



W friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 NO. 2

LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON

APRIL 1999

WS READINGS IN APRIL

APRIL 13 Writer Friends of the San Antonio Public Library and Poetry Society of America are co-sponsoring a "Tribute to William Stafford" on Tuesday, April 13, 1999, at 6:00 pm, in the San Antonio Public Library, Main Branch, at 600 Soledad, San Antonio, TX. Naomi Shihab Nye, one of the event organizers, will be reading along with several others, including Amy Adams, Paulette Jiles, Bruce Snider, Dorothy Stafford, and Barbara Stanush. Admission is free.

APRIL 25 Friends of the Library and the Marylhurst University Alumni Department will host a reading with the theme "In the Spirit of William Stafford" on Sunday, April 25, 1999, 8:30 pm at Borders Books in Tigard, OR. The public is invited.

PLACE YOUR POEM ON THE WEB

The *Spring Calendar 1999* sent out by Poetry Society of America tells of the opportunity for poets to use the web. The excerpted article follows:

Poetry on the Web

Workshop your poems on-line with poets from around the world. Send colorful audio-visual *Poetry in Motion* postcards to your friends via e-mail. Find out *What's American about American Poetry?* Visit the PSA web site at www.poetrysociety.org for all this and more! Created as a forum for those who love poetry, the on-line workshop allows you to post your own poems and discuss them with your peers, talk about your favorite poem or poet, or engage in a conversation on critical issues in poetry today.

FWS members may also link to the PSA website on www.wmstafford.org.

Poetry Teaching Ideas

Ideas for making poetry more fun for students on Teachers & Writers web site: www.twc.org or the web site of the Academy of American Poets at www.poets.org.

TWO POETS JOIN FWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paulann Petersen and Joseph Soldati are the newest Friends of William Stafford Directors.

PAULANN PETERSEN has three books of poems: *Under the Sign of a Neon Wolf* (Confluence Press, 1989); *The Animal Bride* (Trask House Books, 1994); and *Fabrication* (26 Books, 1996). Her poetry has also been widely published in magazines, such as *New Republic*, *Poetry*, *Poetry NW*, and *Hubbub*.

Petersen was raised in Portland and taught in Klamath Falls for twelve years before becoming a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford. She has won several publishing awards including two Caroline Kizer Awards. She is a popular writer-in-residence for the Oregon State Poetry Association program which brings poets to rural communities. Petersen currently teaches at West Linn High School in a classroom with a William Stafford name plate over the door. Her Creative Writing students have won public acclaim for their poetry, and have read their work at many events.

In the mid-1970's, **JOSEPH SOLDATI** gave readings with William Stafford in Lewiston, ID, Pendleton, OR, and several other locations for Columbia River Watch, an organization of scientists, artists, environmentalists, and others concerned with the Columbia River and how it influences all parts of life in the NW. While other poets also read in the series, it was driving together from town to town for programs with titles such as, "The River Within Us," and "Looking at the River," that solidified the friendship between the two men. Soldati was raised in North Carolina, had a tour of duty in

ORCAS ISLAND, WA, HOSTS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

from FWS member Anne Hay's letter about
the gathering at the Orcas Island Library on
January 17, 1999 [W. Stafford's birthday]:

The ambiance was perfect for the sharing
of his poems--a wet rainy day outside,
and pleasant booklined shelves around
us. Ted Braun did a splendid job of
drawing people together, his own
reminiscences of Bill sparking those of
others. Sally Bryan, a published poet,
read a poem about Stafford by Robert Bly,
and Alan Lichter read one he had written
about Stafford after his last visit here. The
rest of the poems read were favorite
Stafford poems from the audience. We
had people here on Orcas from Guemes,
Lopez, Shaw, and San Juan Islands, as
well as La Conner on the mainland.

Comb and Rake

The comb that we love, of all combs,
is a rake through our private beach,
giving a voice through missing teeth
to all the things one hopes to find in the sand
next to horseshoes, aluminum tabs,
and sand ants thrilled by the sight of a claw.

The rake that we love, of all rakes,
is a comb through our private grove,
singing at perfect intervals
of all the things one hopes to be divine,
here, among human tongues rusting in fire,
bearing the singed hair and beard.

Of all names, the name we most love
mocks an unsaid name we did not love --
in the smallest possible space,
cast upon a screen encircled by a naked moon
at the center of a solar system
where there is only you and me and someone else.

Marvin Bell

from *Iris of Creation* (Copper Canyon
Press, 1990). Bell's new *New and
Selected Poems* will be published by
Graywolf Press in 2000. Marvin Bell is a
National Advisor for FWS.

(JOSEPH SOLDATI cont. from page 1)
Viet Nam, lived in Switzerland and
Austria, and has had a dozen extended
visits to Italy. Soldati is English Professor
Emeritus at Western Oregon University
where he taught for twenty-six years and
served as co-editor of *Calapooya
Collage*. His most recent book of poems
is *Making My Name* (Mellon Poetry
Press, Lewisburg, NY, 1992). Since then
he has co-edited with Eduardo Gonzalas
Blana a book of poems in two languages,
*O Poetry! Oh Poesía! Poems of Oregon
and Peru* (WOU and Cuadernos
Trimestrales de Poesía, Trujillo, Peru,
1997). Soldati appears in literary
publications throughout America,
including *Hubbub* and *California
Quarterly*. He's currently working on a
book of essays.

CELEBRATION IN WEST LINN, OR

excerpts from report by Patricia
Conover *West Linn Tidings*, West Linn,
OR, Thursday, February 11, 1999:

Rain and wind whipped around guests as
they entered the West Linn Public Library
the night of Jan. 29 for a birthday
celebration for William Stafford. ...For the
third year, a celebration in his honor was
hosted by Paulann Petersen, poet and
West Linn High School teacher. ...About
50 people attended, their ages ranging
from 20 to 85. ...Poets and friends were
invited to read their favorite Stafford
poems. Harold Johnson, poet and
teacher whose work has appeared in
several anthologies, read "Allegiances"--
"because of its prescience," he said. "I met
him in 1978 at a writing project at the
University of Oregon. I remember being
held up in New York and reading his
book, *Writing the Australian Crawl*, twice.
I wrote him a letter, and he wrote back.
That is how our ongoing dialogue
began." ...Petersen stated, "Stafford talks
about his desire to meet each person as a
separate, luminous being. Bill's poems
meet the reader; that's why they resonate
the way they do. ...His poetry speaks in an
authentic voice which enlightens us in
unexpected ways, a voice that endures."

FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Thank you to members who remembered to send a renewal in January. For those who needed an extra reminder, clip out and send in this membership form:

Yes, I would like to be part of
Friends of William Stafford.
Enclosed is my annual donation of
Individual \$25
Student or Retired \$10

Additional donation:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

First time member _____

Renewing member _____

Make check payable to Oregon Community
Foundation for *Friends of William Stafford*
and mail to *Friends of William Stafford*,
P. O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034.

Volunteer Sign Up

Check areas you would like to participate in as a volunteer.

- ☆ Mailing (apply address labels and stamps)
- ☆ Organize poetry readings as a service to libraries and schools.
- ☆ Organize William Stafford Gatherings in your town.
- ☆ Serve as fundraiser for specific FWS projects.
- ☆ Other: _____

CALL FOR ENTRIES FOR NATIONAL POETRY PROJECT

Robert Pinsky, Poet Laureate of the United States, asks people all over America to submit their favorite poem, a first step in building an audio and video archive of people saying aloud their favorite poem. Clip out this submission form and send it **THIS WEEK** to

ROBERT PINSKY
THE FAVORITE POEM PROJECT
CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
238 BAY STATE ROAD
BOSTON, MA 02215

A LIBRARY OF CONGRESS BICENTENNIAL PROJECT

SUBMISSION FORM

name _____ phone _____

street address _____ e-mail (if available) _____

city _____ state _____ zip code _____ age (optional) _____

title of poem _____ your occupation (optional) _____

poet _____

Please provide in the following space a sentence or two about why the poem you have chosen is especially meaningful to you: _____

(If you need more space, you may attach a piece of paper and enclose it, with this form, in an envelope.)

ADMINISTERED BY THE
NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION
FOR THE ARTS
WITH FUNDING FROM
THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

The Favorite Poem Project is Robert Pinsky's special undertaking as Poet Laureate of the United States—to create an audio and video archive of many Americans saying aloud their favorite poems. The project creates a record, at the end of the millennium, of what we choose, and what we do with our faces and voices, when asked to say aloud a poem we love. The project is rooted in two convictions: that poetry is above all a vocal art, and that American poetry, from the time of Whitman and Dickinson, has been one of our great glories and richest treasures. For the purposes of the project, poems loved by Americans are "American" poems. A reader may choose Robert Browning or William Shakespeare—or even a poem written in another language (Hebrew or Tibetan, Spanish or Chinese) accompanied by its English translation. The project will emphasize the relationship between a particular reader and a particular poem, expressed in the words, phrases, readings of the poem.



Friends of William Stafford Board of Directors: Patty Wixon, Ashland, OR, Chair; Nan Atzen, Newberg, OR; Brian Booth, Portland, OR; Martha Gatchell, Drain, OR; Robert Hamm, West Linn, OR; Ceil Huntington, Lake Oswego, OR; Paulann Petersen, Portland, OR; Shelley Reece, Portland, OR; Joseph Soldati, Portland, OR. FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER is published quarterly. NEWSLETTER articles also appear on FWS website: www.wmstafford.org. Send inquires and correspondence to Friends of William Stafford, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034 or e-mail: friends@wmstafford.org.

Take Hold

If there is nothing
before you, take hold
of it. You may be fortunate
or not. Place it deep
in your pocket regardless.
It is a possession
as no other.

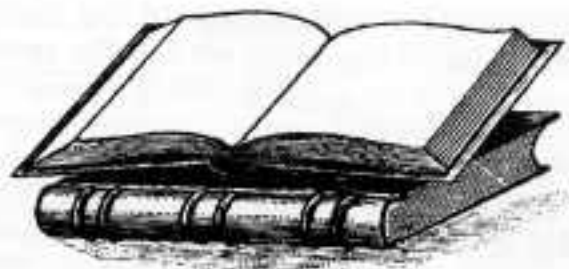
When you are to leave and
have made all your
preparations; when you
are ordered to declare all
your possessions, reach in
to the dark pocket.

This is a symbol
traveler, a parable
perhaps. Nothing
is as whole as the space
in the air
you pass through.
And it is yours. If
you will take hold of it.

Merrill Leffler

from *Take Hold* by Merrill Leffler (Dryad Press, Takoma Park, MD, 1997). Leffler studied with Myra Sklarew, Un of MD, where he was introduced to William Stafford's work. Both Sklarew and Leffler are FWS members.

Bill Henke, FWS member from Upland, CA, writes on a recent trip, "There is a Borders Books in Singapore with at least four Stafford books! How is that for reaching out into the world?"



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