

Nature of Words 2006 A Resounding Success

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Literary Event Grows 30 Percent From Inaugural Year

With full workshops and wait lists, enthusiastic audiences and a sold-out dinner and panel discussion, The Nature of Words drew participants from throughout Oregon, in addition to its loyal Central Oregon following, boosting overall attendance by 30 percent over the previous year. The annual literary event was held in Bend November 2 - 5. Central Oregon's premier literary celebration is co-sponsored by the High Desert Museum and Oregon State University/Cascades Campus.

Feedback was positive from authors and participants alike. Guest author and featured poet Robert Wrigley stated, "NOW [Nature of Words] is a very good thing -- exceptionally well-run, good community participation, fine folks all around. And, most important, good FOR the community. Congratulations and many, many thanks."

Elizabeth Quinn, Editor of the High Desert Journal, said, "The Nature of Words is a fantastic opportunity for writers. I myself gained so much from the workshops I attended. Plus, I simply had a wonderful time at the readings, classes and dinner."

Another participant, Reuben Rich of Wilsonville, Oregon, sent this comment: "The emphasis on the creative process and the high quality of authors made attending The Nature of Words a most rewarding experience for me."

Rich Wandschneider, Executive Director of Fishtrap in Enterprise, Oregon, and a guest emcee, emailed to say, "I thought it a grand event. The readings were good -- right amount of presenters and reading times."

New this year, the Rising Star creative writing competition for emerging writers, sponsored by Central Oregon Community College, was a highlight of the weekend. Winners read their work during the Open Mic on Sunday, November 5. As reported by the Bend Bulletin, Jordan Parsons, winner of the fiction prize in the 15 to 18 age category “wrote a description of a teen suicide so vivid and disturbing that it stunned listeners into silence for a moment before they broke into enthusiastic applause.”

Participant evaluations affirmed that the model of readings, workshops and a panel discussion worked, offering a variety of venues and experiences for readers and writers alike. Ellen Waterston, Director of The Nature of Words, said, “The extensive feedback we received is testament to the participants’ personal interest in ensuring this Central Oregon literary tradition will continue to grow and improve.” The Nature of Words’ reputation has already attracted noted authors who have expressed interest in next year’s event.

The Nature of Words is co-sponsored by the High Desert Museum and Oregon State University/Cascades Campus. Additional support is provided by Brooks Resources Corporation, Cascades East, Cascade Publications, Central Oregon Community College, City of Bend, Deschutes County Commissioners, Mark and Susan Cooper, Deschutes Cultural Coalition, Deschutes Public Library Foundation, Karnopp Petersen LLP, KLRR 101.7 FM, Mount Bachelor Village Resort, Oregon Community Foundation, Oregon Council for the Humanities, Oregon Cultural Trust, Ray Lansing and Angelina Montoya, Mike and Susan McKnight, Starview Foundation, Shops at the Old Mill, Sun Forest Construction, The Bulletin, The Source Weekly, and the Writing Ranch.

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For more information, visit www.thenatureofwords.org, or email info@thenatureofwords.org.

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