



W friends of WILLIAM STAFFORD
NEWSLETTER

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LAKE OSWEGO, OREGON

OCTOBER 1998

**WILLIAM STAFFORD ROOM TO
BE DEDICATED NOVEMBER 19**

The dedication of the William Stafford Room in the new addition of the Lewis and Clark College Library will occur November 19. Beginning November 20, the public may view the room, designed and furnished as a study room for students with permanent displays of a few William Stafford manuscripts, books, and memorabilia. A large photograph of William Stafford by Donnell Hunter, publisher of eight of William Stafford's books, was donated by Friends of William Stafford for permanent exhibit in the room.

**GALES CREEK OVERLOOK
WAYSIDE NEARING COMPLETION**

The first phase of the Tillamook Burn Interpretive Center to be built at the East Portal of Tillamook State Forest in Oregon will be completed by the end of this month. The wayside with rock walls is located about a mile from the origin of the 1933 fire and includes a walkway, benches, and kiosks of information, orientation, and recreational opportunities in the area. William Stafford's poem, "The Tillamook Burn" is part of the permanent interpretive wayside signs to be installed next spring when the dedication will occur for the new Gales Creek Overlook Wayside.

**ORCAS ISLAND, WA, LIBRARY
WILL HOST STAFFORD EVENING**

Friends of William Stafford on Orcas Island will gather for an evening of poetry in November. The public will be invited to bring favorite poems to read. Contact Orcas Island Library for further details.

**AUGUST GATHERINGS HONOR
WILLIAM STAFFORD FIVE YEARS
AFTER HIS DEATH**

Organizers report successful events honoring the memory of William Stafford with poetry read by professional poets, community members, and students in local gatherings around the country.

+++*From New York*, Raymond Patterson, Trustee of Walt Whitman Birthplace, writes of their August 9 event. "A capacity crowd attended the first Annual Gathering for William Stafford at the new Walt Whitman Birthplace Interpretive Center in West Hills, Long Island, on August 9th. Friends of William Stafford, local poets, devoted readers and small-press publishers of Stafford's work, students from his workshops and even a winner from one of the many contests he judged, joined in giving readings of favorite Stafford poems, and reminiscences of the poet."

+++*From Maryland*, Sally Simmons, FWS member in Ellicott City, writes, "A group of us who meet monthly at Barnes & Noble gathered on Friday, August 28, at about 7 o'clock, to memorialize that dear man with a reading of some of his poems... and I read the first poem I ever heard/saw him read, "Bess." It was wonderful to realize that all over the country there were readings to commemorate the life of Bill Stafford."

(continued, page 2)

(AUGUST GATHERINGS (cont.))

+++ *From Enterprise, Oregon*, Rich Wandschneider, FWS member, writes about a group of 25 meeting August 27 at the Bookloft. "Three teachers drove over from Stanfield --that's on the other side of Pendleton, over 100 miles-- and poet Oma Miller came from La Grande. The rest of us were 'local.' We had a glass of wine, read poems and shared stories...the junior high teacher from Stanfield said that he had not liked poetry until someone shoved one of Bill's poems at him, and now he's missionary about poetry. Kathy Punam said that she'd written her first published poem on Bill's typewriter, and we all listened to the 1989 Fishtrap tape [gathering at Wallowa Lake, OR, where William Stafford gave an address]... a nice evening of memories."

+++ *From Lake Oswego, OR*, Ceil Huntington reports a successful opening reception for an exhibit of the work of William Stafford on display at the Lake Oswego Library during August. Several local poets read and community leaders made comments. The exhibit included eight large panels in the library atrium displaying broadsides, newspaper photographs and articles, book covers, poems written by William Stafford honoring special events, and other memorabilia --an ambitious collection put together by Huntington and FWS member Pat Carver as the library's annual August art exhibit .

+++ *From Sisters, OR*, a report that about 50 people gathered August 29 in honor of William Stafford. Several said it was one of the best readings they'd attended because of the variety of people reading --no one "famous" or with big poetry credentials, but young and old reading

and relating how poetry has changed their lives. Bob Dusenbery shared master of ceremonies duties with Kit Stafford. Jay Bowerman read a poem he uses for rehabilitation volunteers (for birds of prey) at the Nature Center . Sarah Lawrence, a Redmond High School senior read her favorite poem, "Star" and said she keeps a copy of *Stories That Could Be True* by her bed, uses it for last-minute book reports and writing assignments. Many connections were made, including words of support and inspiration from a conscientious objecter and tales of transforming times in college with Stafford's poetry becoming a guide for life.

Looking for Gold

A flavor like wild honey begins
when you cross the river. On a sandbar
sunlight stretches out its limbs, or is it
a sycamore, so brazen, so clean and bold?
You forget about gold. You stare—and a flavor
is rising all the time from the trees.
Back from the river, over by a thick
forest, you feel the tide of wild honey
flooding your plans, flooding the hours
till they waver forward looking back. They can't
return: that river divides more than
two sides of your life. The only way
is farther, breathing that country, becoming
wise in its flavor, a native of the sun.

William Stafford

from *The Way It Is: New & Selected Poems*
by William Stafford (Graywolf Press, 1998)

A Week in Eek

Kids in sneakers squeaking across
the Eek School gym floor, streaking towards
baskets. Or else sneaking out of class
to steal a smoke, or a peek at an uncle's
or cousin's sleek new Arctic Cat. Meek kids.
Cheeky kids. Rural-chic kids. Geeks.
Kids that speak weakened Yupik,
and village English that leaks articles,
the and *a* in particular, making
language go creak so nice. Eek winter days—
not quick, not slow, just a dark freaky trick
like the snaky bow of a rogue bachelor *gussuk*
playing fiddle those decades back. Unique Eek.
Where weeks pass in a day, an hour lasts weeks.
Times as wild as any Dr. Suess might seek.

--Ken Waldman



Nonoetic Press Poetry Postcards
3705 Arctic #1551 Anchorage AK 99503

IRS APPEAL STILL PENDING

Jeffrey Cronn, of Tonkin Torp Attorneys, Portland, and legal advisor for Friends of William Stafford, said the current status of FWS tax exempt application is still pending in the appeal stage. The original application was denied but FWS appealed the decision and has been waiting for official notification of the results of the appeal. Until FWS Board of Directors announces the official decision members should not declare donations to FWS as tax deductions but may hold such donations for possible use as a tax deduction next year. Members' contributions to FWS made through Oregon Community Foundation are tax deductible this year.

**SEND US YOUR IDEAS FOR ITEMS
TO INCLUDE IN THE NEXT ISSUE
OF THE FWS NEWSLETTER**

FWS MEMBER IN ALASKA USES POSTCARDS TO SHARE POETRY

Ken Waldman, writing teacher and "fiddling poet" in Alaska, writes about doing workshops and singing poetry from Barrow to Nome to Bethel to villages up and down western Alaska to Anchorage then down to Seattle and other Northwest cities. Part of his publishing includes poetry postcards, and he encourages others to do the same. Above is a sample of one.

CALL FOR USE OF INTERNET FOR WRITING EXCHANGES

Several FWS members have expressed an interest in participating in an exchange of members' poetry on the internet. Please contact a FWS board member if you are interested in this activity or know of a volunteer who has the expertise to establish such interaction among FWS members.

LISTENING TO POETRY IN A LANGUAGE I DO
NOT UNDERSTAND

Picture a blue door,
a shiny pipe the rain runs through.
Yellow flower
with twenty supple lips.

I like how you move your hands.
The black T-shirt you have worn
for the last three days
drapes over baggy blue pants.
You stop so abruptly,
I fall into the breath
of the person next to me.

We may look at this poem
from the mountain above the roof
or stand under it
where it casts a cool shadow.

Is this your family home?
Your grandfather's tiny Buddha?

One word rolls across the floor,
lodging under the slipper
of the man who has felt uncomfortable
all day.

Now he knows what to say.




Naomi Shihab Nye

from *Fuel*, Poems by Naomi Shihab Nye
(Boa Editions, 1998)

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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; Robert Hamm, West Linn, OR; Ceil Huntington, Lake Oswego, OR; Shelley Reece, 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.

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P.O. Box 592, Lake Oswego, OR 97034