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AUGUST 24 GATHERING PROVIDES TIME TO REMEMBER

More than fifty friends of William Stafford gathered on the Manor patio at Lewis & Clark College August 24, to hear poets read and friends tell recollections, and to offer ideas for projects for Friends of William Stafford. Margaret Slovak, Portland composer and recording artist, provided guitar music for the event. Poets Ralph Salisbury and Ingrid Wendt led the opening of the program by reading favorite poems by William Stafford plus two of their own poems. Other poets who also read Stafford works and their own were Harold Johnson, Paulann Petersen, and Kim Stafford.

Another popular part of the program was the report by the staff of the Literary Archives of William Stafford. Paul Merchant, Kim Stafford, and Vince Wixon related work in progress during the past year. (See next page for items reported.)

Peter Sears moderated the recollections, leading off with Bob Dusenbery's telling of conversations with Stafford while they were colleagues at Lewis & Clark College.

Others relating experiences were Kathy Chisholm, Nan Atzen, Harold Johnson, Dorothy Stafford, Peter Sears, Betty Burke, and Phyllis Kerns.

The program concluded with people offering project ideas for Friends of William Stafford. Three of these ideas: 1) Support installation of road signs of William Stafford

poems, similar to the seven signs along the Methow River Highway in Washington state. The intention would be to begin with "Traveling Through the Dark," placed on the Wilson River Road near Tillamook. 2) Invest in the on-going writing life of young writers. Patricia and Avi Meir Lev told how important such a commitment has been to their son, Nathan Furr, who received a graduate study grant to investigate William Stafford's writing. 3) Expand access to information on William Stafford on the internet.

STAFFORD ROOM ESTABLISHED IN WATZEK LIBRARY

Later this year, Lewis & Clark College will host a formal dedication gathering for the William Stafford Room in the Watzek Library. The Stafford family is currently selecting copies of poems, manuscripts, and photographs for display in the room, which is being richly refurbished thanks to generous help from the Dusenbery and Booth families.

JAMES DEPREIST JOINS NATIONAL ADVISORS

Friends of William Stafford announces an addition to its National Advisors. James DePreist, Music Director and Conductor of the Oregon Symphony, is an international supporter of the arts, and also a published poet. Other National Advisors are Marvin Bell, Robert Bly, Kurt Brown, Lucille Clifton, Denise Levertov, Ursula LeGuin, Chris Merrill, W. S. Merwin, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Gary Snyder.

Friends of William Stafford Board of Directors: Brian Booth, Portland, OR; Bob Dusenbery, Portland, OR; Ceil Huntington, Lake Oswego, OR; Harold Johnson, Portland, OR; Beverly Partridge, Portland, OR; Dorothy Stafford, Lake Oswego, OR; Patty Wixon, Ashland, OR, Chair. Peter Sears, Corvallis, OR, Executive Director. FRIENDS OF WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER will be published periodically for members. We invite you to send your ideas for the next issue to Friends of William Stafford, P.O. BOX 1223, Corvallis, OR 97339 or e-mail: vpwixon@ieffnet.org

As reported at the Gathering: TWO NEW BOOKS BY WILLIAM STAFFORD PROGRESSING

The third in a series of three William Stafford books is in its final editing stages. Crossing Unmarked Snow: Further Views on the Writer's Vocation will join earlier books, Writing the Australian Crawl and You Must Revise Your Life, as part of University of Michigan Press' Poets on Poetry Series. Another major book in progress, titled The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems by William Stafford, includes about 400 poems, with some 80 poems that have not previously appeared.

STAFFORD REPRINT ANNOUNCED

Warren Slesinger, Oregon State University Press editor, has announced plans to reprint Down In My Heart, as part of the Northwest Reprint Series. This series will reprint key books that tell the story of the region and its culture. Down In My Heart is Stafford's memoir of the four years he was interned in camps for conscientious objectors during World War II. As a pacifist, he worked for the Civilian Public Service on forest and soil conservation projects in Arkansas, California, and Illinois. During this time he wrote stories about relationships among the people in the camps and their pursuit of social morality rooted in pacifist beliefs.

CLASS IN EDITING WILLIAM STAFFORD BEING OFFERED

A five-session course in "Editing William Stafford" will begin November 4 at the Northwest Writing Institute, Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR. Paul Merchant, who helped edit the last three William Stafford books, says participants will work with aphoristic passages gleaned from Stafford's daily writings, and search for ways to select, sequence, and present these pungent lines in small book form.

POETRY IN MOTION ON TRI-MET

On May 21, Portland celebrated its collaboration with the Poetry in Motion organization —a project of The Poetry Society of America. Elise Paschen, The Society's director, was in Portland to assist with the ceremony. Several Oregon poets are represented in the international project which displays poetry on advertising panels on mass transits. The project started in London, then moved to New York, Boston, Chicago, and Portland, and next to Denver and Los Angeles.

Poets Paulann Petersen and Clem Starck read for the ceremony as well as two representatives of young audiences: William Stafford's grandsons, Ian and Sam Wilson. Ian, age 13, read his grandfather's poem, "First Grade" and Sam, age 10, read his own poetry. Watch for "First Grade" now traveling around Portland on Tri-Met.

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.

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William Stafford from Crossing Unmarked Snow: Further Views on the Writer's Vocation (Un. of Michigan Press, Winter 1997-98); earlier in Passwords (HarperCollins 1991).

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You can help promote poetry in your community by donating books of poems to expand the collection in your local school library.

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