

Newsletter



Volume 28, Number 2 Spring, 2009

Summer Writing Institute

Where will you spend your summer vacation? Relaxing on the beach? Hiking trails in the mountains? Learning with colleagues at the Graduate Business Center or the Bucks County IU? What - you're thinking about spending 4 weeks in school? Really? Summer Writing Institutes provide teachers an opportunity to refine their writing and teaching of



writing and get a much needed professional boost!

Take a peek into an institute classroom and you will see teachers writing in notebooks, colleagues listening intently to a new friend's writing, facilitators modeling instructional strategies that can be implemented in classrooms, and groups of teachers working together. Listen in at the door and you will hear voices offering encouragement, questions being

raised, discussion on writing pedagogy, feedback being given to a novice writer and ... laughter. Working in a congenial, collaborative, and collegial setting, teachers develop teaching skills that transform their classrooms.

Summer Writing Institutes bring together a cadre of committed teachers who experience writing firsthand by writing daily, engage in instructional strategies that work with all students, and explore issues central to their teaching of writing. An institute offers opportunities to examine teaching practices in a sup-

*- continued on page 2,
top of column 3*

Reading and Literature Institute

"Reading has always been my home, my sustenance, my great invincible companion." These are the words of Anna Quindlen, and if they resonate with you, then the opportunity of a lifetime awaits you. The Summer Reading and Literature Institute is an incomparable four-week experience held at West Chester's Graduate Business Center. Where else can you receive the gift of time to do what you love most--to read?

Not only will you be reading more, but you'll also have the privilege of meeting other teachers from all grade levels who share the same great passion: the love of reading and the desire to pass it on to the next generation. Are you depressed because of the empha-



sis on the joyless routine of test preparation? Do you worry that your students may never read anything more than text-messages? Have you nearly given up on making a difference through your teaching? Never fear-help is on the way! In the Summer Literature Institute you will

*- continued on page 2,
bottom of column 3*

Summer courses schedule on pages 4 - 5

FROM THE DIRECTOR ANDREA FISHMAN

I admit it: I have not lived the life of a *writing* project director for too many years. With the exception of these quarterly "From the Director" columns and all the email, letters of recommendation, contracts, faculty evaluations, and other administrivia, I haven't written anything substantive for a very long time. Until recently.

In December, Mary invited me to co-author a book with her, an act of incredible generosity. We revised her proposal, and sent it off to Sage. Lo and behold, in January we were offered a contract. So now I find myself writing a book while still doing my day job. "That's crazy," my husband said upon hearing our plans and our due dates. "You'll be exhausted. You're already working full time." I feared he might be right. It turns out we were both wrong.

Of course, the writing takes a lot of time and doesn't always go as well as I'd like. But instead of exhausting it's energizing me. I look forward to my early morning, three-hour sessions every weekend (the time of day and length of time I concentrate best). I look forward to the weekly three-hour meetings Mary and I have to brainstorm, revise, and respond to each other's pages. And, perhaps best of all, I remember why I got involved - and stayed involved - with the National Writing Project all those years ago. They're right: authentic writing makes me more authentically myself.

And now that I'm a writer (again), I notice all the PAWLP Fellow writers around me. There's the middle school teacher in Chester County, writing about her ELL students. The middle school teacher in Bucks County, writing about her writing workshop classroom. The elementary teacher in Montgomery County, writing about her work as a staff developer. The high school teacher in Delaware County, writing about her Catholic school girlhood and its impact on her classroom - and about cooking, when the more professionally focused writing hits a wall. And then there's the burgeoning writers' group that meets monthly, alternating between Berks and Chester Counties, in which people are writing everything from poetry and personal narratives to a Young Adult novel.

What strikes me is that none of these people are writing to an external prompt. They are each writing to an internal one. Their motives are as varied as their topics and genres. What they all have in common, though, is the authenticity of what they're doing. All of these writers are becoming more fully themselves. They are each, in Carolyn Heilbrun's wonderful phrase, "composing a life" and using writing to do that.

If you have the itch, the urge, the unacknowledged or always avoided desire to let writing happen, consider joining us this summer in Teachers as Writers, the Writing Institute, or one of our other wonderful ways to let writing into your life. You may find it as energizing as I have.

- Summer Writing Institute
continued from page 1

portive setting that allows questioning, seeking answers, and the creation of plans that will invigorate classrooms.

Still thinking about the beach? A Summer Writing Institute isn't just a six-credit course; it's an opportunity to rethink who you are as a writer and a teacher of writing; a time to revise, rehearse, and reinvigorate your writing and teaching life. Won't you join us?

In the words of a recent participant: "*I have become a better writer, better colleague and better teacher. I feel armed with the tools to make real change. Who knew four weeks could change a philosophy!*"

- by Brenda Krupp,
Institutes Co-Director



- Reading and Literature Institute
continued from page 1

read works that have inspired differences in the way we teach and the way our students learn. Experts like Lucy Calkins, Janet Allen, Kylene Beers, and Kelly Gallagher will astound you with their knowledge. You will enhance your understanding of activities and book choices that really help students gain a love of reading, all while indulging in your favorite pastime: reading. Where can you go this summer to grow as a teacher, as a reader, and as a person? Come to the Summer Reading and Literature Institute and find out. Call (610) 436-2202 to apply today.

- by Jean Shervais,
Institute Coordinator

Summer Courses

"There are easier ways to earn graduate credit, but there is no better way." Spend some time this summer reenergizing your reading, writing, and teaching. With such a variety of innovative, interactive courses offered throughout the area, it will be hard for you to choose. PAWLP is offering an array of courses for the summer of 2009. In addition to our three Invitational Institutes (Writing at both West Chester and Bucks and Literature at West Chester),

this summer we will begin a new 3-credit course in literacy exclusively for math teachers, grades 4 - 12 at the WCU Graduate Business Center. The **Math Academy** runs from July 6 - 10 and will be taught by Meg Clementi, a teacher in Springfield (Delaware County) who also teaches courses at Cabrini College. This innovative offering was created in cooperation with the National Reading Initiative sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation. Recognizing that "math is language too" par-

ticipants will focus on reading, writing and speaking math. If you are teaching math, join the course, or tell your math colleagues about this opportunity.

PAWLP courses are a great way to learn with other teachers and from other teachers. Why not join us this summer? PAWLP Fellows get a \$200 stipend off one PAWLP course each session. If you have any questions, please contact the PAWLP office at 610-436-2202.

- by Diane Dougherty and Chris Kehan, Summer Courses Co-Directors

Youth Program Celebrates 25 Years

This summer, the Young Writers/Young Readers Program, sponsored by PAWLP, will celebrate its 25th year. The program began in 1984 at West Chester University with 55 students. Since then, it has grown immensely. While we still have the West Chester site, we also serve a number of school districts within the six-county region: Kutztown, Rose Tree Media, Garnet Valley, Interboro, Radnor, Lower Merion, North Penn, Souderton, Central Bucks, Upper Dublin, Pennsbury, West Deptford and Upper Moreland. We also have students writing at Longwood Gardens, the Highlands Historical Society and the James A. Michner Art Museum.

Not only do we have the Young Writers/Young Readers classes, but we have a computer class at West Chester and several specialty courses, including Creative Writing for Teens, Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror Writing, Poetry classes, and Satire and Parody. The specialty courses are found at both West

Chester University and some off-campus sites. All of the classes are described, along with their locations, in our newly updated brochure.

This summer we will celebrate literacy with exciting authors Linda Oatman High and Jen Bryant. We will also have Fellow, Rob Levitt, share his song writing skills with the children. Many local book stores will help us with a book sale on our Gallery Celebration Day on the last day of each session.

Our teachers are all Fellows of the Project and enjoy spending part of their summer helping children develop a love of creative writing. As usual we will have some familiar faces, but this year we have many new teachers. Each teacher will develop a plan and lessons centered on the writing process. Each year is full of new and innovative ideas. This year, for the first time, we will give the teachers at each site a chance to share ideas on writing and community building over either a luncheon or breakfast.

The culminating project for each session is an anthology full of writing from each child. This is the highlight for all of us: the parents, the children, and the teachers who so meticulously work to enrich, encourage and stretch each and every young writer.

Once again, thanks need to be given to Dr. Andrea Fishman and Dr. Mary Buckelew for their support and devotion to this part of PAWLP. Thanks should also go to Ann Mascherino and Toni Kershaw for their hard work in organizing the summer and for helping to make everything run smoothly for those of us who work in the Young Writers/Young Readers Program.

- by Karen Venuto,
Youth Programs Co-Director



**Writing
and
Reading
Brighten
Your
Mind!**

Courses Schedule



Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art



3 locations!
8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown
PWP 513-02 July 20 - 24,
with introductory meeting July 6, 9 a.m. - noon
Coordinators: Mark Boland and Amy Kratz

GoggleWorks, Reading
PWP 513-03 July 27 - 31,
with introductory meeting June 23, 1 - 4 p.m.
Coordinators: Donna Searle and Doreen Holly

Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford
PWP 513-01 August 3 - 7,
with introductory meeting June 24, 1 - 4 p.m.
Coordinators: Teresa Moslak and Michele
Curay-Cramer



Invitational Summer Institutes

Six graduate credits
June 29 - July 23
Four days/week, Mon. - Thurs.
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Writing Institute

Two locations!

Graduate Business Center, WCU
Bucks County IU, Doylestown

Reading and Literature Institute

Graduate Business Center, WCU

Institute participants become teacher-consultants of the National Writing Project and are eligible to teach in our summer Youth program, present in-service programs, and coordinate PAWLP courses.

Stipends are available to help reduce cost.

Please call 610-436-2202 or e-mail
smalarney@wcupa.edu for an application.

The Summer Institutes
and most 3-credit courses
apply toward the WCU Master's Degree
in Writing, Teaching, and Criticism.

View course descriptions,
download a registration form,
or register on-line at www.pawlp.org.

For more information e-mail Sally Malarney at
smalarney@wcupa.edu
or call 610-436-2202.

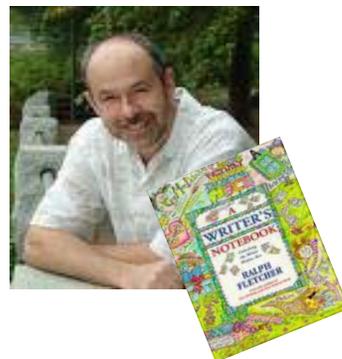
Ralph Fletcher to Keynote May 9 Literacy Conference

Ralph Fletcher says, "I believe that the best ideas are living inside you. Your challenge is to dig them out. Do the writing only you can do." PAWLP is excited that Ralph Fletcher will be sharing his love of the written word with us on Saturday, May 9th at Central Bucks South High School in Bucks County. Come join over 125 teachers from around the area to hear Ralph Fletcher keynote the PAWLP Literacy Conference. Unlock the readers and

writers in your classroom, as well as the reader and writer in you. Don't miss this opportunity to hear the incredibly fabulous author Ralph Fletcher. Following the keynote you will have the opportunity to attend wonderful breakout sessions provided by our PAWLP Fellows. The day will be filled with high energy and lots of practical strategies you can take back into your classroom the following Monday. We hope to see you there. For further informa-

tion e-mail Sally Malarney at smalarney@wcupa.edu.

- by PAWLP Co-Director
Chris Kehan



Teacher Tips

- by PAWLP Co-Director Diane Dougherty

This is a new column for all teachers. First, let me introduce myself. I retired from full-time teaching in 1999 after 32 ½ years teaching high school English. Since then, I have been working for PAWLP providing staff development, model lessons in reading and writing in area classrooms, and coordinating a variety of courses as well as co-directing first the Writing Institute and then the Literature Institute. Though I am no longer in the classroom every day, I still enjoy teaching and learning.

This column is an opportunity for teachers to share what works for them, to pose questions, or to offer suggestions to new teachers. In each Newsletter I will provide a tip for the language arts classroom. I will also respond to questions and I will publish tips that you send in to the newsletter. This is a way for us to share our expertise and to learn from one another.

I'd like to begin with a community building activity that doubles as a writing experience and that also

adds drafts to a student's writing folder or writer's notebook. The "two truths and a lie" strategy isn't new, but this adaptation has proven very successful in classrooms I've visited.

Begin by instructing students to generate vignettes of truths and lies over a broad range of topics, such as: memories of childhood, tales of grade school, stories of achievement and/or accidents, people I've met, places I've visited.

Give students some time to "prewrite" through conversation with fellow students, discussing possible topics (but not giving specific details). Then, provide quiet time (about 10 minutes or so) to write the first draft of a "truth." Follow with another period of quiet to write a draft of a "lie." This procedure can be followed for several sessions until students have about ten vignettes, half of which are truths. Each student then chooses two truths and one lie, polishes them for detail and edits them for mechanics. Ask stu-

dents to label their vignettes A, B, and C. You can use aliases or numbers to conceal student names and ensure privacy.

Tape the vignettes to the wall at eye level and let the class read around the vignettes, recording their votes for "truth" or "lie." At the completion of the reading, each author informs the class which vignettes are true and which is fiction.

The advantages to this exercise include: generation of multiple ideas; awareness of audience, publishing student work, critical inquiry (guessing the truth or lie), and continuing community building in the classroom. Allow ample discussion of why students made the guesses they did. How did students find the lie or how was an author able to fool us? This part of the exercise becomes a lesson in interpreting fiction!

I hope you and your students enjoy this activity and I look forward to hearing from you!

Education Matters

a column from Michaels Associates

A Tisket a Tasket, It's Poetry Baskets

Our friends at Pennsylvania-based Boyds Mills Press have asked Michaels Associates LLC to help with an exciting new project. The genesis of the project came from New Jersey and another friend, Bill Johnson. Bill's been very active in the education community having studied with Isabel Beck, Rita Bean, Don Graves, Ralph Fletcher, Georgia Heard and many others. Bill was discussing poetry, curriculum, kids, teachers and funding with an administrator in Paterson City School District in Paterson, New Jersey, when the two of them hatched a plan.

They agreed that one of the most crucial yet often overlooked genres of literature - poetry - is critical to reading, writing, and oral language development but to some teachers is an intimidating subject to teach. Added to that dilemma is the problem of selecting poems that would be topical, interesting and grade level appropriate for young students. Why poetry? Poetry gives children a chance to experience the richness of our language without being overwhelmed. It also helps students develop an understanding and appreciation of rhythm and rhyme, which have been shown to help

kids become better readers. Poetry is also easy to memorize, which gives children a feeling of success and ownership. Finally, writing poetry gives students of all ages that special feeling of being an author and discovering their writer's "voice."

Reading poetry aloud provides teachers with a wonderful opportunity to let students hear the sounds, feel the rhythm, see the images, fall in love with the beauty of the words, and learn new words that are not common in their everyday discourse with peers. Also important to teachers is that poetry can fit into nonstructured moments such as at the beginning and end of each school day, before gym, or that transition time between classes. It lightens the mood and brings smiles to the students' faces.

As a result of this discussion, Poetry Baskets were born. Bill, in close collaboration with top editors and authors at Boyds Mills, developed several baskets (Grades PreK-K; Grades K-2; Grades 3-4; Grades 5-6; Grades 6-8; and Grades K-4) Each basket contains not only several books of wonderful poetry that are age and interest appropriate for your students, they also contain teacher notes with specific ideas about how to use the books in your teaching that will be fun and effective for students and teachers alike.

Boyds Mills and their imprint, Wordsong, have an amazing collection of poetry books from authors including David Harrison, Brod

Bagert, Ralph Fletcher, Sara Holbrook, Georgia Heard, Jane Yolen, J. Patrick Lewis, Lee Bennett Hopkins, Eileen Spinelli, Nikki Grimes and many more. All three of the baskets for K-2 include a copy of Dr. Walter B. Barbe's book; *A School Year of Poems* which - in addition to the teacher notes mentioned previously - describes the best way to introduce poems to children, skill notes and helpful suggestions for the best use of poetry to help teach reading.

Poetry baskets for grades 3-4 each contain the teacher notes and a copy of performance poet and educator Sara Holbrook's *Wham! It's a Poetry Jam*. In her book, Sara explains to young writers how to use voice, rhythm, attitude, movement, and other techniques to perform poetry solo or in a group - an engaging activity for your third and fourth graders!

All of the baskets are priced well below retail even before you factor in the value of the teacher notes. Boyds Mills Press and Michaels Associates LLC both invite PAWLP'ers to discover how Poetry Baskets can energize your teaching and students and to spread the word to colleagues and administrators. A brochure is on the way, but feel free to contact Jan Michaels at jmichaels@michaelsassociates.com or call us at 1-800-869-1467 with questions.

Cordially,
Greg Michaels

The Newsletter is going green!!

**We plan to publish an electronic Newsletter several times/year
and reduce the frequency of the paper version.**

Please sign up for the electronic Newsletter on our website at www.pawlp.org.

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