



Oregon Reads 2014 Final Report to the OLA Board

by Jim Scheppke, Co-Chair
Oregon Reads 2014 Steering Committee
January 15, 2015

On June 8, 2012, three OLA past presidents, Jim Scheppke, June Knudson, and Sara Charlton made a proposal to the OLA Executive Board that OLA undertake Oregon Reads 2014 in commemoration of the centennial of the birth of Oregon poet William Stafford. They asked that the Oregon Library Association Executive Board approve the following proposals:

1. The Oregon Library Association will sponsor Oregon Reads 2014 in celebration of the William Stafford Centennial in 2014.
2. The Oregon Library Association President will appoint past presidents Jim Scheppke, June Knudson and Sara Charlton to convene and lead a steering committee of OLA members to plan and execute Oregon Reads 2014.
3. The Oregon Library Association Executive Board will empower the steering committee to apply for grants in support of Oregon Reads 2014, in consultation with the OLA President and OLA Association Manager, and agree to have OLA serve as grant applicant, and as fiscal agent for all grants awarded.
4. That the OLA Executive Board, as leaders in the Oregon library community, will encourage every Oregon library to plan to participate in Oregon Reads 2014.

The proposal did not request financial support for Oregon Reads 2014 from the general fund of the Oregon Library Association. The project was to be undertaken through the volunteer efforts of OLA members, participating libraries, and with anticipated grant support from Oregon charitable foundations.

Oregon Reads 2014 was intended to emulate the success of OLA's Oregon Reads 2009, which celebrated the State Sesquicentennial and was the first statewide "everybody reads" program ever undertaken in Oregon. Oregon Reads 2014 was also intended to be a signature event in the William Stafford Centennial celebration being coordinated by the Friends of William Stafford, with support from many organizations throughout the state, including the Oregon Heritage Commission, that in 2012 declared the William Stafford Centennial to be an official statewide anniversary celebration in accordance with ORS 358.595.

A key difference between Oregon Reads 2014 and Oregon Reads 2009 was that we would provide libraries with more discretion to select books most suited to their communities. Instead of selecting just one book each for adults, young adults and children, as was the case with Oregon Reads 2009, several Stafford books would be chosen and each library would be given discretion to choose the book or books they deemed to be most suitable for their program.

The Board approved the proposal and a steering committee was formed to begin a planning effort. The steering committee consisted of the following OLA members:

Jim Scheppke, Co-Chair, Oregon State Librarian Emeritus
June Knudson, Co-Chair, Retired Director, Hood River County Library
Sara Charlton, Co-Chair, Tillamook County Library
Chantal Strobel, Deschutes Public Library
Bill Baars, Lake Oswego Public Library
Cyndie Glazer, Lake Oswego Public Library
Lee Catalano, Multnomah County Library
Ann Tran, Multnomah County Library
Judith Norton, Oregon Health and Sciences University
Martin Blasco, Washington County Cooperative Library Services
Katie Anderson, Oregon State Library

The first meeting of the Task Force was held on September 28, 2012. An important early task was to select the books that would be recommended as selections to the libraries participating in Oregon Reads 2014. Initially the Task Force selected four books for adults. Later on in 2013, the Task Force would select a children's book and a young adult book, both of which were forthcoming for the Centennial. The final list of Oregon Reads 2014 book selections were:

Ask Me: 100 Essential Poems by William Stafford edited by Kim Stafford (Graywolf Press)

Early Morning: Remembering William Stafford by Kim Stafford (Graywolf Press)

Down in My Heart: Peace Witness in War Time by William Stafford (Oregon State University Press)

Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War edited by Kim Stafford (Milkweed Editions)

The Osage Orange Tree: A Story By William Stafford by William Stafford (Trinity University Press)

Everyone Out Here Knows: A Big Foot Tale by William Stafford (Arnica Creative Services)

The Task Force secured a grant of \$5,000 in the fall of 2012 from the Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation, Betsy Priddy Donor Advised Fund, to provide start-up funding for mailings to libraries, creation and maintenance of the Oregon Reads 2014 website, and miscellaneous expenses of the Oregon Reads 2014 Steering Committee.

On November 12, 2012 the Task Force mailed invitation letters to all public and academic library directors in Oregon inviting them to have their libraries participate in Oregon Reads 2014. The Task Force set a deadline of January 15, 2013, to receive participation forms indicating a firm or tentative intention to participate in Oregon Reads 2014. Small and rural public libraries were also asked about their interest in obtaining a mini-grant from OLA to help support their participation in Oregon Reads 2014. Eventually, a total of 110 libraries would indicate their intention to participate in Oregon Reads 2014, including nine academic libraries, twelve school libraries and the State Library.

In early 2013 the Task Force worked on creating an Oregon Reads 2014 website, including a

speakers bureau of speakers who had agreed to make presentations at Oregon Reads 2014 programs. Chantal Strobel took the lead in developing the website working with a contractor in Bend.



Multnomah County Library contributed the graphics used for the website banner and later for the Oregon Reads 2014 bookmark that was printed by the Oregon State Library for distribution to Oregon Reads 2014 participants.

The Oregon Reads 2014 Speakers Bureau included William Stafford's son Kim, two Oregon Poets Laureate, and two Oregon Book Award winners:

- Kim Stafford, son of William Stafford and author and editor of several Oregon Reads selections
- John Daniel, Award-winning author of *The Far Corner* and *Rogue River Journal*
- Brian Doyle, Award-winning author of *Mink River* and other books
- Lawson Inada, Oregon Poet Laureate emeritus
- Paulann Petersen, Oregon Poet Laureate
- Jarold Ramsey, Author of *Coyote Was Going There* and other books
- Tim Barnes, Oregon poet and teacher; creator of *Everyone Out Here Knows*

Standard honorarium fees ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 plus expenses were negotiated for each of the speakers and these were listed on the website along with contact information.

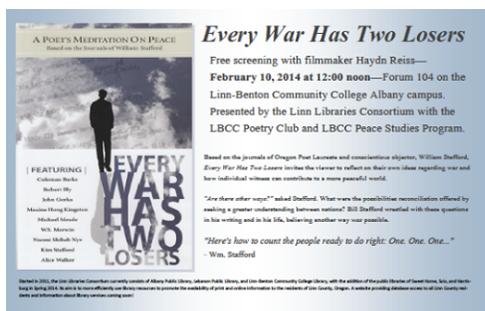
In February, 2013, a request was made to the Starseed Foundation in Sandy, Oregon, asking for \$17,250 to be used to make mini-grants to 28 public libraries to assist with their participation in Oregon Reads 2014. Libraries serving populations smaller than 5,000 would receive \$500 and libraries serving over 5,000 would receive \$750. Mini-grants could be used to purchase multiple copies of the books selected by the community for Oregon Reads 2014, to fund speakers to come to the library and present programs for adults and children, or to fund expenses such as newspaper and radio advertisements to promote Oregon Reads 2014. The Starseed Foundation, which also funded Oregon Reads 2009, generously agreed to provide the support requested for Oregon Reads 2014.

Other activities of the steering committee in preparation for Oregon Reads 2014 included the creation of a Facebook page for sharing of information during 2014 and working with the Watzek Library at Lewis and Clark College to create a table top exhibit about the life and work of William Stafford. Doug Erickson and other staff at the Watzek Library which is the home of the William Stafford Archives, gave of their time, resources, and expertise to create the exhibit. Several copies were made and were sent to different parts of the state.



Oregon Reads 2014 has its official kick-off event at the Deschutes Public Library in Bend on January 11, 2014. Kim Stafford, Kit Stafford and Jarold Ramsey, one of

Stafford's closest friends and associates were featured in the afternoon program. Kim Stafford also attended the book give-away at the Lake Oswego Public Library earlier that week in which 1,000 copies of the new collection *Ask Me* were given away to library patrons. Another January event at the Hannon Library at Southern Oregon University featured former Oregon Poet Laureate and SOU Professor Emeritus Lawson Inada, another friend and colleague of Stafford's. On January 17th, William Stafford's birthday, North Plains Public Library in Washington County held a terrific program featuring Kim Stafford and Oregon Book Award winner Brian Doyle that drew a capacity crowd who enjoyed wonderful presentations and a birthday cake (carrot cake — William Stafford's favorite).



Two videos were often used in Oregon Reads 2014 programming: *William Stafford Life and Poems* and *Every War Has Two Losers*. The producer of the latter video, Haydn Reiss, traveled to Oregon from his home in California and appeared at a number of screenings of the video around the state.

Using surplus operating funds granted to Oregon Reads 2014 by the Betsy Priddy Donor Advised Fund at the

Wichita Falls Area Community Foundation, the steering committee worked with Kim Stafford to purchase classroom sets of the young adult book selection *Osage Orange Tree* for ten schools around the state. We appreciated the assistance of Jennifer Maurer at the Oregon State Library in identifying schools to receive these books for use in school libraries and classrooms.

Oregon Reads 2014 programs continued in libraries throughout the spring in libraries large and small. Salem Public Library held programs in March and April featuring Kim Stafford and two Oregon Poets Laureate, Paulann Peterson and Lawson Inada. They also had exhibits of William Stafford broadsides and another exhibit of paintings inspired by William Stafford poems.

One of the most exemplary Oregon Reads 2014 programs was held at the Lake Oswego Public Library. It was presented as the eighth annual Lake Oswego Reads. A special effort from the Lake Oswego Public Library was to be expected, because Lake Oswego was the home of William Stafford. Throughout the month of February the Library celebrated that tie by exploring some of his many poems and highlighting other works by Stafford. Besides giving away 1,000 copies of *Ask Me* to library patrons, the Library hosted eighteen events that brought together over 8,000 community members to commemorate Stafford's life and work.

Some of these events included a screening of the award-winning documentary *Every War Has Two Losers* with filmmaker Haydn Reiss, meet and greets with two artists that created illustrations for Stafford's works (Dennis Cunningham and Angelina Marino-Heidel), a presentation by Kim Stafford (including a dessert hosted by the Lake Oswego Women's Club), a poetry slam with high school students and several wonderful poetry readings and discussions, including one with Louisiana Poet Laureate Ava Leavell Haymon. People also had the opportunity to visit the Library and view a beautiful collection of handmade quilts inspired by Stafford's poems, as well as a selection of some of Stafford's own



February 25: Stafford Literary Landmark Plaque Dedication with a poetry reading by Anushka Nair

Tuesday, February 25, 6:30 pm at Lake Oswego Public Library. The American Library Association has selected the Lake Oswego Library as a Literary Landmark honoring William Stafford.

photographs. A highlight of Lake Oswego Reads was the American Library Association's selection of the Lake Oswego Public Library as a Literary Landmark. The designation was made in honor of William Stafford and a plaque dedication occurred in February.

While the over 8,000 Oregonians who participated in Oregon Reads 2014 events at the Lake Oswego Public Library was impressive, perhaps equally impressive were the 574 participants at events at the Port Orford Public Library on the South Coast. That a community of this size could attract such a turnout for Stafford events is a credit to the work and dedication of long-time library director Tobe Porter. Here is her report on events in Port Orford:

I am very thankful that Port Orford Library participated in this very special Oregon Reads William Stafford program. We had three glorious months of poetry throughout the community. Our attendance statistics were impressive, but they cannot tell the whole story. Our panel discussions were so well received. We discussed Stafford's life at one of them; and his work at the other. We had "3 Poets" night — three of our local poets read their work and Stafford's. Our committee visited the two local schools, talking up poetry and providing a fun in-service. The visits paid off, we had three young winners among the nearly 100 entries in our "Everybody's Poetry Contest." We put on an amazing art exhibit pairing poetry and art. We displayed 57 poems with 57 works of art. The exhibit, "Thousand Threads," was attended by over 100 people. Poet Willa Schenberg was our keynote speaker at our three-day "Poet's Round Up," and her next-day poetry workshop was well attended and greatly appreciated. This Oregon Reads program had quite an impact on our community. So many people thanked us for doing so many poetry events....who knew, in little ol' Port Orford. We will probably do another poetry/art exhibit again next year, leading into our 12th annual Poet's Round Up. For me personally, it was a life-reminding experience. Poetry has a way of reminding me to be amazed.

In an attempt to capture statistics and other information from participants in Oregon Reads 2014, the steering committee created a participation form, using a Google sheet on the web. We asked libraries to record their headcount at all Oregon Reads 2014 events. By the end of 2014 we were able to record nearly 19,000 Oregonians who came to Oregon Reads 2014 programs in participating libraries. We are certain that many thousands more read Stafford books, viewed Stafford videos and experienced the many exhibits that were created for Oregon Reads 2014. Here are the final headcount statistics:

	Total Headcount at Oregon Reads 2014 Events
1. Albany Public Library	20
2. Astoria Public Library	77
3. Athena Public Library	142
4. Canby Public Library	84
5. Cedar Mill Community Library	13
6. Cook Memorial Library	36
7. Coos County Library Service District	338
8. Corvallis-Benton County Public Library	70

9.	Deschutes Public Library	445
10.	Douglas County Library System	42
11.	Forest Grove City Library	76
12.	Garden Home Community Library	59
13.	Gresham Barlow School District K-8 Schools	6700
14.	Harney County Library	89
15.	Harrisburg Public Library	9
16.	Hazel M. Lewis Public Library	368
17.	Lake Oswego Public Library	8,061
18.	Ledding Library	101
19.	Marylhurst University	55
20.	Molalla Public Library	72
21.	Mt. Hood Community College Library	150
22.	Multnomah County Library	18
23.	North Plains Public Library	150
24.	Nyssa Public Library	28
25.	Oregon City Library	26
26.	Port Orford Public Library	574
27.	Salem Public Library	200
28.	Silver Falls Library	28
29.	Southern Oregon University	110
30.	St. Helens Public Library	46
31.	Tigard Public Library	158
32.	Tualatin Public Library	84
33.	Waldport Public Library	45
34.	Wallowa Public Library	56
35.	Wilsonville Public Library	144

18,674

The OLA Oregon Reads 2014 Steering Committee owes a debt of gratitude to many people who helped us make Oregon Reads 2014 a success. First among them are our funders, Betsy Priddy and the Starseed Foundation, without whom the program would not have been possible. The assistance of the Watzek Library at Lewis and Clark College, especially Doug Erickson and Jeremy Skinner, was indispensable. Mary Bisbee-Beek of Portland, who assisted Kim Stafford in his many Centennial projects, met with the steering committee and provided valuable advice and assistance. OLA's outstanding Association Manager, Shirley Roberts, gave generously of her time to manage the finances of the project and to provide us with a listserv for participants. Multnomah County Library once again assisted, as they did in 2009 with first rate graphics.

We are most grateful for the participation of our all-star speakers bureau, led by Kim Stafford and our Oregon Poet Laureate (now Poet Laureate Emerita), Paulann Peterson. We asked Paulann and Kim to reflect on their experience with Oregon Reads 2014. Here is some of what Paulann had to say:

What a joy to be a presenter for the Oregon Reads Stafford program! In Astoria, I gave a presentation about Bill and his poetry at the library one evening, and then gave a writing workshop based on Bill's poems to a group the next day. In Salem, I teamed up with

Lawson Inada to present an evening dedicated to Bill and his vision. In Oregon City, Lawson and I were joined by Andre Berger Kiss. The three of us gave a program focused on Bill's pacifism. In Wilsonville, I was the guest at the first session of a several-week class studying Bill's poetry. In Milwaukie, I led a discussion of Ask Me. At Cedar Mill, I led a discussion of the film Every War Has Two Losers. And in several other libraries — places that had spent their budgets on books to give away, or places that didn't have a Stafford Centennial budget — I was able to informally add to their Centennial programming. Everywhere I went, libraries large and small had displays to honor and celebrate Bill Stafford — even at the budget-less Josephine Community Library, where I gave a free writing workshop in which the “prompts” were based on Stafford poems. JCL was proudly and prominently displaying the four large panels depicting four stages of Bill's life, beautiful posters supplied by the marvelous OLA.

The energy and influence of OLA is formidable. Kudos to each and every member for so creatively and vibrantly participating in the Stafford Centennial.

And here is part of what Kim Stafford had to say:

My own part felt like the perfect confluence of work and pleasure — to be privileged to meet with readers at Libraries in North Plains, Bend, Lake Oswego, Tigard, Wilsonville, Salem, Oregon City, Enterprise, North Bend, Hood River, Tillamook, Manzanita, Eugene, and Nyssa. I was treated to the lively outcomes of hard work by local volunteers and library staff: student writing and art work responding to my father's poetry, discussion and reading groups, theater projects, music, classroom encounters, and a host of library events that brought a broad cross-section of community participants to talk about poetry, books, reading, learning, and the parallel pleasures of community life.

I realized something in the first library event that was only reinforced as I made the rounds across the state: people crowding into libraries for these events were not just interested in William Stafford, or just in poetry. We convened to talk about family, sense of place, identity, learning, conscience, witness, peace, forgiveness, and other skills and treasures of the human project — as made available through sharing poetry. And I can talk about those matters all day long.

Libraries are the nexus for savoring these human treasures, and poetry, my father's poetry, gave us a chance to do that.

The letters to OLA from Paulann Peterson and Kim Stafford are appended to this report.

Finally, the Oregon Reads 2014 steering committee wants to thank the leadership of OLA for launching our effort and supporting us along with way. We don't know if there will be occasions for OLA to sponsor similar statewide reading programs in the future, but if there are, we hope you will be able to find inspiration from Oregon Reads 2014, just like we found inspiration from Oregon Reads 2009. These programs have really served to bring all types of Oregon libraries together in a common effort, showcasing the incomparable value of libraries in communities, large and small, throughout Oregon.

Attachments

December 10, 2014

Dear Storied, Esteemed OLA,

With only three weeks of 2014 remaining, I feel confident in saying that the 2014 Stafford Centennial year has been an unqualified success. Actually, I would have felt comfortable declaring that several months ago. The number of Stafford Centennial events—their variety and richness—has been remarkable.

Many individuals, many organizations, have made this possible. But none have contributed to the Stafford Centennial to the extent that Oregon's libraries have.

In my four-year tenure as Oregon Poet Laureate, I had the privilege of visiting 79 of Oregon's libraries, many of them several times. At each of them, I saw the pivotal role our libraries play in our communities. At each, I told the people who had gathered there how fortunate they were, how fortunate we all were, to be in one of Oregon's libraries. Our libraries are the hubs of our communities. They provide services that people can find no where else. Oregonians are extraordinarily fortunate to live in a state containing such stellar institutions.

And our stellar libraries have given us an impressive celebration of the 100th birthday of this state's most famous and beloved poet.

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With gratitude from your fan,

*Paulann Petersen
Oregon Poet Laureate Emerita*

Kim Stafford, Literary Executor
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3 December 2014

Oregon Reads Committee
Oregon Library Association

Dear Jim, and all my friends on the Oregon Reads Committee:

I want to express my admiration and gratitude for the amazing creative act you set loose with the William Stafford Centennial 2014. As a Stafford, as a reader, as a lover of libraries, as a writer, and as an Oregon citizen—and as a presenter for the Oregon Reads program—I found it thrilling to watch your preparation for this year's activities, and the way libraries across the state brought to life poetry and citizenship everywhere I turned.

My own part felt like the perfect confluence of work and pleasure—to be privileged to meet with readers at Libraries in North Plains, Bend, Lake Oswego, Tigard, Wilsonville, Salem, Oregon City, Enterprise, North Bend, Hood River, Tillamook, Manzanita, Eugene, and Nyssa. I was treated to the lively outcomes of hard work by local volunteers and library staff: student writing and art work responding to my father's poetry, discussion and reading groups, theater projects, music, classroom encounters, and a host of library events that brought a broad cross-section of community participants to talk about poetry, books, reading, learning, and the parallel pleasures of community life.

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Libraries are the nexus for savoring these human treasures, and poetry, my father's poetry, gave us a chance to do that.

As literary executor of William Stafford's work since 1993, I had been preparing the archives, recordings, photographs, documents, poems, and the 21 books by and about William Stafford published since my father's death. But the Centennial, through the generous and skillful work of the OLA, gave me a place to share those efforts and those resources widely with young and old. For that I am eternally grateful.

So thank you for all you have done, and for the chance to represent—really to represent Oregon Libraries through a celebration of William Stafford.

Be well in all ways,



Kim Stafford