



# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3

Spring 1988

## MAY CONFERENCE PLANS ARE SET

THE COMPOSING PROCESS REVISITED II, a conference jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Writing Project and the National Capital Area Writing Project in conjunction with Heineman Educational Books, will be held at West Chester University and the University of the District of Columbia on May 20-21. The conference continues last year's examination of the theory and practice of writing instruction with the help of several leading teachers and researchers, all of whom have written under the imprint of Heinemann Educational Books or its recently acquired division, Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Each day, speakers will address topics of concern for teachers from primary to college levels. On Friday May 20, PAWP guests will be Tom Newkirk, Sondra Perl, and Tom Romano.

THOMAS NEWKIRK is an associate professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, where he directs the Freshman English Program and the annual Summer Institute for teachers. He is the editor of Only Connect: Uniting Reading and Writing; To Compose: Teaching Writing in the High School; the co-editor of Understanding Writing: Ways of Observing, Learning, and Teaching; and Breaking Ground: Teachers Relate Reading and Writing in the Elementary School. In addition, he has published many noteworthy essays and research reports on all aspects of composition instruction.



THOMAS NEWKIRK

His morning presentation is on the politics of teaching writing as a process, and his afternoon workshop will be on responding to texts by students and professional writers.

SONDRA PERL is the Director of the New York City Writing Project and Associate Professor of English at Lehman College, the City University of New York. She is a nationally known researcher, teacher, teacher of

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR: WHO'S WHO IN PAWP'S SUMMER PROGRAMS

If you've never seen a PAWP summer staff in operation, you've never seen the crackling of sheer energy--something like "the Force" in Star Wars. This year again we've combined a group of superlative teacher-consultants with a cadre of nationally renowned guest teachers and researchers, and added in some special faculty talents from the West Chester University English Department. We are offering two institutes, two advanced institutes, six courses, and seven short workshops on almost every aspect of writing, plus programs for youth and senior citizens.

The Institutes: Co-directors for the West Chester and Bucks County Institutes are Gail Capaldi, Bob McCann, Martha Menz, and Lois Snyder. Bob is adding a Latin certificate to his credentials, Gail is a doctoral candidate in education, Martha is returning after spending two summers on staff at institutes of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Lois has added a second master's degree in counseling and is actually using writing in that area.

The staff for the Advanced Institute in Teaching Creative Writing is described elsewhere in this issue. Chris Kane will lead the Advanced Institute in Writing, Thinking, and Learning with the help of Jolene Borgese. Both participated in trainers' workshops at the University of California, Irvine, which is famous for its programs linking writing and thinking.

The Courses: Strategies for Teaching Writing is offered at West Chester's Exton campus, and in Berks, Bucks and Northampton counties. The coordinators are Mark Ruppel (he's doing two), Vicki Steinberg, and Jim McCall. Vicki led a successful Berks County course in 1985, and co-directs a summer writing program for her school district; Jim recently ran an exciting 5-session course for the Springfield School District (Delco); and Mark has coordinated two previous courses for Bucks County teachers. Again leading the WCU course on Computers and Writing is Brenda Hurley, who has agreed to act as field coordinator for all of PAWP's programs involving microcomputers. Elizabeth Larsen,

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**MAY CONFERENCE PLANS**  
(Continued from front page)



SONDRA PERL

writing teachers and author. Her candid and sensitive book, Through Teachers's Eyes: Portraits of Writing Teachers at Work, documents the lives of six writing teachers from grades 1-12 and examines how they teach (currently reviewed in this Newsletter).

Perl will speak on creating powerful contexts of trust in the classroom, and her afternoon workshop will be on "examining teachers' assumptions" by looking closely at who and what we are.

A former research assistant to Jane Hansen and Donald Graves, TOM ROMANO is a teacher-consultant from the Ohio Writing Project. With sixteen years of practical experience as a high school English teacher, Tom has had several publications including "Finding Focus" (a poem) for the October 1987 issue of Language Arts. He is the author of Clearing the Way: Working with Teenage Writers, which Donald Murray called, "The most extraordinary book on teaching writing I have read."



TOM ROMANO

In his AM presentation, Romano will tell us about the awareness he's had with students "breaking the rules in style."

His PM presentation is an "Imaginative Way to Assign the Research Report."

Saturday's presenters for PAWP are Glenda Bissex, Roy Peter Clark, and Rosemary Deen.

The author of the seminal work, GNYS AT WRK: A Child Learns to Write and Read, GLENDA BISSEX has been involved in many aspects of education both theoretical and practical, working with teachers and "policy-makers" and conducting major research in the field of composition theory. Her publications include "What's a Teacher-Researcher?" for Language Arts, September, 1986; "The Beginnings of Writing" in Home and School: Early Language and Reading; and Seeing for Ourselves: Case Study Research by Teachers of Writing which she co-authored and edited with Richard Bullock.

She will talk in the morning on re-mapping the territory of reading/writing and teaching/learning. She says that her afternoon workshop, which is on observing and assessing growth in young children's writing, works best when teachers bring with them writing folders from one or two students.

Both a writer and a teacher of writing, ROY PETER CLARK has also served as the director of a writing project for the St. Petersburg Times and the American

Society of Newspaper Editors. He is the editor of Best Newspaper Writing 1979-1985. Since 1980 he has taught writing to children and their teachers. His book on teaching children, Free to Write: A Journalist Teaches Young Writers, was published in 1987 and he now runs a summer Writer's Camp for young writers and teachers. Don Murray wrote the Foreword to his book and says it is "exceptional."



ROY PETER CLARK

Clark will talk in the morning about coaching writers and about what teachers can learn from professional journalists; in his afternoon workshop, following this theme, he promises to explain how to coach students into becoming better writers without having to mark up thousands of papers.

ROSEMARY DEEN has been teaching at Queens College of the City University of New York for 25 years. She is a poet and the poetry editor of Commonweal magazine. She has co-authored two books on the teaching of writing: The Common Sense and Beat not the Poor Desk, which won the Mina P. Shaughnessy Medal of the Modern Language Association in 1983 "for an outstanding research publication."

Deen's morning presentation is on reading and writing as "acts of attention" and "acts of understanding" (the title of her forthcoming book). Her afternoon workshop will address writing about literature and how we read to write about what we read.

Look for the May Conference brochure!



**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR**  
(Continued from front page)

who directs WCU's regular composition program, is offering a new course on theory and research in composing processes--an opportunity to do some good reading!

The Workshops: I will again be guiding a group of teachers through several types of holistic assessment in our two-day workshop late in June--the eighth year of this offering. Writers' Workshop will be led by Linda Baer, who participated in it last year. Eileen Lynch will coordinate Writing in the Content Areas and provide it with an elementary teacher's perspective, and Ed Bureau will again organize the popular offering on Administering Writing Programs. Leaders of the three creative writing workshops are described elsewhere in this issue.

Other Programs: The Elderhostel Memoir Program has returned, with Edie Lefferts, now retired, as instructor. This summer's Youth Writing Project will be the joint responsibility of Jolene Borgese, Guy MacCloskey, and Jim MacCall, with Brenda Hurley and Mark Ruppel as the computer coordinators and 6-8 additional teacher-consultants to round out the staff.

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The Consultants: Visitors' schedules are not yet completed for this summer, but I can tell you who some of our guest presenters will be. Each of the visiting writers described in our article on the Advanced Institute on Teaching Creative Writing will also visit the one-credit workshops on the writing of poetry, stories, and plays. Poets Chris Buckley and Len Roberts, each with three books in publication, will be writers in residence for the two summer institutes. Bob Tierney, of the Bay Area Writing Project, will return to the workshop on Writing in the Content Areas and the regular institutes. Ann Berthoff, author of Reclaiming the Imagination and other books, will also be a guest consultant for the regular institutes. Both she and Tierney will also join the Advanced Institute in Writing, Thinking, and Learning. Guests for the workshop in Administering Writing Programs include Karen Steinbrink of the Bucks County I.U. and Jim Lee, formerly of the West Chester Area SD and a now an assistant superintendent in the Lower Moreland SD.

A key person in our entire summer operation—she has been mentioned already—is Jolene Borgese, who as usual will be visiting, presenting in and monitoring most of our programs. Jolene, currently the lead teacher in language arts for the West Chester Area SD, works almost round the clock each summer as co-director of PAWP.



**WHAT'S GOING ON IN  
THE CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT**

While we were going to press, brochures were being mailed for the March 11-12, 1988 Conference on Teaching Creative Writing In the Schools. The Conference will have ended by the time you receive this newsletter. We can't write about it in the future tense because it's past, nor the past tense because we don't know what happened. Thus stymied, we promise to report fully about it in the summer newsletter.

Worthwhile noting is the mix of featured authors: Gary Soto (essay and poetry): *Lesser Evils*; Sharon Sheehy Stark (fiction): *A Wrestling Season*; Ken Smith (fiction): *Decoys and Other Stories*; Bruce Bawer (essay): critic for *New Criterion*; Tom Disch (science fiction): *334*; Dana Gioia (poetry): *Daily Horoscope*; Len Roberts (poetry): *From the Dark*; Karen Blomain (poetry): *Black Diamond*; Craig Czury (poetry): *God's Shiny Glass Eye*.

Four are from Pennsylvania — Stark, Roberts, Blomain and Czury — and have been involved with PAWP in recent years. The others are highly respectable, well published, and experienced in giving workshops for adults. Conference director Mike Peich of West Chester University's English Department operates a fine printing press and will publish sections of the authors' work as presented at the conference.

The conference brochure promised a remarkable two-day workshop by these writers for area teachers. With the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pennsylvania Writing Project now has a major emphasis on the teaching of creative writing. At least twenty Fellows and other well qualified teachers will participate in this summer's Advanced Institute on Teaching Creative Writing, along with four visiting writers: Sherod Santos (poetry): *Accidental weather*; Ken Smith (fiction): *Decoys and Other Stories*; Mark Jarman (poetry): *Far and Away*; and Louis Lippa (plays): *A House Remembered*.

In addition, the Institute will be visited by Valerie Hobbs, a Fellow of the South Coast Writing Project whose fiction appears in the Kansas Quarterly, Fiction 86, and other literary magazines and anthologies. The Institute director, Christopher Buckley of the WCU English Department, is himself a poet with three books to his credit. Institute co-director Joan Flynn, a 1980 PAWP Fellow, who teaches elementary-age students in the West Chester Area School District, has written Writing for Reading and A Handbook for Teachers of Writing.

**1-credit Summer Workshops**

In addition to these two major events, PAWP is sponsoring three 1-credit summer workshops for teachers on how to teach writing. Teaching Poetry (Eng. 599-31) repeats last year's successful pilot from June 27 to July 1; the instructor is Fred Dings, a successful young poet. Teaching Short Fiction (Eng 599-32) is offered by veteran WCU creative writing teacher Theodora West, July 5-8. Teaching Playwriting (Eng 599-33) is taught by playwright Tony Stafford, July 11-15.

Fred Dings has an MFA from the Iowa's Writer's Workshop and is getting his Ph.D. in Creative Writing from the University of Utah. His poetry has appeared in various national publications, including The New Yorker and The New Republic.

Theodora L. West has taught creative writing and short story workshops at WCU for twenty years. A writer of short stories and critical texts dealing with contemporary fictionists, she is currently completing a mystery for publication.

Tony J. Stafford has written five full-length plays, six one-acts, and is looking forward to his first Off-off Broadway production this fall. He has taught playwriting and screen writing as well as a wide range of courses in dramatic literature and has many publications in drama from Shakespeare to Shaw.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS..

The process of putting our second newsletter together serves as a constant reminder of not only the processes of writing, but also of learning.

We recognize the power of collaboration and dialogue in both writing and learning. We listen not only to our own inner voices, but also to each other's to determine, in the words of Wallace Chafe (National Writing Project Quarterly, January 1988), how we want readers to "listen to" our writing.

Listen then to the voices of the Pennsylvania Writing Project. This NEWSLETTER features articles about our first all-day teacher-consultant conference, held last fall. In addition, make note of the information concerning our May conference and the Summer Institute.

Finally, remember you are one of our primary sources. We once again invite you to publish. Submit ideas for articles and book reviews, information for PAWP-POURRI, comments, etc., by means of the response sheet (in the insert) included in this issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Gail Capaldi and Lois Snyder*  
Editors, PAWP Newsletter

### DELAWARE VALLEY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIR ALLIANCE FORMED

*By Barbara Giorgio*

Meaningful staff development always occurs when teachers can get together to talk about common concerns, goals, successes and failures. The same is true for department heads who can share with teachers and other subject area department heads on a daily basis, but rarely have the opportunity to discuss leadership of the English department with others who have the same responsibilities. The need for frequent and meaningful communication among local English department heads was a topic of discussion among some participants in the 1985 Commonwealth Partnership Literature Seminar. With the aid and guidance of Nicholas Spennato, Language Arts Specialist with the Delaware County Intermediate Unit, the Delaware Valley English Department Chair Alliance became a reality in the Fall of 1986.

During the group's first year of existence, four meetings were held. Each meeting focused on a topic of particular instruction. In the Fall, guest discussion leaders, James Lee, Language Arts Coordinator of West Chester Area School District and Harry Lefever, Professor of English, Delaware County Community College led us in an examination of various approaches to "Building

an English Curriculum." In two subsequent meetings, "Grammar and the English Curriculum" served as the source for lively discussions led by Edgar Schuster, Language Arts Coordinator, Allentown City School District, and Sharon Taylor, English Teacher, Springfield School District.

The new state recommended format for Language Arts Curriculum Development, Pennsylvania Comprehensive Reading Program II, has provided the topic for this academic year's first Alliance activities. Susan Lytle, co-author of the document along with Morton Botel, explained the new guidelines in our Fall meeting. The Alliance and the Intermediate Unit sponsored an in-service afternoon on November 11 which extended discussion of the PCR II and related topics. English teachers from Delaware Valley schools heard a keynote address by Morton Botel and then attended one of five workshops on topics including: Transacting with Text, Evaluating Student Writing, Investigating Language Patterns, Perspectives in Contemporary Literature, and Critical Thinking. Response to this opportunity has been quite favorable and another such day will be planned for next year's Fall in-service day.

*Barbara Giorgio is the English Department Chair at Marple Newtown Senior High School and a 1983 Fellow*

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"With the art of writing the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced. It related, with a wondrous new contiguity and perpetual closeness, the past and the distant with the present in time and place; all times and all places with this are actual here and now."

## A WARNING FROM DIXIE DELLINGER

Dixie Dellinger, a leading teacher-consultant of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte Writing Project, intended to frighten the audience of project directors at the last November's meeting of the National Writing Project when she delivered her keynote address. Her message was clear: NWP sites have to do more in their summer institutes to arm teacher-consultants in their constant battles with school administrators, curriculum requirements, and mandated evaluation procedures. Impassioned and lucid, her talk profoundly affected the audience, which consisted of people who work daily to improve the education of teachers. She received a five-minute standing ovation.

Dixie, the author of an NWP monograph called *From the Heart*, began her talk by explaining what she was like when she entered her summer institute. At that time, she had had no instruction or training in composition teaching although she was a veteran teacher; nor had she any stated philosophy of education. After working with the ideas of Dixie Goswami, Toby Fulwiler, Ann Berthoff, Ken Macrorie, Donald Graves, and Peter Elbow, she learned—as she put it—“to trust my students.”

Her early motive was to teach her students to write well. Having learned Moffett's sequences for creative writing and found them to work very successfully with her students, she now wanted to translate her teaching skill into the area of expository writing. She investigated the field of “thinking” as related to writing, met up with the work of James Britton, and as a result had her students do response journals. They loved such work, but the richness of their writing melted when they were asked to write “papers.” So in response she became no longer a “writing skills teacher” but a teacher who made writing central to every activity in the class; she preferred her students' richer writings over their labored, unsuccessful endeavors to produce curriculum-mandated essays. Yet she gradually saw a pay-off that she had not expected: the students who were doing the informal, not-evaluated writing that she assigned indeed had become better expository writers. Having first been a teacher of writing skills, then becoming a teacher of thinking through writing, Dixie then began to ask students to describe their own thoughts—to learn their own thinking processes.

Having followed this progression in a friendly school atmosphere, Dixie cautioned us about the current unfriendly weather systems in schools today. Teachers are losing ownership, autonomy, and trust as a result of state-mandated reform movements. There is much official language in support of writing as a process, but there is no National Writing Project philosophy in any of this. Rather, there are detailed curricula of fourteen volumes and 17,000 pages: there are teacher training and performance appraisal systems, there is Madeline Hunter's effective teaching model with its six-step lesson plan. In North Carolina, there are now six mandated observations a year, a teacher's career ladder plan, and a standardized end-of-course test in every subject for

every student. In the observations, Dixie pointed out, an evaluator may not like the NWP teacher-centered presentation modes and the student-centered workshop modes. Some of the best teachers, she noted, were getting low scores on their career ladder plans.

Her warning was to institute directors: you need to do more for Fellows. When they leave and return to a climate hostile to NWP methods, they must have four things: (1) research data on how NWP practices improve student achievement in writing; (2) research data on how NWP practices improve teaching skills; (3) a year-long plan for a rich writing program in their own classrooms; and (4) a year's sponsorship of the National Writing Project, entitling them to four issues of the *NWP Quarterly*.

Why was Dixie's address so well received? The answer is that it corresponded to what many writing project sites are beginning to feel: the insincerity or shallowness of school administrators' commitments to effective writing instruction (i.e., the resurgence of grammar and mechanics and testing for the same), and the false confidence of many teachers and administrators who have had limited training in teaching writing (“Oh yes, we're already implementing a process approach in grades 4-6”). How many of us hear such lines of reasoning and grow frustrated because the problems remain unsolved. “We have met the enemy,” says the *Peanuts* cartoon, “and he is us.” Us the teaching profession, or us the school administrators, or both?

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### PAWP JUDGES FOR SCHOLASTIC WRITING CONTEST

“On the dashboard your memory plays pinochle beating the pants off the Virgin Mary.” This line, states Jolene Borgese, is truly the most bizarre she's ever read in her five years of judging the Scholastic Writing Contest. Together with Jolene, seven teacher-consultants scored the category of high school poetry for the annual Scholastic Competition on February 6, 1988. Christine Cardamone, the Scholastic Writing Contest/PAWP Coordinator, who enjoys seeing the variety and quality of young authors' writing, held the scoring session at her home in Audubon.

Guy MacCloskey, a five-year reader, stated, “I enjoy reading work by high school students. Teaching elementary school often leaves you with the curiosity of what their writing is like when they grow up.” Bernadette Fenning and Dick Halsey, first-year readers, when asked why they wanted to read replied: “I thought it'd be fun; curious to see what kids were writing. And it's good to see kids writing and entering the competition.” Bernadette added, “The pleasant part was meeting other Fellows and having fun.”

Conne Broderick, a four-year reader, summed up this year's contest by grimly noting that, “this year's writings were the worst of the four years.” However, another PAWP reader, John Poynton, reflected that, “The poems this year dealt more with friendship, love and nature—a welcome respite.”

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE: POSITION AVAILABLE**

### **Associate Director Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP)/WCU and Instructor or Assistant Professor of English**

**Duties of the Position:** Under the supervision of the Director, the Associate Director directs delegated PAWP programs such as Inservice Workshop series and conferences, manages budget records and paperwork as assigned, consults with the Director and Summer Institute coordinators on pertinent staffing issues, and represents the Director in negotiating series contracts with school systems and in working with the State Department of Education in planning professional development programs for teachers. The Associate Director writes reports, workshop materials and brochures; engages in fundraising activities as other responsibilities permit; assists the Director in managing the office computer network; with the Director and Summer Institute coordinators, makes Institute admissions decisions.

The Associate Director is expected to stay abreast of current research in composition instruction and, when possible, contribute to that research. The Associate Director reports to the Director weekly and prepares the Inservice Program section of the annual report for submission to the Advisory Board, the National Writing Project, and the University administration.

The appointee will also teach from 1-3 freshman level composition courses per semester in the Department of English. This is a 9-month appointment with summer employment negotiable. Preferred starting date: June 20, 1988.

**Qualifications:** Master's degree in English or English Education with 2-4 years of relevant experience; demonstrated knowledge of composition instruction; good administrative and organizational skills; ability to plan and organize professional development programs budget; excellent interpersonal skills; familiarity with word processing and data base management or willingness to learn. The ideal candidate will also have experience as a Teacher/Consultant with PAWP or another NWP affiliate and teaching experience in Pennsylvania public schools.

**Appointment:** This is a one-year position with the University, with possibility of renewal pending 89-90 University budget allocations. Starting salary range \$21,900-\$25,410 depending on qualifications.

**To apply:** Applicants should send a letter and resume by May 13, 1988, to: Kostas Myrsiades, Chairman of the English Department, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

**West Chester University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.**

## FIVE PIECES FROM THE OCTOBER CONFERENCE: PAWPDAY 1

### PAWP HOSTS FIRST ALL-DAY TEACHER CONSULTANT CONFERENCE

Amid the splendor of the Oakbourne Estate in Westtown, PA, PAWP held its first all-day Teacher-Consultant Conference on Wednesday, October 28, 1987. As part of a new continuity program, all teachers who had been part of the Pennsylvania Writing Project institutes were invited to enhance the training they had received during their summer institutes and to better prepare themselves as teachers and in-service presenters.

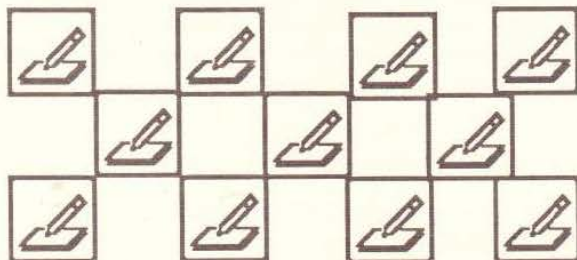
After coffee and various "sweet treats", Don Wolff, in the opening presentation, discussed writing as a way of helping readers to not only read, but also to understand what is read through the use of a "question journal". He engaged us in a reading and writing activity with Hemingway's *A Very Short Story* that demonstrated how the question journal "works". The question journal enables the reader to find a subject and a focus (heuristic), to interpret, and to examine his/her own processes of focusing, reading, and composing. While his presentation was essentially an exercise in critical thinking, it also highlighted some of the similarities between composition theory and contemporary literary criticism.

Session I offered a choice between "Teachers and Researchers" led by Joan Flynn and "New Books on Writing" in which Lois Snyder and Bob McCann reviewed two new writing-related publications (see reviews written up in this issue). Session II again offered choices among, "The PAWP Newsletter," led by Gail Capaldi and Lois Snyder, "Continuity Programs," led by Jolene Borgese, and "The Youth Writing Project," led by Guy MacCloskey and Jim MacCall.

In the afternoon there was another full group session followed by Session III offering a choice between "Coordinating PAWP Courses," led by Jolene Borgese and Bob Weiss, and "Making Effective Presentations to Teachers," led by Lois Snyder and Bob McCann.

The conference provided much information for the participants as well as feedback for the Project, but more importantly, it brought PAWP Fellows together in a spirit of solidarity, reestablishing the bonds that connect all of us to the Writing Project and to each other.

We feel that Ron Shapiro (PAWP 1986) has genuinely captured that "spirit" in the following reaction piece. We look forward to seeing even more of our "PAWP community" at the next all-day conference planned for April 20, 1988.



### ON THE PAWP CONFERENCE

by Ron Shapiro

After becoming a Fellow and completing the Summer Institute in 1986, I have been somewhat dismayed at the lack of follow-up activities. Spending half that summer learning about contemporary writing research, I felt I was then left, like a ship lost at sea, to try to synthesize what seemed to be important and useful information into my classroom curriculum. Being the only Delaware teacher to be involved in the Writing Project, my revolution towards process-centered writing has been a lonely one. Perhaps other Fellows have experienced the same situation. At the Institute's conclusion, everyone was fervently saying, "Let's meet again and share our teaching ideas at my house." Unfortunately, I believe this enthusiasm to continue a community of writing teachers soon fizzles out in the midst of daily lesson plans, administrative paperwork, papers to be graded, and personal affairs. But this experience may be changing. At least that's my impression after attending the all-day conference on Wednesday, October 28, 1987.

Feeling strongly positive about writing and its teaching, I welcome any opportunity to discuss and share what's happening in the classroom. Not having much chance to do this where I teach, I was overwhelmed at the number of participants at the conference. Fellows were enthusiastic to share their ideas and teaching situations. I've always felt that for any group, whether political, religious or social, to be strong and prosper, a community bond must be inherently felt among all members. This feeling was given a great boost during the day-long activities.

It wasn't just the guest speaker, Donald Wolff, and his "Question Journal" or the individual workshops which I found memorable. Rather, it was observing other teachers writing, sharing and listening to each other's interpretation of a Hemingway story; it was hearing other Fellows express ideas about the improving of the Project; it was sharing classroom ideas with others who were really listening and appreciating what each had to offer. I don't know about all of you, but this situation is rare for me outside of workshops and classes. Think what would happen if your department colleagues met occasionally to write, speak and listen. For me this situation seems too far removed from reality. That's why I relished the day away from school to sit and write and talk and listen for seven hours or so.

Fellows should realize these conferences are truly significant events in the Project's growth towards becoming a stronger, more cohesive community as well as their own growth towards becoming active teacher-consultants. I think about all the ideas given to me at the Summer Institute, and I question, "What have I given the Project in return?" My participation in this conference was a good, first step in addressing this important issue. Why we didn't get 100 people I can't say.

Ron Shapiro was a 1986 PAWP Fellow. He teaches high school English in Christiana, Delaware.

## THE TABLES TURNED

It was a pleasure for twenty-five Fellows from recent summers to see Lois Snyder and Bob McCann have to review books for a change. The works discussed in the "New Books" seminar are relatively new and have not yet been included in reading lists for PAWP workshops: Sondra Perl and Nancy Wilson's Through Teacher's Eyes and Muriel Harris' Teaching One to One: The Writing Conference.

Lois praised Through Teachers' Eyes for its willingness to show teachers' successes as well as failures. Under an NIE grant, Perl and Wilson studied post-Institute teachers in the Shoreham-Wading River School District on Long Island for four years. The experiences of six teachers, ranging from first to twelfth grade, are detailed. The authors did their case studies by spending their days in the teachers' classrooms and their nights in the teachers' homes.

What impressed Lois most was the insider's perspective she gained as the six teachers moved through the days spent teaching writing, and later reacting to their work both in group discussions and introspective writings.

The appeal of the ethnographic research, in Lois' opinion, is its holistic thrust, lacking in experimental research.

Through Teachers' Eyes, a Heinemann Educational Books ('86) publication with a forward by James Moffett, is a book about teaching writing and about ethnographic research and, in a larger sense, about education in general.

Bob McCann found the NCTE publication Teaching One to One: The Writing Conference to be helpful for teachers to train themselves or tutors to respond to student papers in a private conference. Examples and exercises focus on making the student discover weaknesses for himself. The book includes a few strategies for having students check for grammatical problems when they don't know the rules.

Harris' students show up for private or small-group tutoring with a draft in hand at a date early enough to revise the writing. They seem to care about improving their work, even though they are not sure how to go about doing that. It is magical to read through a tutoring session transcript to see the student come to the "aha" discovery, led there by a skillful questioner. The book is rich in bibliographical background, examples, and techniques to try. While the examples are collegiate, the strategies of tutoring apply to teaching at any level.

A caveat: Harris empathizes with the problems of a teacher trying to run fruitful one-on-one conferences with a full class in tow, but she doesn't give out the secret of doing that successfully. Also, a reader who is looking for easy advice on "how to grade the writing process work" will be disappointed.

## EFFECTS OF THE WRITING PROJECT

On Wednesday, October 28th, fifty PAWP teacher consultants traveled to the Oakbourne Estate in West Chester for the first Pennsylvania Writing Project Teacher Consultant Conference. In workshops, conversations over coffee, and group writes, we gathered varied and enthusiastic responses to the question, "How has the Writing Project affected you and your teaching?"

A common theme voiced in people's responses was the personal growth they have experienced in their own writing. Some spoke of having conquered apprehension towards writing and actually enjoying writing more. Freema Nichols of Strathaven told us, "I don't hesitate to write anymore. I write better letters and more of them."

Lisa Armstrong echoed Freema's sentiments by saying, "I have become a much more relaxed writer. I feel that since I am now more experienced in the ways and many processes of writing I can assemble my thoughts more readily and convey them more clearly."

Lynada Martinez from Philadelphia wrote movingly about her own growth: "As a writer the Project certainly helped me to organize my thoughts and ideas. It also boosted my own self esteem and confidence as a writer and it has encouraged me to publish ..."

Individual's growth was marked by more than conquering apprehension, however. People spoke of using writing as an outlet, as a means for learning and even as a focus for a doctoral dissertation.

"I've learned to use writing as a tool to discover what I think and to ascertain the questions I have about something," Bob McCann from the West Chester Area School District told us.

Ray Bruno from Ridley said, "This experience for me has changed my teaching and personal life in that I have become more expressive in both areas... Writing for me has become an outlet not just a task."

Another common response was that the Writing Project reinforced what many teachers had known about writing for years. "The Writing Project has completely revitalized my classroom and my teaching style. The process validates what I've known for a long time: that kids (all kids) learn best when they imitate, develop and practice the learning," said Diane Bates from William Penn.

Mary Ann McBride added, "Many of the beliefs which I held prior to my fellowship experience were reinforced and I found encouragement to expand these concepts."

It is enlightening as well as encouraging to see the various ways in which the Writing Project has affected our Fellows--personally as well as professionally. Through continued communication of this nature, we look forward to developing an even stronger PAWP community.

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*"To write well is to think well, to feel well, and to appear well; it is to possess at once intellect, soul, and taste."*

—George De Buffon



WORKSHOPS -- Register by June 10

HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF WRITING

(PWP 504-31) 1 Graduate Credit

June 22-23, 1988 8:45 am-4:30 pm

- Improve your ability to assess writing
- Theory and practice of rapid, reliable assessment of large numbers of writing samples
- General-impression, primary trait, and other scoring systems

WRITERS' WORKSHOP

(PWP 599-31) 1 Graduate Credit

June 22-24, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-3:30 pm

- Serious attention to the teacher as writer
- Provides time to develop written products and writing processes
- Reinforces self-discipline and stimulates creative thought
- Encouragement and response in peer and teacher conferences

TEACHING POETRY (ENG 599-31) June 27-July 1, 1988

TEACHING FICTION-WRITING (ENG 599-32) July 5-8, 1988

TEACHING PLAYWRITING (ENG 599-33) July 11-15, 1988

1 Graduate Credit each 9:30 am-12:30 pm

- Work with practicing teacher-writers
- Explore methods for students of all ages
- Practical suggestions on creative form and language
- Steps for writing poetry/short fiction/plays
- Using creative writing across the curriculum

WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

(PWP 505-31) 1 Graduate Credit or 1 In-service Credit

July 18-22, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm

- Writing to learn; study skills
- Assignment design and writing process
- Classroom management; handling the paperload
- Noted guest speakers and presenters

ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

(PWP 599-32) 1 Graduate Credit or non-credit

July 26-28, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-3:30 pm

- Identify critical elements of a program
- Program management, organization, evaluation
- Practical plans and ideas to improve programs
- Needed administrative skills and resources

SCHEDULE 1988 PAWP SUMMER SCHEDULE 1988 PAWP SUMMER SCHEDULE 1988  
PAWP SUMMER SCHEDULE 1988 PAWP SUMMER SCHEDULE 1988 PAWP SUMMER

COURSES -- Register by June 10

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WRITING

(PWP 502-31/32) 2 or 3 Graduate Credits or 2 In-service Credits

June 27-July 12 or 14, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm

- The Pennsylvania Writing Project "first course"
- Explore practical and imaginative approaches to the teaching and learning of writing
- Lecture-demonstrations and workshops with applications across the curriculum
- Open to teachers in all subjects and at all levels
- Three-credit participants meet two additional days

COMPUTERS AND WRITING

(PWP 508-31) 3 Graduate Credits

June 20-July 8, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm

- Using computers at all stages of the writing process
- Using, developing, and evaluating computer-assisted instruction in writing
- Demonstrations of computer courseware
- Hands-on experience (Apple II) in workshops and labs
- Limited to 30 participants

THEORY AND RESEARCH IN COMPOSING PROCESSES

(PWP 599-33) 2 Graduate Credits

June 27-July 12, 1988 1:30-4:00 pm

- Overviews of modern approaches to writing instruction
- Recent developments in research
- Theoretical issues teachers should know

ADVANCED INSTITUTE ON WRITING, THINKING, AND LEARNING

(ENG 598-31) 4 Graduate Credits

July 18-29, 1988 9:30 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-3:30 pm

- Effective writing instruction to teach thinking
- Link writing process and learning-centered writing with cognitive skills
- Practical and theoretical approaches
- Presentations by Ann Berthoff, Bob Tierney, and others
- Apply ideas of Bloom, Perry, and other researchers
- Prerequisite: previous graduate training in composition, and permission of instructor

**COMPLETE BOTH SIDES**

**GRADUATE COURSE REGISTRATION**

Session:  Spring  Summer  Fall  
 Year: 1988

This card is for students who wish to enroll in a graduate course(s) for personal or professional growth only, and does not imply formal admission to the graduate school. Students wishing to pursue graduate credits toward certification or a degree program must complete the Application for Admission to the Graduate Curricula and submit the required accompanying materials. A fee of \$10 is required for all first-time students and will be applied to the fee charged if the student, at a later date, makes formal application for admission.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Last                                    First                                    M.I.

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
                    Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City                                    State                    Zip                    Sta County (Required)

PHONE: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_

BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

First-time graduate student at WCU?  Yes  No  
 COURSE DATA: Dept. Abr./Number/Section:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO COMPUTE YOUR FEES:**

COURSE/WORKSHOP	TUITION/FEES (audit fee-graduate fee)	YOUR COST
Holistic Assessment	\$127 graduate	\$ _____
Writers Workshop	\$127 graduate	_____
Teaching Poetry	\$102 graduate	_____
Teaching Short Fiction	\$102 graduate	_____
Teaching Playwriting	\$102 graduate	_____
Writing in Content Areas	\$127 graduate	_____
Administering Writing Programs	\$127 graduate or \$ 80 inservice (optional) \$ 15 luncheons (3)	_____
Strategies for Teaching Writing	\$204 2 graduate or \$306 3 graduate or \$150 inservice	_____
Computers and Writing	\$370 3 graduate	_____
Advanced Institute: Writing, Thinking and Learning	\$488 4 graduate	_____
Theory and Research in Composing	\$204 graduate	_____
<b>ADDITIONAL FEES for Graduate Credit participants:</b>		
First-time graduate students at WCU add \$10		_____
Educational Services Fee (all graduate students)		\$ <u>5.00</u>
Out-of-state resident add \$11 per credit		_____
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE WCU</b>		\$ _____

TO REGISTER for Inservice and Graduate Credit, complete both sides of this page and mail with your payment to Pennsylvania Writing Project, Philips 210, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

Make your check payable to West Chester University. You may charge all costs to Visa or Mastercard (forms available from the Project office).

DEADLINE: Register by June 10, 1988 to avoid late fee of \$25.00.

RESIDENCE RATES are approximately \$125-\$150 per person per week for room and board. Apply directly to University College, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383 (215-436-2190) before May 15, 1988. Identify yourself as a participant in a PAMP workshop.

LOCATIONS and PARKING: The Computers and Writing course will be held on the main campus at the Regional Computer Center. Parking is available in any campus lot, and no permits are required in the summer. There is no on-the-street parking except as indicated on street signs.

All other programs will be at the University's facility at the West Whiteland Corporate Center in Exton, PA, 10 minutes from main campus. This is a well-appointed building with plenty of parking. We will send a map when we acknowledge your registration.

TRANSCRIPTS: Grade reports are mailed to participants in mid-August. Arrangements for official transcripts must be made directly with the Records Office by the participant.

QUESTIONS: Call 215-436-2297 Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 4:30 pm or leave a message on our answering machine.

**STATISTICAL DATA:** West Chester University is in compliance with the Office of Civil Rights, the National Center for Educational Statistics and the PA Dept. of Education. Each applicant is required to indicate his/her race/ethnic classification and sex. Please check one in Section A and one in Section B

**A. Racial/Ethnic Identity:**

- Black/Non-Hispanic     American Indian or Alaskan Native  
 Asian/Pacific Islander     Hispanic     White/Non-Hispanic

**C. (optional) Handicapped:**  Yes     No

If "Yes":  Hearing     Visually     Mobility  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Sex:**     Female     Male

I certify that I have answered all applicable questions and that all information submitted is correct to the best of my knowledge.

**GRADUATE OFFICE APPROVAL:**

Yes     No

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dean \_\_\_\_\_

# LET US HEAR FROM YOU!



Are you interested in writing:

A book review?

➔ Name of book: \_\_\_\_\_

An Article?

➔ Topic or Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

Send \_\_\_\_\_

➔ Comments/Questions

➔ Info for PAWP-POURRI  
(About you or other PAWP Fellows)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

PAWP Institute: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Send to: Gail Capaldi/Lois Snyder (Editors), PAWP  
West Chester University, Philips Memorial Building #210, West Chester, PA 19383

## WHAT DO I DO IF THEY KNIT

by Bob McCann

An article in our last newsletter pointed out the necessity of the Writing Project's presentations being "non-slick" so that the audience of teachers would see the presenter's lesson, like their own good classroom teaching, "a seemingly messy mixture...of informing and being informed," etc. Those Fellows who attended the Fall 1987 conference at the Oakbourne Mansion in Westtown, PA seem to agree. At a wrap-up session of the day, Lois Snyder and Bob McCann gathered suggestions from participants who cited their own favorite "do's" and "don'ts" from hard experience both watching and giving presentations to the other teachers.

"Don't be so organized that you lose interaction," urged one participant. The other ideas that follow remind us as presenters, that if we do our homework, we can stave off typical problems that arise when addressing an audience of teachers. But be careful—follow them all to perfection and you may become—the TEFLON SPEAKER!

### Prepare Your Head

1. Arrive early and bring all materials with you. Allow time to set up so you won't be breathless.
2. Smile.
3. Try to find out about your audience a week ahead of time.
4. Bring chalk, overhead pens, paper, pens.
5. Be willing to omit ideas that are not working or you feel won't be accepted by the group.
6. Figure out parts of presentation to omit if promised time is not available.
7. Don't accept an impossible assignment—Friday 3 PM before a ten day vacation, mandatory attendance all subjects, all levels, no supervisors present.
8. Find out when given assignment whether attendance is voluntary, mandatory, or part of a course they've chosen to take.

### Handouts—the Great Distraction

1. Make your handouts high-quality duplication; put your name on each page.
2. Only handouts audience must use during presentation should be given out during your talk. Keep others until the end.
3. Have extra copies—for absentees, visitors, etc.
4. Relieve audience of heavy notetaking by mentioning "that book (address, quotation, etc.) is described in my handout."
5. Don't hand out a sheet and then read it to your audience.
6. Don't have too many handouts. Save something for your next visit.

### Writing

1. Give them writing tasks appropriate for adult writers—then help them adapt it to their own teaching situations.
2. Get them writing almost immediately.
3. Don't get them writing immediately. All presenters do that. Try something else for variety.
4. Model the activity: write (and share) whenever they do.
5. After involving the learners in an activity, do process the activity; make sense of it for them. It may not be obvious.

### Content

1. Provide worthwhile examples and test cases.
2. Watch the clock—give break at time promised—eliminate material rather than run overtime.
3. Vary their activity every 10 minutes.
4. Show genuine student samples, warts and all.
5. Assume overhead has no projector bulb—have plan B.
6. Leave audience with some idea they can use on Monday.
7. Be ready with information about levels you do not teach.
8. Explain (and provide on handout) sound theory for your points.
9. Have clear displays, show books, provide bibliography.
10. Don't try to cover too much. It won't work.
11. So much depends on a red wheelbarrow that is not overloaded.

### Prepare Their Heads

1. Reassure them that they'll get a break, and that you know what time you must finish. Then stick to it. Nothing you have to say is worth your running overtime.
2. Know your audience, find out some of their needs and questions, and tell what you plan to cover.
3. If you're a high school teacher, do something so the K-3 teachers feel you are there for them also.
4. Be sure they know you're in the trenches. You might have been billed as an "expert" by those planning the in-service.
5. If you promise to send follow-up information: Send it!

### Being Human

1. If it's a 5 PM presentation, you'd better look as disheveled as they do.
2. Give yourself credibility with the audience; let them know you are a person with a life of your own.
3. Don't be afraid to admit your 7th period class whines, doesn't do the homework, and subverts the response groups.
4. Don't come on as someone who has gone on to bigger and better things as a textbook consultant or writing consultant.

(Continued on next page)

5. Ask their help in evaluating whether your presentation was helpful to their level. Invite them to write down what ideas they believe they can or cannot use. Then work on that for next time.

#### Handling Hostility

1. Don't take it personally if you are asked too many questions—find a way to postpone or cut them gracefully.
2. Anticipate your audience's priorities and needs by asking for a show of hands, or for questions they hope you'll answer today.
3. Get as much prior knowledge of the group and its situation as you can so you can anticipate resistance.
4. As a last resort, you can say: "That's a hostile question; I'll pass over it."

Some problems of giving presentations cannot be resolved. Anyone who has attended a National Council of Teachers of English convention knows how the bag people arrive, scoop up handouts, then crackle on to the next room with hardly a glance at the presenter(s). This is a fact of life for speakers. We can't take it personally if, in a smaller presentation, there may be someone knitting. But before asking her to put down the needles and pick up a pen, a wise presenter will admire the work or ask a thoughtful question about her technique.

*Bob McCann is a 1982 PAWP Fellow and co-director of the Summer Institute at West Chester University.*



#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT & THE WRITING PROCESS by Jack Eells

During the summer of 1985, Nan Ruth and I attended the four week summer institute of the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester. As English Department Chairperson and Reading Specialist at Indian Valley Junior High School, Nan was interested in the improvement of student performance in writing, as well as the enhancement of teachers' instructional skills. These were my concerns too, of course, but I was also interested in discovering ways to help all the teachers district-wide become better teachers of writing.

Nan and I learned much during those four weeks. We learned about the writing process and process-centered writing. We also learned much about ourselves, as writers and as individuals. We learned about sharing, caring, growing, changing, risking, adapting, and not a little about leading. Then, we took what we learned back to our school district, to our teachers, and with our administrators' cooperation, we developed a staff development program which we have been implementing ever since.

Our program is based on the ideas and writings of many different people, from different fields of interest. We have taken a bit from Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers and their work in staff development; from Donald Graves, Dan Kirby, Lucy Calkins, James Moffett, and a host of others who have given us more insight into writing. And, we have taken direction from teachers, who have told us what they need to know and what they would like to be able to do.

Specifically, our Staff Development Program in Process-Centered Writing is offered on a release-time basis, once a month for eight sessions. Each session is three hours long with one break. We offer refreshments to teachers and a rather informal, supportive environment in which to learn. In order to give them an opportunity to "get away from it all" we hold workshop sessions in the community conference room of the local public library. Four different groups of teachers attend on the third Tuesday and Wednesday of the month; there are Tuesday AM and PM groups, and Wednesday AM and PM groups, with approximately 12 to 15 teachers in each group.

Each month's session is on a different topic, though there are certainly many overlapping topics that are covered. Nan and I have revised the topics for this year, though they remain similar to last year's; moreover, we have changed the content of the activities for each topic. The eight workshop topics we have offered are: Overview of the Writing Process; Classroom Management and Evaluation of Student Writing; Pre-writing and Drafting; Revision Strategies (2 sessions); Editing and Publishing Strategies; Writing Across the Curriculum and the Reading/Writing connection; and Wrap-up and Sharing.

Our approach in the workshops is based on certain beliefs: to be a teacher of writing one has to be a writer; teachers need to experience what they ask students to do; and modeling is crucial for teaching process-centered writing. Therefore, in the workshops teachers are involved with doing a great deal of writing themselves, and they practice all strategies that have been explained and modeled for them.

So far, the staff development program seems to be successful. Evaluations turned in to us by teachers at the end of the first year were overwhelmingly positive; teachers indicated they felt that they were better teachers of writing and, happily, they almost unanimously felt they were better writers themselves.

We know there are changes we would like to make next year, but we are very pleased with what has been accomplished. We invite anyone who would like to visit to give us a call and we will be happy to accommodate. After all, one of the successes of the "Process" is sharing with a neighbor, isn't it?

*Jack Eells (PAWP '85) is Supervisor of Reading/Communications Skills, Souderton Area School District, Souderton, PA.*



# DATABASE



## REP. TAYLOR'S CONSTITUENTS VOTE YES FOR PAWP

Pennsylvania State Representative Elinor Z. Taylor routinely seeks input from her constituents in the 156th District by surveying them via a questionnaire. In a recent survey, she asked: "Would you support establishment of a program to be dubbed the "Pennsylvania Writing Project" to be based at five institutions of higher education across the state? The objective of the proposed program is to improve the writing skills of teachers, who in turn would be able to improve the writing skills of elementary and secondary education students."

Even without mention of any nominal cost, they approved with a vote of 932 (yes) to 447 (no).

## NYCWP CONFERENCE

The Process of Doing Research will be the focus of the New York City Writing Project's Teacher-Researcher Conference on June 4, 1988. The conference will feature three types of sessions: working groups, workshops and reports on research. The site of the conference is Lehman College, CUNY, Bronx, New York.

## THE MACWORKSHOP COMPUTER CONNECTION

The NYU Expository Writing Program has been working with computers in the classroom for the past three years and is now donating time to coordinate a BITNET Composition mailing list. The potential would then exist for students to share their writing with others through the BITNET (BITNET is an electronic computer communication network connecting many colleges and universities). Anyone interested in participating or learning more about this should contact: NYU/Expository Writing Program, 269 Mercer St., 2nd Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003

## T & W OFFERS HANDBOOK OF POETIC FORMS

The Teachers & Writers Collaborative has published a Handbook of Poetic Forms for high school students, college undergraduates, classroom teachers and beginning writers. Edited by Ron Padgett, the 230-page handbook contains 74 entries by nineteen teaching poets on traditional and modern poetic forms. The handbook sells for \$17.95 (hardback) and \$10.95 (paperback). Address orders or inquiries to:

Teachers & Writers Collaborative  
5 Union Square West  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
Tel. (212) 691-6590

## HUMANET

Huma Net is an electronic network to help scholars and professionals in the humanities communicate with each other. The network began in 1986 at North Carolina State University at Raleigh. Huma Net is particularly useful for:

- co-authoring papers and books
- doing electronic bibliographic searches
- getting up-to-date conference information
- distributing newsletters
- exchanging syllabi
- sending electronic mail
- participating in teleconferences and open forum discussions of humanities-oriented issues

For additional information write or call:

David H. Covington, Executive Editor  
Huma Net  
Box 8101  
North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, N.C. 27695-8101  
Tel. (919) 737-3854

## DVRA WORKSHOP

Always aware of the connections between writing and reading, PAWP calls your attention to the Delaware Valley Reading Association's spring workshops. Benchmark School will be the site of the workshops on April 14. For specifics contact Irene Gaskin, Benchmark School, 2187 N. Providence Rd., Media, PA 19063.

## RESOURCE FOR YOUNG WRITERS

If you are a young writer or a teacher of young writers you will find the publication, Young Authors (YAM), useful. Published six times a school year by the National Association for Young Authors, this newspaper-style magazine has recently expanded. In addition to features such as creative writing contests, a book club, art, international exchange program, and incentives for publication, the YAM invites teachers to submit writing assignments for possible publications. The principal focus of this promising resource is "to give young authors and artists a place to share their productions with a wide audience in their own age groups." For more information, write:

Young Authors,  
Therapist, Inc.  
3015 Woodsdale Blvd.,  
Lincoln, NE 68502-5053.

**MERRIMACK  
CONFERENCE  
ON VIDEOTAPE**

New Dimensions in Writing: The First Merrimack Conference on Composition Instruction is available for videotape rental. The four hours may be rented individually and are on 1/2" or 3/4" tape. Each one hour videotape has one of the following presenters: Janice Lauer, Gene Montague, Peter Elbow, or Donald Murray. For rental order details write to: Albert C. DeCiccio or Michael J. Rossi, Writing Center, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA 01845.

**MIAMI  
UNIVERSITY  
CONFERENCE**

The Writing Teacher as Researcher will be the focus of the third Miami University Conference on the Teaching of Writing. Keynote speakers will be Donald M. Murray and Lucy McCormick Calkins. The conference will be held on October 21-23, 1988 at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

**ENGLISH  
JOURNAL  
CALL FOR  
MANUSCRIPTS**

Technology and the Teaching of English  
Deadline: June 1, 1988

Metaphor and Cognition  
Deadline: July 1, 1988

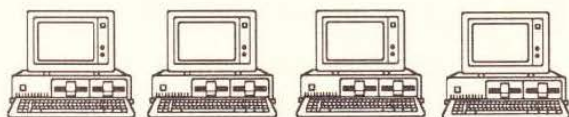
English in the Middle  
Deadline: August 1, 1988

Writing Literary Forms  
Deadline: September 1, 1988

Satire and Humor for Today's Student  
Deadline: October 1, 1988

**For more details contact:**

Gail Capaldi  
or Lois Snyder,  
at the PAWP office  
Philip's Memorial Building, # 210  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA, 19383  
(215) 436-2297.



**PAWP-POURRI**

PAWP extends a warm welcome to its first full-time secretary, IRENE SOLTIS. Irene joined PAWP in January.

We were saddened to learn of the death of BEVERLY KOHN. The PAWP, and the Fellows of the 1985 Summer Institute in particular, remember Beverly for her warmth and for the enthusiasm and skill she brought to the teaching of reading and writing. She will be missed.

BRUCE FISCHMAN, a 1984 Fellow, completed Lehigh University's requirements for the Ed.D. in Reading in December and received his degree in January. His dissertation was "The Effects of a Staff Development Program on K-4 Teacher Perceptions for Writing Instruction Strategies with an Emphasis on Peer Coaching to Improve Student Writing." The purpose of the study was to determine the change in writing instruction and students' writing during an ongoing staff development program for process-centered writing. Bruce expects to publish some articles from the dissertation and has promised to send copies to PAWP. He is currently teaching fourth grade, where his students are working towards publishing their own novels!

On Saturday, April 23 Bob Weiss will be at Bloomsburg University giving the keynote address on writing across the curriculum to a group of college and secondary foreign language teachers.

Bob Weiss has accepted an invitation from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Writing Council to present the keynote address at the Council's 1988 conference. The one-day meeting of teachers of writing from all levels of instruction, elementary to college, will be held on Tuesday, May 17, 1988. The conference theme will be "Teacher-to-Teacher: Creating a Professional Network." Willam Rakauskas, Dan Fraustino and John McInerney of the English Department at the University of Scranton are conference coordinators.

Jolene A. Borgese, Co-Director of PAWP has been temporarily reassigned from her teaching duties at East High School in the West Chester Area School District (WCASD) to Head Teacher for Language Arts for the WCASD.



FOLDING BACK THE CLASSROOM WALLS:  
TEACHER COLLABORATION  
VIA CROSS-VISITATION

by Robert Fecho

Some of us are born to teacher collaboration; others have it thrust upon us. I fall into the latter category. At one point in my teaching career, I taught in an interior room that had no windows. One of the walls, however, consisted of panels that folded accordion-style, turning two small rooms into one large room. Due to an ill fit and the fact that sunlight entered the adjoining room, this pass-through was often left partially open. The teacher next door and I spent a year peeking in, sharing ideas, contributing to discussions, stealing methods, and admiring contrasting styles. Thus I was introduced to teacher collaboration.

Up to that moment, I had never seriously considered the effects of spending six hours a day teaching in a solitary classroom. It was expected of me. It was what I knew. I even prided myself on how I kept my little corner of the world neat and tidy. I was the long distance teacher. I knew the loneliness and accepted it, as did a majority of my colleagues.

But the teaching profession, like all things worthwhile, is in constant flux. To its benefit, teaching is seeing a movement afoot that dares suggest that teachers might have something to say to each other, that educators given time to discuss professional matters will actually discuss professional matters, that a staff in one school can learn volumes from the staff of a second school and, of course, return the favor.

As teacher-consultant for PhilWP (the Philadelphia Writing Project), I am involved in this folding back of classroom walls via cross-visitation. On a regular basis, I meet with volunteering teachers from schools in my sub-district and discuss writing instruction. At the start of this school year, I set out not to do research on collaboration but to learn how to be as effective in collaboration with other teachers as I am in collaboration with my students. I took notes, kept a journal, listened hard, and thought long. I am told this is research. Accepting the premise that it is indeed research, I will share some of what I am learning about one-on-one collaboration, at least as it applies to my own case. I will also speak of what I need to find out, for as research in progress, the questions created are as important as the answers discovered.

Topping the list of what I've learned is the idea that teacher collaboration is kinetic in nature. To enter into a collaboration is to enter into an everchanging, situational state that benefits from its own flux. Once a collaboration is established, change will occur in the status of the collaborators and they must remain receptive to the change.

Here is an example to illustrate the point. I began a collaboration with a science teacher at my high school. Coming new to teaching from an earlier career, she was looking for ways to break the mathematical monotony of chemistry. I, on the other hand, was in search of a

science teacher willing to use more writing in the classroom. We agreed to collaborate.

The dynamics of our initial meetings were based on a giver-receiver relationship; I was offering instructional suggestions that she would implement. The relationship was further complicated by my years of experience as opposed to her lack of the same. When I first visited her classroom, it was difficult to shed the observer/observed feeling. A note in my journal alludes to her nervousness with my being there. This thread was carried later into the year in seemingly harmless, yet telling remarks. "I don't have any writing to show you yet," she said one day as we passed in the hall. "What do you want to see me do?" was her question when I offered to sit in on a class. "Is this what you want?" she asked, handing me writing samples.

Clearly, our roles in the collaboration were unequal. In many ways, the science teacher reacted in the same way my students do in September. Accustomed to working only for assignment and not for themselves, my students begin the year by handing in work accompanied by "Is this what you want?" As we collaborate on writing and other projects, the student comment often changes to "I have something I want to show you." Submission becomes sharing.

The same can be said of teacher collaboration. The science teacher tried some writing. She openly discussed successes and failures. One day, she showed up at my door, with a pile of papers. "I was desperate," she said, "so I told my students to write me a letter explaining what they've learned about chemistry this year." She and I had never discussed this use of writing. She had a problem; she addressed it through composition. Her sharing with me was on her own initiative rather than at my request. I ended up reading a pile of interesting, honest letters and picking up a new writing strategy to use and share.

In addition, our relationship had shifted. She was now giving back. Our stance was less giver to taker and more colleague to colleague. This change is important to the collaboration because without it, we would have had little reason to continue. What we have now established is open groundwork for future collaboration, one in which I might bring scientific theory into the English classroom. Whatever the case, a sound collaborative effort is one that allows room for growth and consequent change.

A second idea making itself known is that collaboration improves over time, or to say it another way, a collaboration, if kept active, will benefit from the passage of time. This is already apparent from the situation described earlier, but I will add a second example, mainly because this second collaboration is less successful than the first, yet still manages to benefit from repeated meetings over a period of several months.

I was asked to work with a special education teacher at an adjacent junior high school. As I walked into her room on my initial visit, she blindsided me with "I'll let you know right off the bat that I had my arm twisted to get into this program." Well, I stayed anyway, watched her

(Continued on next page)

teach, listened to the content of her classroom. When we talked about what we could set up, her initial concerns were focused on specific plans. "I'm doing a science unit on the body," she said. "What good writing lessons would you have?" After I outlined what she might observe in my classroom, she expressed doubt regarding the usefulness of the venture. "After all," was her response, "you don't teach special ed."

A standardized test and a snow day washed out two attempts at her visiting my room. Bringing her and another teacher in for a half-day each was nixed because of the upheaval it might cause in the classrooms. A growing worry seemed to be emerging—how could a sub handle her special ed students. Despite the delays, I kept in touch via mail and phone, assuring her of the competence of the person who would replace her and encouraging her regarding the value of observing the uses of writing in my classroom.

The special ed teacher finally came to my school. After the first students left, she said, "I see how I can use that idea in my class. My students could write about a significant event in their lives." As the day went on, she jotted more ideas on to her pad. Still concerned about her class, she ran back to her school for a period. She returned, amazed at how well her pupils were responding to the sub. By the end of the day, she agreed to visit a special ed teacher who I know uses a good deal of writing with his students.

The passage of time and the repetitiveness of meeting work in favor of collaborations. When at first, four scheduled meetings with any one teacher seemed an eternity to fill, I now find myself cursing the calendar and its lack of days. The teacher I just told you about isn't totally sold on our collaboration, but her attitude has changed and her mind has opened. It is a start.

These first two examples lead into a third concept which seems to be true, at least in my situation. Collaboration with teachers at my school appears to be easier than collaboration with teachers in other schools, particularly in the initial phases of collaboration, but also throughout the process. Access and familiarity are emerging as the keys to the difference.

At my school, the access and familiarity lead to spontaneity. The science teacher can show up with her spur of the moment assignment. Another English teacher can spear me in the hall, discuss writing motivation, and set up a series of meetings to try out some ideas. I can approach a department head and work out a way to share writing-to-learn ideas with his department. The thrust is already in place. An air of "We are all in this together" exists.

All of the above is not necessarily so when collaboration goes beyond the school. The person coming in may be a teacher, but he isn't a teacher at that school, so he is stuck in the door for a while, partly in, partly out. This was made very evident when I visited an eighth grade teacher at a middle school. In the cafeteria, I offered to meet with other eighth grade teachers in a group. Their reply was cordial, but said implicitly, "You work with the one teacher you came to work with. She'll process what

you have to offer and we'll take her version."

Although trust can be earned, spontaneity cannot be planned, the two terms being mutually exclusive. At my home school, chance meetings can occur, popping in becomes welcome, sudden thoughts can be acted on. When streets and traffic separate teachers rather than walls and hallways, these occurrences become difficult, if not impossible. The collaboration hinges more on mutual schedule than on mutual need, the collaborators meet because they have scheduled a meeting and not because a need suddenly exists. This is not to imply that these planned meetings are bad. They are just different.

What I have learned about collaboration—that it is kinetic in nature, that it prospers from time and repeated use, and that it seems to flourish best within one school than between schools—has gone along way toward answering questions that were in mind as the year started. But these and many other concerns still exist. I could go well beyond my allotted time listing them. I'll consider only the most pressing.

First of all, since all relationships pass through stages, what then are the stages of collaboration? These stages would tie into evaluation. When is a collaboration beneficial? When is one best laid to rest? What standards can be used for evaluation?

The next question rises from the nature of my own situation. Do collaborations work best when they grow from felt and shared need, or can collaborations be artificially imposed?

Collaboration has a snowball effect—once you start one, you tend to gather others. What are the effects positive and negative of this increased workload?

Finally, yet importantly, what is the effect collaboration plays upon teacher morale? Specifically, is a sense of camaraderie developed through collaboration?

I ask that we gather and share these ideas...only good can come of the effort. I hope that, as ideas on teacher collaboration spread, all classrooms will have walls that fold back.

*Robert Fecho is a teacher at Simon Gratz High School in Philadelphia and a Teacher-Consultant with the Philadelphia Writing Project.*

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**Just a Reminder:**

**Don't Forget to Register  
for the  
May Conference**

**Brochures are forthcoming**

# PAWP CALENDAR

When	What	Where
April 20, 1988	PAWP Second All-Day Conference	WCU
May 15, 1988	1988 PAWP Fellows Luncheons	WCU
May 20-21, 1988	PAWP Regional Conference with Heinemann Authors	WCU
May 22-24, 1988	Retreat for NWP Mid Atlantic Sites	Ocean City, MD
June 22, 1988	Summer Programs begin	WCU
June 27, 1988	Summer Institutes begin	WCU

## THE YOUTH WRITING PROJECT

Open to students in grades 1-12

July 11-22, 1988

1:00-4:00 PM

### General Session:

- Experience the writing process
- Work in writing groups
- Work with noted Pennsylvania writers
- A final-day Young Author's Conference and publication
- \$120 tuition plus non-refundable \$10 registration fee

### All-Computer Session:

- Write exclusively on the IBM-PC
- Same activities as General Session
- \$150 tuition plus non-refundable \$10 registration fee

Brochures will be available in April.  
Registration begins in April  
and closes in June.



**PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER**

Published Quarterly  
by the Pennsylvania Writing Project  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383

*Director:* Robert H. Weiss  
*Co-Director:* Jolene Borgese  
*Assistant Director:* Martha J. Menz

*Editors:*  
Gail Capaldi Lois Snyder

*Sponsors:*  
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Delaware County Intermediate Unit Montgomery County Intermediate Unit  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

The purpose of the *Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter* is to link together all teachers of writing in our area. The Newsletter features, but it is not limited to, articles that deal with writing and the teaching of writing and related matters.

We seek articles from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and in all subject areas and from anyone else interested in writing. All articles will be considered for publication. Comments, questions, etc., are also welcomed. Please send all communications to: Gail Capaldi or Lois Snyder (Editors), Pennsylvania Writing Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

The Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP) is an affiliate of the National/ Bay Area Writing Project and a training site for the nationally validated New Jersey Writing Project. PAWP was created by the sponsors under grants from the William Penn Foundation and the University of California at Berkeley, with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

PennsylvaniaWriting Project  
Phillips Memorial Bldg. #210  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
West Chester, PA 19383  
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