



Tracking a Stafford Poem from 1977

By Sulima Malzin

In February, Friends of William Stafford received an eight-page packet of correspondence that spanned twenty-eight years. It came from FWS donor William G. Gray of Richmond, Virginia in response to an invitation in the Summer 2004 newsletter to share personal musings and memories of Stafford.

In it Gray writes: “Enclosed is a letter I wrote in January 2001 to Naomi Nye, asking about a William Stafford poem. She forwarded it on to Paul Merchant, whose response is here too.”

In his letter to Nye, Gray told of how in 1977, Bill Stafford had visited Richmond area high schools at the invitation of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English, to speak about and read from his work at their Fall conference. Gray was trying to track down a particular poem and thought he might start with Nye, who had written the preface to *The Way It Is*.

Gray goes on to describe how he got to fix breakfast for Stafford on the morning of November 4th. “He had spent the first night at the home of my good friend and mentor, Frances Wimer and her husband Dan. They had to leave early in the morning for work, and I went by to see that he got breakfast. As I was cooking his eggs and carrying on some small talk, he was writing on a slip of paper as he sat at the kitchen table, politely acknowledging my presence.”

Stafford was, of course, writing his morning poem after returning from an early morning run along the James River. Later in the day when a student in one of Gray’s classes asked him about his latest poem, Stafford pulled the folded slip of paper from his pocket and read what he had written at breakfast. The poem haunted Bill Gray for years, but it wasn’t until 2001 that he got more creative in trying to track it down.

Coming Back to Richmond

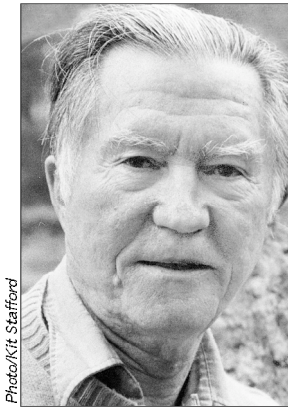
You forget, elsewhere, how easy the air is
in the pines and the grass of Virginia. It’s mild
in the morning; moist little breaths come
drifting sideways from the woods. A squirrel
on patrol goes by looking for relics;
a bird not proud of flying falls
from a branch and loops easily upward
on set wings. A courteous vine designs
the eighteenth century with an oak tree.
Something they almost had back then
waits here to come true if the morning can reach
far enough into stillness. A tapping of rain,
or of a leaf leaving its branch to fall,
makes it now again. You can forget,
go on walking the woods looking for something.

William Stafford

Unbeknownst to Gray, who wrote “it had been published somewhere in a journal, I believe, but I cannot recall where,” the poem was titled “Coming Back to Richmond,” and was accepted for publication by the *New Virginia Review* in August of ’78. As Paul Merchant later pointed out, it was one of the two or three thousand published poems that were never collected. “But on reading it,” Merchant writes, “I feel it would not have been out of place in any of his books, and I can also see why it has stayed in your mind all these years.”

In his letter to Nye, Gray asks to be directed to an index of Stafford’s poems, adding that he will gladly do the research. “His poetry is kind of like Scripture to me: I read at least one poem each night before I go to bed. It’s not that I have great understanding about what many of them actually

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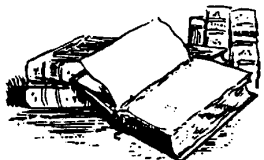
Photo/Kit Stafford

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Stafford's Rudimentary Filing System Saved Only the Best

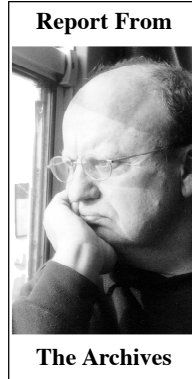
By Paul Merchant

If one writes a poem (or more) a day for forty or fifty years, some questions of logistics arise. These circle round the same central concern: How to house these twenty thousand partial and complete poems? How to avoid reading through hundreds of poems every time in search of one? At the Archives, we have needed to create a number of indexes to navigate through the materials: titles, first lines, drafts, typescripts, journal, and book appearances. No memory could hold all that information. I expected Bill's private index to emerge at any moment. In the end, we finished ours, and we had looked at everything. Bill's index, if it existed, was lost. But the question would not go away, and then a friend asked directly, "How did Bill track his poems?" We made an appointment to sit down and look at the evidence.

The earliest handwritten manuscript of a William Stafford poem dates from 1951, when (as a graduate student at the Iowa Writing Workshop) he began to preserve his daily writings. We have typescripts, however, from much earlier, from the late 1930s, over four hundred of them through the 1940s, an indication that from the beginning, he was typing poems to keep, and presumably throwing away his drafts. This, then, was the first revelation: the object of value was the typescript, not the manuscript. In the 1950s, it appears he was typing about a quarter of the poems he wrote (five or six thousand, eventually, of the twenty-plus thousand) on to half-sheets, and filing those separately from the full-page manuscripts, which he gathered in rough order, approximately one ream box per year. The second revelation is shocking: if not typed, once a manuscript was filed away, it was gone. The magic word "Copied," scrawled in the margin of a manuscript, gave a quarter of the poems a future: to be mailed to journals, probably accepted, and perhaps collected. The other three quarters, those he chose not to type, were simply abandoned. Of his many smart moves, this was perhaps the smartest. Five or six thousand poems, as it turned out, were enough.

He did go back into the boxes occasionally, trawling through for children's sayings, or for aphorisms, or to pull out a draft for an editor who asked for a facsimile to print. But not, it seems, to do what other poets sometimes do: dig back among the drafts for promising material. (He did call his daily writings his "compost heap," but perhaps by this he meant the rich soil out of which the new poems would grow.) In an interview with Vince Wixon and Mike Markee, he commented, "My rule is not to go back. It's more of a habit than a rule because I don't feel any twinge about breaking it. It's just that I hardly ever go back. I just go on

thinking something better, surely something better will come than this, surely!"



Report From

The Archives

So how did he track the typescripts? The answer, as I should have guessed, is simple. He followed two essential rules: first, he made sure there was only one "documentary copy" of each poem, and then he just divided them between published and unpublished. When he sent a poem to a journal, he wrote that journal's name, and sometimes the date, on the documentary copy, thus ensuring that the poem could not be sent twice to the same journal. If the poem was rejected, he sent it out again, crossing out the last destination on the documentary copy, and writing in the next. Unpublished poems were sent out repeatedly. "Traveling through the Dark" was accepted at the fourteenth attempt. Poems that failed to find a publisher were eventually banished into folders with names like "Once Possibilities No More" and "Abandoned Poems."

The documentary copy of an accepted poem took a different track. It was placed out of commission, in a folder of poems accepted for that year. The earliest such folder we have is "Poems of 1945." Poems in these folders were still available to be put together into collections, so we have "Les Miserables 1937-1943" and "Collected Verse 1937-1943," both assembled on the same day (2 February 1944) at Los Prietos CPS camp. This method of collecting remained his lifelong habit, and we have such "put-togethers" of documentary copies for all his major collections and most of his minor ones, thirty-three in all. Once each book appeared, its put-together, with all its poems on board, went out of sight into a file. The simplicity of the method is that typescripts moved between four, but only four, categories: available for publication; published and available for books; collected in a put-together; and abandoned.

So how did William Stafford find a particular poem? If it had not been typed, it was almost impossible to find it. If (having been sent out unproductively) it had been abandoned, it too was out of reach. If it was somewhere in his large files of poems available for publication, he could choose to hunt through till he found it, or he might choose not to--there were other poems. If it had appeared in a journal, to find it he would need to remember the year of acceptance. If it had appeared in a collection, he would perhaps remember which one.

One last question: how did he find poems for his readings? He maintained files filled with reading copies of his favorite poems, with the venues listed on the back. Some were read to pieces, and had to be retyped. In the Archives' collection of CDs of Stafford readings, many poems were read often: "The Little Girl by the Fence at School," (28 readings), "At the Un-National

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Filing System ...

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Monument Along the Canadian Border,” (26), “Serving with Gideon,” (22) and “Thinking for Berky” (21). The recordings represent merely a cross-section of his hundreds of readings, most of which were not taped, but these were clearly among his favorite poems to read.

What do we learn from all this? First, that William Stafford developed from the beginning an economical system for tracking the fifty or so poems in circulation at any one time. And second, that a poem not pulling its weight was abandoned, without a backward glance, No regrets. There were plenty of others on the way.

Thanks to Sharon Wood Wortman for posing the key question.

Tracking a poem ...

Continued from Page 1

mean, but the language is music that comforts my mind and every once in a while, I find myself saying an emphatic ‘Yes!’”

“His poetry is kind of like Scripture to me: I read at least one poem each night before I go to bed ... the language is music that comforts my mind ...”

William G. Gray

He goes on to say, “I enjoyed searching out the poem and vicariously sharing in your direct experience of William Stafford’s excellent powers of concentration and imagination, and of the pleasure he took in presenting poems written on the morning of one of his readings. He had many ways of encouraging his listeners to feel that the writing of poetry was an easy and accessible activity, and this demonstration of the dailiness of the process was one that he used regularly.”

Bill Gray’s letter to FWS closes with these words: “For me, being with Bill Stafford for several days is a major memory and the ensuing story of how my memory has been validated is a minor miracle. It may make good reading for others.”

We hope it has.

Once the letter was sent on to Paul Merchant at the William Stafford Archives, the tracking adventure picked up speed. Merchant was able, given the dates of Stafford’s visit, to not only find the poem in its originally folded form, but to refold the copy he sent to Gray in exactly the same way.

He goes on to say, “I enjoyed searching out the poem and vicariously sharing in your direct experience of William Stafford’s excellent powers of concentration and imagination, and of the pleasure he took in presenting poems written on the morning of one of his readings. He had many ways of encouraging his listeners to feel that the writing of poetry was an easy and accessible activity, and this demonstration of the dailiness of the process was one that he used regularly.”

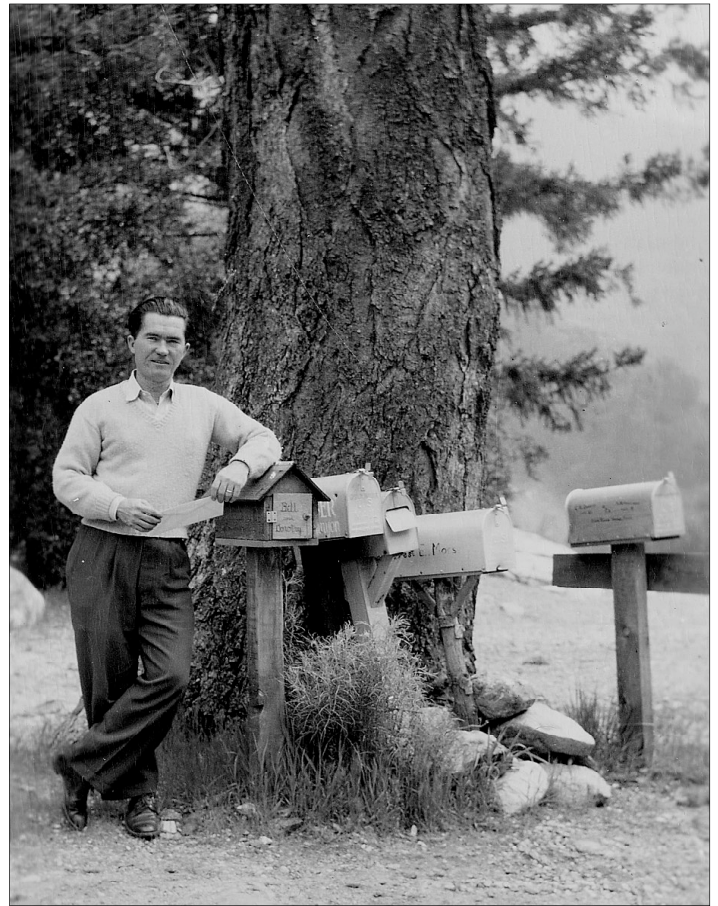


Photo courtesy of Stafford Archives

This jaunty photograph of William Stafford was taken, probably by Dorothy, in 1946 or 1947. It was printed on April 6, 1947, but never published. Bill is leaning against their doll’s house of a mailbox, with its inscription, “Bill and Dorothy,” painted on the door in Dorothy’s hand.

The location is Barrett Canyon on the slopes of Mount Baldy, northeast of Los Angeles. Bill, handsomely dressed for his work at Chaffey High School in Ontario, is holding an envelope, sealed and presumably containing a handful of poems ready to be mailed to The Nation, or The Ladies Home Journal, or The New Mexico Quarterly Review. Or perhaps it held his first published essay, “Are You Sure You Want to Teach?,” a typically forthright exploration of the stresses of postwar teaching published by the California Journal of Secondary Education in May, 1947.

The substantial pine is a reminder that he was not far removed from wartime forest work. Though some distance now from his home on the Great Plains, Bill seems at ease among the tall trees. “I relish this photograph for its optimism, its calm demeanor, the poet standing on a dusty road in impeccably polished shoes. And for the five symbolic mailboxes, all at their different angles, the one marked “Bill and Dorothy” different from all the others; trim, upright, and clearly labeled.” (Paul Merchant)

FWS Board Welcomes New Chair, Shelley Reece

Shelley Reece's poem, "Tracking Stafford," makes it easy to understand why the new Chair of the Friends of William Stafford's Board of Trustees accepts the position as his natural next step. Reece, Portland State University's English Department Chair Emeritus since 2002, has served on the FWS board since 1997. This service is consistent with his wish to at least partially repay the debt of gratitude he feels toward Stafford.

It was in 1967, during the Vietnam era, that Shelley Reece first saw William Stafford read his poetry, and heard him caution the audience about the risk of violent opposition to violence. Reece's curiosity about this quiet man from Kansas, where he, too, had once lived as a child, kept him tracking Stafford for many years. Interestingly, they both settled in Oregon.

But it wasn't until the 1980s, when he first read *Writing the Australian Crawl*, that Reece himself finally returned to writing poetry, after having his poems choked off in a college poetry writing class more than 20 years earlier.

One of his fondest Stafford memories emerges from the 1992 Lake Oswego Arts Festival, when they read together on the same program. Later, in the hall, Stafford shook Reece's hand and, with a broad smile, said, "Kansas Forever!" Then, glancing back into the room they had just left, he quipped, playfully, "Wasn't that fun?"

Shelley Reece is a quiet, thoughtful man with a wide range of interests and a great sense of humor. He has sung with the David York Ensemble and continues, as a "serious voice student," to study classical Italian. He and Mary, his wife of 47 years, just finished building a vacation home on Anderson Island in Puget Sound, and his duties as co-editor of *Fireweed*, keep him plenty busy.

But Reece really leans in to a conversation when it focuses on William Stafford and the Friends' organization. His enthusiasm for FWS's major ongoing projects, the Stafford Birthday Celebrations, and "How the Ink Feels," the traveling broadsides exhibit, currently displayed in the Multnomah County Central Library in Portland during Poetry Month, is palpable, as is his interest in exploring new territory.

FWS Annual Report Available

The Friends of William Stafford's Annual Report, which provides financial information about FWS, is now available. To obtain a copy you may call Betty Barton (360-750-0165) or email friends@williamstafford.org.

Tracking Stafford

I've been tracking Stafford for years.

I watched his tight-lipped lines,
flat as Kansas wheat fields,
quiet under the green sky
just before the hail explodes.
Quiet, but he was there,
not even needing the breath he held.
And then he sang like the phone wires
ping in the wind on the plains.
But mostly his voice was Kansas flat.

Twenty-two years ahead
he moved west, not on Oregon trails
but over Donner Pass.
I followed his stories from drifters.
He didn't hide his footprints. Hadn't tried.
Turned indirectly right. North again.
Never did follow a straight line.

I found him in Portland.
He wore a suit and spoke his poems
with wheat fields in his voice.
Then he carried a green cloth
creel on his hip.
No fish in it. Just poems.
He was jetting out of town again.

Shelley Reece

Reece sees taking on new projects and utilizing members' talents as essential to the organization's life force. "It's important to remember," he says, "that any volunteer organization is just one generation away from extinction. If we don't move forward, we die. How we go about that is always the big question."

Ideas for developing poetry workshops and finding ways to involve more young people have been germinating, while writing grants to sustain the *Ink* exhibit and help fund new projects is work already begun. While some projects, like the Birthday Readings, are highly visible, others, such as advocating for a Stafford commemorative stamp are very much behind-the-scenes. In the spirit of William Stafford, the FWS board, along with their new Chair, looks forward to moving forward—one step at a time.

From the Chair



By Shelley Reece

Friends of William Stafford is a lively organization, and yet in its current stage of development, our organization faces some serious questions. How will we find enough labor and money to sustain our current and future projects?

This newsletter, *How the Ink Feels*, our traveling letterpress broadside exhibit, the website, and the yearly birthday celebrations in January demand substantial attention and

support right now, let alone what might be required in the future for things like poetry workshops and unique publications such as Stafford broadside poems and poetry or prose chapbooks. How can we, as an all-volunteer organization, do this work without becoming merely “commercial”?

In the Middle Ages, literary patronage became one standard way to solve the problem. During the fifteenth century and even earlier, for instance, people of lower social standing depended on a patron to advocate for their cause or to reward their literary efforts with clothing, food, connections, gifts, and money. In the Renaissance, courtly gentlemen like Thomas Wyatt and Henry, Earl of Surrey, attached themselves to court and produced literary art for Henry VIII. Even Shakespeare had his patron.

FWS benefactor Pierre Rioux visits Portland

Dr. Pierre Rioux, an FWS member from Minot, North Dakota, who in 2000 generously donated the funds to produce several letterpress broadsides of William Stafford poems, made his first visit to Portland in February. It provided the board an opportunity to “properly” thank him for making it possible for us to produce the broadsides that have been so popular these past years.

At a reception held at the home of Joseph Soldati, several current board members as well as former member, Ceil Huntington, and Dorothy Stafford, welcomed Dr. Rioux to Oregon. Among those present was Patty Wixon, who with her husband Vince, has produced many of the popular CDs of Bill’s readings, and videos about his life and teachings. She presented him with a basket brimming with videos, CDs, and poetry books.

Dr. Rioux, a psychiatrist, had been interviewed by Wixon for the August 2000 issue of the FWS newsletter. He spoke at that time of the odd ways that poetry enters, fades away, and then re-enters our lives at different stages. After a long hiatus from poetry, he said that upon reaching middle age and accomplishing most of

While there are individuals who remain as patrons in our own time, there are few who are only patrons of the literary arts. Today they are more likely philanthropists who support a broad range of social, educational, or artistic causes.

Organizations like schools, foundations, and government agencies have replaced the patrons of earlier times. Poets now hold academic positions as teachers or writers-in-residence, and foundations and governmentally funded organizations like the National Endowment of the Arts award individual fellowships to authors and artists, who have to create literary and artistic works in exchange for their grants.

So, what does this thimbleful of history have to do with you and the Friends of William Stafford?

First, you are our patrons. Your donations are what keep us afloat. As a new Chair of the Board of Trustees, I certainly thank you and encourage you to continue to contribute funds and to invite your friends to do so as well.

Second, the Board of Trustees would ask you for another kind of patronage—your expertise and talent. For instance, we are seeking people with grant writing skills and a talent for creative fund-raising, people with special knowledge of art exhibits, and website expertise. Is there someone who has experience as a volunteer coordinator? Whatever special skills you may have, we invite you to offer them. If you want to become more actively engaged with the work of Friends of William Stafford, please email me directly at shellr@earthlink.net. I look forward to hearing from you.



Pierre Rioux and Dorothy Stafford

his academic and professional goals, poetry again seemed to beckon him.

It was while reading the Wall Street Journal that he came across an article describing the creation of poetry intended to

be sited in natural settings. Contacting the National Park Service, he was able to obtain The Methow River Poems video. “And that,” he says, “is how William Stafford came into my life.”

You will find the August 2000 issue of the newsletter archived on our website www.williamstafford.org.

Stafford's Quiet Spirit Felt at January Birthday Celebrations

In community gathering places, over radio airways and on the pages of newspapers, the birthday of William Stafford was not only duly noted, but honored and celebrated with heart and creativity all across the United States. And in many instances, people spoke of feeling his quiet presence. In at least one gathering, Stafford's poetry was put to original music. In another, the guest readings were accompanied by live musicians, whose music matched the varying moods of the poems. Special chapbooks and broadsides were created for poems written in response to one of his, and the sound of Bill's own voice, coming from a CD, could sometimes be heard at the beginning or close of a program.

On Monday, January 17th, **GARRISON KEILLOR** let his NPR

Writer's Almanac audience know it was the birthday of poet William Edgar Stafford, born in Hutchinson, Kansas, in 1914, the same year as American poets Weldon Kees, Randall Jerrell and John Berryman. Keillor went on to tell about how Stafford usually wrote in the early morning ... about simple things like farms and dead deer and winter ... about the West and his parents and cottonwood trees. He told his listeners that when Bill accepted the National Book Award in 1963 for *Traveling Through the Dark*, he spoke of how at the moment of writing, the poet sometimes glimpses how it might be "to overwhelm the universe by rightness, to do something peculiarly difficult to such a perfection that something like a revelation comes ..." In closing, Keillor read the beautiful and revealing, often overlooked, "What's in My Journal." One might wonder how many listeners who had never heard of William Stafford went off in search of more.

In **NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**, local author and columnist Ray Waddle, having seen a flyer for the first-time Nashville Birthday Reading, interviewed event coordinator **NICK DOWD**, then wrote a feature article in *The Tennessean's* "Faith and Values" section. Waddle, at one time the paper's Religion Editor, grew up in Kansas and has always felt moved by the spiritual nature of Stafford's work and its expansiveness. When he saw the flyer at the library, he said his "heart jumped." The article, "Late poet's fans invited to birthday celebration," notes that "Stafford was cheerfully, fiercely contrary to two things—violence and perfectionism. He gave permission to all within earshot to trust their

What's in My Journal

Odd things, like a button drawer. Mean
Things, fishhooks, barbs in your hand.
But marbles too. A genius for being agreeable.
Junkyard crucifixes, voluptuous
discards. Space for knickknacks, and for
Alaska. Evidence to hang me, or to beatify.
Clues that lead nowhere, that never connected
anyway. Deliberate obfuscation, the kind
that takes genius. Chasms in character.
Loud omissions. Mornings that yawn above
a new grave. Pages you know exist
but you can't find them. Someone's terribly
inevitable life story, maybe mine.

William Stafford

own voice and banish the snarling demons of self-criticism." In drawing attention to the event itself, Waddle mentioned that "Gatherings were taking place all over the country ... organized by people stirred by Stafford's simple phrasings, his humility before the natural world, his ability to find dignity, whiffs of theism, in wind, mountains, interstate drives, even in the unknown good in our enemies."

Many tender and touching stories were reported from various events, including this one from Nashville relayed by Nick Dowd. "In the midst of the proceedings, three Filipino immigrants (in their late 70s, early 80s) came to the open door and asked if they might join us. One man was in a walker and being assisted by another

man. The woman with them got them both seated. They sat and listened, smiling the entire time. Later as we were getting ready to leave, the little Filipino lady came up to me — an old, folded and well-worn piece of paper in her hand. 'May — may I read to you?' My heart jumped into my throat. 'Of course you may read to me. I would be honored.' She carefully unfolded the paper and read so clearly and poignantly, 'Sitting Up Late.' Then she thanked me. She thanked me! I am the one standing there with tears in my eyes and she thanks me! She said she had carried it for years and had always wanted to read it to someone who would know what it meant."

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA, a small town on a tiny island, only accessible by boat or plane, might seem an unlikely place for a Stafford Birthday Celebration. However, on public radio station KRBD, three local poets, **PHOEBE NEWMAN**, **DAVID KIFFER**, and **ERIN HOLLOWELL**, regularly take turns reading a wide variety of poets in the "Poetry Lounge." On Bill's birthday, Erin Hollowell, (one of FWS' newest members), purposefully read from the *Methow River Poems*. She felt these poems would resonate with listeners who experience such a close relationship with water and the natural world. And she was right. Hollowell received a strong, positive response from what appears to be a well-established cadre of Stafford fans in Ketchikan. Indeed, these are people who understand that *How you stand here is important. How you / listen for the next things to happen. How you breathe.*

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Birthday Celebrations ...

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Joe and Barbara Adams
sing *Happy Birthday* to
Bill in Welches.



Photo/Ed Wortman

In **WELCHES, OREGON**, a tiny village on Mount Hood, a real community effort brought together a crowd of about 50 on a snowy Sunday afternoon for the first Stafford Birthday Celebration. Organizer and MC **SHARON WOOD-WORTMAN** worked with the Hoodland Library, usually closed on Sunday; the local Lions Club, who donated chairs; and the WyEast Book Shoppe and Art Gallery, who hosted a post-reading reception; to create a memorable afternoon. Barbara and Joe Adams provided music and led the group in singing “Happy Birthday” to Bill. Following the reception, most of the crowd stayed to watch *A Literary Friendship* before they departed for home or shared a dinner at the restaurant next door. Wood-Wortman, who never had a chance to celebrate her own father’s birthday, (he was also named Bill and born in Kansas) felt this was her time to give both Bills a great party, and she says Welches is already looking forward to next year.

In **BETHESDA, MARYLAND**, again despite a snow and ice storm that made its way up from the Carolinas overnight, about 20 hardy souls turned out for the second annual celebration at **THE WRITER’S CENTER**. Organizer **MARTIN DICKINSON** said the storm enabled them to have a different kind of reading and sharing than might have happened otherwise. Such poems as “At the Bomb Testing Site,” prompted a wide-ranging discussion about how, although his poems seemed guided by a strong moral compass, Stafford never appeared “preachy”. Rather, he always seemed to speak directly to his readers as a kind and trustworthy friend. From the day’s program cover—*I heard the wilderness listen. / I thought hard for us all.*

FWS Board Member
Patricia Carver reads one
of her favorite Stafford
Poems at the **Lake**
Oswego Public Library’s
Celebration. Carver
organized and hosted the
“hometown” reading,
which always draws a
sizeable crowd.



Photo/Dennis Schmiedling

ELEANOR BERRY and **JANET MARKEE** organized the reading at the **SALEM (OREGON) PUBLIC LIBRARY** titled “Celebrating William Stafford: Influence and Inspiration.” According to Berry, who introduced the five guest poets, it turned out to be a lively Sunday afternoon, in which they and the approximately 30 people attending engaged in a warm, animated exchange about Stafford and his influence. During the first hour of the program,



Photo/Richard Berry

Lex Runciman shares a
Stafford “moment” with
David Laing at the
Salem Public Library’s
reading.

the featured poets talked about their connections to Stafford and read poems of his and kindred poems of their own. Their different selections brought out the range of his work, and the variety of inspiration it offers. Poems complex in their mature simplicity, such as “Why I Am Happy,” went toe to toe with “Adults Only” and “Fifteen,” as well as “Widow” and “You Reading This, Be Ready.” Following the conversation-filled intermission, there was more sharing and reading. “The Way I Write,” and “Lit Instructor,” with its unforgettable line, “I dance my way toward the family of knowing ...” seemed an appropriate ending for the afternoon’s festivities.

In **CORVALLIS, OREGON**, the Saturday celebration was almost an all day affair, co-sponsored by **FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY** and the **WILLAMETTE LITERARY GUILD**. A morning workshop titled “Public Language, Private Language: Poetry’s Way of Telling the Truth,” was led by Roger Weaver and drew 25 participants to examine inner and outer voice and intent in poetic language. About a dozen people responded to an invitation to “Join the writing table” to write with others and/or illustrate a personal response to Stafford’s poem, “A Ritual to Read to Each Other.” A couple of people read their responses during the afternoon segment, “The Celebration Reading,” which brought in nearly 50 people. **LINDA GELBRICH**, the MC and primary organizer, reported that many people commented on how good they felt and how welcoming and warm the spirit in the room had been.

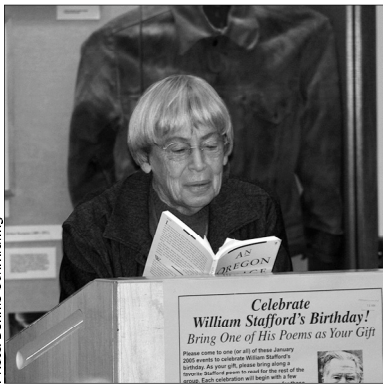
A major ice storm on the Oregon coast tended to downsize the gathering at the **SEASIDE LIBRARY**, organized by **SUSAN FIRGHIL PARK**, where an intimate community of about nine poetry lovers gathered to share a Saturday afternoon of favorite poems and a “Happy Birthday William Stafford” birthday cake.

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Birthday Celebrations ...

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At **HUGO HOUSE** in **SEATTLE, WASHINGTON**, in a room described as feeling “filled with Stafford’s warmth and peaceful presence,” the evening began with readings from Kim Stafford’s “Early Morning: Remembering My Father,” and listening to Bill’s recorded voice from his last public reading. One of the highlights of the celebration was a story shared by a woman who had first met Stafford while staying with her in-laws in Portland, thought he was the gardener. She also shared a photo of her infant son that Bill had taken and sent to her just weeks before he died. **ARLENE NAGANAWA**, who helped organize the event, reported that several who read during the Open Mic had been his students and one read a poem inspired by having seen a Stafford poem on a bus.



Photo/Dennis Schmitzling

FWS National Advisory Board member Ursula K. LeGuin reads one of her favorite Stafford Poems at the Central Library.

At the **CENTRAL LIBRARY** in downtown Portland, a standing room only crowd of about 200 were treated to stories and comments from Dorothy Stafford, a spirited reading of Stafford’s poems and her own by FWS National Advisor Ursula K. LeGuin, and a musical interlude by the Satori Men’s Chorus—Singing For Peace.

The **WEST HILLS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP** in Portland, Oregon, where Bill and Dorothy Stafford had often visited, hosted its first Stafford Birthday Celebration this year, organized by **SULIMA MALZIN**. About 15 people gathered to hear guest poets and audience members read Stafford’s work and share stories. One of the poets, who had attended his first celebration last year, spoke of how his work had been influenced by Stafford, then told a story he had heard illustrating how focused Bill could become when something caught his interest. In this case, it was a backyard bug zapper at a summer party. Unable to get the image of Bill studying the zapper out of his mind, he finally wrote a delightful poem called “Zapped,” which he then read quite dramatically. The audience quickly learned why the next reader came forward laughing. Coincidentally, the party in question had been at her home, and she was able to provide details that made everyone feel they had shared in the experience.

*I would trade
everything I have written
to write the next poem.*

William Stafford

Your Next Poem

Waits for a thumbprint of land:
slide through mud
to a swollen creek
ripped wide with sound
clumps of leaves and ferns
have found their season
even a bottlecap tossed here
rare as a forgotten coin,
borrows light.
These are your teachings:
outline of trees propped
against the edge,
tilting earth.
How rooftops
defer to rain
while clouds leave a rim
for sun before it sets.
Some mention a new career,
invite you to begin
without an interview
the only requirement
is to notice the way smoke
drifts out of chimneys
to listen
for a voice
you come to recognize
as your own.

Fredda Jaffe

Kirkland Celebration Published Keepsake Chapbook *The Next Poem*

LAURA GAMACHE, organizer of the **KIRKLAND (WASHINGTON) PARKPLACE BOOK SHOP’S** Stafford Birthday Celebration, sent out a call for submissions of poetry inspired by the life and work of William Stafford. She got over thirty responses and ultimately published four in a keepsake chapbook. **FREDDA JAFFE’S** was one of those.

Continued on Page 9

Birthday Celebrations ...

Continued from Page 8

At the **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IN ANN ARBOR**, more than 40 students and community members filled the Hopwood Room on a late Thursday afternoon to hear poets, professors, ministers and students read and discuss Stafford's life and work. Organizer **MEREDITH MARTIN** reports "Everyone had a fabulous time" and they promise to continue the tradition.

ANNIE BLOOM'S BOOKSHOP in **PORTLAND, OREGON**, was filled to overflowing for the Birthday Reading organized and hosted by **JUDITH BARRINGTON**. A young man, squeezed in along one wall, told of how he first heard William Stafford's name the day after his death in '93, from former Portland mayor, "Bud" Clark. Wandering into a local pub, he noticed Clark sitting at the bar in tears. The two knew each other, and the young man, taking an empty seat, quickly learned the reason for Clark's distress. He said they then spent the rest of the afternoon together as Clark related story upon story about the poet and his poetry, alternating tears with laughter as more memories continued to surface.

The **BAINBRIDGE ISLAND (WASHINGTON)** Celebration, organized by **NEIL BAKER** and co-sponsored by the **BAINBRIDGE ARTS AND HUMANITIES COUNCIL**, included a Stafford video and was attended by about 50 people. A woman who said she helped care for the Stafford children when they were very young, spoke of how much love she experienced in the family. She went on to tell of how she had once brought Bill a poem of hers that she wanted him to review. She didn't understand his "Uh-huh" until she saw *A Literary Friendship*, the video with Robert Bly.

HELEN MARIE CASEY reported that in **FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS**, although somewhat hampered by the weather, the event nevertheless turned into an "evening marked by camaraderie and warmth." For those who made their way to Border's Bookstore to hear the regular Monday Night Poets read a variety of Stafford poems as well as original work inspired by his themes, there were mini cupcakes, hot drinks, and a chance to win a gift-wrapped surprise.

Three libraries in **SOUTHERN OREGON** were filled to capacity with Stafford birthday celebrants.. At **ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL**, the reading also served as a reception opening the FWS broad-side exhibit, *How The Ink Feels*. Two days later, organizer **MITZI MILES-KUBOTA**, hosted an audience of more than 90 people at the **MEDFORD BRANCH OF THE JACKSON COUNTY LIBRARY**, who crowded in to hear Rogue Valley poets read their own and Stafford's work. There were students from Rogue Community College and local high schools, as well as members of surrounding communities. **PATTY WIXON** hosted nearly 100 people, from the campus as well as the community, celebrating Stafford at the **SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**. Prominent poet, **LAWSON INADA**, opened the reading with one of



Photo/Dennis Schindling

Cassandra Sagan set William Stafford's poem "A Bird inside a Box" to original music, which she performs here at the Tigard, Oregon Library Reading. Sagan sang and played the ukulele, accompanied by her husband, Bruce.

A Bird inside a Box

A bird inside a box, a box will sing.
You put it in a window for the sun—
at first the song hides, then it calls to everyone.

Every day let loose again, those faithful notes,
they're gone, they're gone—
so many deathless vows—and songs—and friends.

Young, you tremble. Old, you do again,
in fear. Between, a rock inside,
you hold the wild bird still like this, in here, in here.

William Stafford

Stafford's early poems, "Los Prietos." He spoke of his coinciding residence in a Japanese internment camp just 90 miles from the camp where Stafford was serving as a Conscientious Objector.

Eleven Complete Stafford Studies Program

Congratulations to FWS board member **ANN STALEY** and her teaching partner **WENDY TURNER SWANSON** on the completion of the second annual **STAFFORD STUDIES** summer program at Lewis & Clark College. Eleven teachers and writers spent July 11–15th immersed in the writing life and poetry of William Stafford. Guests Kim Stafford, Paul Merchant, and Dorothy Stafford provided even deeper insights. For information about next summer's program, contact Diane McDevitt at 503-768-6162 or email mcdevitt@lclark.edu to have your name placed on the mailing list.

Stafford Symposium Features Response Poems

Five students: Benjamin Thonney, Emily Sheridan, Mathilde Walker, Fletcher Bouvier, and Mackenzie Griffith, along with their instructor, Mary Szybist, comprised a feature of the fourth annual Stafford Symposium at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon on January 22. Discussing the life and poetry of William Stafford and its influence on their own writing, each had written a response poem to “The Little Girl by the Fence at School,” which were then collectively placed on a broadside. We regret that limited space keeps us from reprinting only one.

The Little Girl by the Fence at School

Grass that was moving found all shades of brown,
moved them along, flowed autumn away
galloping southward where summer had gone.

And that was the morning someone’s heart stopped
and all became still. A girl said, “Forever?”

And the grass. “Yes. Forever.” While the sky –

The sky – the sky – the sky.

William Stafford

Lingering in the Damp

I sat in the yard next to the kitchen door
And diligently shredded orange and red leaves
With my fingers. I stacked the fragments

Next to me, wishing the wind would come
And blow them away. My sister had asked
“Forever?” before she walked inside.

She was only seven, and I wanted to say “No” –
She was too young to learn why mother wasn’t here –
Why everyone was wearing black. The leaf in my palm

Was wet with the passing of a rainstorm, while
Above me a fingertip of clouds caught the sun,
Glaring white against the darkening patches of blue.

I looked away, scattering the fragments of leaves
With my hand. Inside the kitchen window, I saw
My sister, confused, and father’s jacket on the counter.

Benjamin Thonney

Lewis & Clark College will feature Naomi Shihab Nye at Next Stafford Symposium

Naomi Shihab Nye is the new Stafford Center’s first William Stafford Fellow. At this year’s day-long William Stafford Symposium on November 5th, she will greet a gathering of teachers, writers, students, readers, and citizens dedicated to the quest of writing for pleasure, witness, and reconciliation.

With funding from the Lamb Foundation, the center will convene a community of students and teachers from rural Oregon schools, together with writers and readers from all directions, to consider *The Dream of Now – the writer’s place in the healing of the world*. Participants will sip poems and stories from international sources, attend to local opportunities, and focus their craft in the spirit of William Stafford.

Naomi Shihab Nye, the author of a dozen books of poetry and prose, is described by the Stafford Center as “the beloved traveling poet and Palestinian-American who brings to each meeting the human languages of clear words, big heart, and open eyes. Of everyone he had interviewed, Bill Moyers chose her to interview him. She changes lives.”

For details regarding cost and location, email Diane McDevitt at wilstaff@lclark.edu or write to her at Lewis & Clark College, MSC 100 / 0615 SW Palatine Hill Road / Portland, OR 97219.

Clippings from the Writing Garden

Editor’s note: Each of the following quotes are from *The Answers Are Inside the Mountains*, (pages 80–93)

“Maybe you could write a poem as it comes, with connections between the parts, and then erase the connections so as to induce a leaping or flying sensation on the part of the reader or hearer. Leaps in syntax could be an advantage.”

“Have good dreams, know when a dream is right, read good material, see useful things, overhear relevant things, bring in helpful fragments, honor your experience.”

“Fair winds. Go forth. Save up little pieces that escape other people ... Pick up the gleanings ...”

“And remember to be on guard against the routines you think you know ... Be careful of ‘craft’.”

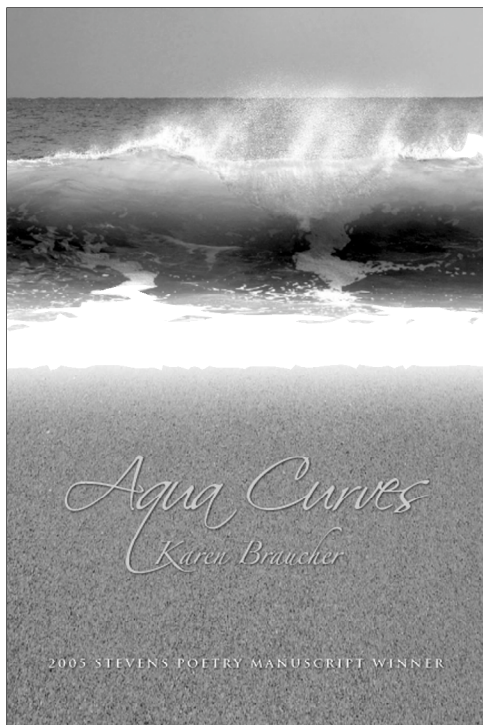
Karen Braucher's Aqua Curves Wins NFSPS Competition

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies recently named Aqua Curves the 2004 winner of the Stevens national manuscript competition. This is FWS member Karen Braucher's second full-length book. It follows *Sending Messages Over Inconceivable Distances*, chosen by Maxine Kumin as a finalist for the Oregon Book Award in 2001, and two chapbooks, *Heaven's Net* and *Mermaid Cafe*.

The judge for the Stevens competition was Peter Meinke, who said of Aqua Curves: "This is a complete book, with a mature vision expressed with passion, wit, and lyrical intensity... I'm looking forward to continued reading of these clear-eyed and generous poems, and the ones that follow in years to come."

Braucher received a cash award of \$1,000, and publication of *Aqua Curves* by NFSPS Press this spring. The exquisite cover of this book of poems, mostly inspired by oceanic themes and mermaid folktales, clearly invites the reader to dive in and float through its pages.

Karen Braucher, who has hosted a number of Stafford Birthday Celebrations in the Portland area, first met William Stafford and heard him read while she was treasurer of the Worcester County (Massachusetts) Poetry Association. Braucher describes Stafford as having been kind and unpretentious and a great inspiration for the beginning writer that she was then.



And now a word from one of our National Advisors

"Gender of course figures prominently in my poetry, as I think it must in the poetry of most American women poets of the nineties. So much is still unsaid about our inner lives, our place in the family constellation, our desires, failures, successes, our identification with the natural world, and so on. Since we write out of who we are, we must continue to define that role and to see ourselves in relation to the political structure, religion, and history. A tall order but one we will doubtless fulfill in the next hundred years."

From an interview with Maxine Kumin—
"What is American About American Poetry?"

Jellyfish

To carry such 3D squiggles
half-baked or crazed
notions streaming
calligraphy time-lapse
neon streaks

To expand a parachute
sink slowly
to the ocean floor rise
upward opening
and closing
my crazy umbrella my filmy
mushroom cap

To swirl galaxies
in deep space
seen through a telescope
a love that keeps spiraling
To pulse slowly my odd
frills my oneiric membranes
suspended
like smoke without bones
translucent inside a glow

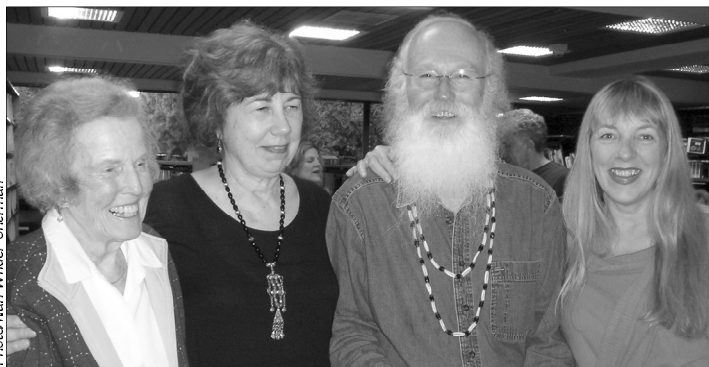
To ascend dust
off the desert
seemingly innocent
a feminine
rocket
lavishly shedding larvae

To sting
explode on contact
this medusa with
breathtaking poison
paralyzes
your intricately obvious
way of seeing

Karen Braucher

FWS Poetry Reading precedes Lake Oswego Festival of the Arts

For the second year in a row, on June 23rd, the opening of the Lake Oswego Festival of the Arts was preceded by the FWS-sponsored Poetry Reading to honor the town's resident poet, William Stafford. Held at the Lake Oswego Library, the evening featured poet readers David Hedges, Maggie Chula, and Paulann Petersen, who shared both Stafford's and their own poems. Hedges spoke about his beloved Rosemont Hills and his illustrious "Brother Joe" while Petersen read, among others, her poem, "Home Address, for William Stafford" which was purchased by the city to be hung in the library. Among the offerings from Chula, an internationally recognized haiku poet, came the lines, *summer morning / the tiger lilies open / to the hummingbird.*



Dorothy Stafford with Poets Petersen, Hedges and Chula

FWS Poets Petersen, Sears to Lead Mountain Writers Workshops

Mountain Writers Series has announced its fall schedule, which will include two workshops led by FWS poets.

Northwest Bouquet with Paulann Petersen will meet Tuesday evenings, 7-10 p.m. October 11 through November 29 and will focus on the critique of existing poems and the creation of new ones. The process of creating new work will be prompted by an anthology (or bouquet) of Northwest poets.

"There is no way to predict which craft issues will emerge but surely line integrity (line breaks), sound form (musical devices), compression, tone, and dramatic strategy will be among them," Petersen says.

Serving on the FWS board as organizer and coordinator of the January Birthday Readings, Petersen has had her poems published in a wide variety of poetry journals and literary magazines. The readers of her first two poetry collections, *The Wild Awake* and *Blood Silk* (poems about Turkey) look forward to her

third publication, *A Bride of Narrow Escape*, scheduled for release in spring 2006..

Launching Poems, another eight-week class led by Peter Sears, will meet on Wednesday evenings, 7-10 p.m. October 12 through November 30.

Sears, whose work has been widely distributed in literary publications, is the author of two collections of poetry. They are *The Brink*, which won first place in a national competition sponsored by Gibbs Smith Publishers, and *Tour: New and Selected Poems*.

Sears explains that *Launching Poems* is about finding an idea for a poem and then finding the will and time to write the first draft, which is always an issue. The class will provide the concentration of time and he will encourage ideas and teach strategies for "nudging" a poem along once the idea has come forth.

Details and registration are online at www.mountainwriters.org.

Friends of William Stafford appreciates its growing number of Lifetime Donors. To add your name to the list, you may contribute using the form on Page 15.

Cassandra Sagan – 2005
Lois Baker – 2005
Nancy Hutchins – 2004
Paulann Petersen – 2004
Ann Staley – 2004
Arnold Dyer – 2004
Daniel Skach-Mills – 2004
Doug Stow – 2004
Marjorie Briggs – 2004
David Hedges – 2003
Sandy & Nicola Crosbie – 2003
Roland Bartel – 2003
Ron Talney – 2003
Martin Dickinson – 2003

Harold Johnson – 2003
Joan Peterson – 2003
Anne Henke – 2003
Verne Dusenbery – 2003
Joy Bottinelli – 2003
Madeline De Frees – 2003
Doris Carlsen – 2003
Sally Anderson – 2003
Kathleen Worley – 2003
Kim Cornwall – 2002
Terry & Nan Atzen – 2002
Sarah P. Simmons – 2002
Doug Erickson – 2002
James & Ginette DePreist – 2002
Chris Sloop & R. Sanderson – 2002
Todd & Marinhah Prendergast – 2002
Penelope Scambly Schott – 2002
Robert & Kerstin Adams – 2002
Karen Braucher – 2002

Bill Howe – 2002
B.J. Seymour – 2002
Pierre Rioux – 2001
Carlos Rivera – 2001
Jane B. Glazer – 2001
Erland G. Anderson – 2001
Brian & Gwyneth Booth – 2001
Ceil Huntington – 2001
Elizabeth Rogers-Wallace – 2001
Linda Hathaway Bunza – 2001
Philip Miller & Colleen Cain – 2001
R. Virgil Ellis – 2001
Shelley Reece – 2001
Patty & Vince Wixon – 2001
Marilyn S. (Marsh) Noll – 2001
George & Elizabeth Barton – 2001
Sulima Malzin – 2000
J. Alma Tedrow – 2000
Linda Richard – 2000

News Notes and Opportunities

If you're visiting Edinburgh, Scotland this summer, you'll want to drop by the **SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY**. Along with browsing a number of William Stafford's poetry books, you may attend a variety of readings and discussions. Visit their website at www.spl.org.uk.

If Washington, D.C. is in your travel plans for *next* spring, you won't want to miss **WASHINGTON D.C. CELEBRATES WHITEMAN: 150 YEARS OF LEAVES OF GRASS**. This city-wide festival will honor Walt Whitman's connection to D.C., where he lived and worked from 1863–1873. Activities will take place starting March 26 (the date of his death) through May 31 (his birth) to include National Poetry Month. All events will have free or low cost admission. For more information, visit www.washingtonart.com/whitman/walt.html.

SOAPSTONE, a writing retreat for women, located in Oregon's coastal range, is accepting (through August 1) applications for 2006 residencies. Soapstone residencies are offered at no charge and may be one to four weeks in length. Complete details and application forms may be found at www.soapstone.org.

OREGON'S LITERARY ARTS is seeking a Writers In The Schools Program Director, "a dynamic individual with a strong background in education and the literary arts to lead a stable, growing WITS program." Application deadline is July 29. so visit www.literary-arts.org quickly.

NORTHWEST WRITING INSTITUTE/WILLIAM STAFFORD CENTER is offering an all-day Alternative Publishing Showcase Saturday, October 8 on the south campus of Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. "At this gathering we will hear from creators of NPR radio commentaries, music CDs, chapbooks, literary stand-up and other forms of self-propelled giving of literary gifts, and we will exchange resources and ideas for making this practice part of our writing process." Cost: TBA. Contact Diane McDevitt (mcdevitt@lclark.edu) for more information.

OREGON STATE POETRY ASSOCIATION (OSPA) is accepting submissions for its Fall Poetry Contest now through August 31. Nine opportunities to win cash prizes and publication are offered and the theme poem category this year is "Discovery." Check out rules and submission details at www.oregonpoets.org.

THE WILLIAM STAFFORD CENTER at Lewis & Clark College has announced a fall workshop with experienced editors Paul Merchant and Glenn Storhaug, called "**CHAPBOOK: FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PRINT IN TWO WEEKS.**" The workshop will be limited to eight participants, who will be chosen in a blind-juried process. They will meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings September 26–October 6. The \$300 cost will include five printed and bound special edition copies of your completed chapbook and free attendance at the Alternative Publishing Showcase on October 8th. Contact Diane McDevitt at the Center (503-768-6162) or email mcdevitt@lclark.edu. Application deadline is August 26.

Congratulations to **JUDITH MONTGOMERY**, who recently received the Oregon Arts Commission's 2005 Individual Artist Fellowship—a \$3,000 grant. In her grant essay she wrote: "My concerns spring from this: how to live in the face of mortality: questions of time, passion, sacrifice, duty; of fall and redemption, of confinement and escape, especially in the developing lives of women. How and what to celebrate out of loss." Montgomery was the only poet and one of only three writers among this year's Individual Artist Fellowship recipients.

SO TO SPEAK: A FEMINIST JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND ART is seeking submissions for its Annual Poetry Contest. First prize is \$500 plus publication. Postmark deadline for 3–5 poems with a \$10 reading fee is October 12, 2005. Send to So to Speak, GMU, 4400 University Drive, MS 2D6, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444 or go to www.gmu.edu/org/lsts.

Look for Ted Kooser's column, **AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY**. The column is the project he chose for his tenure as Poet Laureate, co-sponsored by the Poetry Foundation and the Library of Congress. Each week the column features a poem briefly introduced by Kooser and distributed free of charge to any newspaper who wishes to have it. You will find it on the web at www.americanlifeinpoetry.org.

News Every Day

Birds don't say it just once. If they like it they say it again. And again, every morning. I heard a bird congratulating itself all day for being a jay. Nobody cared. But it was glad all over again, and said so, again.

Many people are fighting each other, in the world. You could learn that and say, "Many people are fighting each other, in the world." It would be true, but saying it wouldn't make any difference. But you'd say it. Birds are like that. People are like that.

William Stafford

'Billy' Stafford Meets His 5th Grade Teacher

By Sarah "Sally" Simons

I participated in Haystack, my first WS workshop, in summer 1974—possibly the most wonderful two weeks of my life. There is no need to say more, for those who were his students will understand perfectly. Those who were not, I'm sorry you didn't have that experience. Another student, Phyllis Kerns, said to me after one particularly transfixing session, "I can't remember a word he said. I just know he changed my life." (Some years later, incidentally, Kim Stafford would marry Phyllis Kerns' daughter!)

I was staying at a motel and having breakfast in a restaurant where, one morning, I shared a booth with two sisters, one of whom was in an art class; the other was waiting for it to end. The cranky one would have preferred I not join them, but her sister was cordial. I did my best to make idle conversation and learned they were raised in Hutchinson, Kansas, and Cranky still lived there. I gushed, "Oh, that's William Stafford's home." Cranky made no response. His name meant nothing. Her sister was polite, inquired as to just who WS was. Somewhat unbelieving, I told them, and said I'd introduce him at the beach Tuesday evening. (All groups gathered at Haystack Rocks for hot dog suppers.)

Tuesday came, I found the two sisters, and took Bill to them. When I mentioned Hutchinson, Bill realized Cranky was his fifth grade teacher. "Miss Caskey," he cried, "you were my fifth grade teacher! Remember me, Billy Stafford?" She said no, she certainly did not. He tried again, "I sat in back of Freddy Crow!" This rang a bell. "Colored, wasn't he?" Bill nodded. She looked decidedly suspicious of Bill. And that was that.

Later he wrote me that he included her in a new poem. I cannot, unfortunately, remember which poem, which book—maybe a reader will know, or will discover, or maybe Kim or Dorothy will know. There's a line about Miss Caskey having her charges fold their arms on their desks, if I'm remembering correctly. Bill, as he would, thanked me for "the introduction."

No doubt Miss Caskey has gone to her great reward, and I'm sure she did so totally unimpressed and unknowledgeable about this Stafford upstart she met on the Oregon beach.

Submitted by Lifetime Member Sarah "Sally" Simons of Ellicott City, Maryland, this story recently resurfaced in the FWS archives. Thank you, "Sally" for sharing your treasured memory. If you have a favorite Stafford memory to share, please email it to Friends@williamstafford.org or send to P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034.

Central Oregon Community College has high praise for *How The Ink Feels*

In a letter to Nancy Winklesky, David Bilyeu, the college's library director, thanked the Friends of William Stafford for "putting together such a provocative and stimulating exhibition ... well received by faculty and students, as well as the greater Bend community."

Our traveling exhibit, *How The Ink Feels: An Exhibition of Letterpress BroadSides by Distinguished Artists and Writers*, had been on display in the library rotunda at COCC throughout the month of April, where it became the focal point for a variety of both school and community events.

Bilyeu's letter gives an overview: "Kit Stafford gave a lovely talk at the reception, and many community members came just to hear her, but were equally delighted with the broadsides ... local poets brought their own interpretation of poetry and art to their poetry reading in the library rotunda. Some read William Stafford poetry and, others read their own works ... a very educational and inspiring evening. Both writing classes and art classes viewed the exhibition with their professors, each focusing on a different aspect of the same art pieces...It was truly a wonderful show, and one that was enjoyed by a broad group of viewers."

In September, under the direction of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, Ink will embark on a six-month, six-city tour. If you happen to live in Kodiak, Ketchikan, Homer, Juneau, Fairbanks, or Anchorage, watch for it.

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P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034
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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide ongoing education in literature, particularly in poetry, in a way that will encourage and enrich a broad community of readers and writers. In the spirit of William Stafford's gifts as a teacher, we are also devoted to the free expression of literature and conscience. We seek ways to share his work and advance the spirit of his teaching and literary witness. We direct our work toward education in local communities, to contribute to the poet's legacy for generations to come.

BECOME A FRIEND OF WILLIAM STAFFORD

William Stafford's work ended with his death in 1993, but through the *Friends of William Stafford*, his gifts as a teacher continue. He traveled widely in pursuit of the free expression of literature and conscience. We continue to spread his work by advancing the spirit of his teaching in "a plain unmarked envelope passing through the world," By becoming a *Friend of William Stafford*, you will be contributing to his legacy for generations to come. Lifetime or annual donation includes:

- Newsletters that let you know about activities of *Friends of William Stafford*
- A forum to promote poetry in your community
- Opportunities to volunteer for *Friends of William Stafford* projects
- A network of other poets, writers, and poetry organizations

Your donations support our newsletter and web site and the traveling broadside exhibit, *How The Ink Feels*, as well as the reading, writing and enjoyment of poetry.

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- Distribute Posters/Flyers
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Please copy or use this form to renew and let us know if you change your address.

Lifetime Friends

Please see Page 12 for a listing of Lifetime Donors

New Friends
January-July 2005

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- Susan Campbell
- Laura Weeks
- Claire Amsden
- Diane Janes
- Pamela Crow
- Elizabeth Johnson

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Don't forget to renew your friendship.

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FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD Newsletter©

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poetry events, awards, etc. to:

news@williamstafford.org

or mail to:

Friends of William Stafford,

PO Box 592

Lake Oswego, OR 97034

Burning a Book

Protecting each other, right in the center
a few pages glow a long time.

The cover goes first, then outer leaves
curling away, then spine and a scattering.

Truth, brittle and faint, burns easily,
its fire as hot as the fire lies make –
flame doesn't care. You can usually find
a few charred words in the ashes.

And some books ought to burn, trying for character
but just faking it. More disturbing
than book ashes are whole libraries that no one
got around to writing – desolate
towns, miles of unthought-in cities,
and the terrorized countryside where wild dogs
own anything that moves. If a book
isn't written, no one needs to burn it –
ignorance can dance in the absence of fire.

So I've burned books. And there are many
I haven't even written, and nobody does.

William Stafford

Please notify sender of change of address.

Teacher, Page 14
"Billy" Stafford meets His Fifth Grade

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