



# W Friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 NO. 1

LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON

MARCH 1998

## NAN ATZEN AND MARTHA GATCHELL JOIN FWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of *Friends of William Stafford* announces two recent additions: Nan Atzen, Forest Grove, OR, and Martha Gatchell, Drain, OR.

Nan Atzen has been volunteering computer services, such as programming lists and mailing labels for FWS newsletters, since October. She joined the Board of Directors in January.

Martha Gatchell, a long-time volunteer for literary arts in Oregon, joined the Board at its March 9 meeting. One of her duties will be FWS Archivist.

## 1998 POETRY IN MOTION SELECTS POEMS BY SEVERAL FRIENDS

This year's selection of poems to be used for Poetry in Motion has been announced and includes three *Friends of William Stafford*. Poems by Peter Sears, Jane Glazer, and Hannah Wilson will soon begin moving around Portland posted on Tri-Met. Poetry in Motion is an international project of the Poetry Society of America.

## 1ST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN PORTLAND HONORS WILLIAM STAFFORD

Sunday, March 8, 1998, Dr. Marilyn Sewell, minister of the First Unitarian Church in Portland, held three services using the title, "William Stafford: Poet of the Spirit," for her text. The order of service included a printed copy of Stafford's "Being A Person." Other poems read by Dr. Sewell were "Watching Sandhill Cranes," "An Invocation," "Father's Voice," "Waiting for God," and "Near Dawn Some Time." Several hundred attended the services.

## PLANS SET FOR USING POEM IN WALL OF TILLAMOOK FOREST OVERLOOK

According to Doug Decker, Director of Tillamook Forest Interpretive Program, William Stafford's poem, "The Tillamook Burn," will become a permanent part of the rock wall at the Gale's Creek Overlook. Construction will take place between April and June. The Overlook is an extension of a wayside with a large Interpretive and Educational Center to be located at the Eastern Portal of the Tillamook Forest. Construction is scheduled to be completed by October.

### THE TILLAMOOK BURN

These mountains have heard God;  
they burned for weeks. He spoke  
in a tongue of flame from sawmill trash  
and you can read His word down to the rock.

In milky rivers the steelhead  
butt upstream to spawn  
and find a world with depth again,  
starting from stillness and water across gray stone.

Inland along the canyons  
all night weather smokes  
past the deer and the widow-makers—  
trees too dead to fall till again He speaks,

Mowing the criss-cross trees and the listening peaks.

William Stafford

(by permission of the  
Literary Archives of the  
Estate of William Stafford)

**JANUARY BIRTH DATE  
TRIGGERS THREE MONTHS OF  
COMMUNITY POETRY EVENTS**

Beginning with a reading held in Eugene on William Stafford's birthday, other communities joined in with free poetry events in February and more scheduled for April. Poetry readers represented several generations, including high school students.

**EUGENE = Jan. 17**

*Friend* Ingrid Wendt organized the Eugene event, with assistance from other *Friends* (Beverly Partridge, Bill Sweet Myrna Pena-Reyes, Martha and Jerry Gatchell, Ralph Salisbury, Eric Mueller), Lane Literary Guild and David Rhodes, owner of Tsunami Bookstore. Seventy-five people responded to the public invitation to come to the free event and bring a poem of William Stafford's to read. In a standing-room-only crowd nearly half the people held favorite Stafford books, with about 20 audience members adding their readings to the program. Also read were two selections from Stafford's memoirs of his 4 years as a Conscientious Objector during W.W.II.

**WEST LINN = Feb. 10**

Paulann Petersen organized a reading held at West Linn Public Library February 10. The event, co-sponsored by FWS and the West Linn Public Library, drew over 73 people to hear David Hedges, John Smith, Meredith Martin, and Paulann Petersen read poems by William Stafford and Valentine poems selected from romantic poets. A highlight of the program was West Linn High School students Thais Gruning, Laura Close, and Bobby Martin reading their poems inspired by studying works by Stafford and others. The program concluded with the audience invited to write a valentine poem for a loved one on a blank valentine card (fuschia with antique graphics) distributed to each person. Deanna Piowaty, Librarian of West Linn Public Library, provided a birthday cake and bouquets of flowers for the Valentine birthday celebration and guests of honor, Dorothy Stafford and Paul Merchant.

**LAKE OSWEGO = Feb. 25**

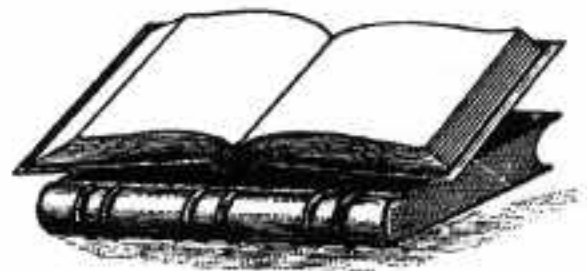
February 25 a reading was held at the Lake Oswego Public Library. Master of Ceremonies, Bob Dusenbery, introduced seven *Friends* who read poems or spoke about the importance of poets in their lives. These included Beverly Partridge, Bill Lucht, Pam Carver, Bob Hamm, Barbara Wilson-Stafford, Nan Atzen, and Dorothy Stafford. About 50 attended the event. At the conclusion of the program, FWS presented a broadside of Stafford's poem, "You Reading This, Be Ready" created by Calligrapher Elaine Young for permanent installation in the main lobby of the Lake Oswego Library.

**ASHLAND = Apr. 13**

Two Southern Oregon events, scheduled as part of National Poetry Month, will honor work by William Stafford. April 13, 7:30 p.m., several Ashland poets will read Stafford's work at Bloomsbury Books. These include Vince Wixon, Lawson Inada, Julie Rogers, Kathi Bowen-Jones, and Patty Wixon. The event is part of a month-long series of poetry readings by ten local and regional poets.

**GRANTS PASS = Apr. 23**

Josephine County Library will be the location of an early evening event set for April 23, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The public is invited to bring favorite Stafford poems to read. Area poets who will also read Stafford poems include Joan Peterson, Jeannette Doob, Bill Doody, Tee Corinne and Vince Wixon. Wixon will also talk about making a documentary video on William Stafford. Poet Sara Jameson, organizer of the event, says she feels National Poetry Month is the perfect time to honor Oregon's much admired Poet Laureate, William Stafford.



**NATIONAL POETRY MONTH  
BRINGS WEEK OF STAFFORD  
EVENTS: APRIL 19 - 25**

When President Clinton designated April as National Poetry Month, he brought attention to its mission which is similar to that of *Friends of William Stafford*: to bring people new to poetry together with long-time poetry readers for the enrichment and preservation of our cultural heritage. Eight organizations are coordinating efforts to put Portland on the National Poetry Month calendar with four events under the title, "There's a thread you follow ..." A Week for William Stafford." All events are free and open to the public.

**\*CENTRAL LIBRARY\***

801 SW 10th

FOCUS: National Poetry Month and William Stafford's three 1998 books

The first event, held at Central Library Sunday, April 19, 6:00 p.m., will invite readers of all ages to browse in the poetry shelves and take special note of a new book of poetry by William Stafford, *The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems*, 1998. Several people will read and provide commentary for those new to poetry as well as seasoned poetry readers about the importance of poetry today.

**\*OREGON HISTORY CENTER\***

1200 SW Park Ave.

FOCUS: Peace Witness in Wartime

The second event, held in the Madison Room, Oregon History Center, on Wednesday, April 22, at 12:00 noon, will present a discussion with Conscientious Objectors and readings from Stafford's *Down In My Heart*, 1998.

**\*LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE\***

0615 SW Palatine Hill

FOCUS: Writers & Writing

On Thursday, April 23, 7:30 p.m., in the Armstrong Lounge, Lewis & Clark College, staff members of Lewis & Clark and the Northwest Writing Institute will explore Stafford's writing about how and why people write, with readings from Stafford's *Crossing Unmarked Snow: Further Views on the Writer's Vocation*, 1998.

**DENISE LEVERTOV, FWS  
NATIONAL ADVISOR, DIES**

Several generations of Americans have honored Denise Levertov for her voice on social and political issues and events, such as the Vietnam War and the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. Levertov published more than 20 books of poems since 1946, and won several major awards including the Robert Frost Medal, the Lenore Marshall Prize, the Shelley Memorial Award, and the Lannan Award. Denise Levertov died in Seattle in December, 1997, at the age of 74. "The Change" is from her most recent book of poems, *Sands of the Well* (New Directions, 1996).

## The Change

BY DENISE LEVERTOV

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For years the dead  
were the terrible weight of their absence,  
the weight of what one had not put in their hands.  
Rarely a visitation—dream or vision—  
lifted that load for a moment, like someone  
standing behind one and briefly taking  
the heft of a frameless pack.  
But the straps remained, and the ache—  
though you can learn not to feel it  
except when malicious memory  
pulls downward with sudden force.  
Slowly there comes a sense  
that for some time the burden  
has been what you need anyway.  
How flimsy to be without it, ungrounded, blown  
hither and thither, colliding with stern solids.  
And then they begin to return, the dead:  
but not as visions. They're not  
separate now, not to be seen, no,  
it's they who see: they displace,  
for seconds, for minutes, maybe longer,  
the mourner's gaze with their own. Just now,  
that shift of light, arpeggio  
on ocean's harp—  
not the accustomed bearer  
of heavy absence saw it, it was perceived  
by the long-dead, long absent, looking  
out from within one's wideopen eyes.

**DONALD HALL, FWS  
NATIONAL ADVISOR, BEGINS  
READING TOUR ON WEST  
COAST THIS MONTH**

FWS is pleased to announce readings by Donald Hall in the next three weeks. Hall will begin his West Coast tour in Seattle March 30 at Elliot Bay Bookstore, March 31, 3:00 p.m. at Seattle Pacific University and that night (8:00 p.m.) at the Richard Hugo House. Hall reads in Portland April 2 at the First Unitarian Church, sponsored by Mountain Writers Series. On April 3 at 9:30 a.m., Powell's Books will host a book signing for Hall's newest book of poems, *Without* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Also April 3 there will be a reception honoring Hall from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Mountain Writers Center, 3624 SE Milwaukie. He will complete his Portland visit at 7:30 p.m. giving a lecture at Portland State University. Hall reads next in San Diego on April 4.

**FWS "BUSINESS" ITEMS**

Donations for projects of *Friends of William Stafford* will be gladly accepted any time. While we are waiting for our tax-exempt status from IRS, you can receive a tax credit for your donation to FWS if you make your check payable to "Oregon Community Foundation, fbo Friends of William Stafford".

Annual donations to FWS will become due in January, 1999. In order to ease the work load for our volunteer treasurer, Terry Atzen, FWS has established a once-a-year donation renewal on the anniversary of William Stafford's birthday, January 17. There will be a reminder in next January's newsletter with a coupon to send in with your renewal. We hope this will be convenient for you. Thank you for your support.

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Friends of William Stafford Board of Directors: Patty Wixon, Ashland, OR, Chair; Nan Atzen, Forest Grove, OR; Brian Booth, Portland, OR; Bob Dusenbery, Portland, OR; Martha Gatchell, Drain, OR; Ceil Huntington, Lake Oswego, OR; Beverly Partridge, Portland, OR. Friends of William Stafford Newsletter is published quarterly. Articles from each Newsletter also appear on FWS website: [www.wmstafford.org](http://www.wmstafford.org). Send inquires and correspondence to Friends of William Stafford, P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034 or e-mail: [vpwixon@jeffnet.org](mailto:vpwixon@jeffnet.org).

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***Friends Of William Stafford***

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