



Dr. Anthony Abbott autographs his collection entitled *The Search for Wonder in the Cradle of the World* for Catherine Saleska, college transfer student, following his reading in the Music Room. PHOTO: VOICE STAFF

Poet reads works, shares healing power of words

By JOY COX

Dr. Anthony S. Abbott, professor of English at Davidson College, spoke on Tuesday, April 3, to about 90 students at 10 and 11 a.m. prior to his performance as the speaker for the Rotary Club Henry Belk Lecture.

Margaret Baddour, humanities instructor at WCC and Abbott's friend, received a Foundation mini-grant to support Abbott's poetry reading for students and arranged for his performance in the Music Room of the Dogwood Building.

The 66-year-old poet captured the attention of college students 40 years younger than he.

He shared his youth in a dysfunctional family, facts of his life, his success in the academic world, his adolescence in boarding schools with their share of playground betrayals, his despair over the death of his young daughter—and his discovery through poetry of reconciliation and peace.

Abbott told students and faculty members that he began writing poetry when he was 40 years old: "It came to me when I needed it. I began to write poetry to deal with my feelings, to keep alive those things that would otherwise be dead," referring to his 4-year-old daughter who died suddenly.

He asked, "What is poetry that we should care about it?" Crushing a piece of notebook paper and tossing it across the room, Abbott demonstrated what he said Robert Frost noted about poetry, that it is "experience we throw ahead of us which we later come across and realize the meaning of."

Abbott shared that he was born with a deformity, bilateral club feet, which took several surgeries to repair.

He told how this condition made him sympathetic to but also scornful of those who are different.

He said some of his poems are really apologies to those that he should have treated better than he did in his youth.

After the readings, he responded to questions from the audience and signed copies of three volumes of poetry, including *The Search for Wonder in the Cradle of the World*.

Wellness from p. 20

Of 353 participants, 26 faculty/staff and 11 students had referrals. Blood pressure: 53 participants 3 faculty/staff and 1 student referral, Body Composition: 51 participants no referrals; Cholesterol: 63 participants, 1 faculty/staff and no student referrals; Diabetes: 49 participants, 3 faculty/staff and 1 student referral; Glaucoma: 45 participants, 2 faculty/staff and 2 student referrals; Hearing: 30 participants, 7 faculty/staff and 1 student referral; Skin Cancer: 17 participants, 2 faculty/staff and 1 student referral; Vision: 47 participants, 8 faculty/staff and 5 students.

The areas that most faculty/staff and students had trouble in were hearing and vision.

The fair was rewarding to all that attended; it provided lots of health advice.

The following students, faculty and staff members won door prizes: Susan Elliot, Teresa Hart, Beverly Lipford, Chrissy Alers, Varonda Manley, Syreeta Worrells, Sean Lamb, Janis Hardy, Amanda Lund, Sherry Grandberry, Donna Potter, Peggy Moses, Doug Davis, Yolanda Faison, Brenda Bowie, and Carolyn Wooten.

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