

Averill, Williams express memories, views through poetry

by Melissa Freels
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Teaching, Earth Day and censorship were among the numerous themes expressed at the Diane Averill and Sandra Williams poetry reading, which took place on April 22 in CCC's McLoughlin Theater.

Averill, an English instructor at Clackamas, and Williams, an English instructor at Mt. Hood Community College, both read poems that were filled with experiences and memories.

"Memories come floating

detoured, "suddenly riding gravel with my grandma at the wheel."

Following Williams' reading of "Detours," Averill recited "Colors," another poem from *Branches Doubled Over with Fruit*.

"I've read this several times before," she told the audience, "and every time that I read it I think that it's not going to affect me as much, but each time it does. It brings me right back to that situation where I was sitting out on the back porch and there were these teenagers--abused teenagers--

Williams.

She wrote "The Error in Creation" after seeing the rare experience of a pheasant flying across the road while she was going to class one day. "This is a sight we won't see much again out here . . ." Williams wrote of the sighting. Rapid development in rural areas, where "lights twitch messages all day," and where a new shopping center is "a miracle in seven days," are all images that Williams wrote about in "The Error in Creation."

In honor of Earth Day, Averill read "Notes From Oaks Bottom Trail." Averill, who has spent much time in Sellwood at Oaks Bottom Trail, wrote "Notes . . ." from the perspective of a mother, trying to understand her son's fears.

"I always find the natural world beautiful in itself, but also as a source for renewal," Averill explained.

Averill closed Wednesday's reading by reciting, "Paint By Number." The poem stresses Averill's belief that "artists need free minds in order to create." Speaking against censorship in the arts, Averill wrote, "Well-endowed art is 'safe art.'" In "Paint By Number," Averill wrote against painting to please and against guidelines for art. Censorship, Averill wrote can be like "ocean drift nets."

Following the poetry reading, Averill and Williams answered questions from the



photo by Vivian Johnson

Diane Averill, an English instructor at CCC, read some of her poems from "Branches Doubled Over with Fruit" at a poetry reading on April 22 in the McLoughlin Theater.

"When I first began writing poems seriously, I was about 11 years old and I loved doing it. . . I was also writing short stories at the time."

--Diane Averill

to me out of nowhere," said Williams. Sometimes, for no particular reason, Williams told the audience, "suddenly I'm transported back into an experience."

Williams' first poem during the hour-long reading was "Sausage." The poem is written from Williams' experiences as an English teacher and actually contains four sentences from a student's writing assignment.

Averill continued the theme of teaching as she read "Steps in Composition: Four Students," which is published in her book *Branches Doubled Over with Fruit*. "One thing that has always bothered me a bit as an English teacher is the necessity to correct punctuation, grammar and sentence structure . . ." Averill explained. Averill's poem includes four student voices and the "traditional English teacher voice."

During last Wednesday's reading, Williams also read "Detours," which deals with "the phenomena of memory," she said. "It seems that, as we grow older, sometimes the memories seem to come drifting back at us with increasing frequency," Williams said. In "Detours," Williams wrote about driving on the freeway when unexpectedly she was

-in my backyard."

Averill explained that she has helped many teenagers who were abused and had no family to turn to. "Colors," is about Julie and her brother Jim, who had been abused by their father. When Julie and Jim were kicked out of their house, they turned to Averill for help. This experience prompted Averill to write "Colors."

"Julie couldn't have her school picture taken--her father stained her cheek a blue-yellow bruise," Averill wrote.

Averill followed "Colors" by reciting "The Mother," which expresses the experience of separating with all of the girls she helped.

Appropriately, Averill and Williams recognized Earth Day during their April 22 reading.

"When I first started teaching at Mt. Hood Community College, one of the reasons I accepted the contract was that I thought it would be lovely each day to drive from the urban environment of Portland--the city--into the rural landscape, and go to school and teach in a community college where there were fields and orchards and farmland . . . Since I started teaching there, almost all of that is gone. It's rare that one sees much that looks rural, mostly it's fast-food restaurants," said

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--Sandra Williams

audience. The questions focused on subjects ranging from imagery to careers.

"When I first began writing poems seriously, I was about 11 years old and I loved doing it . . . I also was writing short stories at the time," Averill explained. After pressure from her parents and teachers, who told her,

collection of her poems.

Like Averill, Williams also started writing poetry when she was young. "I guess I had more of a romantic image (at the age of 12) that I'd die and somebody would find all of these wonderful poems that I'd written . . . sort of a la Emily Dickinson," Williams said.

"I received a lot of praise from teachers all the way through high school . . . but I never got any constructive criticism," Williams explained. After she began teaching at MHCC, a friend in California convinced her to submit some poetry to a literary contest.

"I submitted my very first poem and got accepted for publication and thought, 'Hey it is this easy . . .'" Then (I) took the next step and then got the 'Whap!'" Williams said. Criticism like, "Work, change it, I don't like it, it's not good enough, if you make these changes . . ." made Williams think, "My God, this person's telling me to make changes in my poem, my heart, my soul."

"I actually came to the whole idea of publication, and the suffering that's attached to it, quite late. I was already 22 before I realized that this was going to be tougher than I thought," Williams said.

Williams has had her work published in numerous magazines. She will have poetry published in two forthcoming anthologies, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She recently received a fellowship and hopes to publish a book of poetry soon.

Print photographer awarded

David VanKeuren, the photo editor of *The Clackamas Print*, recently received an Oregon Newspaper and Publishers Association (ONPA) Award of Merit for a photo that was published in the Oct. 9, 1991 issue of *The Print*.

VanKeuren's photo, which was taken at the scene of a car accident on the CCC campus, won the award in the Spot News Photography category. The winners of the annual ONPA Collegiate Contest were announced on April 3, 1992 at an editors' conference held at the Sweetbrier Inn in Tualatin.

"I wasn't really expecting it (the award),"

VanKeuren said. "(But now) I can see all of the elements they were looking for. The photo does tell a story of what happened."

VanKeuren is a second-year student at Clackamas and has studied photography for eight years. He is considering pursuing a career in the journalism field.



photo by Vivian Johnson

USA Today recognizes CCC honor student

by Ginger Land
Staff Writer

Kathleen Mayer, a full-time CCC student, was recently mentioned in *USA Today* when she was presented with a nationwide scholarship worth \$2,500. The Academic All-American First Team Scholarship was awarded to her in Phoenix, AZ. CCC Administrators Dian Connert, John Keyser, Vince Fitzgerald and Bernie Nolan were present for the ceremony.

There were 400 applicants and only 20 winners, with only one applicant submitted per college. Kathleen's 4.0 G.P.A. was a big factor in the application she submitted. She is the only

student west of the Rockies to be awarded the first ever in Oregon. The award was sponsored by Phi Theta Kappa, *USA Today*, and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.

Kathleen has received three scholarships altogether and is planning on going to Lewis and Clark College next fall. She is an English major and eventually wants to get her Secondary

Education Degree. Being a mother of five, Kathleen's scholarships, along with financial aid, will help her reach her goals. "I recommend that more people apply for scholarships," Kathleen stated. "There is money out there; you just have to have the initiative to apply and follow through."

"There is money out there; you just have to have the initiative to apply and follow through."

--Kathleen Mayer

Quit smoking.

