Reyes, and Steve Sander. Scheduled readers will offer a reading, a way of understanding more richly, the Stafford poem they have selected and/or offer some thoughts on his work and their relationship to it. An open mic will follow in which readers are encouraged to share a Stafford poem meaningful to them and perhaps say a few words about why this is so. The dynamic duo of Sander and Grabel will also perform some Stafford poems on vocals and keyboard. Contact Katie Radditz 503-228-6389 ex.17 kradditz@firstunitarianportland.org or Tim Barnes tim.barnes63@gmail.com 503-232-4437

**Tuesday, January 22nd, 7-9 pm—Portland**

Annie Bloom’s Books, 7834 SW Capitol Hwy, Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Susan McKee Reese. Featuring Barbara Drake, Valentine Freeman, Lisa Galloway, Tom Hogan, and Annie McFarland. Please come to a celebration of what would have been the 99th birthday of William Stafford and bring a favorite William Stafford poem to share. Contact: Susan Reese sgreese@pdx.edu or books@anniebloom.com

**Thursday, January 24th, 7:30-8:30 pm—Portland**

University of Portland, Buckley Center 163, University of Portland, 5000 N. Willamette Blvd., Portland. Hosted by Herman Asarnow. Featuring Judith Arcana, Eren Ergenbright, Sara Guest, Erik Larson, Kirsten Rian, and FWS Board Member Bill Howe. Contact: Herman Asarnow, asarnow@up.edu

**Thursday, January 24th, 7 pm—Portland**

Smith, (333 SMC), Portland State University, 1825 SW Broadway, Portland. Hosted by FWS Board Member Emeritus Shelley Reece. Featuring FWS Board Member Don Colburn. Contact: Shelley Reece reeces@pdx.edu
Saturday, January 26th, 3 pm—Lake Oswego
Holy Names Heritage Center, 17425 Holy Names Drive, Lake Oswego. (Take the Mary’s Woods exit off Hwy 43 and head one block east.) Hosted by Joan Maiers. Featuring FWS Board Member Patricia Carver. Bring a Stafford story or poem written by William Stafford to share. Contact: Joan Maiers, jmaiers@yahoo.com or Holy Names Heritage Center 503-607-0595

Sunday, January 27th, 2 pm—Portland
Multnomah Central Library, US Bank Room, 801 SW 10th Ave., Portland. Hosted by FWS Emeritus Board Member Joseph Soldati. Featuring Greta Blalock, A. Molotkov, Penelope Scambly Schott, Scot Siegel, Laura D. Weeks, Wendy Willis, and FWS Board Member Jim Scheppke. Contact: Joseph Soldati jasole@comcast.net or Lee Catalano leec@multcolib.org

Sunday, January 27th, 2-4 pm—Tigard
Tigard Public Library, 13500 SW Hall Blvd., Tigard. Hosted by FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Featuring Judith Barrington, Sue Einowski, Tim Gillespie, George Staley, and Primus St. John. Scheduled readers will offer a reading, a way of understanding more richly, the Stafford poem they have selected and/or offer some thoughts on his work and their relationship to it. An open mic will follow in which readers are encouraged to share a Stafford poem meaningful to them and perhaps say a few words about why this is so. Contact: Tim Barnes tim.barnes63@gmail.com  503-232-4437 or Sarah Jesudason Sarah@tigard-or.gov

Tuesday, January 29th, 7-8:30 pm—Vancouver, WA
Barnes & Noble, 7700 NE Fourth Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, WA. Hosted by Shawn Sorensen. Featuring Ken Arnold, Kirsten Rian and FWS Board Member Don Colburn. Come celebrate William Stafford with a round table discussion, author readings, open mic and the largest selection of poetry titles in town. Come on up or by for a poetry event in the thriving and growing Vancouver art/literary scene. Contact: Shawn Sorensen crm2679@bn.com

Tuesday, January 29th, 6:30-7:45—Portland
Kenton Public Library, 8226 North Denver Ave, Portland. Hosted by Tom and Margot Lavoie. Featuring Herman Asarnow and FWS Board Member Tim Barnes. Come to one of the last Stafford celebrations of the month and hear Herman Asarnow read. Share a favorite Stafford poem and then read at the open mic to end the night and bring down the curtain on this year’s events. Contact: Thomas Lavoie thomas.lavoie44@gmail.com

Richard Hugo to WS, Jan. 9th, 1978

One thing you’d love here is the soft voices of the Gaels. The doctor who lives in our village, a beautiful man, got so passionate one night talking about something, he threw a book on the floor, but softly, and his voice never raised a bit, yet we could all feel the depth of his feelings—my lord, I’ve just described a Stafford poem.

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WS to Kirk Polking, Managing Editor of Writer’s Digest, April 4th, 1963

Receiving the National Book Award for poetry this year was a surprise; but once I adjusted to the idea I found it all purely exciting and enjoyable—the TV appearances, the press conference, the sociability before and after the award ceremonies, the chances to talk with editors and reviewers and with other writers including the award winners in fiction and non-fiction—J.F. Powers and Leon Edel. And of course there was the money.

Once the excitement was over and I settled down to stare at my shabby, continuing attempts in writing, I did have a few qualms:—would I dare to be reckless now, in submitting as usual my current hopefuls? My immediate attempt was to suppress such considerations and to decide to go on as before, pushing into the mail whatever occurred to me, and hoping that editors would continue to do what they have so steadily done before: reject, for their sake and mine, whatever did not seem to them worth publishing! I believe the writer should follow his best impulses, his most rewarding subjects and styles, in his work; and that he should then do his best to keep from being either presuming or unduly humble in sending out his product. The writer writes; the editor selects. Both make many mistakes, but our trust is that by and large good writing will find worthy readers.

So—with my feet back on the ground, and under my desk where they belong—I turn to the job, but I take time to send my respects and my best wishes to other writers. May they get their fair share when awards rain down again!
**IN THE GREATER NORTHWEST**

**Saturday, January 5th, 12 pm**—**Keno, OR**
Keno Branch Library, 15555 Highway 66, Keno, Oregon. Hosted by the Keno Library. Contact: Mary Hope [kenostaff@co.klamath.or.us 541-273-0750](mailto:kenostaff@co.klamath.or.us 541-273-0750)

**Saturday, January 12th, 2 pm** (**Mtn. Time**), **Ontario, OR**
Community Library, 388 SW 2nd Avenue, Ontario, Oregon. Host: Phillip Mahaffey, English Department, Treasure Valley Community College. Contact: Doreen Jones (Ontario Community Library) 541-889-6371 or Phillip Mahaffey pmahaffe@tvcc.cc 541-881-5912

**Saturday, January 12th, 4 pm**—**Seattle, WA**
Green Lake Branch Seattle Public Library, 7364 E Greenlake Dr. N, Seattle. PoetsWest tribute to William Stafford. Open mic. Bring your favorite Stafford poem to read. Hosted by J. Glenn Evans. Contact J. Glenn Evans 206.682.1268 or JGE@poetswest.com

**Saturday, January 12th, 3 pm**—**Waldport, OR**
Waldport Community Center, 265 Hemlock St., Waldport, Oregon. Hosted by Drew Myron and friends of the Waldport Public Library. Join the worldwide birthday celebration honoring the life and work of the late William Stafford, Oregon’s most famous poet. Oregon Coast writers will read a Stafford poem, as well as their own. Audience members are invited to share a favorite Stafford poem. Contact: Drew Myron dcm@drewmyron.com

**Sunday, January 13th, 2 to 4 pm**—**Hood River, OR**
Columbia Center for the Arts, Hood River, Oregon. Hosted by Barbara Young, sponsored by CCA. Both Stafford and Stafford-inspired personal poems will be read with time for audience members to read, as well. Contact: Barbara Young, 541-490-1996, barby@gorge.net

**Sunday, January 13th, 2 pm**—**Welches, OR**
Wy’east Book Shoppe & Art Gallery at the Rendezvous Center, 67149 E. Highway 26, Welches, Oregon. Hosted by Lindy Delf and Tony Wolk. Featuring: poet Ed Edmo, singer/songwriter Suzan Lundy, and FWS Emeritus Board Member Sharon Wood Wörtman. Contact: Sandra Palmer 503-622-1623 or Lindy Delf lindydelf@gmail.com

**Monday, January 14th, 6 pm**—**Hermiston, OR**
Room 136, Blue Mountain Community College, 980 SE Columbia Drive, Hermiston, Oregon. Hosted by Pam Steele. Contact: Pam Steele 541-571-8722 Pamela.Steele@hermiston.k12.or.us

**Monday, January 14th, 7 pm**—**Bainbridge Island, WA**
Bainbridge Island Public Library, 1270 Madison Ave., Bainbridge Island, Washington. Hosted by David Hecker. Featuring John Davis, Gayle Kaune, Peter Quinn, and Nancy Rekow. After introductory remarks, the host will present a power-point presentation of photographs of the William Stafford mural on a downtown building at Hutchinson, Kansas. Each of the four panel members will then present on their contacts with William Stafford as students and workshop attendees, and how he influenced their writing and poetry teaching. Last will be readings by host, panel members, and audience of favorite poems by or about William Stafford. Contact: David Hecker dahsojourner@comcast.net or Reference Librarian, B.I. Public Library 206-842-4162

**Tuesday, January 15th, 7-8:30 pm**—**Newport, OR**
Newport Public Library, 35 NW Nye Street, Newport, Oregon. Co-sponsored by Willamette Writers Coast Chapter. Hosted by Dorothy Mack. Featuring Linnea Harper and Dan Stein. Attendees are encouraged to bring their favorite Stafford poems to share. Contact: Dorothy Mack dmack@centurytel.net

**Tuesday, January 15th, 5:30 pm**—**Enterprise, OR**
Fishtrap House, (Coffin House), 400 E. Grant St., Enterprise, Oregon. Featuring Cameron Scott and FWS Board Member Rich Wendeschneider. An evening potluck and reading to kick off our wintertime writer-in-residency program and celebrate William Stafford’s birthday. Please bring a dish to share for the potluck at 5:30, the reading will begin around 6:30. Contact: Ben Hayes ben@fishtrap.org

**Tuesday, January 15th, 6:30-7:30 pm**—**Lincoln City, OR**
Driftwood Public Library, 801 SW Hwy 101, Lincoln City, Oregon. Co-hosted by John Fiedler and Ron Sears. A reading of Stafford poems by audience members and by featured readers, who will also share brief original poems in the spirit of William Stafford. Contact: John Fiedler 541-994-8178 johnfiedler@embarqmail.com or Ron Sears 541-921-2217

**Wednesday, January 16th, 7 pm**—**McMinnville, OR**
Austin Reading Room, Nicholson Library, Linfield College, 900 SE Baker Ave, McMinnville, Oregon. Hosted by Lex Runciman and FWS Board Member Barbara Drake. Featuring a mix of students and local people reading. Public participation warmly invited. Bring a Stafford poem, prose passage, or anecdote, and a poem of your own to share if you wish. Contact: Barbara Drake bdrake1@frontier.com or swhyte@linfield.edu

**Thursday, January 17th, 7 pm**—**Ashland, OR**
Hannon Library, Meese Meeting Room 309, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon. The public is invited to attend this free event honoring the late Oregon Poet Laureate. Hosted by Friends of Hannon Library and Friends of William Stafford. Composer Todd Barton will open this celebration by performing his piece composed for the Cavani String Quartet in 1996 to accompany a quartet of William Stafford poems. Poet Linda Barnes will read the four poems. Todd Barton, Oregon Shakespeare Festival Resident Composer for forty-three years and Director of Composition Studies at Southern Oregon University, is the composer of over 250 scores for theater productions and over one hundred commissioned concert works. Among his film and video scores are William Stafford: The Life of the Poem and Lawson Fusao Inada: What It Means to Be Free. Other featured poets for the event include Jean-
nette Cappella, Bruce Barton, Richard Lehnhert, Liz Robinson, and Jay Schroeder. Audience members are invited to bring a favorite William Stafford poem to read. For further information about the William Stafford event contact Michelle Schuster at SOU, 541-552-6835.

Thursday, January 17th, 7 pm—Bellingham, WA
Village Books, 1200 Eleventh Street, Bellingham, Washington. Hosted by James Bertolino. William Stafford Tribute Event: An Evening of Poetry. Village Books will host a poetry reading celebrating Oregon’s late poet laureate, William Stafford. One of the best-known and loved American poets, Stafford served as Poetry Consultant to the Library of Congress, received the National Book Award for Traveling Through the Dark, and taught for many years at Lewis & Clark College in Portland. He grew up in Kansas, was a conscientious objector during World War II, and was widely admired for his generosity. Contact: Christina Claassen, Village Books events@villagebooks.com or James Bertolino jim@jamesbertolino.com 360-398-7870

Thursday, January 17th, 6:30-9:00 pm—Burns, OR
The Bakery (previously The Rock Wall Studio), an art exhibit and performance studio—the studio is up a flight of stairs, 255 North Broadway, Burns, Oregon. Hosted by Sue Kovar, owner of The Bakery. Featuring Harney Basin Writers group members Peg Wallis, Lorna Cagle, Debra Raymond, Susan Kovar, Kate Marsh, and Marjorie Thelen. The public is invited to attend this free event, and refreshments will be served. The upstairs studio is above The Children’s Barn, and is the site of frequent Coyote Cinema showroomings and other artistic events. Several writers will read a poem by the late Oregon Poet Laureate followed by one of their own poems written in the spirit of Stafford’s work. Members of the audience are invited to read one of their favorite Stafford poems. Contact: Kate Marsh, cope.landmarsh@centurytel.net, 541-573-7204

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The Bakery (previously The Rock Wall Studio), an art exhibit and performance studio—the studio is up a flight of stairs, 255 North Broadway, Burns, Oregon. Hosted by Sue Kovar, owner of The Bakery. Featuring Harney Basin Writers group members Peg Wallis, Lorna Cagle, Debra Raymond, Susan Kovar, Kate Marsh, and Marjorie Thelen. The public is invited to attend this free event, and refreshments will be served. The upstairs studio is above The Children’s Barn, and is the site of frequent Coyote Cinema showroomings and other artistic events. Several writers will read a poem by the late Oregon Poet Laureate followed by one of their own poems written in the spirit of Stafford’s work. Members of the audience are invited to read one of their favorite Stafford poems. Contact: Kate Marsh, cope.landmarsh@centurytel.net, 541-573-7204

Thursday, January 17th, 3:20-5 pm, & 7 pm—Longview, WA
Longview Public Library, 1600 Maple, Longview, Washington, 98632. Hosted by Northwest Voices (Lower Columbia College & Longview Public Library). Featuring Alice Derry presenting a workshop at Lower Columbia College from 3:30-5 pm, followed by a public reading at the Longview Public Library at 7 pm as the keynote speaker for the annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration. Cake and punch are provided by the library for guests, and there will be an “open-mic” time for Stafford fans and budding poets alike to share Stafford poetry or their own work. Contact: Danielle Skulke dshulke@lcc.ctc.edu or Longview Public Library 360-442-5300

Saturday, January 19th, 1 pm—Olympia, WA
Columbia Room, 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW, Legislative Building, Olympia, Washington. Hosted by Alex Hays. Featuring Chris Bayley, Mark Lindquist, and Sam Reed. We will be celebrating the life of poet William Stafford. A basic outline of the events includes: a)

Time to Mingle with other patrons of the arts b) Introduction — Alex Hays c) Featured Readers — Poems will be read by several local authors (they will be provided with some of Stafford’s poems, or they can choose their favorite Stafford poem to read) d) Conclusion — Alex Hays. Contact: April Sanders april.sanders@abhays.com; (253) 961-2230

Sunday, January 20th, 2 pm—Salem, OR
Anderson Room A, Salem Public Library, 585 Liberty St SE, Salem, Oregon. Hosted by Janet Markee. Featuring Alice Derry, Marilyn Johnston, and FWS Board Member Jim Scheppke. The program will open with HOW THE INK FEELS, then the readings, and then audience participation of sharing favorite Stafford poems. Contact: Janet Markee janetmarkee@mac.com

Friday, January 25th, 7 pm—Sunriver, OR
Tsunami Books, 2585 Willamette St., Corvallis, Oregon. Hosted by FWS Board Member Emerita Linda Gelbrich. The theme for this year’s celebration is “What is Poetry?” We will begin with the DVD of “The Life of the Poem,” followed by a short workshop led by Linda Varsell Smith, with time to write from the inspiration of Stafford’s video and his poems related to poetry. Featured readers will include Eleanor Berry and Be Davison Herrera. They will address the theme as well as read from Stafford’s work. Audience participants will be invited to read a favorite William Stafford poem as well as one of their own related to the theme. Contact: Linda Gelbrich lindaw@exchangenet.net 541-754-7198

Saturday, January 26th, 4 pm—Eugene, OR

Saturday, January 26th, 7 pm—Mt. Angel, OR
Mt. Angel Abbey Library, Mt. Angel, Oregon. Silverton Poetry Association Stafford Celebration Event. Hosted by Efrain Horna Diaz. This year we will celebrate what William Stafford called “circling around our truth.” Everyone is invited to listen and to read the poetry of William Stafford. Those who knew Stafford are especially invited to share. Special attention will be given to the poet’s relationship
with grief. A few of his poems will be read in other languages. Refreshments served. Contact: kelley.morehouse@gmail.com

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27TH, 1:30 PM—MOLALLA, OR
Molalla Public Library, 201 E. 5th St., Molalla, Oregon. Hosted by Larry Anderson and Kate Gray. Sponsored by the Molalla Writers Group. Featuring Larry Anderson, Brian Biggs, Maureen Cole, Kate Gray, Carol Hausholder, Steve Slemenda, and Esther Wood, who will read Stafford and Stafford-related poems followed by reader and audience discussion of his work, life, stories, anything else of pertinence. Guests are warmly invited to read their own work and/or related poems. Those not interested in reading poems may sit back and enjoy! The film, “Traveling in the Dark” will be shown, with a short discussion to follow. Contact: Kate Gray. Kateg@clackamas.edu.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11TH, 6:30-8:30 PM—GEORGETOWN, TX
Cianfranni’s Coffee Shop on the Square, Georgetown, Texas. Hosted by Mike Guilickson, who will portray William Stafford and read some of William’s poems. The theme is “A Ritual To Read to Each Other.” Contact: Mike Guilickson, poetkind@yahoo.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 7:30 PM—PACIFICA, CA
Flory’s Book Company, 2120 Palmetto Ave., Pacifica, California. Hosted by Bob Walker and Sherri Rose-Walker. Contact: Bob Walker and Sherri Rose-Walker 650-738-0261 or Flory’s Book Company 650-355-8811 FloresysBookCo@yahoo.com

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 7 PM—BURLINGTON, VT
Morgan Room of Aiken Hall, Corner of Maple and Summit Streets, Champlain College, Burlington, Vermont. Hosted by Jim Ellefson. Featuring: Erik Eckilsen and Bill Everts. Bill’s birthday begins our “Under the Influence” reading series for our so-called spring semester. By April, we’ll celebrate the birthdays of six others. On 1/17, readers will present a Stafford poem, talk about the influence on her/his work—and then present an original poem. Our evening will go on in a clunky democratic fashion until everyone has had a chance. Contact: Jim Ellefson ellefson@champlain.edu 802-865-6406

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 4 PM—NEW YORK, NY
Fifth-Floor Milstein Chapel of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, Columbia University Medical Center, in New York City. Hosted by Joel Nightingale Berning, Chaplain. Within one of Manhattan’s largest hospitals, patients, family members, and staff will be welcomed in the spirit of Stafford to share their favorite poems, relate poetry to healing and coping with illness, and develop a poetry community among each other. For security reasons this celebration is restricted to NYP staff, patients, and their families. Contact Joel Nightingale Berning at job9122@nyp.org or 212-305-5817.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 6 PM—PRINCETON, NJ
Princeton Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. Hosted by Meredith Martin. Contact: Meredith Martin mm4@princeton.edu

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17TH, 11 AM—TIFFIN, OH
Herbster Chapel, Heidelberg University, 310 East Market, Tiffin, Ohio. Co-hosted by President Rob Huntington and Professor Bill Reyer. Open to the broader Tiffin and Seneca County community, the event will focus on a theme, Social Activism, which seems so appropriate for Mr. Stafford. As with each year, students, staff, and faculty will be invited to participate in a democratic manner. Contact: Bill Reyer wreyer@heidelberg.edu 419-448-2048

Tuesday, January 22nd, 9:30-11:15 AM—CARSON CITY, NV
Prison Chapel, Northern Nevada Correctional Center, Carson City, Nevada. Facilitated by Shaun Griffin. For twenty-three years, Shaun Griffin has been leading a writing workshop for the inmates in this correctional center. He says, “There will be a handful of us gathered to read and remember Bill on that day. We will read Bill’s poems, some of his essays, and remember, through his many words, the depth of his gift to all of us. I always tell my guys at the prison to ‘lower your standards and keep writing...’ after Bill’s example.” Contact: Shaun Griffin shaungrif@aol.com

Saturday, January 26th, 2 PM—SANTA BARBARA, CA
7th annual gathering at First Crossing Day Use Area, Los Padres National Forest, Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, California. This site has no address, but is just across the road from Los Prietos Boys Camp, 3900 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. In case of rain, the reading will be moved a mile down the road to Los Prietos Ranger Station, 3505 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. Hosted by Paul Willis. Featured readers: Paulann Petersen, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles, and Mark Sargent, Provost of Westmont College. Program Note: This reading will take place on the exact site of the Los Prietos Civilian Public Service Camp where William Stafford was stationed during WWII. We will be dedicating an outdoor informational display on Stafford and the CPS Camp. Further Program Note:
Earlier in the day, Paulann Petersen will be giving a Stafford-based poetry-writing workshop from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm at the nearby Los Prietos Ranger Station, 3505 Paradise Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93105. This workshop is free and open to the public. Furthest Program Note: The Forest Service has waived the requirement of an Adventure Pass for those attending the day’s events. Contact: Paul Willis 805-565-7174 willis@westmont.edu

Saturday, January 26th, 11:30-3 p.m.—Sapporo, Japan
Koorakuen Hotel, Nishi 8 Chome, Oodori, Chuoku, Sapporo, Japan. Hosted by Yorifumi Yaguchi. Several persons will read poems of William Stafford both in English and Japanese, including Kim Stafford’s poem “Bell & Fire.” This is included in “Farewell to Nuclear, Welcome to Renewable Energy, A Collection of Poems by 218 Poets.” This book was published a few months ago. The poems in it are both in English and Japanese. Contact: Juichi Matsuda. Mazda 1193@ybb.ne.jp

Sunday, February 3rd, 7 p.m.—Marrakesh, Morocco
American Language Center, 3 Impasse du Moulin, Gueliz, Marrakesh, Morocco. Hosted by Joseph Green. Featuring students in the ALC Writers’ Club. Contact Joseph Green greens_tossed@yahoo.com

Gerald Burns to WS, Nov. 28th, 1966

If anything was needed to drive your reputation home to me, it was seeing Bly, Kinnell & Kizer read their favorite Stafford poems after you left. By now you’ll have heard about it—Bly “The Farm on the Great Plains,” Kinnell “Passing Remark,” Kizer “Thinking for Berky” & “Traveling through the Dark.”

“We’ve printed acres of Stafford,” she said.

Bly apologized for reading without having heard you read; he really cared. Said you’re the greatest poet to come out of Kansas for the next 400 years. Hope he has that record & you’re on it.

I thought at the time I heard Creeley that his delivery would be most useful to have heard, but tried silently it doesn’t help that much. Bly may have been the most unpredictable in advance; Duncan useful. All by the way of sliding into something I’m almost ashamed to say—you reading was the most effective of any—and like your poems there was no moving parts to it, no way of telling how you did it. I say “ashamed” because around here it’s likely to sound like hero worship. Hall is genial & fuzzy, with just the right reserve, boyish relish. Kizer cocktail high school flash — delightful. Duncan still in Oz. (Doesn’t he look more like the Wizard of?) Bly unbelievable. Kinnell OK, enjoying himself. Creeley the only poet without platform distance—he treats an audience as if it’s just people he’s talking to, & groans his poems to whoever’ll listen, a brilliant reading. Even Eberhart made me happier with his stuff.

But you—how do you do it. I figure maybe a poet who takes a camera to a reception is a man to watch. And darned if you don’t do everything like that. No question of role, hence no particular mannerisms. Just a man reading poems. Amazing. If I were reporting the conference I’d have to note what you do at the end of a poem. You grin.

You look integrated, is all.

The Big School

William Stafford

Will you be afraid when miles of sagebrush hold you? When you are lost and a cold wind has begun to blow? Somewhere out there you will stop. Will you be afraid?

No.

Dry streambeds wander, just lower than all that surrounds. You can find little patches of grass. Any place you choose to rest can be the place.

Yes.

It is the whole world, level, round, asserting only its minimum pose where it happened to fall. It is like justice. Could it have provided better for you? Not at all.

You could have believed better, of course. What others had were yours too. Would you care when the great world-lesson comes aiming at you over the miles?

I’ll be there.

WILLIAM STAFFORD
WS to Kenny and Jean Johnson, May 1st, 1987 (poem enclosed)

Workers of the world! It is Mayday and time to celebrate all of us heroic, retired workers. It occurred to me to write you a note on this our-size paper, even though we are hoping to see you both soon at the big party out at Sisters.

Anyway, I have been thinking what a disastrous decline there is at the old college. I was up there a couple of days ago, to fend off a writer who wanted to come out to our house to talk….And as I looked around, as I sniffed around the department, as I traversed the shabby-looking crowd of students lounging with their gum (and who knows what else) in the library, I thought about the shining exemplars we were compared to the present dolorous bunch.

In the department, the new secretary hardly knew me. The big, odd-looking professor slouching the halls was apparently a new “addition” to the halls. My mail slot was pitifully empty, that used to be glorious with invitations to have dinner with book salesmen. Remember those days when they had expense accounts?

Well, I came home to our hideaway and thought about our band of survivors, and thought I would write to you when a worthy piece of paper came along, which just did as I shuffled through things here in the garage-office preparatory to taking off tomorrow for Indiana and then Phillips-Exeter Academy in New Hampshire (gone a week for this pair of goodies).

Our lives are snug now, and we can avoid all except occasional glimpses of the decline of the world around us. Here at home we have been working on the yard, reading our books (I have just finished The Scarlet Letter and began on Mosses from an Old Manse, feeling sort of mossy myself anyway), and—for me—writing a few bits now and then. I'll load in at once this morning's accretion to the pile of mss accumulating for our attic unless some alert editor nabs these gems that keep arriving in my head.—

In Any Country

It happens this way all the time:
Someone swam near, in that restless water.
You have to be quiet and wait, then speak
as if casually. Most of the time, for awhile,
the current carries you sort of together
and you don’t much care, for awhile.

This time, it was night. The others were gone,
or drowned; anyway, only the waves
made any difference as they came and went
with their many unread messages, telling
the despair of all who have no purpose in life.

And someone swam near, so alone, so still,
that the waves hesitated before they went on,
and the night paused. It was my time.
After, long after that night, now has come
demanding the story I have just told.
It happens this way all the time.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

WS to Kenny Johnson, Aug. 6th, 1970

One night at our house you posed a tough question for me. You took a stand that said one should accept his nature or preferences or principles, and do his thinking in terms of some kind of stand or commitment. I had always held lurking in my mind the idea that in my thinking I should try to erase my self—be ready to follow any thinking, including other people’s, and not have any commitment at all, if possible.

Down at Haystack 70 we had a discussion about such an issue, and I realized your posing of the issue had lurked along in my thinking. Somewhere out on the edge of my stance, my way of seeing the world and myself, there is an allegiance that is almost like religion, maybe much like religion: it is the acceptance of one extreme belief—belief in the imminence [sic] of the world as provider of guidance for creatures with sense (sensibility). Experience will bring us more than we now have. Hence, I must be variable, not principled (except for this one principle of steadfast waverness).

John Haines to WS, Oct. 27th, 1968

I enjoyed your poems. You’re one of the few who have anything to say these days.

Happy 97th Birthday,
Dear Dorothy!

Dorothy at the 1993 Portland Poetry Festival, which was dedicated to William Stafford.

Permissions

Letters, poems, and graphics from Poet’s Letters: The Correspondence of William Stafford, an exhibition held in the Collins Gallery of the Multnomah County Central Library from Nov. 1st to Dec. 16th, 2012, are used with the permission of the Estate of William Stafford.

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Errata for issue 17.2 of FWS Newsletter:

On page 3: The last word of Shaun Griffin’s essay “Looking for William Stafford on the Yard” is missing. The final sentence should read, “Above all Stafford taught us to pay attention: the poems cannot wait.”

On page 5: The last sentence in “Host and Organizer, David Hecker” has the wrong date. The sentence should read, “David sent along the accompanying graphics of the poster and the bookmark that were a part of the 1994 event.”
BECOME A
Friend of William Stafford

MISSION OF FWS

IN THE SPIRIT OF WILLIAM STAFFORD, we are committed to the free expression of literature and conscience. We seek to share Stafford's work and advance the spirit of his teaching and literary witness. We strive to provide ongoing education in poetry and literature in local schools and communities in ways that will encourage and enrich a broad spectrum of readers and writers. In doing so, we hope to contribute to William Stafford's legacy for generations to come.

WHY JOIN?

BY JOINING THE FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD, you become part of an international community of poetry lovers and writers with broad access to other poetry organizations and events. As a Friend, you’ll receive a subscription to our triannual newsletter, filled with poetry and poetry news. In addition, your contribution provides vital funding for the annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration Readings, helps maintain our web site, www.williamstafford.org, and helps initiate new projects. We always welcome your volunteer services.

TO JOIN THE FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD, renew your friendship, or make a donation, please fill out this form and mail to: FWS, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034. Checks payable to "Friends of William Stafford."

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How did you hear of FWS?

Volunteer opportunities [ ] Organize poetry readings in your community [ ] Event help [ ] Distribute posters/flyers [ ] Publicize events [ ] Other (describe):

FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD newsletter is published three times a year.

Editor: Tim Barnes
tim.barnes63@gmail.com

Webmaster: Dennis Schmidling
Special thanks to Ilka Kuznik

Please email comments, letters, news, and information on poetry events, awards, etc. to: news@williamstafford.org or to tim.barnes63@gmail.com

or mail to:
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Lake Oswego, OR 97034

Many thanks and best wishes for a PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
Special Birthday Celebration Issue

Glimpses from the Poet’s Letters

This broadside was done by printmaker and Chinese scholar, Wang Hui-Ming, and is part of Poet’s Letters, an exhibition of Stafford’s correspondence held at the Multnomah County Central Library in November and December, 2012.

Photo by Hua Kuan