



# friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Newsletter For Poets & Poetry  
Volume 12, Issue 3 - Winter 2008

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## Reading Stafford's Poetry with Malaysian Hearts, Global Minds

by Melissa Ann Reed

**Editor's Note:** *Melissa Ann Reed has been a Friend of FWS for a number of years. An artist, poet, and teacher, she is currently teaching Literature and Theatre Arts in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at the Sri KDU SMART School, a private school affiliated with KDU College. Both are located near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and on January 31<sup>st</sup> Reed will participate in the school's first William Stafford Birthday Celebration.*

Although Malaysian students do not study American literature during their secondary years, their present historical context prepares them to meet the pacifist American poet William Stafford through his creative work, and it is not surprising that Bill's poems travel well, both in the IB program and in the country itself.

Celebrating 50 years of independence from Great Britain this year, Malaysians reflect on how theirs was a peaceful negotiation rather than a violent revolution. Simultaneously they celebrate fifty years of friendship with neighboring Australia.

Might they see a part of their national identity reflected in Stafford's mirror - in *the millions of intricate moves toward justice* and in *the little ways that bring good fortune* and genuine friendship? They seem to feel a kinship with the ways that Stafford explores, extols, and practices his fine art of listening, his very own perspective toward the world, and his reflective poetic acts; be they holding a new vision of life or a tiny hummingbird in his hand.

The student population here is comprised of Malays, Chinese, and Indians. The mission of the IB is to develop creative, inquiring, reflective, and knowledgeable minds; to introduce the larger world to students who will understand and have compassion for all cultures of the world, as well as their own, and to maintain a commitment to nurturing peace and life-long learning.

Sri KDU, where I teach, is participating in many fifty-year celebrations; milestones in the current Blue Ocean strategy toward global consciousness and living which forms the basis of education as directed by our principal, Mrs. Chan and our chairman, Dato' Teo.

Mrs. Kalai, an Indian Hindu and native Malaysian who coordinates the CAS (Creativity, Action, Service) finds Stafford's work especially deep and engaging. It is Mrs. Kalai who will be planning, advertising, and hosting, (along with the students), "Reading Stafford's

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Photo/Melissa Ann Reed

*Friends of William Stafford is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of poetry and literature in the spirit of the legacy, life and works of the late award-winning poet William Stafford.*

## Viola M. Gale 1917-2007



Photo/William Stafford

### On Prescott Street

They're stirring on Prescott  
 the street with the vicarish name.  
 The ash trees have put out  
 little gray monkey hands and the Emperor tulips  
 are facing the east wind.  
 The neighbor on the right drags  
 his mower, clutches his pleurisy  
 and eyes the daughter across the way  
 arriving home in a convertible.  
 The hippie hoists his sack,  
 the Avon Lady comes calling.  
 The mangiest cats are sunning their underchins.  
 It's greening, they're moving, always the young,  
 always the tender, deciduous old.

VI GALE

Vi Gale – poet, publisher, and recipient, in 1989, of the second C.E.S. Wood Distinguished Writer Award from Literary Arts – passed away this year.

Born in Norest, Dala-Jarna, Sweden, Gale was a naturalized citizen of the United States and a longtime resident of Portland, Oregon. She studied creative writing and poetry at Portland State University and at Lewis & Clark College. Her career spanned more than 30 years and included the publication of six collections of poetry, her most recent, *Odd Flowers & Short Eared Owls*. She was editor and publisher at Prescott Street Press and a close friend of Bill and Dorothy Stafford.

Dorothy describes her as *a perennial in the garden of the literary world*. She said, "I miss the frequent calls from Vi Gale. They would begin with 'How are you, Dorothy?', then veer quickly into the world of books and writers, our mutual friend in Japan, another in Chapel Hill, a couple in central Oregon, one in New York, and then back to Portland's new writing and recent events.

She read, she wrote, and she published. Her Prescott Street Press gave us handsome books of quality and taste, and the set of different poets on note cards was a treasure; hard to give up for correspondence.

Vi was such a great friend of writers; beginning and established. She brought them together with encouragement and affection.

I remember reading that *an editor is someone looking for someone who has something to say*. Vi found those people and we are grateful."

A "Celebration of Vi Gale, Poet and Publisher," will be held on her birthday, Sunday, February 24, 2008, from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the First Unitarian Church, 2336 SW Salmon Street, in Portland. This event is sponsored by the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission and admission is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact David Milholland ([encanto@ochcom.org](mailto:encanto@ochcom.org)); or John Laursen, 503-231-8022.

### Reading Stafford with Malaysian Hearts

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Mrs. Chuah Siew Yen, Communications Representative and Cultural Events Liaison, finds "Traveling Through the Dark" a poem that invites readers to think. Reflectivity is one of the skills that the IB program aims to catalyze within students, along with knowledge of many different cultures and the skills of communication, compassion, and peace-making. She finds Stafford to be a model of reflectivity, and sees his poems as a model for the *millions of intricate moves* necessary to receive and accept each unique individual for who he or he is.

Our thanks to Paulann Petersen and the many others who have helped create this context in which by celebrating William Stafford's birthday we become part of a growing family of friends throughout the world.

## Reading Stafford with Malaysian Hearts, Global Minds

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Poetry with Malaysian Hearts, Global Minds,” on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Within the school, Stafford’s stance is germane, while in a global context, distance may prevent us from knowing all of our neighbors on a daily basis. Our email communications and our disembodied languages may not always transmit our intended touch and tone. Stafford’s poem, “A Ritual to Read to Each Other,” upholds the reflectivity, the clarity of communication, and the deeper knowledge of one another that is necessary for genuine friendship lest *the parade of our mutual life get lost in the dark*.

The opening lines of “A Ritual to Read to Each Other”... “If you don’t know the kind of person I am / and I don’t know the kind of person you are / a pattern that others made may prevail in the world ...” could well preface the novel, *Salina*, by the contemporary poet and novelist, Dato’ Dr. A. Samad Said. This book is a favorite among my International Baccalaureate students and I write about it by way of illustration.

*Salina*, on one level, is an ethnographic study of life in the 1966 “goat village” of Singapore, where goat pens were literally the make-shift shelters of the marginalized, the disenfranchised, and the dispossessed.

There, a Malay as well as Chinese and Indian people are suddenly thrust into unbidden relationships with one another as they find themselves bereft of home, family, community, education, and work, due to World War Two and socio-economic injustice. From a larger perspective, each is a member of a representative global village.

Some of Said’s characters, like the landlord, Kurupaya Sammy, and the rabid sailor, Abdul Fakar, represent the diseased powers of imperialism and colonialism at large. Other characters, like Salina, Katijah and the young people, Hilmy, Sunarto, and Nahidah, represent humanity at its best. These last five also represent the emergent consciousness of a new, independent Malaysia.

Because the darkness of ignorance and injustice around them is deep, Hilmy and Nahidah learn to carefully read one another’s facial expressions. If Nahidah’s face says “no,” Hilmy refrains from asking his burning questions. Nahidah waits for Hilmy’s face to open and say “yes” before she shares her painful family history. Katijah and Hilmy read Salina’s grief and the signs of her attitude, waiting until she is ready to hear their kind advice. Through their thoughts, silences, signals, spoken words, and intricate interactions, Said underscores the importance of nonverbal and verbal communication – of receiving and reading both – to the fragile, yet flowering friendships among these strangers.

Furthermore, like Stafford’s persona of *A Ritual*, Said’s Hilmy advises the judgmental village guru, Haju Karman, that they cannot rely on patterns of judgment made by others:

... *it isn’t certain that those who are regarded bad are actually bad in*

*themselves. And we can’t be certain those who do good are good persons in themselves. Now don’t you think the time has come for you to get closer to them all? And likewise, they should get closer to you too? When you get closer, you might find something new. It is the same with them. Then you would not easily accuse and find fault with them, and likewise it would not be easy for them to say you are mad. We would not know people’s difficulties if we look at them from far only. . .*

Hilmy follows his own advice to develop a more mutual life. In truth, he and Manur find Salina a more caring and supportive person than their former neighbors *who live in brick houses*. As the village goat pens eventually burn to the ground, and as Malaysia emerges from bondage to imperialist and colonialist laws, Said shows us that it is Hilmy’s solid and genuine friendship with Salina, Mansur, Nahidah, and Sunarto that rises from the ashes, shaping the real underlying basis of the independent Malaysia of 1957.

In such poems as “Thinking for Berky,” “Objector,” and “Ask Me,” Stafford’s voice joins the voices of Afro-American authors Langston Hughes and Dr. Martin Luther King, two of the other writers we study in the IB program. In fact, all three of these authors form that more perfect union of the true American Dream. All three patiently disobey unjust laws out of respect for just and moral laws; all three inspire nonviolent revolutions and new visions of life through the various poetic acts of their own lives; all three demonstrate for our students the ways of justice that create true peace.

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### For My Young Friends Who Are Afraid

There is a country to cross you will  
find in the corner of your eye, in  
the quick slip of your foot – air far  
down, a snap that might have caught.  
And maybe for you, for me, a high, passing  
voice that finds its way by being  
afraid. That country is there, for us,  
carried as it is crossed. What you fear  
will not go away: it will take you into  
yourself and bless you and keep you.  
That’s the world, and we all live there.

WILLIAM STAFFORD



## FWS Board Member Walks Portland's Bridges Using Poetry as a Compass

After three successful editions of *The Portland Bridge Book*, which she co-authored with her husband, engineer Ed Wortman, Sharon Wood Wortman has published another "bridge" book. This one, the fourth, speaks to the author's love of poetry.

*Walking Portland's Bridges Using Poetry as a Compass* is a guide book, with step-by-step directions for bridge walking. But beyond that, the book features poems about bridges, both concrete and metaphoric, by 78 poets, including both Sharon Wood Wortman and William Stafford.

Stafford's poem, "By Hawthorne Bridge," was taken from his Daily Writings, 11 October 1978 and has remained unpublished until this time. It is used in the book and reprinted here with permission from the Estate of William Stafford.

### By Hawthorne Bridge

They went on talking about the river.  
They stopped sometimes, then began  
again, faster, picking up what they had  
said before and moving it along. Their  
voices made me remember a time  
on a train, people in another compartment  
traveling home and telling about it while  
we dozed. And we woke up at dawn all turned  
around, passing trees in a line with their tops just above  
mist that swirled around us. The world  
was all gray, and we shivered while we moved.

☪ WILLIAM STAFFORD

*"More than in any other human relationship, overwhelmingly more, motherhood means being instantly interruptable, responsive, responsible ... It is distraction, not meditation, that becomes habitual; interruption, not continuity; spasmodic, not constant toil ..."*



Tillie Olsen  
*Silences*

## Kim Stafford Receives Holbrook Award From Portland Literary Arts

Congratulations to Kim Stafford, who received the Stewart H. Holbrook Legacy Award from Portland's Literary Arts at the Oregon Book Awards ceremony hosted by FWS National Advisor, Naomi Shihab Nye. The award, presented by FWS board member and retiring Executive Director of Fishtrap, Rich Wandschneider, is given each year to an Oregon writer who has made outstanding contributions to Oregon's literary life. Last year's recipient was Paulann Petersen and in 2003, FWS member David Hedges. This photo was taken at the September Poetry & Potluck (see pp. 6-8).



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

### PERMISSIONS

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"THE WAY IT IS AMONG YOUR FRIENDS SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE" by Scot Siegel, reprinted with author's permission.

"By Hawthorne Bridge" and "With Neighbors One Afternoon" by William Stafford, reprinted with permission from the Estate of William Stafford.

"Here" by Grace Paley, reprinted with permission of The Feminist Press.

"To William Stafford," by John Daniel. From *All Things Touched by Wind*, Salmon Run Press, 1994. Reprinted with permission.

"A Woman of Stature" by Larry Butler, reprinted with author's permission.



## From the Chair

by Shelley Reece

This year we lost two important writers, Tillie Olsen (1912-2007) and Grace Paley (1922-2007). Both were the children of Russian Jewish immigrants, both were working class, pro-labor, human rights and anti-war activists; friends who gave voice to the voiceless among working-class people without being sentimental about it. Both wrote in the vernacular with a great ear for speech patterns. Like William Stafford, they wrote in ordinary language about abiding concerns in ordinary lives.

After being released from jail in the mid-thirties for political activities, Tillie Olsen worked until 1959 as a waitress, shaker in a laundry, transcriber in a dairy equipment company, capper of mayonnaise jars, secretary and Kelly Girl. She persisted in her writing. In 1961, she received the O. Henry Award for “Tell Me a Riddle,” the title story of her collection. In 1974, she completed *Yonnonidio*, a novel she had begun in the thirties. Then in 1978, she published *Silences*, a book that detailed the reasons for the silent spaces in women’s writing lives.

A moment from the first story of *Tell Me a Riddle*: At the beginning of “I Stand Here Ironing,” her narrator says, “I stand here ironing, and what you asked me moves tormented back and forth with the iron.” In this first sentence of the narrative, a thirty-eight-year-old mother of a nineteen-year-old daughter irons and simultaneously worries about her daughter’s choices. She irons the wrinkles out of clothes in a way she wishes she could iron the wrinkles out of her daughter’s life. That loaded phrase, “back and forth,” opens up the way Olsen’s narratives work. Dialectic, thesis/antithesis, or strophe/antistrophe—call it what you will—defines the political contact zones among members of family and friends in Olsen’s stories. Though she isn’t writing poems, the rhythms of her sentences are often iambic and read like poetic lines.

At 16, Paley dropped out of high school and entered Hunter College; expelled for lack of attendance, she entered City College. At the New School for Social Research, she took a course from W. H. Auden, who encouraged her to write what she heard and spoke. She began to believe all art is political. In 1959, she published *The Little Disturbances of Man*. A year later, she and her neighbors founded the Greenwich Village Peace Center, which protested atomic bomb testing and U. S. policies in Vietnam. In 1966, she was arrested on Armed Forces Day for sitting under missiles on Fifth Avenue. A decade later, she was arrested for placing an anti-nuclear banner on the White House lawn. In 1974, she published *Enormous Changes at the Last Minute*, and in 1985, *Later the Same Day*.

A moment in “Wants” from *Enormous Changes* . . . reveals how she uses metaphor. A divorced woman narrator says of her ex-husband, “He had a habit throughout the twenty-seven years of making a

narrow remark which, like a plumber’s snake, could work its way through the ear down the throat, half-way to my heart. He would then disappear, leaving me choking with equipment.” And she leaves the reader choking too. Often, Paley’s humor deflects her anger, a difference between her and Olsen. The title story from her second collection begins, “A young man said he wanted to go to bed with Alexandra because she had an interesting mind.”

Tillie Olsen’s and Grace Paley’s activist lives and stories about people “wrecking their lives on the shoals of every day” [Paley] remain to teach us more about our own humanity. And for that we are grateful.

### Here

Here I am in the garden laughing  
an old woman with heavy breasts  
and a nicely mapped face

how did this happen  
well that’s who I wanted to be

at last a woman  
in the old style sitting  
stout thighs apart under  
a big skirt grandchild sliding  
on off my lap a pleasant  
summer perspiration

that’s my old man across the yard  
he’s talking to the meter reader  
he’s telling him the world’s sad story  
how electricity is oil or uranium  
and so forth I tell my grandson  
run over to your grandpa ask him  
to sit beside me for a minute I  
am suddenly exhausted by my desire  
to kiss his sweet explaining lips.

GRACE PALEY

# FWS Second Annual Poetry & Potluck Turns A Rainy Day Into An Afternoon With Neighbors

by Sulima Malzin

At this year's Poetry & Potluck the rains came, along with 60-80 Friends who, undaunted by a little Oregon weather, gathered at Foothills Park for the second year in a row in the spirit of William Stafford, to renew old acquaintances and make new ones; to share stories, songs, poetry, and a magnificent potluck feast. Three came from California and two from Texas.

Warm smiles and hugs warmed the gazebo where tables and chairs were set up while outdoors, balancing a plate of food and an umbrella became the coveted skill of the day.

Board member Rich Wandschneider served as Emcee, with opening remarks from Dorothy Stafford. Following readings and remarks by featured readers Kirsten Rian, Doug Stow, and Mike and Joyce Gullickson, John Daniel used a number of poems to texture his presentation, inviting the audience to accompany him from his first encounter with William Stafford at a Klamath Falls writing conference in 1979 to the last day of Bill's life in August 1993.

Drawing from his 2002 memoir, *Winter Creek: One Writer's Natural History*, Daniel told how in hearing Stafford read "Vocation," that first day of the conference, he was struck by the line his father speaks to Bill's boy-self: *Your job is to find what the world is trying to be.* That, Daniel decided, was the poet's work, and would be worth all the years and concentration he might have to put into it.

Daniel admitted that now, all these years later, he is not likely to find what the world is trying to be, but that, for him, it is enough to



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

John Daniel

be "one small parcel of Nature's becoming, and to attend to my life as alertly and faithfully as I can. Bill Stafford is one of the teachers who showed me that way." Speaking of the sense of community he felt at FWS events, Daniel closed with Bill's poem, "With Neighbors One Afternoon."

As board member Patty Wixon rose to introduce the latest broadside "Hummingbirds," Paulann Petersen stepped in with a surprise presentation on behalf of the board – a token of appreciation for Wixon's unflagging service to FWS from its inception. The gift presented was a "poetry box" by FWS member, artist Shirley Marie Dees. The poem, "Why I Am Happy," was etched into both the outer and inner surfaces of the box, which was painted with images of that *lake somewhere so blue and far that nobody owns it.*

## To William Stafford

Some would call it luck, I guess.  
 Stop to watch geese on the misty marsh  
 and something rises just beyond –  
 flash of head and tail, the great wings  
 shouldering slowly away. You said it  
 faithfully, with all your voices,  
 as you built the house of everything  
 your alertness could call forth –  
 geese on the marsh, the eagle rising,  
 it's a luck we can rely on  
 if we give ourselves to what's here.  
*Be ready, you said. Out of the mist  
 of all indifferences, the world speaks.*  
 And that house of yours, the one  
 you worked on all those mornings,  
 the house of little things  
 we might have missed, the house  
 that stands by your allegiances  
 and walls nothing out – we're lucky  
 that you placed it here around us,  
 this home where you've welcomed us to live.

JOHN DANIEL





Photos/Dennis Schmidling



Patty Wixon receives surprise box from FWS board

Our California guests were Doug Stow, the founder of Paper Crane Press, who is the generous publisher and artist responsible for the letterpress broadsides of Stafford poems for FWS, his wife Margaret, and Carol Garcia, the artist whose hummingbird drawing is part of the latest broadside.



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

Doug Stow

Stow, a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War and a long-time fan of William Stafford and his work, expressed gratitude for the courageous example that Stafford set for those who were compelled to stand up for what they believed, and pleasure at being able to contribute to Stafford's legacy. Reading from his own work, "Fishing

for Poems," Stow said ... *a poem is hard to keep alive out of the current. I'll release it and let that brilliance flash and disappear.*

Portland poet Kirsten Rian, who has led workshops internationally using poetry as a tool for literacy, healing, and storytelling within the refugee/immigrant and homeless communities, read from her poem, "Reading The Dirt Like Braille." ... *After waiting in line with tin bowls for porridge, she and the four children start down the dirt road, the youngest running ahead, hoping momentum will stir enough air to lift the scrap paper and string kite up into the sky, a banner to tripwire the sun ...* Rian is a Poet-In-Residence through the Literary Arts Writers-in-the-Schools program teaching poetry to at-risk high school students.

FWS members Mike and Joyce Gullickson, both poets with numerous publications to their credit, came from Burnet, Texas (just 60 miles northeast of Austin) to participate in the festivities. In their home town, they will be hosting their second Stafford Birthday

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## With Neighbors One Afternoon

Someone said, stirring their tea, "I would come home any time just for this, to look out the clear backyard air and then into the cup."

You could see the tiniest pattern of bark on the trees and every slight angle of color change in the sunshine – millions of miles of gold light lavished on people like us.

You could put out your hand and feel the rush of years rounding your life into these days of ours. From somewhere a leaf came gliding slowly down and rested on a lawn.

Remember that scene? – inside it you folded the last of your jealousy and hate, and all those deeds so hard to forget. Absolution: swish! – you took the past into your mouth

And swallowed it, warm, thin, bitter, and good.

☞ WILLIAM STAFFORD



Kirsten Rian

Photo/Dennis Schmidling

*How light behaves depends on the river swells,  
and today the belly of the earth inhales  
and constellar puppeteers shake loose  
the rain just as they arrive ...*

☞ Kirsten Rian  
"Reading the Dirt Like Braille"

## FWS 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Poetry & Potluck: An Afternoon With Neighbors



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

Joyce and Mike Gullickson

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Celebration. Much of the Gullicksons' work is inspired by Stafford poems and reflects the same tenderness in harsh circumstances as Rian's. Mike's "Meanwhile the World Goes On" begins with these words: *The prisoners from the Le Blanc unit are fixing a picnic shelter at the park none of them will ever use ...while Joyce, in her poem, "Tomatoes," tells of a woman trying to survive her husband's sudden death while tending his tomatoes. Now, she writes, her garden holds cucumbers and green peppers but not tomatoes; the snap of a tomato from the vine too fresh, the fruit too red, the flesh too tender.*

Thanks to FWS volunteer Scot Siegel and all who spontaneously pitched in to help with the last-minute business of physically putting things together. Special thanks go to board member Sharon Wood Wortman, who did such a great job of coordinating the entire event, supported by enthusiastic participation from the board.

Much appreciation also goes to those who contributed dozens of items for the special drawing Gift Baskets and to those who donated over \$300 for chances to win the contents of those baskets. There were several lucky winners.

*Scot Siegel recites his poem, "THE WAY IT IS AMONG YOUR FRIENDS SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE."*



Photo/Dennis Schmidling



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

The Open Mic portion of the program was another highlight of the afternoon. Paula Sinclair, a singer/songwriter from Portland was about to release her new CD *The Good Horse*, a stunning compilation of poems that have been set to music. William Stafford is among the five Oregon poets represented on the album

and Sinclair sang for the gathering, along with other pieces, Bill's beautiful "Our Story." It was recently learned that she has also written music to accompany "A Story That Could Be True." To purchase a copy or to hear music from *The Good Horse*, you may visit Paula Sinclair's website, <http://sinclairsinclair.com>, and click on the link to CD Baby.

### THE WAY IT IS AMONG YOUR FRIENDS SINCE YOU'VE BEEN GONE

*for the Friends of William Stafford*

There's a thread that follows you. It goes among things you said. And it doesn't fray.  
People wonder about what you were sewing.  
We'd like to explain about the thread.  
And cast it far for others in need;  
that all may know it, and one day be saved...  
Fellowship happens; people get word  
and cry; and someday, maybe, they'll end this war...  
No evening news can stop this discovery.  
We won't ever let go of the thread.

SCOT SIEGEL



## Sometimes Our Readers Write About Dorothy

*In late September, we received the following anecdote from Nicole Wagner, via our website, [www.williamstafford.org](http://www.williamstafford.org).*

About fourteen years ago, as I was walking my then six-year-old daughter up the front steps of Chapman Elementary School, I saw a woman I thought I recognized. I stopped her and said, "Excuse me, but are you Dorothy Stafford?" Smiling, she grabbed my hand and replied, "Nicole, how are you?" I expressed my amazement at how she could have possibly remembered me and she said, "Well, Nicole, some students are more special than others."

Mrs. Stafford was my fourth grade teacher—my favorite teacher. I was ten years old in 1972 and she taught fourth grade at Lake Grove Elementary School. It was the year my father had a heart attack, leaving him ill for some time. It was the year I broke my front tooth and had to wear a stainless steel crown over the intact portion until it grew out a bit. It was the year Mrs. Stafford read *The Call of the Wild* and *The Secret Garden* aloud to the class; the year I was chosen to play Mrs. Claus and Kevin Tisdell (on whom I had a terrible crush) was to be Santa, and he had to kiss me at the end of the play in front of the entire student body.

During fourth grade we worked on penmanship. I modeled mine on Mrs. Stafford's—a strong backhand, as she wrote with her left hand; her right always concealed in her skirt pocket. (We never dared ask why!)

I occasionally visited her classroom as I went through junior high and part of high school. She kept butterscotch candies on her desk in a heart-shaped pottery jar I had made and given her.

When I saw her on the steps of my daughter's school, she not only recognized me, but asked if I was still writing, and expressed a genuine interest in who I had become. Although I don't believe she really thought me any more special than her other students, she always made me feel as if I were.

Today I am a painter, with two grown children, a Scottish terrier, seven chickens, a rabbit, a cat, and a husband who is the writer of the family. I still live in Portland, although we are planning a move to Argentina in the coming months. My father was a piano teacher in Lake Grove and I was his first student. I have his mother's (my grandmother's) piano that I play occasionally, and more books than I can read. My life is brimming with art, music, nature and beauty, more than one person deserves.

Every child deserves to have, at least once, a 'Mrs. Stafford' teacher. Dorothy Stafford was and continues to be my hero. She changed my life forever. She cared about me, a freckle-faced girl of ten years who loved to read. And oh, how I needed a hero that year. I will never forget her.



Photo/Sulima Matzin

*Last April, the City of Lake Oswego surprised Dorothy with a formal dedication of The Dorothy Stafford Memorial Garden, a shady nook at the base of Sunningdale Road. Part of the surprise was a musical offering by students from the neighborhood elementary school where Dorothy taught. With daughter Barbara and son Kim, Dorothy watches the children assemble. During the dedication ceremony, Larry Butler, a visiting poet from Glasgow, Scotland, who had just met Dorothy, offered his newly-written poem, "A Woman of Stature."*

### A WOMAN OF STATURE

Do you know Dorothy Stafford  
Oregon mother of four  
Remarkable human beings? She is the  
Original magnificent homemaker, gardener,  
Trusted teacher of fourth graders.  
Helpful and friendly, who knows how many  
Years she's lived in this neighborhood?

Single-handed breadmaker,  
Triumphant elder – Nebraska daughter  
Always ready to listen and natter  
Forever over a cup of tea and muffin,  
Freely she fills her days with meaning.  
Occasional scribe with sharpened pencils  
Recording treasured *lost words* of children...  
Delighted to meet you Dorothy Stafford!

LARRY BUTLER

∞ Happy 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday to you, dear Dorothy! ∞

## NEWS, NOTES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

### LISTINGS OF THE JANUARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

were sent to Friends in a separate mailing this year. They may also be seen on our website, [www.williamstafford.org](http://www.williamstafford.org).

**WINTER FISHTRAP** – February 22-24 at Wallowa Lake, Oregon. **LIVING RIGHT; EMPATHY, CHARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.** A sample of the weekend's ponderings: *What does a belief in social justice demand from a person on a daily basis? What are the ethics of privilege?* For information and registration, call 541-426-3623 or visit [www.fishtrap.org](http://www.fishtrap.org).

**THE GOLDEN STRING: A RETREAT DAY WITH WILLIAM STAFFORD**, March 1<sup>st</sup> in Mt. Angel, Oregon. "Accompanied by Stafford's writing and in the prayerful setting of Queen of Angels Monastery, we will explore our place as writers, student and teachers, and lovers of our particular place in the world." The facilitator is FWS member, Sister Alicia Kleiman. More information at [www.benedictine-srs.org](http://www.benedictine-srs.org) or 503-845-6773.

Once again, FWS will be represented at **THE MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY'S WRITERS RESOURCE FAIR**, Sunday, March 16 at the Central Library, 801 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, Oregon. The Fair is open to all, free of charge, and includes special tours as well as a small-press book sale. For more information, please email Ellen Mueller at [ellenm@multcolib.org](mailto:ellenm@multcolib.org).

### WILLIAM STAFFORD MEMORIAL POETRY RENDEZVOUS

April 10-12, in Hutchinson, Kansas, Stafford's birthplace. Kim Stafford and a panel of fine poets and writers will be the featured presenters. For more information or to register by April 4, contact Steven Hind at [Shind444@aol.com](mailto:Shind444@aol.com), or 620-662-2292.

In Milwaukie, Oregon, a monthly **POETRY READING SERIES** is happening at the Ledding Library Pond House starting at 7 p.m.. On January 9 - Judith Barrington, February 13 - Barbara Drake, March 12 - Floyd Skloot, April 9 - Jim Grabill, May 14 - Vern Rutsala, June 11 - Kate Gray. This project is supported in part by the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition and the Oregon Cultural Trust.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to FWS National Advisor, Naomi Shihab Nye, on the recent loss of her beloved father.

The **OREGON STATE POETRY ASSOCIATION (OSPA)** is sponsoring its tenth annual **STUDENT POETRY CONTEST**. All Oregon students from kindergarten through grade 12, enrolled in any public, private, parochial or alternative school, as well as students who are home-schooled, are invited to submit poetry. The deadline for submissions is February 1. Get complete details at [www.oregonpoets.org](http://www.oregonpoets.org).

## ANNOUNCING AN INCREASE IN FWS DONOR LEVELS

"Are the Retired and Student levels still just ten dollars?" is one of the questions we are most frequently asked. And up until now, the answer has always been "yes." Since the inception of the Friends of William Stafford ten years ago, there has been no change in our donation levels. However, steady increases in the cost of maintaining the organization; primarily, our printing, mailing and shipping expenses, have greatly impacted our budget, especially affecting our two major projects; this newsletter and our traveling broadside exhibit, *How The Ink Feels*.

As of January 1, 2008, we will increase our donor levels according to the table to the right. You will notice that we have also added two new categories of support – *Family* and *Patron*.

Acknowledging the \$350 leap in the Lifetime category, we are offering as a gift to the first eleven Lifetime Friends (either new or current Friends upgrading from the \$150 level), our limited edition portfolio of seven William Stafford letterpress broadsides, "The World Speaks Everything to Us," valued at \$280. Remember, we have only eleven portfolios left.

### Annual (renewable) Donations:

Retired/Student	\$20
Individual	\$35
Family	\$50
Patron	\$100

**Lifetime Donation:** \$500

We look forward to continuing the work of The Friends of William Stafford, instilling the love of reading and writing poetry, for many years to come. We thank you for your support and we look forward to seeing you at the January Birthday Celebrations.



# 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 our traveling broadside exhibit, *How The Ink Feels*, supports the annual William Stafford Birthday Celebration Readings, maintains our web site, [www.williamstafford.org](http://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."

## JOIN OR RENEW:

*(Please check ALL appropriate boxes)*

- New     Renewal     Gift
- Patron \$100/yr     Individual \$35/yr
- Family \$50/yr     Retired/Student \$20/yr
- Lifetime \$500

*Please add \$5.00/year outside the U.S.*

Name\* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

May we list this information (or any part of it) in a "friends-only" directory of which you will receive a copy? \_\_\_\_\_

\*If this *friendship* is a gift, please add your name and address on the line below so that we may send an acknowledgement to the recipient and to you. \*\*If you reside outside the United States, please add any additional postal codes we may need to ensure that you receive your mail.

Giver's Name & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear of FWS? \_\_\_\_\_

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

## New Annual Friends Sept. - Dec. 2007

- David Campiche
- Paula Chasan
- Maggie Kelly
- Joanna B. Klick
- Liz Nakazawa
- Lois Rosen
- Paula Sinclair
- Pamela Steele
- Bob & Sheri Walker

## New Lifetime Friends Sept. - Dec. 2007

- Bill Baars
- Shirley Marie Dees
- Patricia Carver



Many thanks and  
best wishes for a

PEACEFUL  
AND  
PROSPEROUS  
NEW YEAR

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

Editor: Sulima Malzin  
Designer: Susan Gillespie  
Webmaster: Dennis Schmidling

Please email comments, letters, news, and information on poetry events, awards, etc. to: [news@williamstafford.org](mailto:news@williamstafford.org) or mail to: Friends of William Stafford P.O. Box 592 Lake Oswego, OR 97034

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## Walking the Borders

Sometimes in the evening a translator walks out  
and listens by streams that wander back and forth  
across borders. The translator holds a mint  
on the tongue, turns it over to try  
a new side, then tastes a wild new flavor,  
a flavor that enlivens those fading languages  
of cursing and calling each other those names  
that destroyed millions by swinging a cross  
like an ax, or a crescent curved like a knife,  
or a star so red it burned its way over the ground.

The wild new flavor fades away too,  
but lingers awhile along borders for a translator to savor  
secretly, borrowing from both sides, holding  
for a moment the smooth round world  
in that cool instant of evening before the sun goes down.

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*friends of* **WILLIAM STAFFORD**

P.O. Box 592 Lake Oswego, OR 97034  
[www.williamstafford.org](http://www.williamstafford.org) | [friends@williamstafford.org](mailto:friends@williamstafford.org)

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International Flair pp. 1 & 3



News from the 2nd Annual Poetry  
and Potluck pp. 6-8.



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