



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 2 WINTER 1997

From the Director

WRITING THE FUTURE?

I attended a day-long conference at the Chester County IU on October 22, 1996 on the topic of distance education. The featured presenter was Robert Nahory of Bellcore, NJ (formerly Bell Labs), where he develops on-line teacher workshops in physics, general science, and electronic communication using both interactive video and e-mail. I and the other 35 conferees wanted to see what this was all about. Within an hour we were on-line inside of the Space Station in Texas talking to Jay Cory, one of their engineers, and watching through one of his dozen or so on-line cameras pointed at different features of the SpaceLab. The demonstration showed us how it was possible to use a phone line to let him or anyone see and talk with us in "real time."

All the while this was going on, my mind was racing with the possibilities for students and for teachers.

In the next part of the conference, we considered how a classroom teacher and a classroom of students might benefit from on-line interaction with remote subject matter experts--scientists, writers, archaeologists, younger people, older people, cooks, janitors, foreign people, whatever. We explored many possible benefits through such connectedness: enhancing student learning, continuing education beyond the classroom, enhancing teacher capabilities and resources, teacher education and workshops, teacher-to-teacher communication, resources for subjects (such as science, history, art, and current events), school-home linkages, equity of access, and handicapped access.

We learned about many strategies for remote or distance education:

- broadcast video (via cable or satellite)--the least interactive
- videoconferencing (one or more people at either end can talk)
- PC-based videoconferencing with screen sharing (of an application such as a Word document or a painting, which can be edited or examined at both ends)
- e-mail
- Internet (world-wide web)

(continued on page 2, column 1)

ONGOING CONSTRUCTION

by Kim Smitas

... 76 West backs up from the Boulevard all the way to Girard Ave--that's a five mile back up--and again from the Blue Route to Gulph Mills, all due to ongoing construction . . .

"Certainly this is a sign," I thought to myself, pulling my car back into the fast lane. I had left school in a rush to give myself plenty of time, only to see it quickly eaten up at the hands of *ongoing construction!*

"Pennsylvania Writing Project," I whispered to myself. I must have lost my mind!

Why hadn't I just said *no* when Judy Fisher came knocking, telling me about how much I had to offer and how much I had to share? I could have politely excused myself and stumbled out the door when I met Bob Weiss--I'm certain others have. Surely I had taken leave of my senses and maybe, just maybe, this was a sign that the Project and I were not meant to be.

... *Your best alternative is to exit at Gulph Mills and take the detour to the Blue Route . . .*

"Well maybe one good thing will come from all this. Maybe all those writing gurus will be able to tell me how to incorporate more writing into my basal-based reading instruction." I stated to no one in particular, especially since I was alone in the car. "I've done all I can do by myself. It's time to consult with the experts!" I smiled my sarcastic smile, showing my disdain at the so-called experts. The only problem was no one saw that smile. It didn't matter. I continued the torturous drive, considering the audience I would be facing in the fall.

Just three short years ago, I was a middle school math teacher. I was unhappy in that teaching situation and decided to throw my career in the air. When it landed, I found myself at the D. N. Fell School, teaching first grade. The Fell School is located on the Delaware River edge of South Philadelphia, seven blocks from the Italian Market. South Philadelphia has traditionally been divided by Broad Street both physically and ethnically. Families living west of Broad are predominantly black and Asian, while those living east of Broad are

(continued on page 2, column 2)

WRITING THE FUTURE *continued...*

Before investing time, energy, or money in any such strategies, Nahory advised us to always ask: "What makes it better than a video?"

Some model interactive educational programs have been developed by museums to provide guided experiences, unstructured visits driven by exploration of exhibits, live demonstrations, behind-the-scenes programs, links with other institutions, Internet access, and interactive software applications. All of these strategies simulate to some extent the experience of "being there." Nahory recounted stories of students who experienced these "mock visits" and whose parents called the school indignantly to ask why they were not asked to sign field trip permission slips.

Marcy Klein, of Trenton's Invention Factory Science Center, described the "Discovery Trails" developed by Liberty Science Center that can be linked to a school classroom. The seven different "Trails"--including Life Sciences, Communication, and Math--are presented as challenges for students, such as designing an all-terrain vehicle or a structure to withstand an earthquake.

What all this has to do with the future of communication between people became very obvious to me: we earthlings are a closely linked race, and our opportunities to talk to one another increase daily at an extraordinary pace. Incredible and not-so-costly possibilities are becoming available to students now for all areas of schooling and, of course, for writing. Student writers can gain access to all kinds of information and to diverse audiences. What all this has to do with the betterment of the human race is a deeper question and one that should be regularly addressed, since we still live in a world that supports poverty and destruction. I hope that our students today and in the future always ask the deeper question.

PAWP Certificates Awarded for Fifteen-Credit Programs

*The following participants have been awarded a
Certificate in Writing Instruction:*

Diane Barrie ('95)
Bernadette Cant ('95)
Judy Endicott
Steve Heffner ('92)
Jean McCarney ('96)
Dorothy Millar-Cirillo ('96)
Joan Pileggi ('92)

ONGOING CONSTRUCTION *continued...*

the stereotypical Italian and Irish working class families. Both neighborhoods used to be extremely stable, where several generations grew up and moved around the corner or next door to their parents and grandparent. Over the course of the past ten years, the neighborhoods have become very transient--the "old country" resists the influx of the new families into their neighborhoods and cries of racism echo in the community air. The Fell School sits on the east side of Broad Street, and due to federally court ordered busing, fifty percent of our 550 students are bused to school. The school district has mandated that, whenever possible, school staffs will be racially balanced.

... you'll find a huge backup from the Blue Route to the Turnpike Exit of the Schuylkill Expressway, where you'll find the left lane intermittently closed down and blocked due to ongoing construction...

"Will I never get there?" I groaned. I continued the painstaking crawl to West Chester and continued to think about the reasons I was taking this never-ending trip.

As a teacher new to first grade, I neatly organized my lesson plans to include reading in the morning and language arts, which included the inclusive term "writing," in the afternoon. It wasn't long before I realized that you can not write without reading (Murray 1985), and I moved writing to the morning, right after reading. I anticipated that by merely changing the schedule, my reading/writing dilemma would be solved. As we plowed through our basal reading series and the endless worksheets and workbooks that accompany it, I became disheartened at the quality of the reading skills my children were developing. I was also discouraged by the choruses of "Oh no" that I met whenever I gave a writing assignment. By the end of the year, I felt very inadequate as a first grade teacher, and I knew something needed to change. That something was me.

... An emergency road crew has been dispatched for pothole repair along Route 202. Expect delays...

I began my second first grade class by changing my attitude about the relationship between reading and writing. During the summer I had attended a workshop that dealt with strengthening the first grade curriculum. The presenter suggested that teachers move to a whole language approach to language arts instruction which was impossible for me. My school district is married to basal based reading instruction, and I was in no position to challenge the whole school district. However, I was not going to use excuses for my poor instruction. I picked through the whole language information I was given and decided to add the following strategies:

1. Reading and writing would no longer be listed separately on lesson plans or taught separately in my classroom. I needed the children to understand the

interaction between reading and writing and to treat the two as one.

2. I needed to supplement my basal instruction with literature books from the children's interests. We would read the books together on our newly established "reading rug," and then share our reactions to the book together.
3. I planned to extend our book talks into book writes by modeling writing whenever I read to and shared with my class.

I met with better than average success with these revisions to my instruction. Still, after two years of refining my "sort of" whole language classroom, I wanted more. I continued weaving along the Expressway.

. . . . *In Delaware County, ongoing construction has forced the closure of the on-ramp to Route 476, causing delays in your commute . . .*

Ongoing construction. "What do I still need to do?" I asked myself as the mile markers passed. The answer lay in the Pennsylvania Writing Project. During my five week stay at the Summer Institute, I had the remarkable opportunity to reevaluate my approach to reading and writing and investigate what I wanted to add. I decided that I wanted my children to incorporate writing into all facets of their learning, both in and out of school. I had used journals with limited success, but Dorothy Millar-Cirillo ('96) pointed me toward the idea of using the writer's notebook with my children during her institute presentation. I was suddenly but intensely introduced to the foremost proponent of the writer's notebook, Lucy Calkins.

Calkins calls the writer's notebook a seed bed out of which rough drafts grow. Whether one calls them a daybook, a bureau drawer, or a notebook, they are, above all, places for rehearsal (Calkins 1994). The notebook is a place to save things: a word, a phrase, an unrefined thought, the title of a poem or song. The writer's notebook is a miniature greenhouse. If you keep planting seeds and nurturing the ideas stored there, good things happen and the results are sometimes surprising (Kirby 1988).

A notebook should be a personal place to put ideas about school and life. Children should be encouraged to add all sorts of things to their notebooks--pictures, photographs, quotes, or any type of medium that can be placed in their book. It needs only to represent their lives. The notebook is important and should be approached as such. There are many activities designed for a writer's notebook. Notebooks can be the starting place for reflections, dream journals, work journals or just a place to record people watching. Children can write new words, funny words, analogies or metaphors they'd like to remember. Notebooks can be the starting place for many things or just a place to put writing "stuff."

The benefits of using a writer's notebook are thoroughly described by Regie Routman, a pleasant

surprise for me as I read about improving my instruction. The writer's notebook promotes fluency in writing and reading and provides an opportunity for reflection by the children. Notebooks encourage risk taking and provides a private place to write. Most importantly for me, the writer's notebook validates children's personal experiences and feelings and seems like a fun thing to work on. I am anxious for September to arrive so that my children can experience keeping a notebook, and I will be the one who brings it to them.

. . . . *detours have also been posted in the area of the Valley Forge interchange, where a tractor trailer has lost its load . . .*

"I know I'm almost there!" I sighed, wiping a bead of sweat from my forehead. I thought about the changes I had made, and considered the wonderful opportunities that were ahead for me and my class. And I considered the rookie trucker who just lost his load and laughed out loud.

I know about rookie mistakes. Regie Routman showed me that I over taught the literature I had chosen to incorporate in my reading instruction. I asked too many questions and required too much "study" of those trade books, basically because I was not confident about the power of the literature to teach skills. Beginners make mistakes, but my real mistake was not recognizing that my philosophy needed to change. Literature is not something that is done or something extra to do after reading is over. Becoming a whole language teacher is not conditional on the material (basal or otherwise) the teacher will use. It is the literacy model the teacher holds that determines the type of instruction and choices that happen in the classroom. Calkins says "let the book do the work." I would like to amend this statement to read "let the book and the kids do the work." I will just stand back and learn. I will watch the construction.

. . . . *No problems to report this morning on the Walt Whitman Bridge . . . just a minor delay at the tolls . . .*

Now I am traveling along the Walt Whitman Bridge, and school is within my sights. I will soon see their faces. The road has never felt so smooth.

Works Cited

- Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *Living Between the Lines*. Heinemann, 1991.
- Kirby, Dan and Tom Liner. *Inside Out: Developmental Strategies for Teaching Writing*. Boyton/Cook, 1981.
- Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Houghton Mifflin, 1985.
- Routman, Regie. *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. Heinemann, 1991.
- Kim Smitas ('96) teaches at the D.N. Fell Elementary School in the Philadelphia SD and wrote this piece during the Summer Institute.*

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH PAWP'S EVALUATION PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Jamie Fiermonte ('95)

Upper Dublin SD, Grade 4

✓This is my second year affiliated with the Writing Project. This past summer I coordinated the YW/YR program in my school district. I presented at a PAWP day last spring and will be doing more presentations for the project. My involvement with PAWP led to my appointment as elementary writing curriculum leader in my building. In this role I helped create a new K-12 writing curriculum for my district. I have also been encouraging my colleagues to write, write, write with their students. We have published 3 staff books so far.

Sharon Daly Sweeney ('96)

Rose Tree Media SD, Penncrest HS, Grade 11 & 12

✓I completed the Summer Institute of the Writing Project this summer, so I guess you'd call me a new guy. I'm currently in the fall follow-up with Jim MacCall and Diane Dougherty; the trailer fun continues! My classes are better because of the Project! My room is physically, aesthetically different this year--I actually decorated! We're trying response groups, reading circles, journaling and reading logs, and modeling, modeling, modeling! The strategies I outlined in my implementation project have been enormously successful. I'm just starting to process all of the philosophy and strategies from the Institute, and it's currently affecting my year in dozens of small strategies. One of the most exciting projects has been a 5th-12th grade collaboration that I am designing with Mark Paikoff, a District '95 Fellow. I feel better about what I do than I have in a long time.

Erika Allen ('94)

Upper Moreland SD, Grade 3

✓I have been involved with PAWP as a presenter for a number of years, and have taught in the Summer Youth Program at Upper Moreland for two years. This year I am looping with my students from 2nd to 3rd grade.

Karen Venuto ('92)

Rose Tree Media SD, 5th Grade

✓In the summer I work in the Young Writers/Young Readers program on campus and in any satellite location that will tolerate me. My 5th graders and I are presently working with Riddle Village, a local retirement community. Just last week we had a "Hats Off to Poetry" celebration. Our next endeavor will be a multi-generational literature circle.

Karen Kabakoff ('96)

Kutztown Area SD, Grade 9-12 Learning Support

✓I am a summer institute "Fellow" and follow-through member of the writing institute. I'm still teaching high school learning-support language arts (and health, reading, keyboarding, and academic support). One of the pieces of writing I've been working with in my classes is a storyboarding essay inspired by a presentation at the summer institute. I've become co-advisor of my high school newspaper, which was non-existent for 2 years! I have gained in writing and teaching confidence since the writing institute. We began free writing the second day of school, even before we filled out all the "beginning of school" paperwork, because I felt we just had to write! Some of my seniors are currently working on a book of short pieces that they began in their free time with no prompting from me. PAWP has certainly made a difference!

Sue Fitzgerald ('94)

Coatesville Area SD, Grade 1

✓I've worked for the summer youth program for the last 2 summers. Last summer I worked all sessions and coordinated the Coatesville site. I've also given several presentations on writing across the curriculum. This year I'm in charge of a committee to establish the K-2 rubric for our district.

Gerri Eisenstein ('87)

William Penn SD, 5th Grade

✓My school district has made the news lately. My most recent and exhilarating experience was this summer working with the youth program at Interboro. After more than a few years away from PAWP activities, I'm doing it again. Last week I weathered the elements and flood to come to the presentation by Andy Fishman. Alas, I missed the call the session was canceled, as did Rich Joseph, Nancy Ferguson and Bonnie Brown. We decided to set up our own sharing and for 2 hours with rain pelting outside we exchanged ways in which we found writing has made a difference in our professional and personal lives. Definitely PAWP has helped our schools come alive--everyone writes. I'm the writing committee chair for our school and our school newspaper cooperative teacher for K to 6th grades. *Ed. note: Gerri's district went on strike in late October and a picture of her hugging a child after momentarily leaving the picket line appeared on page 1 of the Neighbors section of the Philadelphia Inquirer on October 29, 1996.*

Debbie Cechak ('96)

Bristol Township SD, Grade 4

✓ A big change has come in my life. After the extensive PAWP fellow program this summer, I couldn't hold back from teaching full time again. I obtained a new 4th grade teaching position. The interview process was made easier because of the numerous ideas, activities and skills that enveloped me during the summer PAWP program. My students have benefited! Through journal writing my class has taken steps to become independent writers. They hate to stop! And not just my class has been the recipient of the unbelievable knowledge that PAWP offers. Using my summer presentation "Write Kids Club," I have set up an after-school weekly program. Introducing many forms of writing, students use their skills and learn new ones. Fall includes 30 kids grades 3-5 and Spring is for K-2. I am trying to get the word out to my fellow teachers, but as a new teacher to the district and building, I am enthusiastically treading lightly. When I listen to my students while in their response groups, I know we're heading in the *write* direction.

Rose Cappelli ('96)

West Chester Area SD, Grade K-2 Reading Specialist

✓ Last summer I survived the Institute and I'm now in the fall follow-up course. My involvement with the Project has given me more confidence in my ability to write, and I recently designed a short guide to the administration and assessment of Running Records, which are being used throughout my district. I am also assisting one of our second grade teachers with a Writer's Workshop.

Phyllis Maier ('94)

Coatesville Area SD, Grade 4

✓ My most recent connection to PAWP is tied in with my classroom responsibilities. With a new literacy series in hand, our K-5 program has changed this fall. We are now involved heavily with writing assessment, using the PAWP rubric at my grade level. My training with PAWP has certainly been invaluable as this year begins! I have enjoyed having my class journal across the curriculum. With a new program of inclusion in my classroom, I have enjoyed journaling with the LS students and teacher. You would have enjoyed the look on her face when she heard she'd be writing along with the class. It was a marvelous session!

Debi Reppa ('96)

Methacton SD, Grade 6

✓ I'm presently in the Fall follow-up. I'm a co-sponsor of our school's first literary magazine. My classes are free-writing on A, B & C days and in writer's workshop on D, E, and F days. In lieu of book reports, they use reader response journals. I'm exhausted but counting on my colleagues to help me come up with strategies to ease my workload.

Sharon Brizek ('96)

Antietam SD, Grades 7,9,11 & 12

✓ I teach in a small school and work with students in several grades. This year we have moved to "block" scheduling except for my ninth grade writing class. I have assumed several new duties this year. In September I directed the involvement of our junior class in an "across the curriculum" learning project culminating in a trip to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. Also, I am co-advisor of the Yearbook at our high school. The students load all of the copy into the computers located in my room. I direct the operations of a computer lab, inservicing colleagues on it. In my English and Writing classes, I have incorporated many ideas about writing to which I was introduced last summer at the Institute. My students complete focused freewrites, and I always write with them. To encourage them to share their work, I regularly read my papers aloud as we do group sharing. My students write in journals, process papers, and conference with one another in response groups. Attending the Institute has proven to be an invaluable experience for me.

Dorothy Millar-Cirillo ('96)

Upper Darby SD, Grade 4

✓ I'm taking the fall follow-up which is sooo much easier than the summer! I'm excited about the quality of writing that's going on in my class! I'm trying a lot of the new ideas I learned this summer. The writer's notebook has been a big success. My students also love looking through my portfolio and seeing "their teacher" write with them!

Kim Smitas ('96)

Philadelphia SD, Grade 1

✓ I am currently teaching first grade at the Fell School. When not in my classroom, I am embarking on an ambitious second vocation--officiating Division 1 and 2 college basketball which will begin next weekend. I am a Writing Project Rookie, having just survived the Summer Institution...I mean Institute, and I currently attend the debriefing sessions known as Fall follow-up every other Wednesday in the trailer next door. I have recently been made chairperson of our English Language Arts committee at school. I have set up a Writing Lab which is functioning for all the first grades, so in addition to my own classroom responsibilities, I now do Writing Workshop with 100 first graders. Needless to say, I am extremely busy and this leaves me very little time to write, which is becoming a real passion! *Ed. note: Kim's piece begins on page 1 of this Newsletter.*



PAWP LEADERSHIP REORGANIZATION: CO-DIRECTOR ROLE TO BE FILLED SOON

Currently, the changes in PAWP offerings and the growth of some project components have brought about a need for a thorough revision of project administration. New to the Project in the past four years are off-campus summer youth programs, a major growth spurt in youth programming, a multitude of one-credit workshops, a literature institute, expanded publications, and more. To guarantee the teacher-based leadership that is at the heart of every Writing Project, we have also to guarantee a succession of strong teacher-leaders who will carry on our work into the next decade. The multiple administrative roles in PAWP that will emerge will reflect current needs and future plans; they will be annual and renewable; and, while they will be voluntary, they will be compensable if the various PAWP programs produce ample revenue.

Many thanks are owed to two original Fellows of the Writing Project--Jolene Borgese and Martha Menz--for their continued efforts to enable us to survive and grow all of these years. Both have held full-time jobs with school districts while serving as volunteer or paid administrators with PAWP. They have spent innumerable hours on the telephone making arrangements to design and staff our programs, very capably led dozens of these programs themselves, and acted as Project ambassadors in many venues throughout our history.

We thank Martha especially for her service during the early years of the Project. She was the first teacher who co-directed a summer institute (1981) for PAWP, and our first Assistant Director. Her 1981 presentation in Harrisburg for the Pennsylvania Department of Education convinced it to support the creation of additional National Writing Project sites in the state and to provide some modest financial support in subsequent years. With her wisdom, skill, and intelligence in support of PAWP, we were able to grow and thrive. Martha left her Social Studies classroom in the Upper Darby SD some years ago to become Staff Development Supervisor in that district, and then to be promoted to Director of Curriculum and Staff Development.

We thank Jolene for all of her years of service as our second Assistant Director and then as our first Co-Director. Because of her contagious enthusiasm, many teachers throughout the region became interested in our program, entered it as Fellows of the summer institute or as participants in other courses, and gained the skills, information, and spark to create better writing classrooms. Jolene directly influenced many teachers to become PAWPer and writers. She also was part of the origin of our summer programming for kids. Recently, she has been responsible for the programming of our

Saturday PAWPDAY series. All of this effort merits our gratitude and commendation.

When Jolene participated in PAWP's first summer institute, she was employed by the Ridley SD; then she taught several years at Radnor; and she currently is teaching at East Senior High School in the West Chester Area SD. In addition to her work as PAWP co-director, Jolene is also involved in other professional commitments and activities, such as the national Conference on English Leadership, the local Adult Night School, and her doctoral studies at Widener University. We hope that Jolene will continue as PAWPDAY coordinator along with Sue Smith. The Project would also benefit from her continued involvement and support.

Jolene and Martha have an important shared history with PAWP, and all of their efforts in helping PAWP establish itself and grow are much appreciated. We wish them continued success in all endeavors, both personal and professional. The Writing Project will not be the same without their leadership but will continue to grow and be strong with the collective leadership that our re-organization will produce.



NOTE TO A FRIEND

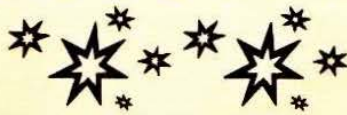
by Will Mowery

It's been a long time,
but time doesn't seem important anymore.
It seems we have reached the point of living
in our everyday lives
where time merges
with sun and moon,
blue sky and stars,
and anything is possible.

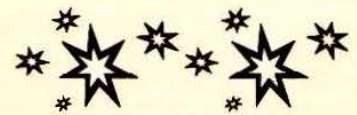
I don't know where we will go from here,
but I know we will go
and the where does not matter.
We will go wherever we go
because it is where we want to be
in our everyday lives.

We are like young children
following wishes and dreams,
standing and falling and standing
until we get it right
and then wishing and dreaming of other things,
wishing and dreaming of what might be
and then being.

Will Mowery is a poet and a member of the 1996 Summer Institute. He will be participating in our 1997 Summer Youth Program as a visiting author.



YOUTH PAGE



NEW ADDITION TO PAWP NEWSLETTER!

This month marks the beginning of a new feature in our Newsletter, a page dedicated to the kids involved with the Writing Project and youth related issues. We hope you are aware of the impact our youth program has had on young writers and young readers in the area, as we have reached nearly 4,500 youth in 12 years. On this page we will feature pieces from the latest summer program, guest authors, information about the graduates of our program, interesting tidbits about youth and writing, and items of special interest to PAWPers.

NEWSWORTHY DOINGS

Two multi-year participants in our youth programs and seventh grade classmates from Lionville JHS have been featured in the *Daily Local News* recently. Nancy Franks, a two-time youth participant whose letter to PAWP appeared in the last Newsletter, was featured in the *Close To Home* section of the *Daily Local News*. Erin Gallagher, a four-time youth program participant, is a regular contributor to their *Newspaper in Education* section. She is known as the "Roving Reviewer" and rates movies with ice cream scoops instead of the traditional stars.

SOMEDAY

by Siobhan Correnty

Someday

I will jump on my bed without
my parents knowing

Someday

I will go to Dorney Park and
Wild Water Kingdom

Someday

my brother will disappear and
my parents will forget about him!

Someday

I will get to stay up as late as
I want to

Someday

I will be grown up and tell my
parents what to do

Someday

I will be the President of the
USA and I won't let people smoke!!!

Siobhan attended our Young Writers/Young Readers program this summer. She is in second grade at Mattison Avenue ES in the Wissahickon SD.

NEW NATIONAL LITERARY JOURNAL FOR TEENS

While we may tend to think that all teens are outspoken, those who are creative and talented finally have an outlet. *Writes of Passage*, the only national literary journal that focuses specifically on taking young writers seriously, gives teens who have something to say somewhere to say it. Subscription and submission information is available from the PAWP Youth Office at (610)436-3089. They also have a website at <http://www.writes.org>.

TEACHER-CONSULTANTS NEEDED TO STAFF YOUTH PROGRAM FOR SUMMER 1997!

If you recently received a letter from our new Youth Director, Judy Jester, regarding teaching in our summer youth program, please take some time to think about it. If you have ever taught for PAWP over the summer, you know what an enriching and rewarding experience it can be. These programs offer a unique opportunity to work with highly motivated students in a low student/teacher ratio. With an expected growth of 25%, 12 off-campus sites throughout Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery counties, and a summer full of programs at West Chester University, we need you! Please return your completed application to the PAWP office today!

WRITING TAKES YOU EVERYWHERE!

The youth program staff is proud to announce the completion of our "best-of" publication, *Writing Takes You Everywhere*. This collection, a compilation of pieces selected by PAWP teacher-consultants from each youth class over the summer, and bookmark book reviews from all Young Writers/Young Readers participants, is currently available for purchase at \$5.00 a copy. An order form is included on page 19 of this newsletter.

Currently in its second year, *Writing Takes You Everywhere* has become a testament to the capabilities of the youth affiliated with our program, and was sold out three months after it was printed last year. In addition to providing each award winner with a copy, Bob Weiss also presents a copy to every award winner's school library. This practice has led to some good publicity for the program.

If you taught in the youth program this summer you should have received a copy in the mail, but even if you didn't teach, this publication is indeed an asset to any bookshelf, whether in the classroom or at home. Order your copy today!

ILLUSTRATOR HONORED

Willy and May, illustrated and written by Judith Shackner, January's PAWPDAY keynote speaker, has been named to this year's *Society for Illustrators*. This most prestigious award comes to Judith for her first picture book, which she both wrote and illustrated. *Willy and May* received starred reviews from the School Library Journal and the ALA Book list. Last year the *Boston Globe* named it one of the top holiday books.

Her other illustrated works include D. J. Napoli's *Prince of the Pond* and *Jimmy and The Pickpocket of the Palace*. She also illustrated Barbara Baker's *Staying with Grandmother* and most recently *What Shall I Dream?* by Laura McGee Kvasnosky. Judith is currently writing a children's book about Ralph Waldo Emerson and her grandmother, Annie Burns, who was Emerson's cook.

Judith will present on Saturday, January 18 in Main Hall. Registration, refreshments and book sales will be at 8:30 AM and the program will start at 9:00 AM. Judith's books will be available for purchase. Please call the writing project if you plan to attend at (610) 436-2297.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IT'S NOT TOO LATE!

If you verbally agreed to participate in the Oral History Project and can find the audio tape, it's not too late to have a taping session! We will be happy to receive a tape any time in the next month or so--you still have time to gather a few people together to reminisce and reflect!

Questions can be directed to Mary Lou Kuhns at (610) 430-7148, or e-mail her at mkuhns@t-e.k12.pa.us. Tapes can be mailed to her at 784 Bradford Terrace, West Chester, PA 19382.

ELLEN

by Carole A. Holden

"Books are my silent friends" is cross-stitched above the cluttered table where business is transacted. Its frame is askew so a slight tilt of the head is required. An overflowing trash can, like an effervescent soda, is spilling its contents to the floor. The abandoned cartons and crumpled paper have created foothills of debris.

It looks as if the shopkeeper has just moved in and doesn't quite know what to do with all of those silent friends of hers, but I happen to know that the shop has been open for some time. I come to the conclusion that the casual style of the shop must reflect Ellen's organizational skills. She is apparently stricken with an abstract-random disorder--a terminal case.

An overwhelming urge to straighten the place up sweeps over me. It passes. I tell myself it's okay. It's not your mess. Oddly, I am almost comforted by the disarray. It eases my own guilt as I recall the condition of the home I left early this morning.

A barefoot proprietor darting hither and yon busily stocking shelves captures my attention. Could this be the famous Ellen? We approach to inquire about a certain book, and Ellen's keen eye scans the room to hone in on the exact location of the book in question. Considering the disheveled character of the room, this was a truly amazing navigational feat! After zeroing in on the book's exact location, Ellen was not content until she had emptied the content of her mind files telling us interesting tidbits of information about one of her treasures. Sturdy, yet mobile, Ellen is a file cabinet with a heartbeat! Did you know that only an American author can capture the coveted Newbery Award medal?

While it was apparent that some of the clutter had grown roots, the store continued to fascinate rather than repulse me. A ceiling-to-floor wall mural, sprawling with the looping autographs and pop art graphics of the famous authors and illustrators who had graced Ellen with their presence, ambushed me. I felt as if I were in such excellent company amidst these quiet reminders of the literary artists who had passed this way promoting their wares. I was in a state of awe.

Making final selections and difficult choices, our business was concluded. Upon leaving, a quick glance to the back room revealed worse horrors. Looking like a suspended avalanche, a sign shouting DANGER! might have been warranted. I winced, shut my eyes, and exited.

I can't wait to return to Booktenders. Each of Ellen's books evokes a tender memory that she is just bursting to share with anyone who crosses the threshold of her bookstore.

Carole Holden ('96) teaches in the Rolling Hill ES in the Council Rock SD. The subject is Ellen Mager, proprietor of Booktenders, a notable kids bookstore in Doylestown

NEWSWORTHY DOINGS AND ITEMS OF INTEREST

★ **Lynne Dorfman's** ('89) third grade class at Round Meadow Elementary School in the Upper Moreland SD was the topic of a newspaper article in the *Montgomery County Record*. Along with several other classrooms and parent and teacher volunteers, Lynne's class began folding a thousand paper cranes in honor of the World War II bombing of Hiroshima. A result of a book entitled "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes," which traces Sadako's losing battle with leukemia as a result of the bombing, these cranes will be delivered to a statue in her likeness. The statue stands in Hiroshima's Peace Park. The symbolism of the cranes comes from the book, where Sadako believed if she could fold a thousand paper cranes, the gods would grant her wish for good health. She did not complete her goal, and her classmates finished folding the cranes and buried them with her. The cranes from Round Meadow were placed beneath her statue on Peace Day, August 6, the anniversary of the bombing.

★ **Carol Reigh** ('87) was recently appointed to a part-time adjunct professor position in English Composition at Kutztown University. Carol said they were looking for someone with experience in writing as a process, and she feels that her PAWP experience really helped her clinch this position.

★ **Judy Jester** ('93) and **Bernadette Cant** ('95) recently accepted positions with the PAWP youth program for 1997 and beyond. Judy's new title will be Youth Program Director, an honor most recently held by **Bruce Seidel** ('91). Bruce was with the youth program for four years (whew!), and deserves a huge round of applause for his contributions to the program. Bernadette will be replacing Judy as the WCU Site Coordinator, following a busy summer as the Site Coordinator at our Interboro site.

★ Congratulations to **Gloria Wetzel** ('83), who recently became the principal at Leary Elementary School in the Centennial SD.

★ Kudos to **Sue Smith** ('84), who is spearheading a publishing center at Mary C. Howse Elementary School, where two of her daughters attend. Just like professional authors, students will go through the process of writing, editing, and rewriting. They will use computers to type their stories and assist the parent volunteers in binding the books with cardboard and librarian tape. The center, which will have its own office following renovations next year, is one of many Sue has helped set up throughout the region.

★ Congratulations to **Pam Kernan-Howard** ('90) and her husband Wayne, on the birth of their son Nathaniel on July 29, 1996. He weighed in at 7 lbs., 11 oz., and

was 21 inches long. Rumor has it that he's already started his memoirs...A future PAWPer?

★ **Brenda Hurley** ('84) recently hosted a party for members of the 1984 West Chester summer institute. In attendance were Jolene Borgese ('80), Mary Corcoran, Mike Gearty, Kevin McAneny, Sue Smith, and Bob Weiss. The group spent the evening reminiscing over good food and drink.

★ Keeping busy seems to be the obvious choice for **Sharon Brizek** ('96). This year she will be the director of a new writing lab, will be the new yearbook advisor, and will also be coordinating the Renaissance Faire project for her district (Antietam). The Renaissance Faire project involves staging a scene from Shakespeare with the juniors in her high school.

★ Our local overachiever and Associate Director **Andy Fishman's** findings from her 1990 study of Amish culture were recently cited in the book *Curriculum as Conversation: Transforming Traditions of Teaching and Learning* by Arthur N. Applebee (she even got her own index listing!) Andy is also teaching an invitational year-long class entitled *Ethics and the Teaching of English* for seven PAWPer, and has been busy conducting in-service workshops for both the Lincoln Intermediate Unit and the West Chester Area SD.

★ **Pat Ripley** ('90) was recently appointed Supervisor for Curriculum & Instruction in the West Depford Township Schools (NJ).

★ **Barb Heisler** ('88) has left teaching and is currently working as a consultant for Houghton Mifflin.

★ **Shari Stem** ('88) and **Chris Coyne** ('95) are running a three-day Writing Academy for 20 teachers in their district, Central Bucks. The program is modeled after a Strategies I course; they are using five presenters, are having participants write, and are using a Lucy Calkins book as their text. Both hope that this will spark an interest in a fuller course through PAWP and the Bucks summer institute (which Shari co-directs). An interesting note about this is that while new CB teachers were expected, all of the registrants turned out to be classroom veterans.

★ The National Writing Project has copies of *The Writer's Workout Book: 113 Stretches Toward Better Prose* available for \$10.90. This book is a compilation of 39 essays in which Art Peterson reflects with humor, irony, and wisdom on three joyful decades as a public school teacher of writing.

★ Our office recently received a request from a teacher from the University of South Florida to come for a visit and see some of the things PAWP is involved in. Carolyn Spillman is currently working with rural at-risk

children in Florida and will be coming to visit some time next semester. Bob Weiss has extended an invitation to Carolyn, requesting a *Newsletter* contribution as a guest author. This could be a fantastic opportunity for us to demonstrate PAWP in the classroom.

★ The National Writing Project has put out a call for teacher-researchers as a result of their alliance with the Polaroid Education Program. Twenty NWP teachers can take part in a special project that provides them with resources to explore teaching and learning in their own classrooms. Participants must already have a camera from participation in a NWP/PEP workshop. Those who are interested should write a one-page letter describing how they've been using photography in their classrooms along with their mailing address and phone number to Stephen Marcus, Co-Director, SCWriP, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, CA, 93106.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

HAMLET AND THE INVESTIGATIVE POLICE REPORT

by Beth Teofilak Wright

Both my academic and honors English 12 classes enjoy studying Mel Gibson's *Hamlet*. I have been satisfied with my "before and during" reading strategies, but found my writing assignment to be lacking. Too many students groaned when I assigned a traditional five-paragraph essay on the theme, truth, and deception. Considering all of the crimes that are committed in this Shakespearean play, I now see how more appropriate an investigative police report will be as a writing assignment. This different expository form will encourage the students to consider different audiences, focus more on diction, and present textual information in a different format.

The first pre-writing activity will be to identify the various crimes in the play, an appropriate detective, and a list of three witnesses:

Crime: Murder of King Hamlet

Detective: Hamlet

Witnesses: Gertrude, Horatio, Claudius

Crime: Murder of Rosencrantz & Guildenstern

Detective: Claudius

Witnesses: Hamlet, Ship's Captain, King of England

Crime: Suicide of Ophelia

Detective: Laertes

Witnesses: Gertrude, Claudius, A Nun

Crime: Murder of Polonius

Detective: Claudius

Witnesses: Hamlet, Gertrude, Hall Guard

Students will then decide on a crime and form into groups. All students will be writing their own investigative police report, but some of the pre-writing activities will be done in small group work. After selecting their group, the students will write a script involving interview of the detective with three witnesses. All characters need to represent Shakespeare's original characterization and the questions must be pertinent to the crime, exposing valuable information from the witnesses. Each group will have copies of *Hamlet* for text references. Upon completion of the scripts, each group will role play the lines in front of the class. Besides being an exercise in oral presentation, reading aloud the scripts will provide the class with information about the play that should help in the writing of their reports.

The next pre-writing activity will involve discussing the content and format of the investigative police report. Students are to include observations based on the text, testimony from all witnesses based on their scripts, photographs and/or drawings, and any other documents that apply such as pathology reports like autopsies and blood tests, as well as FBI fingerprint sheets. I will try to get samples of local police reports to examine with the class. And, if at all possible, I will try to get a local policeman to speak to the class about how he writes his reports. Students will work in groups to obtain the necessary data even though they will be writing individual reports. Some students are better at finding textual references, others are better at retrieving relevant pictures from magazines to represent the crime. They will get a sense of teamwork, similar to police partners.

Before the students organize all of this data, they need to be aware of the different audiences that will be influenced by their report. Each group will be assigned an audience: lawyers--plaintiff, prosecutor, suspect, police department personnel, courts--especially the judge, the media, and other police officers. The following questions will help the group to describe the audience to the class in an informal oral presentation. It is vital that the entire class understand the multiple audiences. They are not writing for a teacher, themselves, or a peer. It is audience that makes this particular assignment more dynamic than the traditional essay.

- How old is the intended audience? Of what gender?
- What is the economic/educational level of the audience?
- How much does the audience already know about the crime?
- What biases might the audience have about the crime? people involved?
- What does the police officer have in common--beliefs, concerns, and attitudes--with this intended audience?

At this point, it probably will be necessary to preview the scenes from the movie that apply to the crimes. The students will now be viewing the scenes as police officers, looking more closely for evidence, hearing the lines with an ear for incriminating remarks.

After a mini-lesson on writing decisions such as what to include, what to exclude, how to phrase information--with a transparency exercise on diction, the students will be ready to draft. Upon completion of a first draft, students will select a partner for peer conferencing using a checklist.

Investigative Police Report/Crime in *Hamlet* - CHECKLIST

1. Does the report include key observations from the text? Y N
2. Does the report include enough evidence (details from the text) to appease all of the audiences? Y N
3. Does the report include some photographs and/or drawings to support the data? Y N
4. Does the report include any documents that help support the case? Y N
5. Does the report provide key information from testimonies of all of the witnesses? Y N
6. Is the diction clear avoiding confusion and/or loopholes that would inhibit prosecution? Y N
7. Does the report follow the format for a police report? Y N

The reports will be graded according to a scoring guide with a point system.

Observations/Evidence (text)	30 points
Testimonies (scripts)	30 points
Photographs/Drawings	5 points
Documents	5 points
Format	10 points
Diction	20 points

The focus on crime and police reporting will appeal to the at-risk student as well as the "difficult to motivate" academic students. The honor students will probably be challenged by the multiple audiences. And, all students will probably welcome a change from the traditional essay with an opportunity to write in a different expository format.

Beth Teofilak Wright ('88) teaches at the Chichester Senior High School in the Chichester SD.

*Good writing excites me, and makes
life worth living.*

—Harold Pinter

MEETING JANE - AND MYSELF - IN THE 1996 LITERATURE INSTITUTE

by Charlie Sines

It was Day One of the 1996 PennLit Summer Institute. Andy Fishman and Patty Koller, the Institute co-directors, handed out copies of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and asked us to share our first impressions of the book. "Oh, no!" I thought. I had read enough Jane Austen in my undergraduate career to know I didn't like her, so I knew immediately: this book would be the pits. "It's a chick book," I announced when it was my turn, and slid the paperback off the table into my briefcase.

It was a tough start for me. I sensed my view of literature being attacked and prepared myself to defend the literature I loved. In less than a week, however, Pennlit successfully convinced me the Canon really is, to a considerable extent, a list of dead white male's works, honored and put forth for study by other dead and some live ones, and that turned out to include my favorite children's lit author, Dr. Seuss (may the Grinch rest his soul) who (thanks to Carol Rohrbach's presentation) proved to discriminate against females too.

As you might expect from this, my views on teaching literature before coming to the Literature Institute were very conventional. My class would read, I would lecture, students would take notes, complete worksheets, and then take tests. I used little, if any, personal interaction between the students and the texts. For the most part, I followed the Canon in the choice of my literature. The problem was I did not realize there was an alternative, despite the fact that I was unhappy with how I taught and how my students learned.

The changes in my attitude after becoming part of the Institute shocked even me. I suddenly understood that students need interaction with the text and author on a personal level. Judy Jester taught us to use journals in response to literature, resolving an ongoing struggle I had had with journals in my classes. Rosemary Welsh showed us how to respond to literature by putting it on its feet. (Performing "Jack and Jill went up the Hill" as their distraught mother was great!) Mark Paikoff and I became so engrossed in Scott O'Dell's writing style that we wanted to finish our proposed version of O'Dell's next novel, which we called *Oceans of Blood*. Recognizing and transacting with authors as we did is what I want my students to do. I no longer settle for their viewing an author as "another dead guy" who wrote something in their anthology.

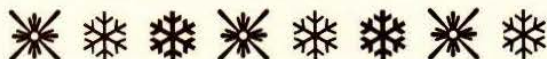
I also realized my curriculum has a void in the number of multicultural and female authors included. Reading Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* as my self-selected novel was an eye-opening experience, so attempting a more diverse selection of authors in my

teaching will be my next task. Even if my class is not culturally diverse, the students need to understand, accept, and possibly deal with people from other cultures.

Currently I am implementing response groups and literature circles in my English class so my students can talk about reading, authors and writing the same ways we did as adults in the Institute. I now believe students need to learn from each other and explore reading and writing on their own.

I was very apprehensive during the first week of the Institute, my mind set to believe I could not buy into the ideas of others in the Institute. I thought the ideas were great for elementary students, but not for junior high. Boy, was I wrong! I still don't like *Northanger Abbey* (though my response group of Chris Koons, Janet Ross, and Susan Oliver did help me see things in the novel I did not recognize, especially in our performance of "The Wizard of Conjugal Bliss"), but I do see the need to open my mind and become diverse in my reading and writing, especially if I want my students to do just that.

Charlie Sines teaches 7th and 8th grade English at Pennridge South Junior HS.



1996 EVALUATION PROJECT UNDERWAY

On October 26, 1996, the 1996-97 PAWP Evaluation Project came together for this year's first scoring session. Eighteen Fellows participated, sixteen in an elementary group and three in a secondary group, with one student assistant joining the secondary group. Fellows who act as Project participants bring samples of their own students' writing, plus, if they choose, samples from a non-PAWP Fellow's classroom--to use as Control papers. They also bring students' evaluative reflections and teachers' parallel evaluative reflections. The scorers begin by reading and scoring a set of anchor papers; they then compare and discuss their findings on the set of anchors. Each anchor has an annotation to explain the score. When scorers have reached agreement on scoring criteria, scoring of actual "live" papers begins. Each paper is scored twice, never by the teacher it came from; the second reader combines the two scores for a final score. If the two scores are more than one number apart, a third reading is required. Finally, when all the papers are scored, the final scores are recorded and participants choose new anchors, at all score levels if possible, and write annotations for them. The Project will continue in the spring when annual progress can be analyzed.

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

by Lynda A. Ramage

Each Christmas reminds me of our second one together. Our schedules were tight and we had no time to shop for family. My husband, Mark, was used to this since he always shops on December 24, and he was not concerned. I, on the other hand, usually shop early and thus, felt desperate and rushed.

When Mark arrived home late in the afternoon on Christmas Eve, I was anxiously waiting at the door, checkbook in hand. I spent the afternoon perusing the store flyers for ideas and sales and was ready to go.

"Hi . . . Welcome home . . . How was your day? Are you ready to go? I know what to get your parents . . . Would they like a coffee maker? There's one on sale at Ames." I spit out the words as I raced through the door expecting Mark to follow.

I turned around when I noticed he was not behind me. Mark was standing at the door, mouth agape, hat in hand, trying to make sense of what I had just said.

"What's the matter?" I hastily asked him.

"What's your hurry?" he inquired, puzzled.

"Time is running out! We have only a few short hours to finish our shopping and I have a lead on your parents' gift!"

Mark was smart enough to put his hat back on and head out to the car.

As we approached the store, I filled him in on the details of the coffee maker. It was a good product with lots of features--something his parents would not get for themselves. *A perfect gift for the in-laws, I thought, and at such a good price!*

When we found the aisle with the coffee makers, the shelves were practically clean. Thus ensued a short, but pointed, discussion on the value of shopping early.

While rolling his eyes during my discourse, Mark happened to notice a demo model on the shelf. He interrupted me by casually walking to the model to examine it more closely.

"Here is just the model we are looking for!" Mark exclaimed, thinking he had solved our problem.

"Mark, there's not a box for this one," I said skeptically.

He quickly found a clerk who came back with a box, but not the one for the coffee maker. Mark was willing to make do, but I began to put up an argument.

"Mark, we can't wrap it in this box! It doesn't fit! It won't even close! And besides, there are no directions included."

"Why do we need directions? Everything you need to know is on this sticker!" He pointed to the finger-worn, half-peeled sticker on the front of the demo model.

"Oh, Mark, everybody and their grandmother has

handled this machine. The sticker is peeling off and it looks horrible! We are *not* giving this to your parents for Christmas!"

Mark nonchalantly looked at his watch, noting the passing time. He knew this would wear me down quickly.

"I'll clean it up and wrap it myself. It will be fine," he promised desperately.

I decided that he knew his parents better than I, and our shopping time was growing shorter by the minute. I caved in too quickly.

We arrived home with our purchase and, true to his promises, Mark began to clean the coffee maker. What a surprise improvement! Until we noticed that when placed on a flat surface, it leaned to one side. The coffee maker seemed to be missing a leg. Indeed, this wonderful display model had been worked over by the public. Mark did not know what to say. I had a few choice words to express, but it was Christmas Eve.

"I can get a replacement leg at the hardware store," he said hopefully.

Unbelievably, the store was still open. The owners must have heard the desperation in Mark's voice when he called for their hours.

The replacement leg did not match, but the coffee maker did stand level.

"Mark," I implored, "we cannot give this to your parents! It has a different leg and the information sticker is peeling off!"

"They will never see the bottom of the coffee maker! How many coffee maker bottoms have you looked at? Do you inspect your gifts when you receive them?"

He did have a point there, but I was still unsure.

"Let's see how it looks after I smooth out the sticker," Mark said confidently.

I was a bit curious as to how he was going to smooth out a crinkled, curled, half-peeled sticker that was still attached to the coffee maker.

"I'm going to iron it out," he said matter-of-factly. I decided to watch and learn.

Mark proceeded to get out our ironing board, iron, and a dish towel. I stepped in when I noticed he chose my good towel. He promptly switched to a well used one.

All was going well, until he lifted the towel. The glue under the sticker had melted and bunched up causing the wrinkling to worsen. It looked disgraceful. Mark was not sure what to do.

I said, "Mark, give it up. We can take it back on the 26th and explain everything to your parents. We'll just give them a late gift."

But he wouldn't give up.

He peeled the whole sticker off and smoothed the paper out.

"If we use a hot glue gun, I bet it will look just like new."

By this time, I was not going to argue. I got out the gun.

Mark is an artistic person; sometimes this comes out during inopportune times--such as that night. Not realizing that when you use a hot glue gun you must attach things immediately, Mark touched the tip to the plastic and put on lovely swirl patterns of glue. He showed them to me. My face must have said it all. He tried to attach the sticker; the glue had already dried.

I couldn't say a thing. Mark looked so defeated that I decided I needed to help and not discourage him.

"Maybe we could clean off the glue and just write down the instructions from the sticker. It will be fine. Your parents will understand," I said.

I quietly pulled off the hardened glue only to find that the hot tip had left permanent swirl marks embedded in the plastic. It was too humorous by this point. We both burst into gales of laughter. Then Mark put on the finishing touches.

"I think we should just glue a family picture onto the coffee maker. It would work better than the thin sticker." He was serious!

"Oh, no," I said, "you are not ever touching the glue gun again! We now have to keep this coffee maker and get a new one for your parents!"

The issue was settled. Before we went to bed, Mark hooked up our new coffee maker, set the timer for 7:00 a.m., and we went to bed dreaming of fresh coffee brewing as we woke up.

The final touches of our Christmas memory were added in the morning when the basket overflowed spilling coffee all over the counter. It was the wrong size coffee pot for this model!

I did not think it could get more memorable than this. We took the whole thing back and I told the clerk that we had the wrong pot for the machine and simply wanted our money returned. Unfortunately, the clerk misunderstood and let us know she could get the right size pot. That was all Mark needed to hear.

Our coffee maker has served us well since then. Each time we use it, we are reminded that marriage is filled with wonderful, humorous memories that create beautiful designs throughout life.

As for Mark's parents, we did go to a different store to find the coffee maker we wanted. As the clerk typed in the purchase order, she looked at her screen and said "I'm sorry. We are sold out of that brand. If you are interested, we do have one display model left."

Lynda Ramage ('96) teaches at Walton Farm Elementary in the North Penn SD.

From the Director

PAWP & THE PTA

Many Saturdays this Fall I have been scheduled to do work with or in support of the Writing Project. October 19 we had hoped for our first Leadership Session of the school year for our summer fellows, but it was flooded out (more about this item on page 4 of the *Newsletter*). October 26 we did holistic scoring with participants in our PAWP Evaluation Project and with Fellows who scored 900 elementary papers for a contract we had undertaken. November 2 was our large Fall Writing Festival for kids who participated in our summer youth programs--we had over 350 kids and friends and parents attending. November 9 we returned to the Leadership program we had earlier postponed, featuring our Associate Director Andy Fishman. November 23 required my attendance at the annual National Writing Project Directors' meeting, this year held in Chicago.

On one of these Saturdays I also had to work in the evening. Instead of a social outing on October 26 I attended a banquet of the Pennsylvania Congress of Parents and Teachers. This organization was holding its 100th anniversary convention in Valley Forge, and I had been asked to attend to represent the Pennsylvania Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. Neither the state President nor the Executive Director could attend, so as regional President I was pressed into service.

The full conference lasted two days, and the people attending were mostly PTA parents, and of those mostly organizational women--active "moms." Sessions were held on such diverse topics as child safety, student discussion, television's influence, pest control, on-line information, working with school boards, ethics, volunteerism, and school funding.

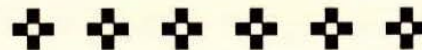
Other organizations and associations were also represented at the banquet to honor and show support for the state PTA. The table I was assigned included Beverly Helsel and Tom Gentzel, respectively President and Assistant Executive Director Governmental Relations of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association; Stinson Stroup, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators; Robert Feir, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Goals 2000; and Barbara Halpin Murphy, a government relations specialist for the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers.

It was also a pleasure to listen to the banquet keynote address, delivered by Richard Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education and formerly the governor of South Carolina, who in this election year had visited 20 states in the past 30 days. In his unmistakable southern drawl, Secretary Riley spoke about the "powerful national voice" of the PTA. He noted that when Congress tried to cut the

federal education budget by billions of dollars, the PTA objected and helped bring about a \$3.6 billion increase, \$72 million of which went to Pennsylvania. (It helps to have these statistics when you make a presentation to such a group as the Pennsylvania PTA.) He identified chief (pre-election) concerns of the Clinton administration for youth: a strong campaign against smoking cigarettes, a national initiative to raise educational standards, a movement to place computers in every classroom in the nation, and a set of tax incentives intended to ease the burden of college tuitions.

Riley ended by quoting Captain Kangaroo--the "great American philosopher" Bob Keeshan--who tried to bring together all parties to the debate (?) about what it takes to raise a child: "Yes, it takes a village to raise a child. Yes, it takes a family to raise a child. Actually, it takes us all."

My presence at the banquet raised some questions for our regional Writing Project. Might we not also want to hear from local parent-teacher organizations about their broader concerns, especially as those relate to our mission of improving writing instruction? The state PTA takes on broad legislative issues, so might we not also want to hear more local perspectives on such issues as academic standards and assessment? Perhaps we should invite area PTA leaders onto a PAWP program to share their views.



**ON THE ROAD TO PUBLISHING:
EDITING FOR MECHANICS**

by Laurie Luff

"See me about a publishing center," read the note from my principal at Sol Feinstone Elementary School. This was his way of suggesting that I, the literacy specialist, institute such a center in our building. Being a proponent of process writing/learning, I had no difficulty buying into the concept. I referred back to Donald Graves' *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (1983) and developed a proposal for our teachers and sponsoring PTO. I included a quote from Graves:

When children publish, teachers can work with more of their skills. Such surface conventions as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and handwriting receive high attention when going to final draft.

I felt that this statement would arouse curiosity and support for the endeavor. I later found that these very issues were to be the nemeses of our first year of operation.

At the onset, attention was first given to student grades two through six. Student writers were to bring a "final draft" to the center and co-publish the story on a

computer with the help of a volunteer parent. Many hours had been spent on the procedural issues of the center. My mistake was in making the assumption that the teachers and I had a similar definition for a final draft. I stressed the importance of revising for content prior to editing for mechanics.

The variety of levels of editing being done prior to publication ran the gamut. Some teachers advocated self-editing, proposing that the greatest benefits are gleaned when students take responsibility for their own work. Other teachers took more control, and spent hours ascertaining that every "error" was corrected. There was no connection between the grade/developmental level and the type of editing being done. This caused concern from the publishing volunteers who yearned for more consistency. It also raised eyebrows when the finished books were proudly displayed in the library and later found to be laden with conventional errors.

I felt confused. I had always advocated that students first revise for content and then proceed through "developmental" editing whereby the student edits to his ability and the teacher then teaches one conventional skill, based on need patterns displayed in the writing. I wrote this to the teachers, thinking that this would simplify everything. I also told them to refer to their Planned Course Outlines. They reminded me that the PCOs were vague. Most teachers continued to do as they had been doing. The problems persisted.

In the Spring, I was forced to take action. The students were revising for content, but too many mechanical errors continued to surface. I read Calkin's *The Art of Teaching Writing* (1994), convened a group of teachers, and spoke my peace. My thinking had evolved and I therefore wrote:

This type of "developmental publishing" is already occurring in the Language Arts classrooms. Most of us agree with Calkins' comments that to overwhelm our students with editing changes is counterproductive, but... the publishing which is occurring at Sol Feinstone Press enters a new dimension. A wider audience is availed through this type of publication; therefore, students need to go through the same process as "real world" authors. When an author achieves a state of excellence ready for publication, the writer must submit to a professional editor. This is an honor to adult writers. We need to extend this concept to our student writers. Sol Feinstone Press is the vehicle for doing so.

Not everyone was happy with my conclusions. Moreover, they were confused as to how to implement the increased editing standards. In June, I left on sabbatical, promising to investigate the issue and return with my impressions on how to improve the situation.

During the Pennsylvania Writing Project Summer Institute, I took the time to read about editing from a wider variety of authors. I referred back to the aforementioned Calkins and Graves books. I reread excerpts from Nancie Atwell's *In The Middle* (1987), Linda Rief's *Seeking Diversity* (1992), and Regie Routman's *Invitations* (1991). I also read the articles listed under "Rewriting/ Editing" and "Revising for Correctness" in the 1987 *Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing as a Process* published by the California State Department of Education. I tapped into some books I had always wanted to take the time to read. *The Author's Chair and Beyond* (1993) by Ellen Blackburn Karelitz and *Lasting Impressions* (1992) by Shelley Harwayne provided insights from different perspectives. I talked to our math/computer specialist inquiring about any technological help. And the article "Publishing and the Risk of Failure" by Marguerite Graham printed in *Workshop 3: The Politics of Process* (1991) turned out to be a piece to which I could relate. Other people were experiencing the same problems!

I now began to formulate questions to the nebulous problem I was having. I realized that my original central question, *To what level should students edit?* was too broad. I had to break the issue down into manageable components which could be implemented according to specific situations. The questions are as follows:

1. What are the purposes for editing?
2. Who must take responsibility for editing?
3. What is the correct timing for editing?
4. What are some practical ways for teachers to accomplish editing within their varying situations?

I went back to my sources, synthesized their thoughts, and came up with my own. The results of my learning are reported here revolving around the questions posed.

What Are The Purposes For Editing?

Editing for mechanics generally only occurs on those pieces selected to go to publication. There will be many drafts in the folder or notebook which are never taken to this step. For those pieces valuable enough to be taken to this level, however, Atwell writes:

Early in the school year, I explain that writers edit because they want the writing to invite reading and to mean to others what they intend. They also want to prevent the errors or awkwardness that will distract readers and interfere with meaning; they've learned that readers come to the page with certain expectations.

This appears to be the umbrella under which all editing occurs. In the writing process classroom,

however, there are different components to that definition. There is:

1. the editing during which the teacher guides the student toward making new associations and using new techniques.
2. the higher order of editing which occurs when a piece is to be shared outside of the classroom (as part of a literary magazine, student newspaper, or publishing center endeavor).

Who Must Take Responsibility For The Editing?

The answer to this question varies according to the purposes cited above. All of the above theorists/practitioners agree that the primary responsibility for editing *must* be assumed by the student. All too often, we promise students that we will help them edit, only to run out of time, or we cave in to our students persistence when they ask for spelling help during drafting. Routman is one of many who cries that we must remain firm, not accepting any papers that have eluded a thorough self and peer editing prior to the teacher edit. Students will continue to be dependent on us if we give them intermittent reinforcement for this behavior. Routman continues, emphasizing that students are capable of this responsibility if greeted with appropriate teacher expectations and sufficient demonstrations. Modeling must occur.

At the other end of the spectrum, all of the cited authors again agree that if a piece is being published for an audience outside of the classroom, the teacher must act as a final/professional editor. Rief explains that this saves writers from unnecessary embarrassment. She and fellow professional writers such as Atwell, Calkins, Graves, and Routman, are thankful to their own editors for this service. They see it as an honor for their students. As Murray (1982) says:

The greatest compliment I can give a student is to mark up a paper. But I can only mark up the best drafts. You can't go on a piece of writing until it is near the end of the process, until the author has found something important to say and a way to say it.

After reading this I felt vindicated. It echoed that which I had memoed to the teachers in my school. Graves summed up nicely when he advocated that teachers are to help students edit within their "zone of proximal learning." After that, if the piece is going to professional editing, the teacher corrects the remaining errors. He quips that there isn't a professional writer alive who wouldn't want an editor to save him from the embarrassment.

What Is The "Correct Timing" For Editing?

There are a few implications embedded in this question. First we must look at the developmental stages of writers. Blackburn Karelitz, a first grade teacher, argues that even first graders benefit from "Things I Can Do List" stapled inside their working folders. Calkins tells of Harwayne's positive editing experiences in a Kindergarten classroom. We need to model the process for these emergent writers, but we also need to be flexible so that fluency will develop. Remember that not all pieces are taken to the final editing and publishing stages. This may curtail early writing attitudes. Routman concurs that expectations for editing will vary, but that our timing within the process itself is crucial. Students must be given adequate time and response to ascertain that their meaning is clear (revision) prior to attention being given to mechanics. If we only attend to conventions of language, student writing will be stilted and voiceless.

What Are Some Practical Ways For Teachers To Accomplish Their Own Situations?

The following ideas may be used in classrooms as needed:

1. Atwell suggests that editing is fostered first and foremost through conferences, but also through mini-lessons. She completely edits a piece before the editing conference, correcting all errors, but choosing one or two patterns to teach during conference. Immediately following Status of the Class, she goes to the editing conferences first. In her Editing Conference Journal, she records the skills used correctly as well as the skills taught during the editing conference. She argues that parents deserve to see these specifics during conference time.
2. As for mini-lessons, she categorizes these as format, punctuation, usage, and spelling lessons. These lessons serve as the reference points for future learning. She strongly feels that our goal is to help kids grow to independence.
3. Routman and Calkins suggest that students may be aided if they are prompted to proofread from right to left so that they may focus on conventions rather than content. Calkins sometimes has the students point to each word during this stage.
4. Routman suggests that when students are allowed to distance themselves from the writing (take a break for a few days) they are better able to edit for mechanics.

5. Rief has her class generate a list of criteria for effective pieces and then evaluate anonymous pieces. The students are then allowed to also grade their own piece based on the same criteria, giving it a process, content and mechanics grade which counts. The list is stapled in the students working folders for easy reference. Routman suggests a similar list, citing that the more engaged the student, the more responsibility which will be taken.
6. Calkins refers to the advantages and disadvantages of peer editing, suggesting that peer editors may only advise and may not mark up other students papers.
7. Rief has her students take editing notes in their logs and also refers them to *Writers, Inc.* as a reference.
8. Routman advocates the Post-It Technique. Rather than showing the students where the errors lie, she will prompt them on the post-it note with a message like, "Find five spelling errors in the first paragraph."
9. Graves suggests that before the publishing conference, older children may be asked to circle potential spelling errors, put boxes where punctuation may be needed and draw lines where the language doesn't sound right.
10. Harwayne sheds a different light, coaxing that we don't have to totally rely on dictionaries and thesauruses. Literature is an excellent resource for showing how some favorite authors utilize the conventions of print.
11. Routman suggests that there are two aspects of proofreading for spelling. First we need to get the students to identify misspellings with a colored pencil. Then we need them to produce the correct spelling of about three of the five circled words.
12. Many teachers staple a "Things I Can Do List" in the front of each child's folder. This celebrates the individual achievements of each writer while holding them accountable for that which they have shown understanding. Calkins suggests that this may be too unwieldy in some classrooms. Some teachers may want to make an ever-growing list to place above the editing bin.
13. You may want to encourage the use of technological help in certain situations. Franklin spellers, computer spell checks, and grammar checks are available.
14. As for schoolwide publishing centers, Graham has found success following this process:

- student editing
- teacher editing
- piece checked by another teacher prior to typing
- typed copy returned to student and teacher for final proofing publication

Teachers may experiment with any or all of the above to see what is suitable for their needs.

Implementation Of The Plan/Summary

I was pleased with my search on editing. First of all, it validated that which I had come up with in my own situation. Editing is an important part of the writing process and should be viewed as an educational experience. It should not be passed off to parent helpers. It is the skillful teacher who utilizes these situations to teach mechanics in context. Students going on to publish out of the classroom context, however, should be flattered to receive the type of professional editing to which real world authors submit. This is not a punishment but a reward.

Secondly, this report expanded my practical knowledge of how to achieve successful editing in different situations. I had previously answered editing questions with an elusive, "*it varies according to your situation.*" Now I can be more specific, citing the practices offered by many sources.

I plan on sharing this report with the teachers in my school. Now I can justify the edict already handed down, because I have given a variety of ideas for its implementation. As always, I will offer to come into classrooms to try out some of these ideas.

As for the publishing center, I liked what Graham shared. I will share this article with the Publishing Center moderators and we will make adaptations accordingly. We had already decided to have publishing parents for each classroom. Now I have a better picture as to how to utilize them.

Harwayne shares that we need to change the image of editing. We need to approach it joyfully. "*Editing is celebratory. I'm always grateful to have reached these final moments.*"

I now echo these sentiments and am inspired to instill them in my school.

Laurie Luff ('96) teaches at the Sol Feinstone Elementary School in the Council Rock SD.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE LITERATURE. I
LOSE A COW, I WRITE ABOUT HER DEATH,
AND MY WRITING PAYS ME ENOUGH TO
BUY ANOTHER COW.

--JULES RENARD

CATHERINE'S RELATIONSHIPS IN NORTHANGER ABBEY: INNOCUOUS OR DYSFUNCTIONAL?

By Janet E. Ross

Whoever would have thought that a mild-mannered, excruciatingly proper Victorian author could cause such a stir in a modern day, state-of-the-art Literature Institute? I asked myself this question after the second day of reading Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and listening to the vast, varied, and sometimes vehement reactions to the novel. Is Catherine a true heroine or a parody of one? Are we supposed to take her seriously and look for epiphanies and character growth and that sort of thing? Are Catherine's relationships in the novel truly problematic, or simply funny? Now that I am armed (if not dangerous) with reader-response theory, I feel well-equipped to contribute my own voice to the din. By examining the issues at hand through late twentieth century psychology's contact lenses, I have discovered that the root of her difficulties can be traced to her home life. In other words, blame her mother.

Every great heroine needs a family, either to mold her noble character or, preferably, to provide some obstacle to be surmounted. Austen makes a particular point to emphasize the sad absence of such an obstacle within Catherine Morland's family. With her father's office as a respected clergyman, and her mother's remarkable wherewithal to bear ten children without flinching, Catherine's family situation seems to be nothing if not ordinary. The appearance of her family's stability cannot stand under close scrutiny, however.

To begin with, I recognize a hint of mother-daughter tension suggested by Austen's initial description of Mrs. Morland:

Mrs. Morland was a very good woman, and wished to see her children everything they ought to be; but her time was so much occupied in lying-in and teaching the little ones, that her elder daughters were inevitably left to shift for themselves.

Notice the implied neglect suffered by these middle children. With Catherine as the eldest daughter preceded by three brothers, she must have born the brunt of her mother's inattentiveness. Certainly, nothing is mentioned of the boys being neglected or "left to shift for themselves," implying a confidence in their ability to handle such independence. No doubt Mrs. Morland regarded her daughters as weaker, less reliable people than her sons, and yet she carelessly left them to their own devices as she pursued her own interests in giving birth to her remaining six children. Were Catherine the thoughtful type, she may well have felt her security threatened, wondering whether her mother continued to

have children because she, as the eldest daughter, had not measured up.

Compounding this problem, she may also have been confused over which role she was to play--that of an eldest daughter or that of a middle child. Did she awake at night feeling the pain of being neither one of the youngest children, naturally dependent upon her mother, nor one of the eldest, naturally confident in her abilities to set the pace for the family? Imagine Catherine, suffering in silence, wrestling with such weighty issues. Could her lighthearted chatter really be a cry for help, a plea for some small assurance of her worth as a person? In the midst of such an identity crisis, young Miss Morland's thoughts could easily have reflected bitter jealousy toward her siblings. Perhaps she tossed and turned upon her bed in anguish, thinking things like: "Everything my elder brothers do is perfect, especially that James! If I hear Father praise him as an exemplary student at the University one more time, I shall be most disgruntled! James! James! James! Everything must centre round James! Ooooh, it makes me quite cross!" Of course, for one reason or another, Catherine is not portrayed as a thinking person; nonetheless, her familial circumstances are ripe for our heroine to fall prey to this type of inner turmoil, identified in our current popular culture as the *Jan Brady Syndrome*.

The effects of the Morland family's dysfunction on Catherine are not limited to unfortunate birth order and its attendant distresses. As young Catherine turns from her father's demeaning attitude toward her ("She is *almost* pretty today" [*italics mine*]), and from her mother's preference for the younger siblings, she naturally looks to society to seek self-actualization. Unfortunately for Catherine, the pinnacle of realizing her potential worth, that is, finding a husband of means, is beyond her reach since her neighborhood lacks the requisite bachelor lords and barons. Note, though, that Catherine's journey to "find herself" only begins when a well meaning family friend, Mrs. Allen, initiates it. Obviously the Morlands have failed to empower Catherine to think for herself, and they actually set the groundwork here for the codependent relationship with Henry Tilney that results from the trip. Further, by entrusting their daughter into the hands of the Allens for such a personally significant quest, they provoke, or at the very least, enable an unhealthy surrogate parent relationship to develop. This in itself would have less of a negative impact on Catherine had the Allens even a moderate amount of good sense. Sadly, Mr. and Mrs. Morland entrust our heroine's character development to the superficial, image-oriented Mrs. Allen, whose concern is to guide Catherine to sartorial distinction. Allen is no better a role model, avoiding confrontation

with his wife over her tiresome, insipid banter by abandoning her to a mob of strangers in a pump room.

Catherine, laden with the baggage of seventeen years' experience with a dysfunctional family and their dysfunctional friends, develops coping strategies that survive during her stay in Bath. She learns to "go with the flow" and to accept everyone who crosses her circuitous path at face value. Her indiscriminate friendships with the Thorpes, as well as with Henry, Eleanor, and even General Tilney, bear this out. She has never learned to trust herself, or to develop any mental acuity that is trustworthy in her judgments of people. In truth, her parents have prepared her not at all for entrance into this complex, confusing world. Having given her nothing greater than ten guineas, a book in which to account for them, and a few distant memories of rolling down green slopes as a child, they abandon her once again to shift for herself, this time with near tragic results.

It is a testimony to the quality of perseverance in her character that Catherine retains any dignity at all after her disastrous experience with the Thorpes. It certainly does her parents no credit that she is so insensible to the manipulative natures of these "friends" that she must inevitably become their victim. A dose of tough love here and there in her formative years wouldn't have hurt, but Mr. and Mrs. Morland have failed to instill in their daughter that self-preserving skepticism so much needed to maintain personal autonomy. Had she only learned to give herself permission to speak her mind to these social parasites heedless of concern for their approval, our heroine might have been spared a considerable amount of unpleasantness. Happily, Catherine does not remain entirely in the state of denial which her parents fostered, but grows sufficiently in "street smarts" to recognize the Thorpes' insincerity for what it is. In light of this newfound savvy, our heroine is able to trust herself enough to risk a relationship with Henry Tilney.

The clenched fist of Catherine's repressed childhood deals its final blow in her selection of a life's mate. After enduring the humiliation of General Tilney's rejection which render her most vulnerable, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Morland longs for the comfort of a stable, secure relationship, or, as truth would have it, of an unstable, unfulfilling, but *as-long-as-it's-marital* relationship. How tempting it must have been to choose someone so like her father as Henry; both are clergymen who assert their dominance over this ingenious young woman by mocking her simple nature. I likewise note Mrs. Morland's offhanded remark to Catherine, "You always were a sad little shatter-brained creature". With these derogatory comments of her primary care-giver echoing in her head, Catherine obviously seeks the accustomed feeling of subconscious inferiority in her choice of a significant other.

The charmingly condescending Henry Tilney is, of course, the logical choice, not only because of his tendency to talk above her, presumably comparing his intellect with hers, but also because he is the only one left in her field of possible life partners, and she is simply exhausted. We have seen how valiantly she has struggled to withstand the brutalities of upper class society with nothing to recommend her but an almost-pretty face and an almost-empty head. How much is one carelessly raised young woman supposed to take before she collapses on the familiar ground of dysfunction? Most likely, Henry will lord it over her (albeit subtly and kindly, but still) for the rest of their marriage, and quite probably Catherine will raise her children with just as much attention to character development as she received, but so what? She has her man; in essence, she has reached self-actualization. I can almost hear her now, speaking to us as witnesses of the unfolding drama of her life: "If *you* have a problem with it, I should recommend a good therapist."

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