

Poetry class offers advice, not structure

CRYSTAL CASTLEMAN
Contributing Writer

Diane Averill, a Clackamas English instructor, feels that oftentimes people think of poetry as simply what they are taught in the early years of high school, and she wants students to see poetry in a new way.

"... poets are taught to be nice, say nice things, think nice things, and in the world of poetry things aren't always nice," said Averill, teacher of English 106, mythology and Writing 121 and 242 classes. "The obstacle I see is trying to get people to write from the whole spectrum."

Averill sat in front of a bookcase packed over five shelves high in poetry volumes; her eyes shone with interest. Averill defined Writing 242,

creative writing and poetry, as being unstructured. She uses "suggested assignments" and said, "I never try to change the basic core of a poem or rewrite by rules. I just help them write their own idea." Sometimes Averill will use objects or paintings for the class to write about.

Student Brittany Narvaez said, "Poetry classes are cool as long as they're independent, not structured. Everybody needs to be able to develop their own style."

On Nov. 15, four of Averill's long-time poetry students presented a 50-minute reading each at Wallace Books for the Living Poets Society.

Averill has written for 25 years and two of her books have been published. "It feels good to have it out in the

world," she said. Her first book, "Branches Doubled over with Fruit," was published by University of Florida, and the second, "Beautiful Obstacles," was published by Blue Light Press of Iowa. One day, while stopped at a traffic signal, she was writing a poem on the back of her checkbook, almost rolling into the car behind her. "You never know when it's going to hit," said Averill. "Every time I sit down with a piece of paper, I feel like a beginner. You don't know where the poem is going to take you."

"We are taught in society to have to understand things instantly, as in TV where the media want the viewer to have an immediate impact. So, some people don't always have the patience to read a poem more than once. It is often neces-

sary to read and reread to get the poem's full meaning." Averill feels it is important to "take a class where you're reading good contemporary as well as old-fashioned poetry." She contrasts this to poetry in high school, where the focus is mainly on the older poets such as Shakespeare, so "oftentimes this is when people don't see it as relating to their life." Averill says that in contemporary poetry, the side of things that are not "too nice, or overly gushy" comes out.

Averill is also one of the major organizers of poetic events on and off campus. On Oct. 22, Averill organized a reading in the Gregory Forum by Diane Glancy. A nationally known author of more than 15 books of poetry, fiction, plays and non-fiction, Glancy has won

over five awards and lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. More than 40 people attended, and Glancy gave out free books to all who came.

On Feb. 26 another nationally known poet, Marvin Bell, described as "dynamic," with "poems that are really accessible," is scheduled to read at CCC. To get more information on this and other events, look for posters up around the campus, visit the Clackamas Literary Review's Web site, or contact Diane Averill at 657-6958 ext. 2370. For the poets around campus looking for readings and chances to share, Coffee Time, four or five blocks down 21st Street off Burnside in the northwest area of Portland, is always welcoming, with poetry readings beginning at around 9 p.m. every Tuesday night.

Nursing shortage poses risk to public health

DAN MERYS
Staff Writer

According to the National Student Nursing Association, there is a tremendous nursing shortage looming on the horizon. "By the year 2020, there will be 500,000 openings. Just Nevada has 1,000 openings unfilled right now," said Cathie Burton, national secretary and treasurer for the NSNA. "This shortage puts patients at risk."

With a constrained healthcare industry that resists costs, there are more patients with fewer nurses to care for them, coupled with the fact that enrollment in nursing schools has been down for five years. In the fall of 1999 enrollment was down 46%. The average age of a registered nurse is now 46.

"The only way to solve the nursing shortage is to promote nursing as a respected profession to attract the best and brightest," Burton said.

The NSNA is a membership organization representing students in associate degree nursing programs, diploma, baccalaureate, generic masters and generic doctoral programs preparing students for Registered Nurse licensure. It also represents Registered Nurses in Bachelor of Science nursing completion programs.

The NSNA has 50 years of experience helping nursing students voice

their interests and influence legislation. Some of the NSNA's main goals are to provide opportunities for students to learn and prepare for a future career, broaden knowledge of the

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Cathie Burton
NSNA Secretary-Treasurer

nursing profession, help students become involved in community health and education and the opportunity to communicate with national nursing leaders.

The NSNA wants to enact legislation that will provide loan forgiveness options, grants and scholarships and increased funding to nursing schools to expand nursing programs, staff and faculty. "Many companies are offering sign-on bonuses to entice prospective nurses to enter the profession, but this is only a short-term fix," Burton said.

"Our community needs more nurses. Our department provides those trained nurses. The college needs to support the department," said Burton, whose duties include notifying six states (Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Maine, Vermont and Guam) of upcoming events.

Poet's Corner

On September 12, I Can't Stop

looking at one business man falling head first
from the tower. His arms and legs do not paw
the air. He is not a kite with his tie as a tail.
He is more a missile than man, his head the dome
and trigger, his body a titanium shell, just as vivid, just
as dumb. Now I know the clammy hold of images, why
the eye flickered and bulged in the broken window
of the college lockerroom years ago where I showered
in a different man's gaze. And it is the calm of this man
compelling me stare over and over, the magnified shot
of his face, his eyes watching the unrepentant street,
the approach of a terrible body, its greeting
a shattering. I can't leave him. In his descent
I finger a slick, clean fear and a grace
so fierce it whistles like a bomb.

- Kate Gray, English instructor

This poem is one of five finalists for the James Wright Poetry Prize and will be published in the upcoming Mid-American Review.

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