



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING Pauline Oliveros, founder of the Deep Listening Institute, was the guest artist during the MFAIA residency in Port Townsend last August. She took students to explore the Dan Harpole Cistern, which was originally used as the fort's water supply system.

When East Meets West

A DECOMMISSIONED MILITARY BASE that dates back to the 19th century may seem an odd fit for a college campus. But Fort Worden, home of Goddard's Washington-state site, isn't a typical Army base. Since 1973, the fort has been a state park and also what the state calls a "lifelong learning center."

In addition to Goddard, a diverse group of organizations resides in what is now the Fort Worden State Park Conference Center, including Copper Canyon Press, an all-poetry publishing house; the Centrum Arts organization; and the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.

Goddard offers two programs at Fort Worden: the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and the Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts. The college is located on a picturesque site, high on a bluff, on a corner of land with the east side facing Puget Sound and the north side facing the Strait of Juan de Fuca, offering a not-so-distant view of Canada. The park's 434 acres include miles of walking trails and beachfront.

"I tell people, in Vermont you're going to be surrounded by rolling hills and cows," says Campus Director Erin Fristad, "and in Port Townsend, you're going to be surrounded by saltwater and fish."

Ann Hedreen is a documentary filmmaker from Seattle who is enrolled in the MFA in Creative Writing Program.

She's been visiting Port Townsend for years, but as an academic location she found Fort Worden to be ideal.

"It's a gorgeous setting – mountains, woods, beach," she says, "and running or walking or biking every day during the residencies kept me sane."

The town of Port Townsend, about the size of Montpelier, Vt., is a 20-minute walk down the beach or a mile and a half by car.

"It has a very similar feel to Montpelier," Erin says, mentioning bookstores, coffee shops, a food co-op and a public swimming pool. There's also a refurbished theater where Goddard has hosted public screenings of major motion pictures, followed by talks with the directors who were visiting writers to the creative writing program.



Perhaps best known as the location of the 1982 film *An Officer and a Gentleman*, Fort Worden is home to Goddard's site in Port Townsend, Wash. High on a bluff above Puget Sound, the college is bringing its unique brand of education to a new audience.

BY JEFFERY LINDHOLM



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID CONKLIN



The college tries to have a public event at every residency involving students, guest artists and community members.

"It's our way of saying 'thank you' to Port Townsend," Erin says, "because the community has really welcomed Goddard College."

Goddard has two full-time staff members onsite at Fort Worden – Erin and Joyce Gustafson, the operations manager – and five others as needed throughout the year.

"When we are in residency, we're all here," Erin says. "I think of it as: you add water, and the college unfolds like one of those little sponge toys."

Goddard holds residencies in the meeting spaces in various buildings around Fort Worden. An information resource librarian and a technology assistant set up a computer lab and teach the same workshops offered at the Plainfield-campus residencies. Erin explains that the residencies in Washington and Vermont are all part of the same two programs.

"It's one creative writing program and one interdisciplinary


arts program," she says. "It's just offered in two different locations."

During residencies, students stay in Victorian houses along the former officers' row. The houses have fireplaces and dining rooms, and almost all the rooms are single occupancy.

"The old officers' houses make for atmospheric living quarters," Ann says. Being a writer, she appreciates how the rooms help create an atmosphere of respect and acknowledge everyone's need "to have a little time alone."

Having run programs at Fort Worden since 2005, Goddard is firmly part of the community. As a member of the Fort Worden Partners, the college is working with the State Parks and Recreation Commission as well as Centrum, Copper Canyon Press, and other onsite groups

such as Peninsula College and the Madrona MindBody Institute to share resources and to steer the fort's course into the future.

"We are in partnership with all of them, so we are more than just renters at the fort," Erin says. "Goddard is becoming involved in its future." 

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ANN HEDREEN
MFAW STUDENT