

friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Newsletter For Poets & Poetry
Volume 13, Issue 1 - Summer 2008

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CREATIVE PUBLISHING KEEPS STAFFORD'S POETRY ALIVE AND VISIBLE

by Sulima Malzin

Printed, painted, carved in stone, recorded live, and now even set to music, the words of William Stafford are very much alive and well, in plain sight and within hearing distance for anyone who might be interested in knowing them.

Lines from Stafford's poetry can be found on silk-screened linen banners, letter-press broadsides, cut and polished basalt columns, roadside plaques, and at the entrance to at least one new building in downtown Lake Oswego. Sightings have been reported on park benches and billboards, and today there are available recordings, not only of William Stafford reading his own work, but of

adaptations set to music by popular artists as well.

The poem, "Earth Dweller" is part of W.S. Merwin's collection of thought-provoking writings, *For An Undersea Library*, which has been placed in United States submarines.

What a treat for the lucky passers-by who discover the nine cut and polished basalt columns gathered on the edge of the Willamette River bearing fragments of Stafford poems, or the banners that fly from the light poles along the sidewalk by the gazebo. Imagine the surprise of the adventurous

continued on 2

BRONX ZOO, NEW YORK CITY



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.

CREATIVE PUBLISHING KEEPS STAFFORD'S POETRY ALIVE AND VISIBLE

from 1

explorer driving the Methow River Highway high in Washington's Cascade Mountains above the Columbia, who in venturing off the beaten path comes upon "A Valley Like This" standing majestically atop a viewpoint near the crest of Stevens Pass.

And what a delight for the first-time visitor to recently-built Stafford Commons in downtown Lake Oswego, who is met at the front entrance by a plaque bearing the full text of "The Way It Is." Surely finding poetry in unexpected locations offers people an extraordinary opportunity to take a deeper breath and linger for an extra moment in the present.

In more expected places like campus student centers, libraries, cultural centers, and museums, many have been able to experience *How The Ink Feels*, the letter-press broadside exhibit FWS has exhibited around the country since 1999. *How The Ink Feels*, whose name was taken from a line in Stafford's poem, "The Trouble With Reading," has been one of the longest-touring shows of its kind and has truly reflected the mission of our organization – 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.

Ink, a visually exciting collaboration between poets, printers, artists, calligraphers, illustrators and paper makers, represents the work of 19 visual artists and 43 poets including eight *Friends of William Stafford*



Photo/Susan Gillespie

STAFFORD STONES AT FOOTHILLS PARK

National Advisors, several U.S. Poet Laureates, and Stafford himself, who has 13 poems in the collection. While not limited to academic venues, it has proven to be a most useful teaching tool for art, paper making, and letter-press printing, as well as poetry and literature.

How The Ink Feels concluded its fabulous eight-year run this summer with a month-long exhibit in the Hoffman Gallery at Lewis & Clark College. This final exhibit was co-sponsored by the *Friends of William Stafford* and Lewis & Clark College and supported in part by a grant from the Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Our thanks to board member Rich Wandschneider, who wrote the grant on behalf of FWS. Please see pg. 8 for more details.

A documentary film by Haydn Reiss is scheduled to be released this summer based on *Every War Has Two Losers*. The film will be narrated by Peter Coyote and feature readings by Naomi Shihab Nye, Maxine Hong Kingston, Kim Stafford, Michael Meade, and others. In it, folksinger John Gorka will sing "At The Un-National Monument Along the Canadian Border," for which he has composed a simple and haunting melody.

Haydn Reiss, who has been producing award-winning films on important subjects for 17 years, in 1993 gave us *William Stafford and Robert Bly: A Literary Friendship*. The new film is a further exploration of themes begun there. To learn more about the release of *Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War*, you are welcome to contact www.zincfilms.com.

Michael Markee and Vince and Patty Wixon have collaborated a number of times to produce videos, CDs, and DVDs of Stafford's poetry. Our website, www.williamstafford.org, carries a full listing of those titles, and several of our past newsletters contain articles about their work. Featured in our 10th Anniversary Issue, Summer 2007, are Markee's photographic essay, "Portraits of a Life Going By," and "The Archives Audio Collection" by Patty Wixon.

In Portland, Oregon, folksy blues singer and songwriter Paula Sinclair, has set three of Stafford's poems to music. Two of them, "Our Story" and "Song Now," appear on her CD *The Good Horse*, which you can hear by visiting her website. <http://sinclairsinclair.com>. Her latest musical adaptation of a Stafford poem is "A Story That Could Be True."

Composers seem to be 'musicalizing' poetry more often these days. At this year's Birthday Celebration in Beaverton, Oregon, the Satori Men's Chorus: Men Singing Peace," treated the audience to two of Stafford's poems set to music by Kenneth A. Skach-Mills, "Friends, Farewell" and "The Dream of Now."

In 2000, FWS received a generous gift from Dr. Pierre Rioux for the express purpose of creating a set of seven letter-press broadsides of Stafford poems that we could use to raise funds for our organization.



Photo/Bill Baars

LAKE OSWEGO LIBRARY

Doug Stowe of Paper Crane Press in Half Moon Bay, California graciously and generously published the collection, which currently stands at nine, thanks to additional funding from many Friends.

The most recently printed broadside to come from Paper Crane Press was “Hummingbirds,” introduced at our Poetry & Potluck last September, and the newest, “Choosing a Dog,” will be unveiled at this year’s gathering. Not all of the seven originals are still available individually, but were included in the limited edition portfolio, *The World Speaks Everything To Us*.

Another, much larger broadside, bearing Stafford’s poem, “Ask Me,” features a drawing by Henk Pander. It was designed and printed by John Laursen in 1981 for Portland’s *Artquake*, an annual festival of the arts. In 2006 Laursen donated a number of these vintage broadsides, signed by both Stafford and Pander to FWS to be used for fundraising. Some are still available. For more information, see newsletter volume 11, issue 1, Spring 2006, archived on our website.

Our most recent acquisition of a Stafford broadside is the powerful poem, “Meditation,” with color illustration by Marquita Green, whose husband, Joseph Green, the designer and printer of the piece, recently donated a substantial number to FWS. See page 7 for more details.

Perhaps the most recent creative rendition of Stafford’s poetry was a performance in Portland, Oregon directed by Eric Hull and performed by the spoken word chorus VOX. Seven Portland actors performed the poetry of a number of American poets; among them William Stafford, Allen Ginsberg, Li-Young Lee, Emily Dickinson, Dorothy Parker, Donald Hall, and Jane Kenyon.

The performers, as a chorus, read poems with some lines spoken in unison, others solo, while some were divided among the members of the chorus in rolling waves, staccato fragments, or languid, elegant expression. For a more detailed description of the work, you may visit www.voxpdx.com.

Thanks to Confluence Press’s long-time publisher Jim Hepworth and his persistent vision of banners flying all over the world bearing Bill Stafford’s words, the Lake Oswego Library in early 2008 acquired the 3- by-6-foot banners that finally manifested that vision in 2003.

In April of that year, the six silk-screened twill and silk panels designed and produced by textile artist Arin Arthur were unveiled at the Asotin County Library in Clarkton, Washington before they went on to area schools, hospitals and community agencies. The library had teamed up with Confluence Press on an arts project called “Ask Me: Poetry in Public Places,” and the opening served as the culmination of a month-long poetry contest. A \$500 grant from FWS provided the materials.

Hepworth describes his meeting with the artist as serendipitous. She was working as a receptionist at the Idaho Commission on the Arts at the time and he was there on another matter entirely. He says, “I wish sometimes I could let go of my visions the same way I do my dreams.” There are a lot of people today who are glad he hung on to this one.

Starting with Little Things

Love the earth like a mole,
fur-near. Nearsighted,
hold close the clods,
their fine-print headlines.
Pat them with soft hands –

But spades, but pink and loving: they
break rock, nudge giants aside,
affable plow.
Fields are to touch:
each day nuzzle your way.

Tomorrow the world.

∞ WILLIAM STAFFORD

FWS Board Welcomes Scot Siegel as Treasurer

The Friends of William Stafford has a new Treasurer, Lifetime Friend Scot Siegel, who recently accepted the fiscal reins from resigning Treasurer Sue Einowski.

Siegel has been an avid volunteer for FWS, especially with the September Poetry & Potluck event. He is no stranger to board service. In addition to serving on the advisory board of Squaw Valley Academy, with special interest in its summer writing program, he is currently mid-way through a city council-appointed four-year term as a Lake Oswego Planning Commissioner, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of Western Planning Resources, a consortium of over 1,500 professional planners and planning commissioners from 14 western states.

Professionally, Siegel works as a consultant specializing in sustainable land use planning for small towns and cities across the West. He is also co-owner, with his wife Debbie Siegel, of the Kumon Math and Reading center of Lake Grove, an after-school learning center for children in grades K-12. The Siegels are parents of two daughters, Caroline (8) and Lianne, (12).

As regards the new treasurer's fondness and admiration for William Stafford, Siegel says: "I have to admit, it was really by happenstance that I discovered Stafford's writing." In 2002, working for a large engineering firm in Portland, where he felt his days were numbered, Siegel was offered a chance to work abroad, helping with "the rebuilding effort in Iraq." There was hazard pay, overtime, and contractors could earn three to four times their regular wages (five times soldiers pay) tax-free. "I didn't go, of course, but the event changed me," he says.

Like others who had begun to question the war, Siegel became determined to 'revise his life.' Although he had won an award for his honors thesis, he had put writing aside in favor of building a career. He felt it was time to change that. Once he discovered the CD, "William Stafford's Final Reading," in an Ashland bookshop, and re-discovered *The Way It Is* on his bookshelf, "the world began to make sense again. I felt as though I had a guardian angel."

Siegel says, "I am humbled and honored to be asked to serve as Treasurer. It's an important job, yes, but I would have taken any one they gave me for such good company and friends. It's the least I can do. Thank you, Bill."

The board says, "Thank you, Scot."



SHELLEY REECE'S COLUMN, "FROM THE CHAIR," WILL RETURN NEXT ISSUE.



Photo/Debbie Siegel

To Hold

So we're dust. In the meantime, my wife and I
make the bed. Holding opposite edges of the sheet,
we raise it, billowing, then pull it tight,
measuring by eye as it falls into alignment
between us. We tug, fold, tuck. And if I'm lucky,
she'll remember a recent dream and tell me.

One day we'll lie down and not get up.
One day, all we guard will be surrendered.

Until then, we'll go on learning to recognize
what we love, and what it takes
to tend what isn't for our having.
So often, fear has led me
to abandon what I know I must relinquish
in time. But for the moment, I'll listen to her dream,
and she to mine; our mutual hearing calling
more and more detail into the light
of a joint and fragile keeping.

LI-YOUNG LEE

Two FWS National Advisors visit Portland for *Poetry Downtown*



Photo/Courtesy of Literary Arts

The Literary Arts series, *Poetry Downtown*, was graced this year by the presence of both Li-Young Lee and Lucille Clifton. Lee appeared in February and Clifton in April.

The Clifton program was underwritten by the Reece and Einowski families and the Friends of William Stafford, who together with Literary Arts hosted a reception for Lucille Clifton prior to the event.

Li-Young Lee read from his newest collection, *Behind My Eyes*. Here is his paraphrased response to a question from the audience. The question: ‘Do you think it’s important to read poetry out loud and if so, why?’

...I think of a poem as the musical score for the instrument that is the human voice. The human voice speaks only on the exhalation breath, which is the dying breath. Because poetry packs a lot of meaning into a few short words, it could be said that reading poems aloud is about making our ever-approaching deaths more meaningful – that reading aloud exercises our dying breath and gives it increased vitality...

Lucille Clifton, who received the 2007 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, read from several of her books, as well as her soon-to-be published volume, *Voices*. When asked “Where and how do poems come to you?” she answered this way:

“Poems know that I will say ‘yes’ to them, and so they come. Really. It is very mysterious to me. When I’m writing, I can write a lot in a short time, and when I’m not writing I can’t write at all. Right now, I’m in one of those not writing things – I’ve been ill. But I wait for them. I’m still waiting for them, and they fill my whole body. If I’m writing, everything’s okay.”

ON NOVEMBER 6, 2008, FWS NATIONAL ADVISOR W.S. MERWIN WILL BE IN PORTLAND FOR ONE OF TWO SPECIAL EVENTS FROM LITERARY ARTS. TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE BY CALLING 503-227-2583 OR AT WWW.LITERARY-ARTS.ORG.

whose side are you on?

the side of the busstop woman
trying to drag her bag
up the front steps before the doors
clang shut i am on her side
i give her exact change
and him the old man hanging by
one strap his work hands folded shut
as the bus doors i am on his side
when he needs to leave
i ring the bell I am on their side
riding the late bus into the same
someplace i am on the dark side always
the side of my daughters
the side of my tired sons

LUCILLE CLIFTON



Photo/Courtesy of Literary Arts

Fifth Annual William Stafford Poetry Reading features Kim Stafford



Photo/Michael Markee

For the past five years the Friends of William Stafford has hosted a poetry reading at the Lake Oswego Public Library on the evening preceding the community's annual Festival of the Arts.

Coordinated by FWS board members Patricia Carver and Paulann Petersen, this free and open to the public event is part of the library's ongoing Author Series

and is presented with generous support from the Friends of Lake Oswego Library. In past years it has featured several readers. This year there was only one – Kim Stafford.

Library Director Bill Baars, who welcomed the just-the-right-size crowd, spoke with warmth and humor about the fact that the idea for the Author's Series was introduced five years ago, and finally he was welcoming Kim Stafford, who grew up less than 10 blocks away.

FWS Board says *Arvedarcc!* to Joseph A. Soldati

Earlier this year, long-time board member and former board Chair, Joseph A. Soldati, stepped away from the board to become 'just another Friend.' In the winter 2004-05 issue of this newsletter, he wrote his last regular column for "From the Chair." You may read it and others on the News page of our website, www.williamstafford.org.

Joe's 5-year term as Chair was ending back then, but he had agreed to remain on the board as what he liked to call "a supporting player." And indeed he was! Joe has been and continues to be a staunch supporter of all FWS activities, especially the January Birthday Celebrations. He has been especially good at getting press releases out where they belong and serving as a poetry ambassador wherever he travels. This year among other European countries, he visited again his beloved Italy, and while it is hard for the board to say *Arvedarcc!*, we have every confidence that we will see him often in the community of poets and poetry lovers that he has helped to build. *Grazie* for everything, Joseph A. Soldati. We wish you many happy travels, more poems to read and write, and good health for a very long time.

In his response to Paulann Petersen's invitation to appear, Stafford, who is becoming widely known as a storyteller and troubadour, said he would gladly come to "read, rant, and sing." And sing he did! A couple of very old folk songs, one specifically about Oregon, were warmly received, as was a moving ballad he wrote in honor of a murdered New Orleans man he learned about while visiting that city.

Kim Stafford is a natural story-teller and his poems reflect his experience as a traveler and a teacher. Speaking of his love of books and libraries, he told of the many glorious hours of "promiscuous browsing" that have occupied his life of reading and writing, and his first public reading experience at the Lake Oswego Library many years ago, encouraged by one of Portland's literary icons, Penny Avila, to "project" to her as she stood at the back of the small crowd.

He spoke fondly of two of his most memorable teachers and the "sweet magic that comes from writing together." In assembling a collective poem from fourth graders, he quoted a boy who asked, "When you close a book in the library, does the world inside it keep on happening?" Among the poems he read were three that honored his mother, Dorothy, his mother-in-law Phyllis Kerns, and his wife, Perrin.



Photo/Amy Floss

Elizabeth Grossman receives Friends of Lake Oswego Library William Stafford Award from Literary Arts

This year Literary Arts honored 12 writers and publishers with fellowships totaling \$30,000. Among them was non-fiction writer Elizabeth Grossman of Portland who was granted \$2,500 as the recipient of the *Friends of the Lake Oswego Library William Stafford Award*. Each year the *Friends* makes it possible for Literary Arts to pay tribute to William Stafford while recognizing one promising writer in particular.

Grossman is the author, most recently, of *High Tech Trash: Digital Devices, Hidden Toxics, and Human Health* (2006). In her current work-in-progress, titled *Redesigning the Future*, she is examining the migration and global transport of chemical pollutants through the perspective of design. Fellowship funds will help her conduct in-person interviews, library research, and site visits.

Grossman's new book explores the work being done in what is called "green" chemistry to design alternative, environmentally benign products. To tell the story as vividly as possible, she travels to see places impacted by contaminants and to meet with scientists who are working on these issues.

"As a full-time free-lance writer, this fellowship is of enormous help," Grossman says. "It's an honor and I hope my book can in some way contribute to his (Stafford's) legacy of care, careful observation, and spirit of discovery."

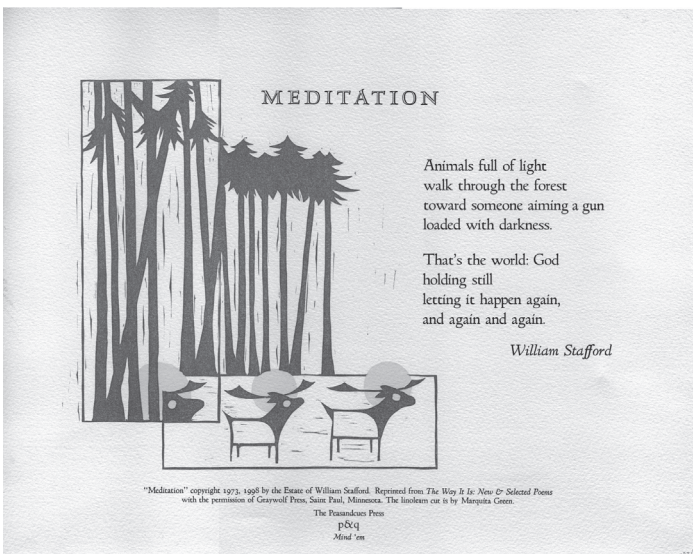
In late November 2007, Elizabeth Grossman began a three-week stay on the CCGS Amundsen, a Canadian Coast Guard ice-breaker and scientific research vessel spending 15 months in the Arctic. For a first-hand account of her time there, you may visit the online Magazine *Grist* at the following address: www.grist.org/feature/2007/12/13/grossman/index.html. The article is titled "On Thin Ice."



Photo/Elizabeth Grossman

SELF-PORTRAIT

Joseph Green's gift of "Meditation" is added to list of broadsides available from FWS



The *Friends of William Stafford* was recently presented with 70 numbered copies of the beautiful broadside of Stafford's poem, "Meditation."

Designed and published by Joseph Green and his wife, Marquita, the broadsides will be offered for sale at \$25 each and used to raise funds for the organization.

Of the 200 letterpress broadsides produced in 1985 under the banner of Peasandcues Press, the Greens felt that 160 met their standard for numbered prints.

Green, who will be a special guest at this year's Poetry & Potluck, said this about the poem: "In 1984 I reviewed Stafford's book, *Smoke's Way* for the journal, *Concerning Poetry*. I was especially taken by several of those poems, "Meditation" among them. It soon became – and has remained – something of a touchstone for me. I don't go around looking for places to apply it, but the poem seems to apply all the time: *That's the world: God holding still ...* It's oddly reassuring."

Concluding its eight-year journey, *How the Ink Feels*

by Sulima Malzin

After eight years of successfully touring over 40 sites throughout the United States, the FWS-sponsored traveling broadside exhibit, *How the Ink Feels*, was viewed for the last time at Lewis & Clark College, where William Stafford taught for over 30 years. 14 of his poems are included in the exhibit.

Hosted by the Lewis & Clark Special Collections and co-sponsored by the Friends of William Stafford, the exhibit was funded in part by a grant from the Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. It ended July 13th.



Photo/Michael Markee

How the Ink Feels is one of a series of events celebrating the recent gift of the Stafford Archives to the college by the Stafford family. The opening was held on Thursday, June 5th and featured a reading by Fred Marchant, editor of the newly published early poems of William Stafford, *Another World Instead*. It also featured readings by several poets whose

PAUL MERCHANT OFFERING TRIBUTE

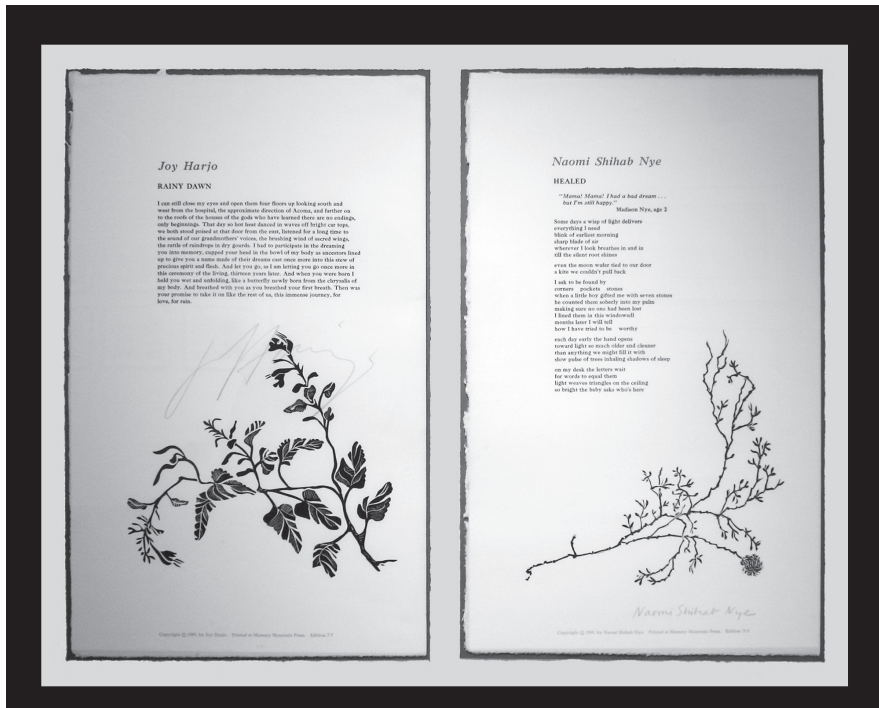
work is represented in the exhibit, including Oregon's current poet laureate, Lawson Inada.

Introducing the book, Marchant said that he felt it was one of the great privileges of his life to be able to edit this material, and that "those of us here tonight would be among the first to hear some of these poems read since the 1940s."

Karla Elling, who has printed many of the beautiful letterpress broadsides in the exhibit, commented on her work as well. Elling, who manages the Graduate Creative Writing Program at Arizona State University, is a papermaker and self-proclaimed "typography obsessive," who has printed for over one hundred American authors.

Paul Merchant, long-time Stafford archivist working now with Doug Erickson and the Lewis & Clark Special Collections, presented two of the very first woodcut broadsides of Stafford's work by Wang Hui-Ming to FWS board members Nancy Winklesky and Patty Wixon, in tribute to their unflinching dedication to the exhibit from inception to closing.

Later, Kim Stafford read a poem which he wrote especially for the occasion, "William Stafford and the Lineage of Yin," in which he cited many of the women who have supported and continue to support his father's work; namely, along with Patty and Nancy, his



BROADSIDES BY HARJO AND NYE, PART OF THE *INK* EXHIBIT

*When the old man disappeared at last
from a life in poetry, / who lifted his words,
smuggled them toward generations not
yet known? / I say, count the women who
sustained his songs, cherished his yearnings.*

*...In a world that often surrenders to the
whims of men, a world / that credits force,
fact, battering, where hawks cling the
barrens, / where darkness is deep, where he
thought hard for us all, / where the yin
in him became this pantheon of worthy
women, / who will do his calling still?*

Kim Stafford
from "William Stafford
and the Lineage of Yin"

comes home to Lewis & Clark's Hoffman Gallery

mother, Dorothy, Paulann, Grace, Diane, Fiona, LeAnn, Emily, and of course, Kim's grandmother, Ruby.

The exhibit catalog was designed and assembled by Doug Erickson, Jeremy Skinner, and Paul Merchant. Erickson, who emceed the event, told how many years ago when he would be working in the special collection archives, Bill Stafford would stop by for a visit, announcing his presence with a knock on the door, then calling out, "Old man in the archives."



Photo/Michael Markee

KARLA ELLING COMMENTING ON HER WORK

The catalog, which was printed in a limited edition of 150, contains a forward by Nancy Winklesky, who has stewarded the exhibit for Friends of William Stafford these past eight years. In it she states that when the four wooden crates arrived in her garage, she became overwhelmed by a "feeling of *aliveness* and *luminosity*." In that spirit, she goes on to say, she felt that a different title from the original *Like Frost on a Window*, from Stafford's poem, "The Trouble With Reading," might better reflect the exchange of energy that happens between poet, artist, papermaker, printer, and viewer. Thus, from the same poem, she chose the line that begins 'So some time let's discover *How the Ink Feels*, to be clutching all that eternity onto page after page.' And what a privilege it has been to do that.

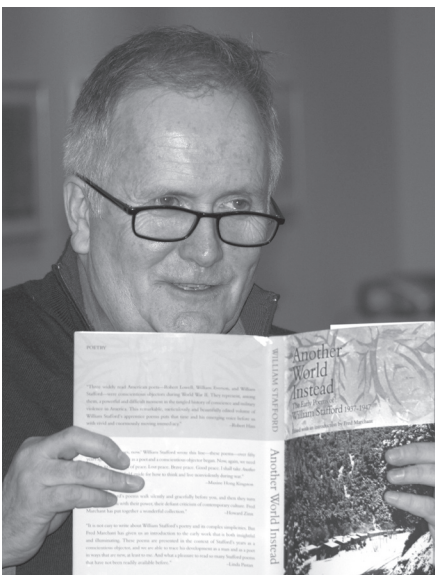
To view a digital version of the catalog, you may visit the Lewis & Clark website at: <http://library.lclark.edu/specialcollections>.

The Trouble with Reading

When a goat likes a book, the whole book is gone, and the meaning has to go find an author again. But when we read, it's just print – deciphering, like frost on a window: we learn the meaning but lose what the frost is, and all that world pressed so desperately behind.

So some time let's discover how the ink feels, to be clutching all that eternity onto page after page. But maybe it is better not to know; ignorance, that wide country, rewards you just to accept it. You plunge; it holds you. And you have become a rich darkness.

WILLIAM STAFFORD



FRED MARCHANT

In his first decade of writing, and in particular in the four years he spent in the CPS program, William Stafford discovered that writing poetry was for him an act of deep listening. He was not only listening to the voices in his world. He was also listening inwardly, to signals emanating from the deepest levels of his own being. One name for that would be a conscience. One might think conscience is a purely individual matter. Yet the structure of the word tells us differently. Conscience is a "knowing-with." It acknowledges the importance of the other. It proposes that we find or create a sense of right relation with one another, with the world around us, and with ourselves. How can one know what those right relations are? Stafford might answer by saying one has to learn how to listen deeply.

Fred Marchant
from the introduction to *Another World Instead*

Local and Global Celebrations

“It was a joy to hear the Stafford poems read in Swedish by a Swede.”

Karyl Severson, Stockholm, Sweden

This year, celebrants of William Stafford’s birthday stretched their arms around the globe to embrace poetry and peace lovers. All the way from the old California site of Los Prietos, the civilian service camp where Stafford served as a conscientious objector in the 1940s, to the province of Selangor, Malaysia, to Stockholm, Sweden, to Glasgow, Scotland, to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, the dark winter months glowed with the light that seems to arise naturally when people come together to share poetry *with the most glowing conviction, passion and radiance...* as Naomi Shihab Nye said of the reading in **San Antonio, Texas**. “There wasn’t a blah reading in the whole bunch...everyone said *It’s Stafford in the room, not us.*”

Portland poet Joanna Rose spoke of how *it gets harder and harder to hear anything that sounds right or true from our leaders, and now here it is an election year, a time that threatens to wring all life out of language, but we have this fine evening of poems...* She then opened the reading at **Portland State University** with Stafford’s “Deep Listening.” It ends with the line “So – let’s turn to language, and its saving graces.”

From the event at **Neskowin** on the Oregon coast came these words from Melissa Madenski: “In the small community school, a former barn with high ceilings, a burning fire and a large circle of friends, we read our selections... I read about how people know each other in India by their former lives. Stafford gives us these gifts of how to be, how to live in a difficult world, in his work... There was a lingering, a desire to stay in the presence of peace, of warmth, of community.”

At the **West Hills UU Fellowship in Portland**, it was noted by reader Susan Reese, that *given what we are seeing and hearing today in this room nearly 15 years after the ‘death’ of William Stafford, it should be clear that the pen is surely mightier than the sword!*

The celebration in **Stockholm** was held at a cozy bookstore on a garden square and attended by over 20 people. Lars Nordstrom, who has translated a collection of Stafford poems into Swedish, read a number of them, with Karyl Severson reading in English. Nordstrom, who now lives in Oregon, makes frequent trips to Sweden. It was noted that *It is wonderful to experience the way that poetry can unite people from all cultures.*

Once again, according to Paul Willis, the Forest Service at Los Padres National Forest near Santa Barbara, California were gracious hosts to the 30-35 people who turned out to sit under a live oak within the old foundations of the **Los Prietos Civilian Public Service Camp** where Bill Stafford served as a conscientious objector during the second world war. Standing in front of a cliff above the Santa

Ynez River, Willis closed the reading with Stafford’s poem written on site: “We called it the chaparral, / folded, easily draped and softly a comfort / over that land egg-beatered out of rock. / It lapped over our cliff / and rested like an evening of shade above / the breaks of the river ...” Someone pointed out the rock in that cliff, especially down near the water, is shattered and swirled in unusual circular patterns – as if it had been ‘egg-beatered.’

The sixth annual celebration held at the Jefferson County Library in **Madras, Oregon** was well attended by high school students and teachers, and some of the poems were read in both English and Spanish. In an article appearing in the *Madras Pioneer*, Stafford was described as a “tireless traveler who gave thousands of poetry readings all over America and the world, literally from Madras, India to Madras, Oregon.”

Larry Butler reported on *an enriching and fun evening in Glasgow, Scotland*, where many people were warmly introduced to the work of William Stafford. Readers were a mix of Americans and Scots; the first being Gerry Stewart who lives now in Glasgow but grew up in Iowa, studied literature in Idaho and never heard of William Stafford until she was invited to read at this gathering. “She has a Midwest accent,” Butler said, “and loved his work immediately.” Readings from *Early Morning* provided some biographical material along with watching the video *What The River Says*. Next year’s celebration is expected to be held at the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh.

Hermiston, Oregon librarian Marie Baldo described their event as “our best yet!” Celtic music by “The Fiddlin’ Females” added to the festive nature of the evening and Bette Husted, always a lively reader, was warmly received by the crowd of 20 plus attendees. Overheard: “Finally, poetry people can understand.”



MARIE BALDO AND BETTE HUSTED

Photo/Pamela Steele

In **Selangor, Malaysia**, Ms Chuah Siew Yen along with Friend Melissa Ann Reed helped organize what turned out to be a March Stafford Celebration. Originally scheduled for a January date, the event

Mark Bill's Birthday in 2008

was postponed so that it could become part of the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Ms Chuah, the Sri KDU school's Communications Representative and Cultural Events Liaison, invited other International Schools who focus on English Literature to participate. Late last year, the school purchased a number of broadsides to be used in classrooms and libraries. You may read more about our Malaysia connection in the Winter 2008 issue of this newsletter archived on our website.

A highlight of the **Beaverton, Oregon** festivities was a musical interlude, featuring two of Stafford's poems, "Friends, Farewell" and "The Dream of Now," both set to music composed by Friend Kenneth Skach-Mills and sung by the Satori Men's Chorus; "Men Singing Peace."

In **Washington**, the blustery winter weather didn't keep 15 brave poetry lovers away from the **White Salmon Valley Community Library**, where a warm welcome awaited them. One attendee said that she had always been intimidated by poetry, but believes she would have loved to study with Bill and that the birthday celebrations have made poetry so much more approachable for her. "This," commented Joan Chantler, the event's organizer, "is real success!"

At the UU Fellowship in **Topeka, Kansas**, with outdoor temperatures near zero, it was suggested that William Stafford's birthday be changed to summer, but after being reminded that the previous year a blizzard had been raging, it was tentatively decided that in 2009 Stafford's birthday would be celebrated on Saturday afternoon, on the actual date, January 17th. That seemed a comforting thought, somehow, as a host of readers enjoyed commenting on Bill Stafford as a person and a poet and why his work continues to grow in its appeal to some and not to others.

In **Puerto Vallarta, Mexico** a group of 40-45 gathered for what is known as Contemplative Sunday, a non-denominational group that explores a variety of topics. Karen Blomain, who spends part of each year in Puerto Vallarta, organized the event and spoke about the influence of William Stafford on her own life, sharing some of her favorite poems. Six other members of the congregation joined her and added rich commentary and additional poems, as well. They gathered in April to view the DVD *William Stafford: Life and Poems*. Blomain said they especially appreciated the Friends of William Stafford making "the writings of this amazing poet, thinker and writer available on the internet."

"Although I'm hardly an objective witness..." is the disclaimer Eleanor Berry used to describe the **Salem, Oregon** celebration as "quite marvelous." One featured reader was snowed in and unable to be there, but in the spirit of true community, others read, between them, the offerings she had intended. The theme was "dwelling on the earth," which seemed to resonate well, and the "wonderfully responsive and appreciative" audience of about 40 left standing room only.



Photo/Wendy Swanson

THE SATORI MEN'S CHORUS: MEN SINGING PEACE AT THE BEAVERTON, OREGON LIBRARY

More and more it seems that celebrations around the country are sharing recordings and DVDs as an effective way to introduce newcomers to the voice and personage of William Stafford. As the numbers of those who knew Bill personally begin to diminish, these are the only means by which many can experience what it's like to hear "Stafford reading Stafford." In **Bend, Oregon**, Kit Stafford was once again a guest at the party and shared memories of her father. The audience was also able to hear him read two poems from his last public reading. And in Portland's Sellwood neighborhood, the group gathered at Looking Glass Books was treated to "Once in the 40s."

With summer upon us it may be hard to imagine the snowy days and evenings when poetry lovers and the poetry curious gathered *to turn to language and its saving graces*; but we who are Friends of William Stafford enjoy the energy of each season. With readings throughout the year, our National Poetry Month appreciation gift, the September Poetry & Potluck, and this newsletter, our community continues to be brought together by that thread we keep following.



"I belong to a small fanatical sect. We believe that current ways of carrying on world affairs are malignant. We believe that armies, and the kind of international dealings based on armed might will be self-perpetuating to a certain point – and that that point might be annihilation."

William Stafford
Journal entry – 16 August 1955

Climbing along the River

Willows never forget how it feels
to be young.

Do you remember where you came from?
Gravel remembers.

Even the upper end of the river
believes in the ocean.

Exactly at midnight
yesterday sighs away.

What I believe is,
all animals have one soul.

Over the land they love
they crisscross forever.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

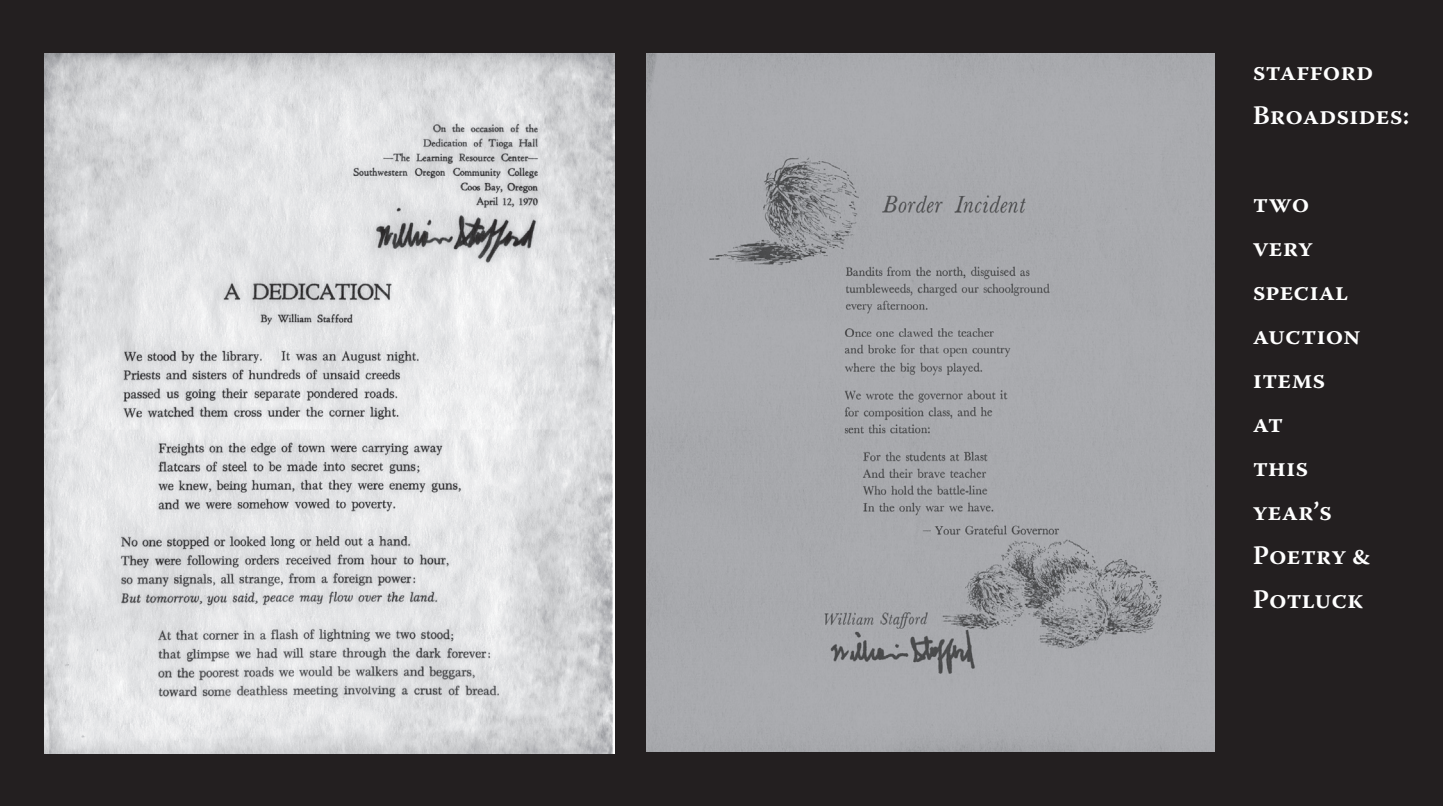
In response to "Climbing along the River," Agnes Sia Hui Bing, Fatimah Zahra Ubaidillah, Fatin Adilah Rolfi, Muhammad Aminudin Jamil, Syed Marwan Mujahid, and Syed Azmen, students in the International Baccalaureate program taught by Friend Melissa Ann Reed, wrote a collective poem. What follows are excerpts from that poem.

What I believe is...

What I believe is...
leaves of willows dance in the same rhythm
as the flows of rivers across borders and rocks
as the wind's melody interrupting formation of cotton clouds.

What I believe is...
the coarsest of gravels are the purest of pearls
with only the gentlest of waters flowing through.
Men need gravels as they need water.

What I believe is ...
we have to appreciate even the littlest things ---
the blink of an eye, inhalation of a breath, the beat of a heart,
the beauty of a smile, the colours of laughter.
We are all the same.



STAFFORD
BROADSIDES:

TWO
VERY
SPECIAL
AUCTION
ITEMS
AT
THIS
YEAR'S
POETRY &
POTLUCK

THIRD ANNUAL POETRY & POTLUCK SET FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH

It's time again for the Friends of William Stafford to gather in Lake Oswego's Foothills Park for an afternoon of sharing poetry, food, and fellowship. This will be the third year in a row for this joyous event and the board, led by Sharon Wood Wortman, is looking forward to putting out the welcome mat for another memorable gathering.

Friends and families or guests of Friends are asked to bring a main dish, salad, or dessert, along with a couple of favorite poems to share. There will be an open mic time and as always, memories of Bill will be warmly welcomed. The fun begins at noon this year and board members and volunteers will be on hand to answer questions, hear thoughts and suggestions, and provide beverages, plates, and utensils. Please email Sharon@bridgestories.com if you are available to help.

This year's goings on will be emceed by board member Rich Wandschneider and Confluence Press publisher Jim Hepworth. Another treat will be the introduction of a new broadside, courtesy of Paper Crane Press in Half Moon Bay, California.

Featured Poet will be Ingrid Wendt, who is a long-time Friend and the author of five books of poems, including *Surgeonfish*, winner of the 2004 Editions Prize. Our Poetry Pilgrim is Longview, Washington resident, poet/teacher Joseph Green. He recently made a generous donation of the Stafford broadside "Meditation" (see pg 7). Once again, singer/songwriter Paula Sinclair will be with us to musically perform some of William Stafford's poetry, as well.

As has been the custom, there will be drawings for gift baskets filled mostly with literary and poetic gifts donated by board members and others. Broadside will also be available for purchase during the afternoon.

Two very special Silent Auction items have come from Paulann Petersen in the form of boldly and clearly signed William Stafford vintage broadsides. "A Dedication," dated April 12, 1970, is one of the earliest broadsides ever produced of any poem. Paul Merchant knows of only one other that predates it. The second, titled "Border Incident," was written later. Bidding on these two items will start at \$100 for "Border Incident," and \$150 for "A Dedication."

FWS board member Martha Gatchell has also generously donated a long out-of-print signed and numbered boxed set of two volumes of poetry. *The Long Sigh The Wind Makes* is a collection of Stafford poems, and *Stafford's Road*, an anthology of poems written to honor him, includes work by Ursula LeGuin, Shelley Reece, David Hedges, Kim Stafford and a host of others. The slip-cased double volume was produced in 1991 by John Laursen and is being offered for a minimum bid of \$150.

Additional donations for Silent Auction will include a signed Lucille Clifton channel card of "whose side are you on?" from the 2003 POETRY IN MOTION series. (You may read this poem on p.5.) and may also include broadsides by W.S. Merwin, Kim Stafford, and Margaret Atwood.

Given that the first Poetry & Potluck was held on a 90-degree day in September 2006, and last year's event featured umbrellas and a wood fire, we hesitate to speculate on the weather. We advise "dressing for Oregon" and bringing along a folding chair or blanket. See you in September.



Photo/Michael Stubbs

GLENNA LUSCHEI READING ON THE OLD LOS PRIETOS SITE.

First Day: Peer Observation of William Stafford Circa 1990 Lewis-Clark State College

By every observation standard for teachers at our college, he should fail. His dress? A floppy hat, a common work shirt, faded now and a bit overlarge, and patches on his baggy pants, two scuffed and muddy shoes, brown and black, more like bricks than shoes, I'd say. And another thing, he's late. One student says she has writer's block, and although he turns his back to pick up the chalk, he rolls his eyes and never answers. He only nods just enough to acknowledge her existence. On the board he scrawls three words: "Creative Writing Rx." Turned toward us his two blue eyes turn black or maybe they were black to start. He looks more like a lizard, really, than a teacher, the elbows tense, fingers slightly curled, hands in front more like little paws. "Okay," he says, "My name is William Tell. Ask me. Ask me now or sometime anything you like, anything at all. I'm ready." But anyone awake can see: these students are not ready. They are asleep. Each and every face has turned to ice.

JIM HEPWORTH

NEWS, NOTES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

THE WILLIAM STAFFORD RENDEZVOUS happened the weekend of April 10-12 in Hutchinson, Newton, and Clements, Kansas. It was the first event of its kind and featured “Kim Stafford & Company” as the catalysts for conversation about the influence of William Stafford on present and future poetry in Kansas. Denise Low, Kansas Poet Laureate, noted that *poetry is not a frill, but integral to our survival*. Saturday’s events took place at the Flying W Ranch in Clements and the evening concluded with music and poetry around the campfire. There are plans to rendezvous again – maybe next year.

This summer, the **MOONSTRUCK POETRY SERIES** will welcome audiences to hear readings by FWS members and other poets local to the Lake Oswego area. On July 27th, Joseph A. Soldati, Micah Llewellyn, and Catherine Conrad-Dixon will read at the Moonstruck Chocolate Café, 45 South State Street in downtown Lake Oswego. August 31st will feature Paulann Petersen, Kay Reid and others in a tribute to William Stafford, marking the fifteenth anniversary of his death on August 28, 1993.

ABAYOMI ANIMASHAUN recently received notice that his poetry collection, *The Giving of Pears*, was named winner of the 2008 Hudson Prize. The book will be published in the coming year by Black Lawrence Press. You may read about this Friend on the news page of our website by clicking on the archived Winter 2005-2006 issue of this newsletter. Congratulations Abayo!

And speaking of websites, you may want to visit www.assistnews.net, the site for ASSIST News Service(ANS). On Thursday, April 3, 2008 there is a Writer’s Opinion column by **Brian Nixon**, a pastor, writer, musician, and family man who writes from his experience as a member of the Church of the Brethren, telling how he missed meeting Bill at the 1991 Annual Conference in Portland, Oregon. Nixon goes on to say that after finding *Scripture of Leaves*, he became an avid student and collector of Stafford’s work.

The lineup for the **12TH BIENNIAL GERALDINE R. DODGE POETRY FESTIVAL** is again magnificent. Listed among the presenters are FWS National Advisors Lucille Clifton, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Maxine Kumin. Historic Waterloo Village in Stanhope, New Jersey will be re-opened especially for this year’s expected audience of 20,000 for the four-day event September 25 – 28, 2008. To learn more or purchase tickets please visit www.dodgepoetry.org.

PAUL WILLIS, who has for the past two years organized Birthday Readings on the site of Los Prietos just outside of Santa Barbara, California, was in Portland on June 22nd for a reading celebrating his first full-length book of poems, *Visiting Home*. Many local Friends were on hand to welcome him warmly.

Abundant thanks are extended to Lifetime Friend **SUE EINOWSKI**, who not only served FWS as treasurer for over a year, but who, with her husband Ed, and Shelley and Mary Reece, generously funded the Lucille Clifton reception and other projects.

If you’re in Salem, Oregon you may want to visit the new **POET LAUREATE READING ROOM AT THE OREGON STATE LIBRARY**. It is home to the Oregon Poetry Collection, which includes books from poets who been born, raised, schooled, or lived in Oregon.

FWS is especially grateful to board member **RICH WANDSCHNEIDER**, for his work on the Oregon Arts Commission grant that funded a large part of our involvement in the final Ink exhibit at Lewis & Clark.

If you had a “Please Renew” or “Final Newsletter” sticker next to the address label on this issue, please do take action at once to avoid missing out on future editions, the National Poetry Month gift from FWS and the Poetry & Potluck – all of which are funded by your renewing enrollments. We appreciate you and look forward to continuing what we hope is a mutually beneficial relationship. Thanks!



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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, 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**
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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): _____

Welcome & Special Thanks to our Friends who upgraded their Lifetime donation

- Patricia Carver
- Courtney Cloyd
- Madeline DeFrees
- Martha Gatchell
- Scot Siegel
- Geo Staley
- Charlotte Tufts
- Kathleen Worley
- Sharon Wood Wortman

Welcome New Friends January – July 2008

- Larry Anderson
- Kenard Burchette
- Daiel Dewardorf
- Maura Doherty
- Katherine Drabek
- B. Diane King
- Rosemary Lombard
- Lee Martin
- Annabelle McGee
- Travis Poling
- Louis Pollack
- Marjorie Power
- John F. Schilke
- Jonathan Peter Shaw
- Susan Shawn
- Holly Springfield
- Deb Stone
- Sylvia Wheeler
- Stephanie VanHorn
- Chuah Siew Yen

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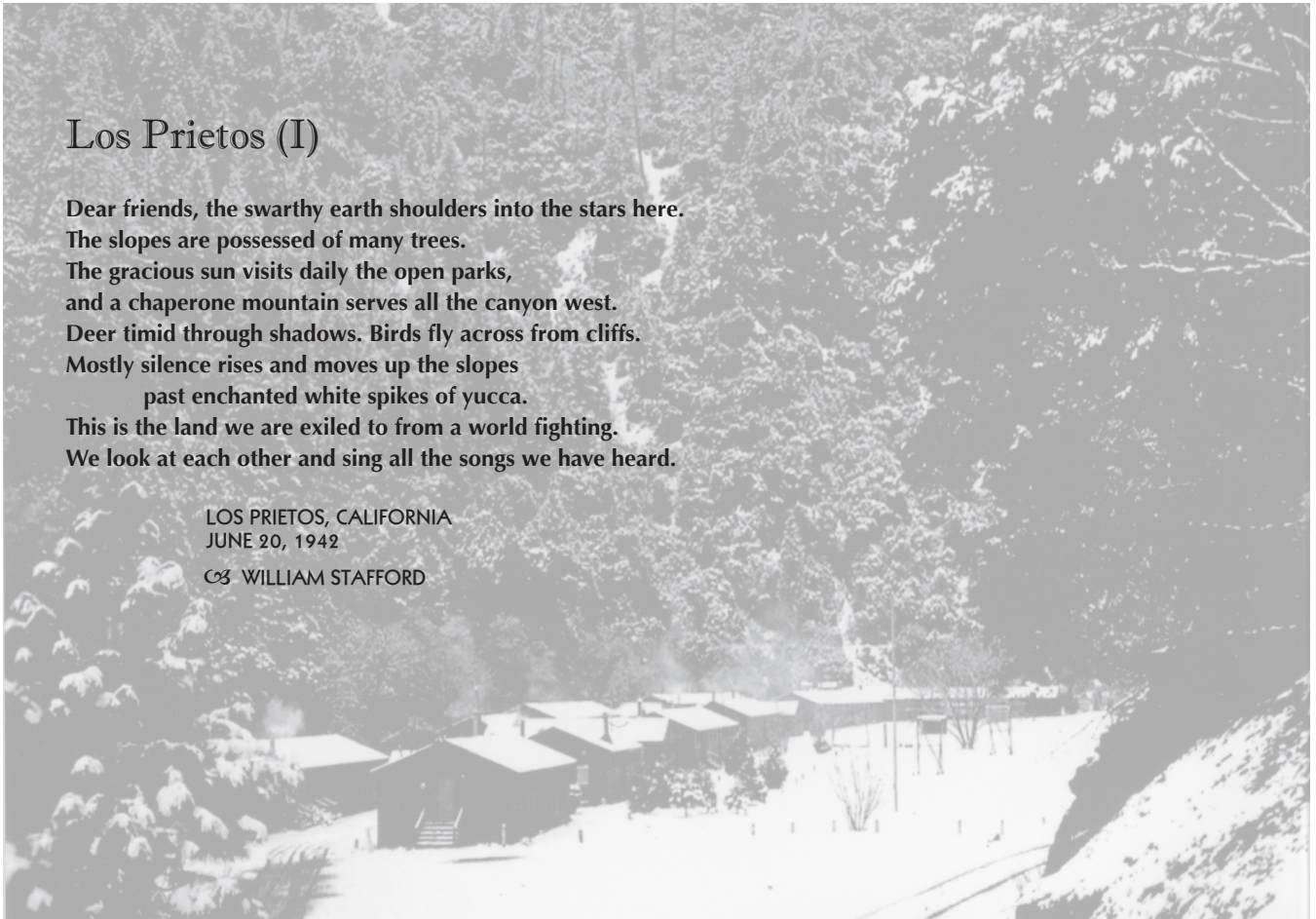
Please email comments, letters, news, and information on poetry events, awards, etc. to:

news@williamstafford.org
 or mail to:
 Friends of William Stafford
 P.O. Box 592
 Lake Oswego, OR 97034

Los Prietos (I)

Dear friends, the swarthy earth shoulders into the stars here.
The slopes are possessed of many trees.
The gracious sun visits daily the open parks,
and a chaperone mountain serves all the canyon west.
Deer timid through shadows. Birds fly across from cliffs.
Mostly silence rises and moves up the slopes
past enchanted white spikes of yucca.
This is the land we are exiled to from a world fighting.
We look at each other and sing all the songs we have heard.

LOS PRIETOS, CALIFORNIA
JUNE 20, 1942
♣ WILLIAM STAFFORD



friends of **WILLIAM STAFFORD**

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Final *How the Ink Feels* exhibit at
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Stafford Birthday Celebrations
Around the World: pp 10-11



3rd Annual Poetry & Potluck
coming in September: p 13

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