

friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD

A Newsletter For Poets & Poetry
Volume 14, Issue 1 - Fall 2009

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REKINDLING PASSION FOR THE METHOW RIVER POEMS

by Sulima Malzin

The spring 2006 issue of this newsletter featured a cover story titled "The Methow River Poems: More Than A Roadside Attraction." It told how in 1992, a year before his death, William Stafford was commissioned by the Forest Service to provide a series of poems that fit the high Cascades landscape and could be "posted" at various points along the river highway.

This collection of poems turned out to be the last complete body of work that William Stafford produced, and the one he infused with perhaps his greatest passion. You can hear that passion in his voice as he talks about "The Methow River Poems" in Mike Markee and Vince Wixon's video trilogy, *William Stafford Life & Poems*.

Visit our website www.williamstafford.org for a look at both the newsletter article and the video.

The fact that the selected poems were not installed until after Stafford's death made the project even more poignant. In "Time for Serenity, Anyone?" he said... *this world still is alive; / it stretches out there shivering toward its own / creation, and I'm part of it. Even my breathing / enters into the elaborate give-and-take, ...*

Bill sent seventeen poems which, with the exception of one ("Ask Me" was already a perfect fit), were written in response to the Forest Service's

request. In accordance with their funding capability at the time, they selected and installed seven of the poems. These were "Time for Serenity, Anyone?" "From the Wild People," "Ask Me," "Where We Are," "Is This Feeling About the West Real?" "Silver Star," and "A Valley Like This."

Although many Stafford fans and followers knew about the poems that had been installed in 1994 along the Methow River Highway in the mountains of Washington state, many of our readers did not. In the

Time for Serenity, Anyone?

I like to live in the sound of water,
in the feel of mountain air. A sharp
reminder hits me: this world still is alive;
it stretches out there shivering toward its own
creation, and I'm part of it. Even my breathing
enters into this elaborate give and take,
this bowing to sun and moon, day or night,
winter, summer, storm, still – this tranquil
chaos that seems to be going somewhere.
This wilderness with a great peacefulness in it.
This motionless turmoil, this everything dance.

WILLIAM STAFFORD

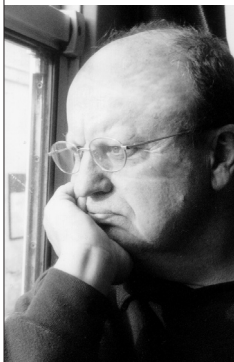
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In Celebration of the William Stafford Room at the Watzek Library

By Paul Merchant

On the afternoon of Saturday February 21, a group of well-wishers crowded into the new home of the William Stafford Archives to raise a toast to the Stafford family for their generous gift. The William Stafford Room, on the third floor of Lewis & Clark College's Watzek Library, houses all of the poet's publications in custom-designed bookcases built by one of the college carpenters. There is ultra-violet protection on the large picture window, and the room's conference table seats eight planning committee members or an advanced poetry seminar.

REPORT FROM



THE ARCHIVES

Present to greet Dorothy, Kim, and Barbara Stafford were college board members and senior administrators, faculty from at least four departments, the library director and many of his staff, some of Oregon's best poets, scholars, and lovers of literature, and friends of William and Dorothy Stafford from their earliest days in Oregon. Also on hand to celebrate were the students who have been so instrumental in driving forward on a variety of fronts the cataloguing and digitizing of the archives, under the direction of the Special Collections staff, led by Doug Erickson and Jeremy Skinner.

In addition to William Stafford's publications in poetry collections, journals, and anthologies, the bookshelves also house his thousands of negatives, the many settings of his poems to music, and the hundred or more broadsides of his poems. The walls are bright with framed broadsides now returned from their decade of travel across the country in Friends' exhibits so loyally curated by Patty Wixon and Nancy Winklesky. Notable among these are broadsides from Sandy Tilcock's lone goose press in Eugene, Karla Elling's Mummy Mountain Press in Arizona, and Doug Stow's Paper Crane Press in California.

The room and its associated collections also contains materials from all four other Oregon poets laureate: Edwin Markham, Ethel Romig Fuller, Ben Hur Lampman, and Lawson Inada, extensive holdings of five important Oregon poetry publishers (Untide Press, Prescott Street Press, Breitenbush Books, Trask House Books, and Traprock Books) in addition to William Stafford's small press publishers (Perishable Press, Honeybrook Press, and Confluence Press). Readers can also consult poetry volumes by a wide range of Oregon poets: Vi Gale, Paulann Petersen, Vern Rutsala, Peter Sears, Kim Stafford, Mary Szybist, and a host of others, so that a visitor is surrounded by the richness of well over a century of Oregon poetry. These collections are being expanded almost daily by new acquisitions and gifts.



Watercolor/Annaliese Dehner

Finally, in its role as a literature rare books reading room, the shelves also carry early and specially illustrated copies of major authors. Students can see Dante's *Divine Comedy* as illustrated by Botticelli, Flaxman, Blake, Dore, Monika Beisner, and Tom Phillips; Chaucer is represented by facsimiles of the Ellesmere Manuscript, William Morris's Kelmscott edition, and Ronald King's screenprint illustrations to the *Prologue*; Milton is represented in early editions and in John Martin's extraordinary illustrations, and Dickens in first and early editions of many novels, with their famous engravings. Fine press and early printings of American authors include volumes by William Everson, Ralph Ellison, Hazel Hall, Robert Frost, Kenneth Patchen, Catherine Dunn, Carolyn Kizer, Richard Hugo, and numerous national and northwest colleagues of William Stafford.

Welcoming as it is in its current state, the new room is also home to an adventure just beginning: the task of presenting William Stafford's (and other poets') work in digital form, through audio and video recordings of poetry readings and interviews, and through digitization of drafts and typescripts. To mark this new direction, we have launched a web page, still in embryo form at <http://www.staffordarchives.org> where (in its News and Notes section) you can read our first blogs at <http://williamstaffordarchives.blogspot.com> and add your own response by clicking on the comment button under any blog entry.

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

Three are warmly welcomed by FWS Board of Trustees



Leah Stenson in Amsterdam

Leah Stenson, who spent sixteen years teaching English and raising a family in Tokyo before moving to Oregon, was introduced to the poetry of William Stafford shortly after moving to Lake Oswego in 1993. Her daughter's gift of *The Way It Is* was enough to spark her interest even though she wasn't reading or

writing much poetry at the time. Then she took a class taught by Friend Joan Maiers at Marylhurst University, and she became a real fan. "I felt strongly that Stafford was a poet of the people, concerned with communicating heart-to-heart rather than dazzling readers with heady flights of imagination." She admired his integrity and dignity of character and found that in some ways he reminded her of her father, "a writer-philosopher who served time in a POW camp and emerged from the war a pacifist."

As are so many newcomers to Stafford's work, Stenson was moved by the energy of the first January Birthday Reading she attended and by the fact that so many had gathered together to keep his poetic legacy and spirit alive. Stenson has been an active member of the Friends of William Stafford for several years and has organized and participated in Birthday and other commemorative readings in the local area.

Since joining the board, she has enthusiastically taken on the "broadside project," maintaining the broadsides, marketing them at events, and mailing them to those who order online or through the mail. Leah Stenson is a dedicated poet whose work has appeared in several periodicals, while a number of her short nonfiction pieces have appeared online in the Oregon Literary Review. Her chapbook, *East / West*, was published through the William Stafford Institute in 2005 and she is currently at work on a full-length poetry collection and a memoir. The board of trustees welcomes and looks forward to an ongoing relationship with Leah Stenson.

Arnie Dyer had worked for several years with former board treasurer Betty Barton and with Sally Anderson, organizing and hosting the Vancouver Birthday Reading for several years. During that time they have built a small community of people who are interested in Stafford's poetry and look to the event each year. "The celebration," he says, "is like a reunion of people who enjoy the poetry and the spirit of the day, confirming that poetry really does matter." It

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Top: Dorothy and Kim Stafford (left) share stories and toasts; Bottom: Barbara and Steve Wilson perusing some of Barbara's dad's artifacts.

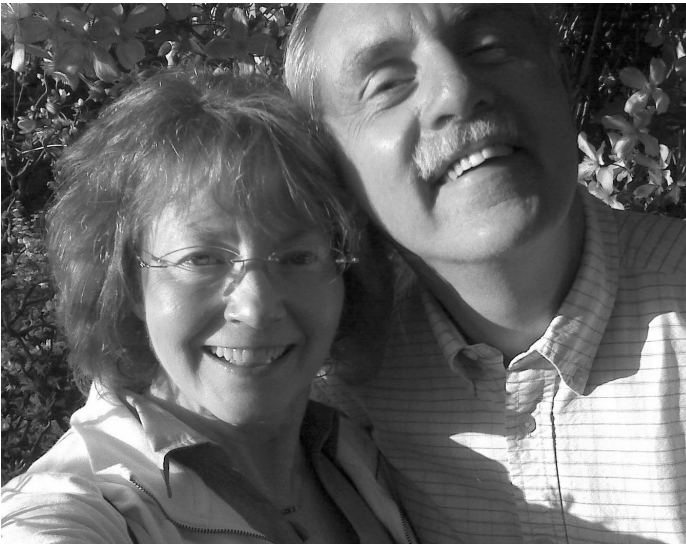


Three are warmly welcomed by FWS Board of Trustees

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was here, two years ago, that he became interested in the Methow River Poetry Restoration Project, which is what he looks forward to becoming involved in as a working member of the board.

Recently retired from a 30-year career teaching high school and college English, Dyer currently teaches Writing part-time at Mt. Hood Community College. He has also, over the years, been active on a number of community boards and peace and justice projects. Even more recently, Dyer married the former Jean Trygstad and has relocated from Vancouver to Portland. The Friends of William Stafford extend all good wishes to him and his bride and the board looks forward to his presence and participation as it moves forward.



Photo/Anonymous

Arnie Dyer and Jean Trygstad

Linda Gelbrich is a recently retired clinical social worker. She hails from Corvallis where she had worked with Samaritan Integrative Medicine as a therapist and health care instructor. With her clients, she has encouraged the exploration of creative paths towards healing such as writing, reading poetry, and seeking personal healing metaphors.

Gelbrich is also a writer and poet in her own right. A native Oregonian, she is in love with the western landscape, which features prominently in her own writing and in the collaborative work she does with her photographer husband Keith. She is active in several writing organizations and is a member of the poetry group, Poetic License. Her enjoyment of promoting events and writers is evidenced by the size of her mailing list and the knowledge that she seems to have at her fingertips. She has been on the organizing committee for the Corvallis Stafford Birthday Celebrations for a several years.

It was a “number of years ago” Gelbrich says, while taking a writing workshop at Sitka taught by Kim Stafford, that she heard the poem, “When I Met My Muse.” It was the first William Stafford poem

Preparation

Before you write
sit and notice your breath.

Allow a gentle carousel of words
to flow in their current around you,
then on your breath
into your space of longing
where hunger lies. Become

a body of invitation and hospitality
where words are welcome, where
breath moves freely, where sparks
ignite and your own fire burns.

LINDA GELBRICH

she recalled hearing and it stunned her. Following the workshop she drove back home to Corvallis by way of Portland and Powell’s Books in order to be sure to find the poem. She describes Stafford’s work as continuing to be transformational for her, and frequently the inspiration for her writing. Gelbrich declares it “an honor to serve on the board of the Friends of William Stafford and join others in promoting the values of the organization in our communities.” The board already appreciates having Linda Gelbrich on its team. You can read more about that in “From the Chair” on page 5 as Shelley Reece tells of Linda’s efforts to see to it that America’s First Family has a copy of the broadside “Choosing a Dog.”



Photo/Ken Gelbrich

Linda Gelbrich



From the Chair

by Shelley Reece

This is the curious story of a dog and a poem about a dog. When Patty Wixon picked “Choosing a Dog” for the Friends of William Stafford’s 2008 letterpress broadside, she became part of a surprising coincidence. Doug

Stow of Paper Crane Press printed the poem, artfully as always. Then some time in the late summer or early fall of 2008 presidential candidate Barack Obama said at a rally that his daughters, Sasha and Malia, had earned the puppy he and Michelle promised them.

After President Obama was elected and there was more and more talk about that presidential puppy, the Board of Friends at a December meeting thought it a good idea to acquaint our new President with William Stafford’s poetry, especially since all that fuss had occurred about what kind of dog to choose. We decided to send a packet of broadsides containing “Choosing a Dog” and three others: “You Reading This, Be Ready,” “A Ritual to Read to Each Other,” and “How These Words Happened.” The only question was how to get it to him. Linda Gelbrich, lively new member of the Board, volunteered to see if there could be a way to get Stafford broadsides to President Obama, considering how apt Patty Wixon’s choice of a broadside had been and considering that the President was a poet at one time, and for all we knew, still may be.

Linda, who calls herself a “possibilitarian,” made a number of efforts, beginning with the woman at the White House information line. Security takes precedence, and the integrity of items sent is not guaranteed. In an e-mail to me, Linda listed her strategies:

“Over the past few months, the efforts have included a combination of e-mail and phone calls to the offices of Senators Wyden and Merkeley, Representative DeFazio, the White House, OSU basketball coach Craig Robinson [Michelle Obama’s brother], local active Democrats, and friends who may ‘have connections.’ Those with whom I’ve spoken have been courteous, but there is a filter. E-mails have not been answered. The most promising possibility so far has been a young gentleman in Senator Merkeley’s Portland office who directed me to an inner layer of e-mail addresses for the White House, where, he said, the response there is likely to be greater. I am still waiting on a reply and if there is no response that young man said I could contact him again.”

Linda, the entire Board applauds your efforts, ingenuity, and persistence. Now that the new puppy has arrived at the White House, can the William Stafford broadsides be far behind?

Hopefully, there will be more to follow on this story.

Choosing a Dog

William Stafford

“It’s love,” they say. You touch
the right one and a whole half of the universe
wakes up, a new half.

Some people never find
that half, or they neglect it or trade it
for money or success and it dies.

The faces of big dogs tell, over the years,
that size is a burden: you enjoy it for awhile
but then maintenance gets to you.

When I get old I think I’ll keep, not a little
dog, but a serious dog,
for the casual, drop-in criminal—

My kind of dog, unimpressed by
dress or manner, just knowing
what’s really there by the smell.

Your good dogs, some things that they hear
they don’t really want you to know—
it’s too grim or ethereal.

And sometimes when they look in the fire
they see time going on and someone alone,
but they don’t say anything.



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“What’s in my Journal,” “Choosing a Dog,” “At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border,” “Merci Beaucoup” © 1998 reprinted from *The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems*, with permission from Graywolf Press, Saint Paul, Minnesota.

“At the Stafford House in Fall” by Nan Wylder Sherman, “At the William Stafford Archive” by Kim Stafford, “Blessing” by Sulima Malzin, “Prayer for William Stafford” by Carol Clark Williams, “Preparation” by Linda Gelbrich, “Retreat” by Scot Siegel, all used with permission of the authors.

Fourth Annual Poetry & Potluck Brightens a September Sunday at Foothills Park

by Sulima Malzin

On an afternoon of sunlight and shadows with gusts of playful breezes and only a hint of rain, the fourth annual Poetry & Potluck happened again at Foothills Park not far from the Stafford Stones and adjacent to the soon-to-be dedicated William Stafford Pathway.

There was, as usual, an amazing potluck feast in the gazebo. At one end of the table was a platter of fresh garden tomatoes and bowls of colorful salads, while at the other, a robust apple pie and an array of exquisite desserts. Gracing the long table in between were more bowls, platters, and casserole dishes teeming with pasta, vegetables, meats and fish - a mind-boggling array and a lovely spot for Friends to chat and re-connect.

This year's gathering was a little different - a group project in which the entire board served as the committee that drew the pieces together to create the 'down home' gathering. For fund raisers there were, as has been the custom, collectors' items for the Silent Auction and 'drawing tickets' available for purchase, for the three donated Gift Baskets filled with poetry collections, chapbooks, CDs, gift certificates from local bookstores, and other surprises.

Without any "featured" poets, most of the afternoon was taken up with poetry readings, (25 readers to be exact), from among the Friends in attendance, led by Dorothy Stafford, who read "Merci Beaucoup." The board's own Rich Wandschneider, in his own inimitable fashion, again acted as Emcee. Midway through the afternoon, to everyone's delight, Paula Sinclair, a local (by way of Kentucky) singer / songwriter made her third annual guest appearance to sing and strum her versions of Stafford poems set to music.

Because Doug Stow, the letterpress artist and founder of Paper Crane Press in Half Moon Bay, California, wasn't able to be there, Board Chair Shelley Reece introduced this year's beautiful new letterpress broadside, "At the Un—National Monument along the Canadian Border." Each year Doug has generously gifted the Friends of William Stafford with the donation of his artistic talent, exquisitely printing a new broadside, for which the board is most appreciative.

As must all good things, the Poetry & Potluck had to come to an end - at least for this year. As Bill might have said, "Adios and Merci Beaucoup," or maybe, if you said it first, "Likewise" -- or even "Far Out!"



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border

**This is the field where the battle did not happen,
where the unknown soldier did not die.
This is the field where grass joined hands,
where no monument stands,
and the only heroic thing is the sky.**

**Birds fly here without any sound,
unfolding their wings across the open.
No people killed—or were killed—on this ground
hallowed by neglect and an air so tame
that people celebrate it by forgetting its name.**

WILLIAM STAFFORD

"At the Un-National Monument along the Canadian Border" copyright 1998, the Estate of William Stafford. Reprinted from THE WAY IT IS with permission from Graywolf Press, www.graywolfpress.org. Funded by Friends of William Stafford. Printed at Paper Crane Press, Half Moon Bay, California, September 2009.



Photo/Dennis Schmidling



PHOTOS: (Clockwise from top left): Tim Barnes keeping warm with wife, Ilka Kuznik, Ingrid Wendt and Ralph Salisbury enjoying a reading, Paulann Petersen and Mike Markee showing off one of Mike's contributions to the Silent Auction, Jerry Gatchell reading from 'Even in Quiet Places.'



Merci Beaucoup

It would help if no one ever mentioned France again. Its words are the ones that get me most into trouble, especially *naïve* and *folie*. Someone sits down beside me in church and says, "Bonjour." "Likewise," I say, and they look at me. See what I mean? It's a French look, and I never get used to that other word they begin to think of.

Or my lady friend says, "Merci," and right away I'm caught up in France, wanting to say "Adios" but usually saying "Likewise," as nice as I can so that she'll see I'm agreeable, no matter what language we're in. But I can tell she's thinking, "Far out," the way they say it over there.

Here's the thing – it's not the words, really; it's being lost from that high ground you have if you're the one who's the insider. It's the "Mother" tongue that says, "Be the way I tell you and you can have my approval but don't ask any questions." So I don't. I'm back home at the foot of the table holding the fork right, learning to say, "Likewise."

☞ WILLIAM STAFFORD

Photo/Dennis Schmidling



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

REKINDLING PASSION FOR THE METHOW RIVER POEMS, *cont.*

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article we quoted Oregon poets Ingrid Wendt and Ralph Salisbury, and Janet and Ed Granger-Happ from Fairfield, Connecticut, all of whom had visited the sites where poems still stood.

The feature generated a good bit of interest and some enthusiasm for restoring those plaques that had been removed due to damage caused mostly by the harsh winters.

However, as is sometimes the case, enthusiasm faded and the project was set aside.

For Dennis Schmidling, an FWS board member and old friend of the Staffords, the idea was never completely sidelined, however. Schmidling knew first-hand the passion with which Bill had engaged in the project and he couldn't imagine letting it die anymore than he could imagine letting any of Bill's other work disappear .

Last year, Dennis and his wife Helen, who is also on the board, made a couple of long drives from Portland to Winthrop, Washington where the ranger station is located. They not only got a look at the damaged signs, but spoke with local citizens who were interested in restoring them. In fact, it sounded as if there was more than just a little interest in a restoration project and it extended throughout the Methow Valley.

As coincidence would have it, both Scot Siegel and Arnie Dyer became members of the FWS board of trustees during the time that the Schmidlings began sharing their thoughts about engaging the Methow Valley residents, arts and culture groups, and again the forest rangers, in revitalizing the poem project. Both of these men had a strong interest, as did Tim Barnes, the incoming newsletter editor. Dyer, in fact, had been involved with former board member Betty Barton's initial efforts back in 2005 to promote and implement the restoration.

Barton, another passionate advocate for the project, had this to say upon learning of the renewed interest: "The Methow River Poems, which began as an interpretive sign project, continue to enlighten us in new ways. What a joy and privilege to be part of restoring and preserving such beauty in such a beautiful place!"

As if in tandem with the resurgence of interest in the project, Cincinnati, Ohio Friends, Jim and Rachel Votaw wrote us about their 2008 summer travels to the Northwest to visit the Methow River Valley, hoping to read and photograph the poetry installations.

Jim Votaw felt that he had been inspired to investigate Stafford's work originally by the poems "Roll Call" and "At the Bomb Testing Site." He later fell in love with "The Way It Is" and "Ask Me," both of which he keeps pinned up in his work cubicle.

"Completing the Methow River Poems in the landscape is a work in progress that will require the inspiration of the arts, the passion of the Methow communities, and the vision of its leaders. Only then will this legacy of William Stafford's poetry become manifest in a spirit that is true to his work."

Dennis Schmidling
FWS board member and webmaster

"As it would happen," says Votaw, "during my reading and research I came upon the Methow River Poems and the story of their origin. It was while watching a video about them that we decided that going to see these 'poem signs' would make for a wonderful trip. A few years passed before this journey, which in my mind was more of a pilgrimage, was at last finalized."

Votaw went on to say that "The entire idea of poetry in the environment was fascinating to me, not to mention that the poems were wonderful."

Describing themselves as "midwesterners who seldom hike," the Votaws admitted to some uneasiness as they made their way along the river at times in the midst of what felt like deep forests. In the end, though, they felt that they had truly experienced what they came for - the voice of William Stafford: *Friend, are you there? Will you touch when you pass, like the rain?*



Jim and Rachel Votaw, enjoying a Methow River poem

Photo: Anonymous



A Valley Like This

Sometimes you look at an empty valley like this,
and suddenly the air is filled with snow.
That is the way the whole world happened --
there was nothing, and then...

But maybe some time you will look out and even
the mountains are gone, the world become nothing
again. What can a person do to help
bring back the world?

We have to watch it and then look at each other.
Together we hold it close and carefully
save it, like a bubble that can disappear
if we don't watch out.

Please think about this as you go on. Breathe on the world.
Hold out your hand to it. When mornings and evenings
roll along, watch how they open and close, how they
invite you to the long party that your life is.

∞ WILLIAM STAFFORD

SEE PAGE 10 FOR A MAP OF STAFFORD POEMS AS THEY APPEAR ALONG THE METHOW RIVER HIGHWAY AND THROUGH THE VALLEY.

Looking Out Over A Valley Like This

Friend Ann Dudley spoke of her experience “searching for Stafford” along the Methow River Highway a couple of years ago as a prelude to reading “A Valley Like This” at a January birthday event.

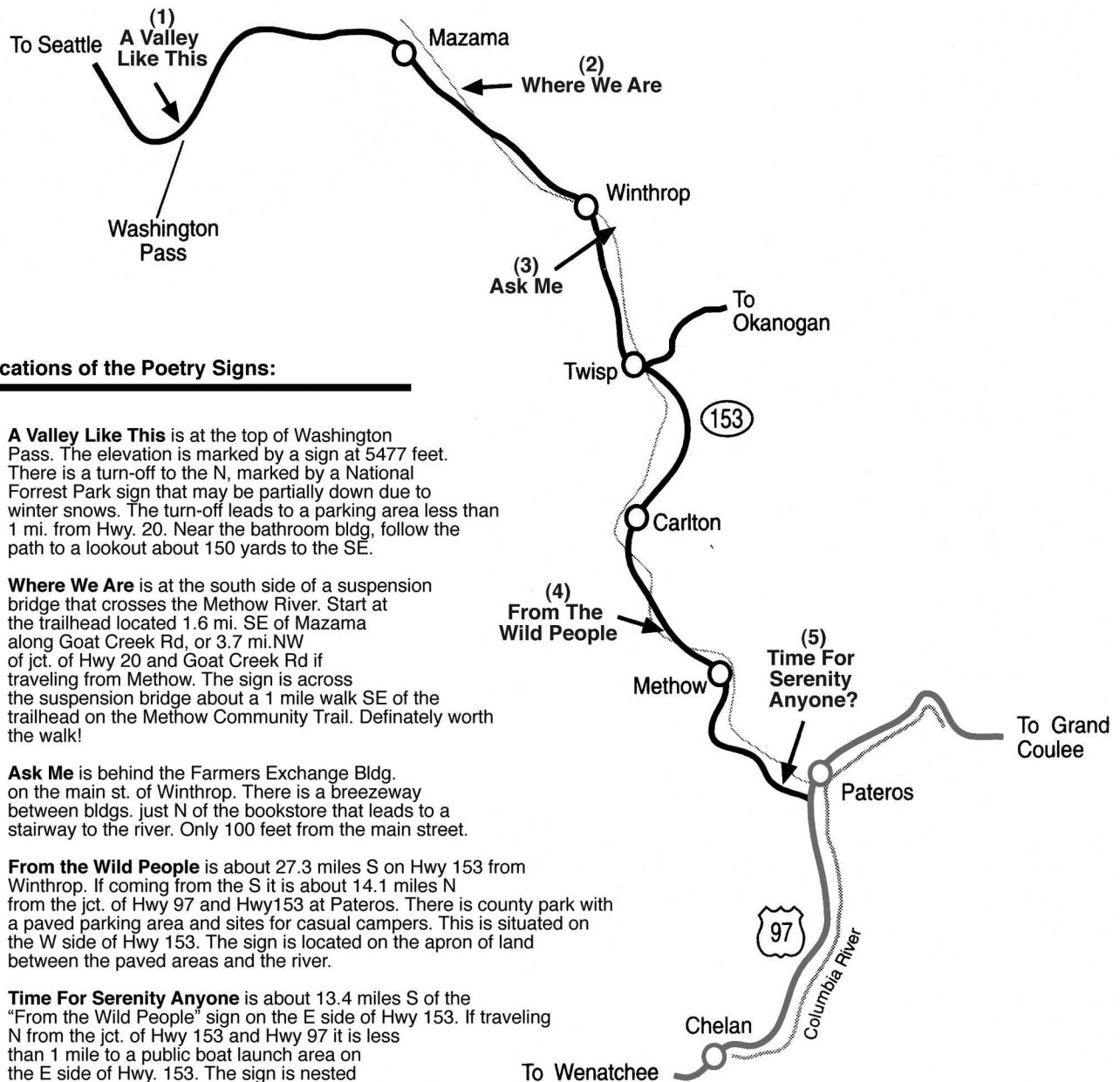
Having heard Bill include some of the Methow River Poems in a reading she attended at Portland State in 1993, Dudley was motivated to visit northern Washington by “the twinkle in his eye as he imagined the surprise of motorists who, when they pulled off the highway to admire a view, would find a poem.” She recalls Stafford going even further to imagine how it might be to find poetry at viewpoints and rest stops all across the country. “I loved that image,” she declared.

When Dudley and her partner finally made the camping/hiking trip a number of years later, they were disappointed. They read signs and plaques about geological formations, power generated by the dams of the glacier-fed lakes, and about Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, and Philip Whalen having stayed in the fire look-out at the top of the mountain in the far distance, but *did not find a single poem*. “Oh well,” she thought, “the poetry project must not have happened. Maybe the funding never came through.”

On their final day before beginning the long descent that would eventually lead them back home to Oregon, the pair came upon the Washington Pass Viewpoint and decided to stop. After a short hike up from the parking lot, “there on a wooden post was a poem; a poem by William Stafford; a beautiful poem facing a rugged mountain and a stream-run valley.”

Dudley read the poem several times, savored the view, took the circular hike through the woods back to the car, then decided she couldn't leave without reading the poem one more time. So back up again and finally, after several more reads, they left. Sadly, she reported, hardly anyone else stopped to glance at, much less read, the poem. “But,” she decided, “What did it matter? After all, that poem, with its glorious invitation ... *When mornings and evenings / roll along, watch how they open and close, how they / invite you to the long party that your life is...* was there for me.”

METHOW RIVER POEM LOCATIONS - 2009



Locations of the Poetry Signs:

- (1) **A Valley Like This** is at the top of Washington Pass. The elevation is marked by a sign at 5477 feet. There is a turn-off to the N, marked by a National Forrest Park sign that may be partially down due to winter snows. The turn-off leads to a parking area less than 1 mi. from Hwy. 20. Near the bathroom bldg, follow the path to a lookout about 150 yards to the SE.
- (2) **Where We Are** is at the south side of a suspension bridge that crosses the Methow River. Start at the trailhead located 1.6 mi. SE of Mazama along Goat Creek Rd, or 3.7 mi. NW of jct. of Hwy 20 and Goat Creek Rd if traveling from Methow. The sign is across the suspension bridge about a 1 mile walk SE of the trailhead on the Methow Community Trail. Definately worth the walk!
- (3) **Ask Me** is behind the Farmers Exchange Bldg. on the main st. of Winthrop. There is a breezeway between bldgs. just N of the bookstore that leads to a stairway to the river. Only 100 feet from the main street.
- (4) **From the Wild People** is about 27.3 miles S on Hwy 153 from Winthrop. If coming from the S it is about 14.1 miles N from the jct. of Hwy 97 and Hwy153 at Pateros. There is county park with a paved parking area and sites for casual campers. This is situated on the W side of Hwy 153. The sign is located on the apron of land between the paved areas and the river.
- (5) **Time For Serenity Anyone** is about 13.4 miles S of the "From the Wild People" sign on the E side of Hwy 153. If traveling N from the jct. of Hwy 97 and Hwy153 it is less than 1 mile to a public boat launch area on the E side of Hwy. 153. The sign is nested against heavy brush on the N side of this area, and just E of the public restroom. You may also see a couple of dumpsters. This sign will be relocated to a better location next year.

THANKS TO DENNIS AND HELEN SCHMIDLING

Newsletter Editor Resigns post

by Shelley Reece

“Time wants to show you another country”

William Stafford, “The Gift”

Sulima Malzin is stepping away from her role as editor of the Friends of William Stafford Newsletter. With hearty approval from the board, she has chosen Tim Barnes to take up the editing pen, and even as we look forward to Tim putting his own stamp on the next incarnation of the newsletter, we will miss Sulima’s warm touch. During the six years of her editorship, the newsletter has come into its own.

Feature articles have covered a broad landscape and a wide array of topics relevant to the mission of our organization. She added Paul Merchant’s column, a wonderful move. No one knows the Stafford archives, now at Lewis and Clark College, better than Paul, who has written eloquently about Stafford matters.

Sulima has as well added photos of Stafford’s life that had been unseen by the public, and she has made sure that the Stafford poem most apt to a particular issue of the Newsletter is sure to be printed there. These are only some of the features that have made for a progressively more interesting publication. Those who wish may examine past issues on our website www.williamstafford.org.

As a writer of both poetry and prose, Sulima feels she needs more time to devote to her own writing, particularly the completion of a body of work that has evolved from her chapbook, *Arms Filled With Bittersweet*, published through the William Stafford Center in 2006. “Indeed,” she says, “time is trying to show me a different country.”

In her resignation letter to the Board of Trustees, Sulima wrote: “These six years of volunteer service as the Friends of William Stafford newsletter editor rank high on my list of joys and privileges, and I know that I will miss the personal enrichment as well as the creative challenges each publication brought.”

Certainly the board, as well as our readers, will miss Sulima’s creative energy, her persistence, and her presence. We thank her for her dedication these past years and look forward to reading her new work.



Photo/Dennis Schmidling

BLESSING

*It can be this way sometimes
even in the rain or in a world
where wars are always lost.*

*Friends gather for a visit no one plans.
They talk and touch, brew a pot of tea.
A narrow band of sun travels millions of miles
to dance on the rims of their cups.*

*All at once in the quiet
they are holding peace
in their hands.*

SULIMA MALZIN

Celebrating Stafford in 2010

January 2010 is just around the corner and with it comes the full spectrum of William Stafford Birthday Celebrations. Celebrating Bill’s birthday (January 14, 1914) for the entire month is a Friends of William Stafford tradition that seems to grow each year.

It was Paulann Petersen who first hosted a “William Stafford Birthday Reading” at the West Linn Library in 1998 and again in ‘99. As a new board member, Petersen suggested that in January of 2000, the Friends of William Stafford might host such an event. The timing was perfect. FWS was exhibiting “How the Ink Feels” at Lake Oswego’s Heritage House, the perfect setting for a celebratory reading. It was a ‘standing room only’ success and the rest, as they say, is history.

Wherever you are, we hope you will be able to attend at least one of this year’s celebrations. At present, there are readings already scheduled throughout Oregon and Washington, with the list growing rapidly to include California, Texas, Kansas, New Jersey, Nevada, New York, Ohio, and Vermont. Internationally, Stafford’s life and work will be celebrated in Japan.

More information will be forthcoming in our year-end “Special Edition” of this newsletter and you will be able to see the complete list online at www.williamstafford.org.

William Stafford Peace Symposium



William Stafford Peace Symposium

Friends of William Stafford board member Tim Barnes was actively engaged in the planning of *Another World Instead: William Stafford Peace Symposium*. This year's symposium, a three-day consideration of poetry and peace from and beyond the life and writing of William Stafford, was held in May. Sponsored by The Northwest Writing Institute and Special Collections at Lewis & Clark College, it became a collaboration with the First Unitarian Church and the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, with a generous grant from the Lamb Foundation.

Highlights of the weekend symposium included the premiere showing of a new 30-minute film by Haydn Reiss. "Every War Has Two Losers," based on the book *Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War*. This and other short films were shown at the Portland Art Museum's Whitsell Auditorium in conjunction with the symposium.

Don't forget Friends of William Stafford for Holiday Gifts

Visit our website, www.williamstafford.org to see the array of letterpress broadsides available for the poetry lovers on your gift list. For those with a special place in their hearts for the four-legged and winged creatures, there is a good supply of "Choosing a Dog" and "Hummingbirds." And the gift of "Friendship" is always an option. Just enroll the person(s) of your choice, using the enrollment

On Friday, Kim Stafford (literary executor of the Estate of William Stafford) and Fred Marchant (editor of *Another World Instead: The Early Poems of William Stafford, 1937-1947*) taught a day-long class entitled "Another World Instead: Write Poetry for Peace." Participation in this event was won by competitive essay.

Friday evening offered a free poetry reading in the spirit of William Stafford at First Unitarian Church (Eliot Chapel, 1011 SW 12th Avenue, Portland) and featured readings by Dorothy Stafford, Abayo Animashaun, Tim Barnes, Andrea Hopkins, Fred Marchant, Kim Stafford, Mary Szybist, Paul Merchant, and others.

On Saturday May 16th the symposium, which was free and open to the public, was held from 9am-4pm in the Buchan Reception Room at First Unitarian Church. Speakers included Mary Szybist, Doug Erickson, Paul Merchant and Kim Stafford (Lewis & Clark College), Fred Marchant (Suffolk University), Jeff Gundy (Bluffton College) Phil Metres (John Carroll University), and others. The symposium provided an opportunity to consider how William Stafford's life of witness through poetry informs our opportunities for literary citizenship in a time of war.

Phil Metres spoke eloquently on poetry's role in the process of reconciliation. Playing off the famous Blake quote, he said "War is a failure of the imagination, and poetry offers the peace movement a relationship to language." Intrinsic to Stafford's work, Metres noted, is the recognition that the homefront is also a site of conflict and war has its sources among civilians. "Stafford," he said, "is the central pacifist poet of the United States."

This is the way Tim Barnes recalls the symposium winding down late Saturday afternoon: "The sunlight fell through generous windows. I remember only a mood in my attempt to gather the threads of the discussions, but I felt the glow of apprehension. My sense of what reconciliation means wavered and flared. Maybe peace is appreciating the satisfactions of the local. Maybe peace is a verb when it wavers about the cultural location of virtue."

form on page 15. We will see to it that they receive a gift card and complimentary copy of the newsletter.

And to all, the best of Holiday Wishes for a season of Good Health and Much Love!

Poems for Bill from Family and Friends

At its annual fall retreat, the FWS board of trustees spent the day at Lake Oswego's Heritage House, engaged in mapping out plans for the upcoming year. Board treasurer Scot Siegel wrote the following poem to mark the occasion.

RETREAT

In the spirit of William Stafford

Today with the slow grace of October's slant light
And the muffled steps of small mammals
We retreat to an historic hall called *Tomorrow*
And contemplate matters like water on stone
Smooth and elusive as otters—

Is this a *mission* only the wind could love?
When we reflect on a sky that never cared less...
Is this the same groove in the plain you inscribed?
When the stars stared down and declared:
The earth is our only friend—

So we retreat with reverence. With *conscience*
And a modicum of *whimsy*. And with *luck*
On our side, invoke these words: "Yes" or "No"...
Or "Maybe"... And, faithfully, we turn our bright ears
Toward your slow-running, frost-rimmed river

At the William Stafford Archive

With pen he plowed through wars
and dark days, mornings and laughter,
mystery, death of child, loving Elvis,
savoring Pascal like bitter tea. Mozart aria,
Buster Keaton, his work of shovel and saw,
fix the dryer, make old cars go, jog,
be silent, be stunned by hilarity –
and all the while write and write
like we others breathe, banter, whine,
and wait for the right time to say
what we hope to someday know.

Now is the time. He invites us
into our own avalanche.

KIM STAFFORD

Prayer for William Stafford

Before I learned to love you, you had gone
to that state where I cannot follow you.
The message you once sent from Oregon,
Password and passport, still rings calm and true.

Where you now sojourn, may there also be
illuminated by your vast and steadfast sun,
a rock, near some pale-green resilient tree,
heavy and huge enough to lean upon:

The honey-colored landscape of your book,
with lakes in their most placid shade of blue.
And may you see there, if you chance to look,
the prayers, like flowers, I send to honor you:

Bouquets of gratitude and simple graces –
Forget-me-nots, and pansies' sweet, fierce faces.

CAROL CLARK WILLIAMS

At The Stafford House in Fall

Dennis and I helped Dorothy throw the soil.
We tramped the path, minded the flower beds.
Bill had just died, but the garden didn't know it yet.

Piles of mulch needed spreading,
The pond frog needed Dorothy's introduction.
Bill's arbor was there,
His river stones lay just so in the sun.

The fragrant, flying dirt landed carefully,
Protecting, at least for now, rebirth
Through our efforts. It was a small difference to make.

The cadence of the shovels sang
Of tomorrow and spring, then quiet.
We three went into the house for tea.
The world has never known such delicious cookies.

NAN WYLDER SHERMAN

NEWS, NOTES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

The results of this year's **OSPA (OREGON STATE POETRY ASSOCIATION) FALL CONTEST** yielded both winners and honorable mentions from among the Friends of William Stafford. The Fall Conference was held in Newport the weekend of October 16-18 and featured a category titled "Something's Fishy" in which Shelley Reece hooked an HM for his poem, "If Only Zeno." David Hedges snagged one in the Free Verse category for "Ernie Pyle's Story of G.I. Joe (1945)" while Eleanor Berry claimed First Prize in Traditional Verse for "Circles within a Larger Round," and Scot Siegel's "R is not for rollercoaster" took Second Place in Poet's Choice. First Honorable Mention in that category went to Penelope Scambly Schott for her "Autobiography II: A Row of Painted Doors in the Junkyard." Congratulations to all! For a complete list of winners and information about their spring 2010 contest, visit OSPA's website www.oregonpoets.org.

William Stafford was among the early contributors to **XANADU**, the long-standing poetry journal. Once again the editors have announced their readiness to read "quality, well-crafted, unpublished poetry" now through May 2010 for its next publication. To submit work or to learn more, you may contact the editors by emailing xanadu2010@optonline.net

"**LEARNING FROM WOMEN**" will be the theme of this year's winter **Fishtrap** weekend February 19-21 at Wallowa Lake Lodge in eastern Oregon. Presenters will be the noted author and FWS National Advisor Ursula LeGuin, along with Molly Gloss and Tony Vogt. The weekend will be filled with discussion and writing, readings by the presenters, open mikes, good food and fellowship. For complete information, visit www.fishtrap.org.

Congratulations to **MATTHEW DICKMAN!** His "All American Poem," received **THE STAFFORD/HALL AWARD FOR POETRY** at this year's Oregon Book Awards. You may see the complete list of awards and fellowships at the Literary Arts website www.literary-arts.org.

In a recent email message, **ANDREW PROCTOR, LITERARY ARTS' EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**, expressed gratitude for the support given to their **WRITERS IN THE SCHOOLS** program, now in its eleventh year. Proctor forwarded an excerpt from an email message written by an early student participant to his high school teacher. "I have been meaning to write you for a while to let you know that you had a huge impact in my life ... Long story short, I am now enrolled in the MFA in Creative Writing program at Pacific University. I feel the experiences I had in your classes helped me to make that leap. In fact you are the reason I am a high school English teacher today." Friends of William Stafford shares in the enthusiasm of this project and looks forward to becoming more involved with programs that encourage young writers.

THE LAST OF THE LIMITED EDITION PORTFOLIOS, "THE EARTH SPEAKS EVERYTHING TO US," WAS DONATED TO THE OREGON STATE POETRY LIBRARY IN SALEM. The portfolio, titled from a line in "Earth Dweller," contains the first seven letterpress broadsides placed between beautiful covers all produced by Doug Stow of Paper Crane Press. There is one from each of the seven decades of Bill Stafford's writing career. More recently printed broadsides were also donated, so that when you visit the second floor reading room, you will be treated to the full array.

The Well Rising

The well rising without sound,
the spring on a hillside,
the plowshare brimming through the deep
ground
everywhere in the field –

The sharp swallows in their swerve
flaring and hesitating
hunting for the final curve
coming closer and closer –

The swallow heart from wing beat to wing beat
counseling decision, decision:
thunderous examples. I place my feet
with care in such a world.

☞ WILLIAM STAFFORD

"The Well Rising" named as poem that could save the earth

Before the April 13th segment of NPR's *Morning Edition*, many listeners had never read or heard, William Stafford's poem, "The Well Rising." But that morning John Felstiner, the Stanford professor who authored a book titled *Can Poetry Save the Earth?*, was being challenged to "pick just one poem that could save the world, if everyone were to read it." He chose "The Well Rising."

"If poems touch our full humanness," Felstiner says in his book, "can they quicken awareness and bolster respect for this ravaged resilient earth we live on?"



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** _____

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 New Lifetime Friends:

Linda Gelbrich



Welcome New Friends:

Dennis Burbridge

Bess Harter

Be Herrera

Marshall Jackson

Kenneth P. Kiesner

Ann Marie Magill

Jane Maynard

Suzanne Metcalf

Roger Meyer

Martha Ragland

Carole Richards

Karen Runkel

Margaret Torgeson

Kimberly & Jeffrey
Willson-St. Clair

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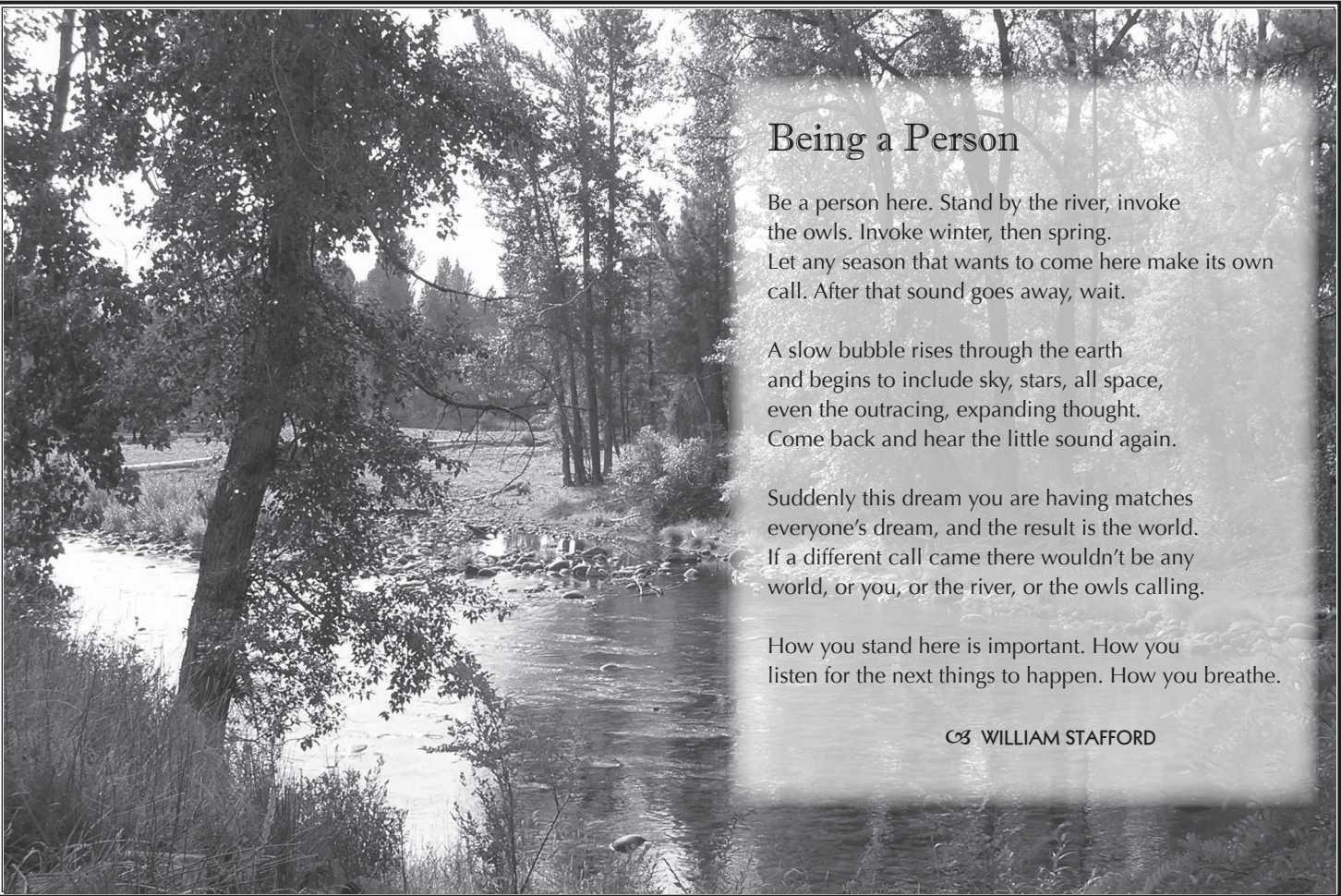
Please email comments, letters, news, and information on poetry events, awards, etc. to:

news@williamstafford.org

or mail to:

Friends of William Stafford
P.O. Box 592
Lake Oswego, OR 97034

F09



Being a Person

Be a person here. Stand by the river, invoke the owls. Invoke winter, then spring. Let any season that wants to come here make its own call. After that sound goes away, wait.

A slow bubble rises through the earth and begins to include sky, stars, all space, even the outracing, expanding thought. Come back and hear the little sound again.

Suddenly this dream you are having matches everyone's dream, and the result is the world. If a different call came there wouldn't be any world, or you, or the river, or the owls calling.

How you stand here is important. How you listen for the next things to happen. How you breathe.

∞ WILLIAM STAFFORD

friends of **WILLIAM STAFFORD**

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"A Valley Like This"

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