



PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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SUMMER CONFERENCE TO FEATURE AUTHOR EILEEN CRISTELOW

AUGUST PROGRAM INCLUDES TWO VISITING SCHOLARS

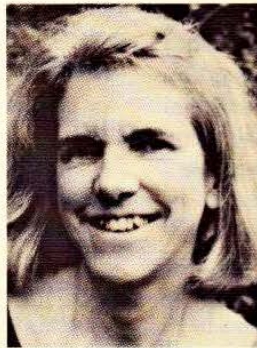
Children's author Eileen Christelow, Barbara Taylor, and Mary Ellen Vogt will be featured speakers at this year's Whole Language/Literacy Conference cosponsored with the Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company. This conference is designed for teachers of grades K-8 will take place on August 6 & 7 at the Sykes Student Union, West Chester University. Sessions will begin at 8:00 a.m. with registration and breakfast. Book displays of literature and trade books will be continually available for browsing and purchasing.

Eileen Christelow's most recent book is *Five Little Monkeys With Nothing to Do*, the fourth in the *Five Little Monkeys* series. Among her many other books are *The Great Pig Escape*, *The Five-Dog Night*, and *The Robbery at the Diamond Dog Diner*, *Glenda Feathers Casts a Spell*, *Jerome and the Witchcraft Kids*, as well as *What Do Authors Do?* a book in which a talkative cat and dog answer the questions of young authors by revealing their composing process step by step.

Using slides of her studio, her family, and her current work, Ms. Christelow will speak about the process of writing, illustrating, and publishing picture books, tracing the process from ideas to completion. She will show how she uses rough sketches to develop a story line and strategies that children and teachers can use to compose their own

stories. With slides, she will demonstrate how a picture book is constructed with a beginning, middle, and end.

Barbara Taylor's topic is "Coaching Struggling Readers to Use Reading Strategies Successfully: Early Reading Intervention and Beyond". Over the past eight years she has worked with hundreds of teachers in on going staff development programs focusing on early reading intervention. She feels it is essential for teachers to effectively coach their struggling readers in first and second grade so they can become successful independent readers. Teachers will also be acquainted with strategies to be used with children in grades 3 to 6. Taylor is a Professor and Department Chair in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Minnesota and



Eileen Christelow

has published numerous articles in educational journals. She has also co-authored three books, including a reading difficulty text, and has recently co-edited a book on effective reading intervention programs.



Barbara Taylor



Mary Ellen Vogt

Mary Ellen Vogt will address "Creating a Balanced Literacy Program." She will be using current research to define the balance between explicit instruction in skills and strategies, and quality literature, as well as present strategies for establishing and maintaining a balanced literacy environment. Vogt has been a classroom teacher, special

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Project Director Bob Weiss announces retirement

...more on page 2

A FAREWELL

Two weeks ago I filed papers to retire. Having been a faculty member at West Chester University and other schools for over 32 years this June, I qualify for a state pension plan provision that encourages early retirement. I will be leaving—reluctantly and almost unbelievably—my professorship in the Department of English and my roles as Director of the Pennsylvania Writing Project and Director of the university's Cross-Disciplinary Writing Program. The Writing Project especially has been my main work for the past 18 years and will be what I will remember most vividly and lovingly.

When I first had the idea of replicating the Bay Area Writing Project in Pennsylvania, I was little prepared for the fantastic energy that was to emerge from the first summer institute and thereafter from the project's school-year programs for continuity and extension. I had envisioned a half-time job to establish this Project's components. There were grants to be written and new things to learn, new people to meet to request help and linkages, a secretary 3 hours a day, a copying machine, and graduate assistants. I was also teaching two classes for the WCU English Department and doing staff development work for the university Writing Program. And I was also raising a sweet little girl who wasn't quite four years old when our first institute took place.

But the first summer was an exploding supernova, and the first year thereafter an ever-expanding universe continuing to move outward from that first big bang. The directorship became a life's work—much more than a half-time responsibility—and started to consume evenings and weekends as well. More and more Project initiatives took

hold: the Saturday meetings for Fellows, the contract work with school districts, the in-service courses with Intermediate Units, the *Newsletter*, the constant movement to fulfill the model established in the Bay Area and to do it well.

Everyone associated with the Pennsylvania Writing Project knew it was wonderful, knew they wanted to be part of it, yet no one could say precisely what it was that we did or were. We weren't a curriculum project because we had no fat book we could set on a shelf. We weren't a methods course because we were doing too much writing of all sorts and because we weren't associated with any pedagogical formula except the idea that writers had processes that could be understood and encouraged to help them improve as writers. We weren't a creative writing program either because much of our writing was pedagogical. Neither the English nor the Education faculty were teaching us, but we could learn from everything they could offer. Even if people had trouble categorizing us, we were making a mark.

Most projects are clearly defined and have set goals, operations to attain their goals, and a pre-ordained life-span. Not us. If projects are akin to projectiles that have short, intense lives and then fizzle toward earth, that's not the right term to use for us. We have become a living entity surviving and thriving on our own merit. PAWP was defined by its model in the Bay Area and is being re-defined by all of its local energies, programs, and relationships—already characterized as an exploding and ever-expanding universe.

And we have expanded mightily. Our first *Newsletter* had four pages. Our course on Strategies for Teaching Writing which we developed a month after the first summer institute, has now been offered over 200 times. Four teachers worked with 52 kids in our first summer youth program. Institutes and advanced institutes have been offered in multiple locations



One of the more flamboyant hats Bob has worn during his years with PAWP is the spotted one he dons when visiting the schools of students who participated in our summer youth program and won an award for their writing.

Although we know this practice gets us a lot of publicity (photographs such as this one have graced the pages of every newspaper in the five-county area), there are a few rumors that he's taken to wearing it around town...

Actually, who can blame him? Consider the hat. It's reversible (checks or polka dots) so it goes with anything, it has a wide brim that protects you from the sun, and (perhaps most importantly) you can still command respect while wearing it, despite its appearance. Hmm... Maybe this is the accessory we've all been searching for, and we owe it all to Bob!



The relationships Bob has forged with school administrators have been a vital component in the growth and development of the Writing Project. Here, Nick Spennato of the Delaware County IU tries to resist as Bob offers him one of the brilliant turquoise T-Shirts from our summer youth program.

"Honestly, Bob," said Nick, "I know I've been bugging you for a shirt, but I don't think you mentioned the color..."

Our youth program takes great pride in the unabashed use of colors not found in nature, and who do you think was at the root of this brilliance? Why Bob, of course. We've been through hot pink, neon yellow, cherry red, and lime green with great success under Bob's direction, and are considering asking him to stay on as the official Youth Program color consultant.

and on multiple topics, including assessment and literature. The Congress of the United States appropriates \$3.2 million annually so that our national project can continue.

All of this growth has resulted from the commitment of hundreds of Writing Project Fellows, their teacher colleagues, and their administrators. The willingness of summer Fellows to return to the Project probably results from the love-bite that occurs inexplicably within the summer institute—it gets you, it hooks you, it claims you as part of it. (Some observers have detected a conversion experience here.) Those who are bitten possess a special fervor and a special aura, and it is sensed and respected by others who haven't experienced the summer institute.

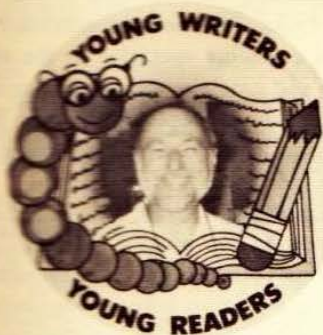
What are the ingredients in this love-bite? Some of the Project's ground rules or principles come to mind right away.

- We emphasize teamwork and consultativeness rather than stardom. We share with one another—materials, student work, successes, problems, failures.
- We respect one another's craft—as writer, as teacher, as responder. Because we've written together and shared all the experiences of a summer institute, we also share a love for one another. Such bonds link the Fellows and link me to them all.
- We know that all writing is a draft, and that all drafts need to be released to meet deadlines. It's work, even hard work, and revision does not necessarily mean improvement.
- We respect our students as writers and teach them to be such. We are all in the same boat when we try to write.
- We seriously apply to writing instruction the Hippocratic injunction to "do no harm."

I am proud of all of these principles and make them my own in many ways.

I loved many stories as a youngster, but my favorite was "The Emperor's New Clothes." It taught me that the authority of adults and of people in power could be falsely based but that a clear and honest thinker could perceive this falseness and could save the day. Years later, when I had tried to teach writing to my students based on the prescriptions in textbooks and on my own recollections of the ways I had been taught, I sensed an operating falseness. The ways I was teaching did not seem to succeed with many students, and both my classes and I were frustrated. At first I thought I was right and they were either under-educated or hopelessly resistant to education. (You can read herein the arrogant young college professor.) Then I remembered the lesson of the Emperor's new clothes and started to doubt—I questioned the authority of the textbook's content, the reasonableness of the assignments I was making, the assumptions in the composition program, and on and on. I saw harm rather than good. So I began to search the literature on writing instruction for better ways to teach, and I found meaningful strategies for writing across the curriculum, writing for authentic purposes, and writing as a process.

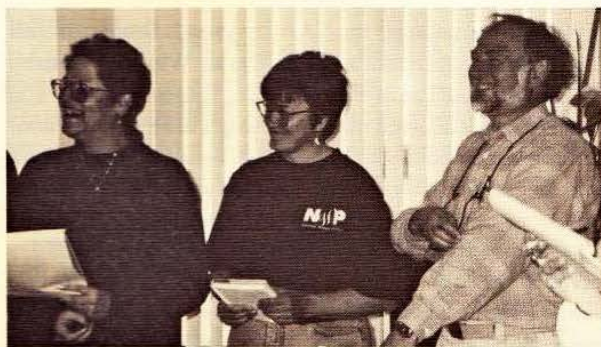
Through the Writing Project and the national movement it has engendered, I became a more effective teacher of writing and a more effective teacher. I hope that similar gains are occurring for all readers of this *Newsletter*. If so, my work will have succeeded. I trust that readers will continue to support and bind with the Project and enable it to be a supernova for years to come. I will be available to help out if asked, but I have confidence that the teachers who have been or will be the Project's leaders will do a magnificent job. ➡



Sometimes during the summer, the PAWP office gets a little crazy. Our full-time staff of six swells to accommodate the teacher-consultants who spring up during the summer like prolific PAWP posies.

The narrowness of our office necessitates the introduction of stress relieving activities, and Polaroid Magic Buttons always seem to do the trick. Here's Bob, looking amazingly relaxed after a potentially traumatic situation...

Apparently, Bob found himself trapped among the stacks of boxes that fill every available inch of our office. Using the imagination and creativity that characterize everyone affiliated with the writing project, Bob was able to sustain himself over the long weekend by starting his biography. How did he do it? He ate his words.



Anyone who was wondering about the impact impending retirement would have on Bob need not look any further than the calm and relaxed smile that has been making more and more of an appearance lately.

Ironically, this photograph (taken at the PAWP sponsored mid-Atlantic Writing Project regional retreat in Ocean City, NJ) says a lot more about the benefits of retirement than words ever could.

Pictured with Bob, from left, are Vicki Steinberg (PAWP '83, PennLit '92) and Pat O'Brien from the Capital Area Writing Project.

From the Editor

LINKING LITERACY & LEARNING: ATLANTA '97

The highlights of the International Reading Convention in Atlanta were the authors. I sought them out. After all, if we are successful teachers of the writing process, we will contribute to the development of future writers. Perhaps a few successful authors one day will reflect positively upon their early experiences in our classrooms.

Clifton Taulbert, author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, gave the keynote address at the official opening ceremony. His book paints a picture with a positive brush of growing up in the small Mississippi town of Glen Allan in the 1950s. A faultless speaker, he held us in the palms of his hands with anecdotes so universal they touched us all.

First, he took us on the Saturday drive into Greenville to buy hot French bread and frozen custard ice cream with Poppa, his great grandfather, a trip of only twenty-seven miles that took hours because Poppa had to stop and talk to everyone on the way. We walked with him as a four-year-old accompanying his mother to the one room plantation school where she taught. He took us on Mr. Walter's truck to the cotton fields with Ma Ponk, where he had the enviable job of water boy.

He told of sitting at a banquet among distinguished Mississippians when an elderly lady beside him confided that he'd written about her great aunt in his book. For a moment he was terrified, because he'd written about two. One he described as being the meanest white woman in Mississippi. She drove a Duesenberg like a bat from hell. The other was a seamstress from a plantation family, who would invite him in for lunch (a "no-no") when he did yard work for her. She encouraged his educational pursuits and borrowed books from the town library for him, since the library was off-limits to blacks. He was relieved to find out the lady's relative was the nice one.

He described sitting at the NAACP Awards Dinner, thrilled to be in the same assemblage as Oprah Winfrey, Denzell Washington, and Colin Powell. His fifteen-year-old son assured him that he need not expect to get the award for non-fiction for which he'd been nominated, because Colin Powell would be getting it. He was so sure his son was correct that he did not respond immediately when his name was called and he stumbled to the stage without a prepared speech.

Tomie dePaola, author of *Strega Nona* and at least two hundred other classic children's books, was the keynote speaker at the awards banquet. He poked good natured fun at teachers and at reading, from Dick and Jane to whole language. He described longing to learn to read, but at that time parents and teachers did not believe children should be taught early, so he bided his time in kindergarten to triumphantly land in the "blue birds" in first grade.

The theme of the children's book breakfast was first days of school. Navajo author and illustrator Shonto Belay described being taken from his home to the Bureau of Indian Affairs school where the fifteen boys and fifteen girls were

forbidden to speak their language, and where religion was determined by height. The first year he was Catholic, but grew to become Mormon, then Presbyterian. He painted a picture of his cousins and himself clinging together in prayer, asking the Great Spirit to sweep them away home. When that did not happen, they felt totally deserted.

I was seated at Paula Danziger's table during the breakfast. Bejeweled with amber she regaled us with "gross" jokes. She calls herself the Beverly Cleary with sequins. When it was her turn to tell about her first day of school, she simply said, "I can't remember, but since I'm an author, I'll make it up." Then she humorously described a precocious cherub ready to learn.

When we think of the ordeal of Ruby Bridges' first day of school (the little six-year-old who integrated a school in New Orleans), we recoil with the disbelief and disgust of forty years. In our minds we see Norman Rockwell's starched figure marching into school protected by the National Guard. But Ruby, who was used to barricades and police during Mardi Gras, told us she thought her first day at the William Frantz Elementary School was just another parade. Though later she learned she was the reason for the anger and protest, she also learned the most important lesson of all from her warm relationship with Mrs. Hurley, her white teacher. She learned that there are good people among all races. ➤

PAWP PRAISED TO WCU PRESIDENT

December 29, 1996

Dear President Adler,

I wanted to write to you regarding The Pennsylvania Writing Project, sponsored by Dr. Robert Weiss, as I have three distinct perspectives to offer. First of all, as a parent I was so pleased to have the Young Readers/Young Writers program come "on-site" to the Methacton School District, where I reside. Both of my daughters attended the two week course of study and benefited greatly from all of the experiences and interactions.

Secondly, as a reading specialist in the district, I was able to promote and proclaim the excellence of the PAWP to all of my colleagues, students and parents. It gave pupils across the district a chance to extend the reading and writing integration, in a unique but structured way.

Thirdly, as a graduate of West Chester University, I was proud of the tradition and interest that WCU consistently values in educating young people. The opportunity to have a Fall Reunion and receive acknowledgments for award-winning work further motivated my children to continue their efforts in the language arts. A special "Thank-You" to Dr. Weiss and his staff is also in order. This undertaking involves numerous hours of training and coordination.

Sincerely,

Joan Misirian Munro
West Chester Class of '72

ED NOTE: Joan will serve on the newly created PAWP advisory board, featured on page 17. ➤

CALL FOR ORAL HISTORY

Dear Fellows and Friends of PAWP,

The Oral History of Pennsylvania Writing Project is in its final stages. Because Bob Weiss has announced his retirement, we think it fitting that the Oral History be dedicated to him. Please send me your favorite "Bob stories," best wishes, and thank you's to be included in the Project's history!

We already have transcriptions from audio tapes (and could use more). We have numerous written statements from last spring's successful banquet and several email conversations. We have reread former Newsletters for archival information, but we would welcome any last-minute messages regarding early history of the Project, first impressions of PAWP, memories of your institute, best experiences with PAWP, ways you have stayed in touch with the Project, and future challenges or dreams for PAWP.

Also under consideration is a section on Achievements in Education by PAWP fellows. Please update us on any awards, promotions, publications, and other successes you have enjoyed since becoming part in the Project.

Send your comments via email to milams@wcupa.edu or US mail to Pennsylvania Writing Project, ATTN: Julie Hanavin, West Chester University, West Chester PA 19383. ➤

Sincerely,

Mary Lou Kehns

PAWP PUBLISHES SECOND BOOK

In response to the reception that greeted our first publication, we are publishing our second book on approaches for teaching writing in elementary and secondary classrooms. The new book, *More Strategies for Teaching Writing*, consists of 19 pieces written by teachers from three states and several neighboring counties. It is intended for teachers of all grade levels, supervisors, curriculum directors, and readers of PAWP's first publication, *Strategies for Teaching Writing*, who are looking for additional ideas for teaching.

Practical discussions center around invented spelling, assessment, response groups, personal writing, literature circles, writing in content areas, voice in student writing, journals, phonics, poetry writing, parent partnerships, reluctant writers, and classroom communities.

Both *More Strategies for Teaching Writing* and *Strategies for Teaching Writing* can be purchased using the order form located on page 9. ➤

PAWP ASSESSMENT UPDATES

ELEMENTARY — In response to many requests over the past two years, PAWP plans to publish a book on Assessing Writing in the Elementary Grades. The book will adapt the tools of contemporary writing assessment (and the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment) to the writing performance of students K-5 and will be offered as a guide for teachers of those grades. Included will be a validated set of K-5 rubrics for writing, about 50 anchor papers for K-5 performance standards with complete annotations, and instructions for their use.

The book will be edited by Bob Weiss. The idea behind it originated with PAWP's Evaluation & Documentation Program, which since 1993 has annually examined the effects of our summer institute training on the writing performance of students in all grades. For grades 6-12 we were comfortable using the Scoring Guide of the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment and re-anchoring as needed. But for students in the earlier years, we knew that this Scoring Guide and the related anchor papers were not intended to fit. We began to develop an Elementary Grades Scoring Guide adapted from the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment and to collect anchor papers to flesh out the rubrics of this adjusted scale (for an example, please see our Summer 1996 *Newsletter*).

Meanwhile, many school districts asked PAWP to relate the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment to the elementary grades. To show this relation, we offered our own scoring guide and anchor papers. Putting all of these materials in booklet form will make them accessible for any teacher or school district interested in an evaluation tool of children's writing that is congruent with the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment.

Over 20 PAWP elementary teachers contributed to developing the assessment tools featured in the book. They created and modified the holistic scoring guide and its rubrics, identified and validated the anchor papers, annotated the anchor papers, and advised as to their use.

SENIOR HIGH — Writing assessment at the senior high school level is being piloted in the Northeastern Intermediate Unit #19 with the assistance of Bob Weiss, PAWP Director. A writing sample was taken in January of 1,700 students in 10th through 12th grade in 9 districts in the IU. Anchor papers were selected based on the Scoring Guide for the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment, and the samples were scored and tallied in April. Results of the assessment will be used as base-line data for future assessments and as touchstones for classroom instruction. Products include a set of anchor papers reflecting the performance capabilities of senior high students. The assessment program has been developed by Lillian DeLeo, NEIU Curriculum Specialist. ➤

IT TAKES TIME TO WRITE A CEZANNE

by Linda Davis

Blot out, correct, insert, refine,
Enlarge, diminish, interline;
Be mindful, when invention fails,
To scratch your head, and bite your nails.

—Jonathan Swift

At the Delaware County Community College Writing Center, we provide writing help for any of the College's freshmen and sophomores who want to use our service. It's a nine-to-three, Monday through Friday operation, and each day can include as many as eleven separate half-hour sessions. Each appointment is a one-on-one conference between the student and one of the two Writing Center instructors. Clients come to us with papers ranging from "How to Be a Better Bartender" to "The Meaning of Monet." However, no matter what the topic, the writing requests usually fall along the same lines: "I've never been able to write, so can you please help me? I've spent a whole hour and I don't even have a finished opening paragraph," or "I just wrote my first draft, and now I'd like you to proofread it for me." Most students get discouraged because they can't create masterpieces in minutes.

What many of our scholars fail to realize is that good writing requires time, often lots of time, especially for revision. They feel that if they can't throw a piece together on the first try, they're "lousy writers" (to quote about 80% of our visitors). The majority of the DCCC students we see want to be instantly ingenious.

Actually few writers are so naturally talented, and it's good for all students to know that. They need to be aware that revising is something that almost all writers do. A rough draft nearly always cries for revision. As Dawe and Dornan stress in their text, *One to One*, "Your rough draft, like those of most writers, probably isn't much more than a scrawny chicken inflated to pass as a Thanksgiving turkey" (298).

One good example of an established author who continually struggles is humorist Dave Barry, a 1988 Pulitzer Prize winner whom the *New York Times* calls the funniest man in America. Barry's recent popularity has led to appearances on Letterman, Leno, Koppel, and even the National Tupperware Convention. Dave Barry takes a lot of time to be funny. A *Times* interview explained:

Each morning, seven days a week Barry pads out across the back yard to his garage pausing occasionally to flop a Frisbee at Earnest, his large main dog, and Zippy, "our small emergency backup dog," before attacking the word processor with all the diligence of a man laying a brick wall. "People think it takes ten minutes to write them [his columns]—it doesn't. I usually spend hours on the first sentence. That's no exaggeration. Then

I finally write the second sentence." Barry says after he writes the second sentence, "then I rewrite the first. I rewrite each sentence a dozen times. It was never easy for me to write." (Richmond 45)

Ernest Hemingway, who won the Nobel Prize Literature in 1954 and the Pulitzer Fiction Prize for *The Old Man and the Sea* in 1952, had a similar writing experience, but he put it more bluntly. He declared that "The first draft of anything is shit" (Winokur 109). Hemingway worked more slowly than most authors; his crisp, clean, clear writing took scrupulous care. "He claimed to have rewritten the last page of *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times and to have read through the manuscript of *The Old Man and the Sea* some two hundred times before he was finished with it" ("Ernest" 265).

Other authors have made comparable statements concerning time and revision. Science fiction writer Ray Bradbury writes his manuscripts and stashes them for a year. Then he picks them up again and pretends he is a stranger reading them for the first time (Murray 401). John Dos Passos claims, "I do a lot of revising. Certain chapters six or seven times. Occasionally you can hit it right the first time. More often, you don't" (Winokur 109). Business writer Peter Drucker calls his first draft his "zero draft" because "after that he can start counting" (Murray 400).

Revising obviously is time-consuming (although no sane instructor would expect students to read over a draft two hundred times or to put it away for a year), but it doesn't have to be complicated. There are some tactics which can make the process rewarding and efficient. "Re-vision" of a piece, as Donald Murray has said, is really exactly what the word says—seeing it again" (qtd. in Kirby 180). When students revise successfully, they should see their work anew from a different perspective.

To help students picture the idea of revision more concretely, it may be useful to resort to artwork. Spandel and Stiggins in *Creating Writers* suggest that students sketch or describe in writing one scene that they can picture clearly: it can be an area of their room, a tree in the front yard or whatever they want to "see." Then they can close their eyes and return to the image, trying to see it again. The second time they will probably notice something in a different way or see something new that they missed before. This simple procedure of working and reworking a vision helps to reinforce the fact that revising means taking another look and that that other look can often lead to additions, changes, and sometimes new directions. As the authors assert, "Working with pictures is a good place for writers of all ages to start, because it helps them to see that revising and correcting are not the same thing" (109).

Once the basic idea of revision is clearer to the students, they should be ready to begin the process on an actual draft. The usual format is to skim over the paper the first time reading quickly to catch major problems in content and form. Then they might want to concentrate on the focus. Is the

main idea clear to the reader? Is the writer saying what he or she promised to write about in the thesis statement or about what he or she implied in the introduction? It's a good idea to encourage writing between the lines, jotting notes in margins, and even using post-it notes as reminders. Sometimes it helps if students start small—if they work on one chunk or even one line at a time, it may seem less overwhelming than tackling a six-page theme. This method may help boost their confidence, and perhaps they won't be so hesitant to toss out a part that just doesn't work.

One effective way to see the paper is to listen to it—to read it aloud. Tennessee Williams claimed to “talk out the lines as I write” (Winokur 111). At the Writing Center we frequently encourage our clients to separate themselves from the work and examine it orally as if they had not created it. They can step into another skin and ask questions as they read: What is this about? Why am I writing this? Does my lead work? Murray says that writers should often resort to “muttering and whispering to themselves, calling on the ear's experience with language” (404). Reading a personal draft aloud, however, should be done slowly and accurately; readers must be sure to read what is actually on the page and not merely what they think they see there.

One young reader that Spandel and Stiggins used as an example in their book carried the oral revision process a step further by continuing to talk to herself about her paper:

After I read the paper to myself and thought about it, quite a bit, I started talking out loud to myself about it. At first this felt funny, but then it started to be kind of fun. I would pretend someone was asking me questions about it, and I would answer them. (It's strange, but it was sort of like they were real people talking to me because I kept coming up with questions I didn't know I knew enough to ask. This is hard to describe!) It was easier talking than having to write everything down. As I was talking, I would think of new things to say though, so then I would have to hurry up and write those down so I wouldn't forget. Some of those notes didn't fit into my paper the way I wanted to rewrite it later, but a lot of them did and I used them when I revised my paper. (109)

Once students do take the time to revise, they usually see a definite improvement and they sense satisfaction. They realize that it is possible to reduce a long wordy paper into one that's more concise and to-the-point. They learn that one vivid verb in a short sentence can be more meaningful than gobs of big words in extended run-ons. Dave Barry, who earlier worked his way up from a columnist at West Chester's *Daily Local News* to an instructor of an effective writing seminar, points out the virtue of conciseness:

I'd lecture a bunch of chemists or engineers about the importance of not writing “It would be

appreciated if you would contact the undersigned at your earliest possible convenience,” and instead state, “Please call me as soon as you can,” which was revealed wisdom to these people (Richmond 45)

Hemingway had like feelings when explaining the rigors of revising for force and meaning:

Most writers slough off the toughest but most important part of their trade—editing their stuff, honing it and honing it until it gets an edge like a bullfighter's killing sword. One time my son Patrick brought me a story and asked me to edit it for him. I went over it carefully and changed one word. “But, Papa,” he said, “you've only changed one word.” I said: “If it's the right word, that's a lot.” (Winokur 109)

Good writing definitely needs time—time for revisioning. Moving a paper from an original rough draft through revisions may take hours or even days for students to accomplish. By the time a writer is ready to polish off a “final” draft he or she probably has “a piece of writing that looks like a Jackson Pollock painting—you know, the kind with dribbles and streaks across the canvas” (Dawe and Dornan 24). Hemingway was undoubtedly close to the truth when he pronounced that writing was as hard as “painting a Cezanne” (Baker 268).

Most students will not turn into literary-award winners or authors of best sellers, but they can have the satisfaction that if they take the time to think and revise, they will become clearer, more successful, and perhaps even more artistic writers. They can create their own personal masterpieces. (By the way, it took me five days and six revisions to “complete” this piece!) ➡

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Linda Davis ('95) teaches at the Delaware County Community College.

PAWP DIRECTOR TO RETIRE

West Chester University announced the retirement this summer of Robert H. Weiss as Professor of English and Director of the Pennsylvania Writing Project after many years of distinguished service.

Weiss joined the University faculty in 1967 and taught a variety of courses in writing and literature for his first several years. In 1977 he developed a major interest in composition studies and pedagogy, founded the University's Writing Program with grants from a state agency and the National Endowment for the Humanities, co-authored a college freshman textbook, spoke at many professional conferences, and was invited to many campuses across the country to train university faculty in writing strategies useful in all academic disciplines.

Shortly thereafter, Weiss founded and presided over the Delaware Valley Writing Council, a local organization linking all levels of education to solve common problems in the teaching of writing, and in 1979 he successfully applied for funding to develop a National Writing Project regional service site at West Chester University. Titled the Pennsylvania Writing Project and known affectionately to participants by its acronym PAWP, this program thrived under his leadership since its first full year of operation in 1980. Quickly known as an energetic and innovative program for teachers interesting in improving their skills and passing their knowledge on to other teachers, PAWP expanded to multiple locations in the region where it now offers over 60 training programs a year for teachers and 100 summer classes for students. PAWP has received praise not only from the teachers and students it directly affects but also from parents and legislators.

PAWP's publications program, established by Weiss, includes an annual quarterly Newsletter for a circulation of 5,500 educators and a variety of occasional publications, including two books of teachers' essays on writing instruction. A collection of the best pieces done by students in PAWP's summer programs, titled *Writing Takes You Everywhere*, is published annually and circulates to schools and libraries in the region.

Weiss helped PAWP to gain state recognition, serving with many committees of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, most recently with the Writing Assessment Advisory Committee. He was a developer of the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment for the state's 6th and 9th graders, was one of its Chief Readers, and co-authored a recent article on the success of the state's program from 1991 to 1995 to improve student writing (cited recently in *Education Week*). Weiss and PAWP received several state grants and contracts to improve writing and writing instruction for many populations, including adult basic education. Weiss is State Director of the Consortium of Pennsylvania Writing Projects, an organization linking all eight of the state's National Writing Project sites, and

President of the Delaware Valley Region of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Nationally, Weiss achieved prominence in the field of composition pedagogy. His research on writing and learning is often cited by scholars, his case approach to student writing is regularly imitated, and he earned major grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and a variety of other public and private foundations. For eight years he was Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for the National Writing Project and a member of its National Advisory Board, and he currently directs its Network for Young Writers Programs. For three years he was a Board member of the College English Association.

At West Chester University for thirty years, Weiss created many courses and programs. For several years he was both the Yearbook Advisor and the Chairperson of the Curriculum and Academic Policies Council. He served with distinction on many other committees and councils and received a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Distinguished Faculty Award in 1979. For four years he hosted a monthly radio talk show, "Education Update: What's Going on in Schools and Colleges."

Weiss will continue to assist the Writing Project as Consulting Director and as Chairman of its newly formed Advisory Board. The new Director beginning in Fall 1997 will be Andrea Fishman of the West Chester University English Department, who has served for six years as Associate Director of the Writing Project and has founded its Literature Institute. ➡

ETHICS IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

A year-long course for teachers K-12.

Where do ethics come from?

How do teachers resolve the ethical dilemmas they encounter with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators?

How might teachers foster ethical decision-making in their students?

These are some of the questions PAWP's new Ethics course will consider.

PLACE: The PAWP office

DATES: 10 Tuesdays, Sept - June beginning 9/16

TIME: 4-7:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, please call our office at (610) 436-2202

PUBLISHERS OF STUDENTS' WORK

The following list was compiled by Bob McCann ('82).

Creative Kids (8-14 years old)

Commissions Editor
PO Box 8813

Waco, TX 76714-8813

Takes everything—stories, puzzles, poetry, artwork

Kids World (Under 17 years old)

Morgan Kopaska-Merkel
1300 Kicker Road

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

Takes any kind of fiction, art work 11" x 17"

Editor is 11 years old

The McGuffey Writer (5-18 years old)

Janet Kretschmer
5128 Westgate Drive

Oxford, OH 45056

Takes everything—looking for personal essays in particular (ie., about your well-worn sneakers, etc)

Merlin's Pen (Grades 6-9)

Manuscripts
PO Box 1058

East Greenwich, RI 02818

Takes everything—pays for accepted manuscripts

Skipping Stones (Multi-Cultural Magazine 7-15 years old)

Arun Narayan Toke
PO Box 3939

Eugene, OR 97404-0939

Will send guidelines and calendar with SASE

Young Voices (Grades K-12)

Char Simmons
PO Box 2321

Olympia, WA 98057

No violence—needs more writing about sports

Young Authors Magazine

Jane Austin
Theraplan 3015 Woosdale Blvd.
Lincoln, NE 68502-5053

Gives special consideration to learning disabled students

ZuZu (7-12 years old)

Beck Underwood, Editor and Publisher
271 E. Tenth St., No. 64
NY, NY 10009

Word limit 600 for fiction, non-fiction, articles. Will send editorial calendar with SASE. Looking for submissions about health, body awareness and social issues

Attention, Please (6-18 years old)

Lois Ludwig
PO Box 1913, Rte 1
Lopez Island, WA 98261

Special attention to ADD students

PAWP Publication Order Form

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The original best-seller reprinted. Twenty-one stimulating essays on writing instruction from pre-first to post-secondary written by PAWP teacher-consultants.

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More Strategies for Teaching Writing

A collection of 19 new essays by PAWP teacher-consultants, including one from Project Director Bob Weiss, to round out a collection of recommended teaching ideas.

1997 ISBN 1-887732-07-1 Paperbound
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Writing Takes You Everywhere, (1996)

Includes almost 700 book reviews and almost 100 award-winning writings from participants in our Summer Youth Programs. A delightful and often comical collection for your classroom or home library.

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155 pages Cost is \$5 plus S & H

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Bull Center, Room 114
West Chester, PA 9382

SPOTLIGHT

WRITING WITH AN ARTIST'S EYE

by Dina Cassidy

To keynote the PAWPDAY on January 18th, illustrator Judith Schachner shared her experiences on the road to becoming a writer.

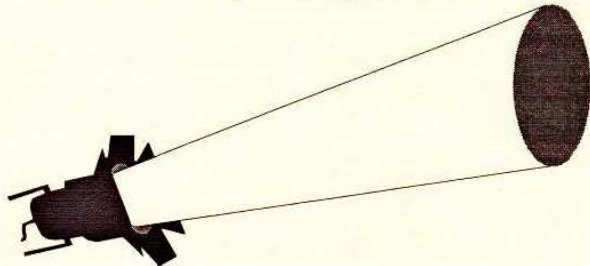
Schachner grew up seeing herself as an artist. Characters filled her daily life, whether they were her own creations or someone around her. She used her artistic talent to capture a character on a sheet of paper, and this enabled her to become that character. She could then feel as though she was inside her characters to imagine how they would feel, act and be. Illustrating characters was her way of telling a story. She did not see herself as a writer in the traditional sense. In fact, a very hesitant writer. (She feels that not reading a lot as a child had a great deal to do with her uncomfortable attitude toward writing.)

In her twenties, Schachner found the desire to be a writer. She credits this with acquiring a pair of glasses. Then she became a reader and fell in love with language. She sees the connection between being a reader and a writer was overcoming her fear of grammar. She feels that this not only held her back, but it is what keeps many kids from writing. She eventually gained her own level of confidence that enabled her to realize that just because she doesn't know how to use a semi-colon doesn't mean she can't be a writer. She's come to the conclusion that writers have ideas and editors have grammar.

Schachner's editor characterizes her as an organic writer. This is because neither Judith nor her editor have any idea how she writes. She does not follow any prescribed or personal style or format. Whatever it is, she has gained a great deal of confidence and success through her writing and illustrating.

She is working on a book about Ralph Waldo Emerson, and has the distinction of being able to tell his story through the eyes of her great-grandmother who was his cook for many years. I'm sure that this personal connection, along with her ability to bring a character to life through illustrations and words, will make this book more than intriguing to all who experience it. ➤

Dina Cassidy ('96) teaches reading in the Upper Moreland SD and co-directs our youth program there.



BUILDING CLASSROOM COMMUNITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE:

A DAY WITH RUTH NATHAN

by Rachel W. Thomas

It was a beautiful April morning when I arrived at West Chester University to attend my first PAWPDAY. I had heard so much about these Saturday sessions and was excited about what laid ahead. I was not to be disappointed.

Walking into the crowded lobby and up to the check-in table, I was given a grade appropriate book co-authored by Ruth Nathan called *Writers Express/A Handbook for Young Writers, Thinkers, and Learners*, as well as a folder that contained topics for free writing. The book, clearly written for children with its inviting graphics and clear text, is filled with useful ideas and tips for student writers. The folder not only had suggestions for children written on it about how to choose a topic to write about and how to keep track of that free writing, it also had handouts inside of it that correlated to the book and the Pennsylvania Writing Assessment.

Ruth spoke to an eager audience on how to build classroom community through language and literature. For me the most memorable aspect of her inspiring keynote address was when she relayed a story about her close friend's death. She had received a tearful phone call from her friend's husband about the sudden death, and she made arrangements to go be with him. The man met her in the airport and quietly shared their last moments together. The couple had been out walking one day when the wife turned to her husband and said in an urgent tone, "Say nice things to me." Within an hour, she was dead. These amazing last words served as a pervasive theme for the rest of her address, as well as the revision workshop that was held directly after the break-out sessions.

I have always found revision to be a difficult concept for my fifth grade students to fully grasp. Many times they bring a first draft to me and insist that it is perfect, requiring a great deal of questioning and prodding from me to make any changes. Ruth defined revision in a unique way. She explained that when you first conceive of a project or piece, you have a vision in mind. To "revision", therefore, is only to look at the project in a different way.

After this concept sank in, she had us all try it for a little bit. At Ruth's suggestion, we all chose a topic that we could write about. We listed as many possible genres for it as we could. The group spent about five minutes writing about their chosen topic in one genre, and then the next five minutes writing about the same topic in a different genre. What a practical way to get us to re-vision our piece of writing!

When we finished our assignment, Ruth asked volunteers to read theirs out loud. After each person read their writing, she asked the rest of us to make observations

about it. Ruth continually stressed, "You can't do this wrong!" making even reluctant adults offer observations, even if they were only phrases that they remembered. She pointed out that only when students can name what is good about a piece of writing (these observations), can they then add to the class' revision checklist and use it in their own writing.

As we shared stories, letters, and poems, and even songs and epitaphs, I was amazed to observe two different things. Everyone had been able to come up with a re-vision for their original concept. In listening to the brave volunteers, I realized that this was an exciting way for students to hear clear examples of many elements of good writing, as well as different genres that they could try on their own. The second observation was about how much a feeling of community had developed in the course of this all-too-short workshop. Simply by making observations about each other's writing, naming what was good and memorable, made me confident that this was a wonderful way to do as Ruth Nathan suggested in her keynote address, a way to build classroom communities, all by saying "nice things to" each other. ◀

Rachel W. Thomas will be attending the Summer Institute this summer. She teaches in the Marple Newtown SD.

APRIL 5, 1997 DAWP DAY

by Kathy Frick

Ruth Hohenstein, a third grade teacher from Central Bucks SD, shared her delight in quilt-making with the teachers who attended her workshop, "Managing a Writing Workshop." Just as a quilt is put together from many pieces, Ruth encouraged us to think of our students and all the curricula we must present as pieces to be put together. As teachers we are also pieces of the puzzle, and if that puzzle seems overwhelming we should just think of it as "eating an elephant"—we do it "one bite at a time."

The task of managing a writing workshop can seem just as overwhelming but Ruth offered practical, usable suggestions and techniques to help organize and schedule a successful writing time in our classrooms. After compiling a list of what we need for a classroom writing workshop, Ruth encouraged us to go beyond the basics of supplies and time to consider such things as trust, confidence, and open minds. She showed us Lucy Calkins's model for allotting an hour a day for writing and presented her techniques for using her students' own work to teach language skills. Ruth shared some of her students' work that showed the success of using current curriculum topics as prewriting ideas. Other student work she displayed demonstrated the wide range of writing projects her students have accomplished. The pieces fit together very well in Ruth's classroom. ▶

Kathy Frick ('92) teaches in the William Penn SD.

DESIGNING A READING/WRITING PORTFOLIO: A WORKSHOP BY CAROL ROHRBACH

by Donna Dougherty

The way Carol Rohrbach does business in her high school English classes was modeled dynamically in this 75 minute session. This Springfield (Montgomery County) School District teacher demonstrated all the right things we can do with portfolios. She showed us why they are a vital part of her students' learning. Her evolving model is a purposeful collection of her students' efforts, progress, and achievements. Carol does not advocate teacher-selected collections that are mandated by districts because an essential part of portfolios is that they are student-centered and no two are alike. It is essential that the student selects the contents.

Did you get to decorate a pizza box in September of your Junior year? Carol's students take ownership of their portfolio by making it their own. After trying various containers, pizza boxes remain the favorite. The artifacts that fill this container may include audio and video tapes, papers, reports, learning logs, homework, and a variety of other treasures, but to gain entrance into the box each artifact must have a reason for being selected. What the teacher views as "Best Work" may not make it into the box. The child may decide to choose something that did not earn an "A", but did produce a great feeling of accomplishment. Portfolios involve students in their learning by promoting goal setting and self-evaluation of progress. Students enjoy taking ownership and responsibility for their learning. Students can see their growth and accomplishments.

Carol is convinced that she would not know her students as well without this concrete, visual record of their effort and productivity. Learning process, not just factual knowledge, is revealed. Portfolios allow the integration of instruction and assessment. Assessment becomes collaborative and on-going. Insights gained help instruction to be tailored to individuals. The teacher becomes a facilitator.

After reading the letters that Carol's students wrote as a reflection of their learning, it is obvious that they have a comfortable classroom climate, they have acquired and integrated their knowledge, they can analyze their learning, they can identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and they think creatively and critically. Would an outsider be able to learn so much about a student if tests and papers were read in lieu of this letter? I think not.

Carol completes her students' year by celebrating their portfolios. Her students invite one person to an evening gala to share their work and have—what else?—Pizza! If you are

(continued on page 13)

ON PAWPDAYS

**ON TONY KUSHNER'S PLAY:
ANGELS IN AMERICA**

by Jennifer Mullen-Haaz

To investigate multicultural literature for my PennLit course, I read Tony Kushner's play *Angels in America*. Like traveling into an exotic culture, my days spent with *Angels* were trying but well worth the remembering. The characters spoke to me of truth, pain and hope in a witty, surreal dialogue which reminded me of a Hieronymus Bosch painting or a Friday's Kitchen Sink sundae. The play is set in New York City and the Kremlin in 1986. Angels appear to the main character, Prior, a homosexual man. They demand that Prior, who is dying of AIDS, become a prophet. As a prophet, Prior's job will be to save the world, or at least to change the world so that it can save itself. Knowing something of the Bible, Prior realizes the swiftest route to ostracism is to become a prophet. Besides, saving the world might be a little time consuming what with his AIDS and everything. Gradually though, throughout the play, Prior comes to accept his heavenly calling as he likewise learns to accept his disease. These two seem strange bedfellows but Kushner weaves a tale which depicts AIDS as an agent of change much like the Old Testament Prophets.

This may sound like an intriguing thesis for a play, and it is, but there is more. Kushner also sees the work of angels in the falling of the Iron Curtain. Is it a coincidence that this occurs at the same time as the onslaught of AIDS? Well, you can probably guess that it is not. Kushner develops the intelligible connection among these three strikingly dissimilar themes in his amazing play.

How did Kushner convince me of his viewpoint? He accomplished this subtly of course, with characters full of humor and good sense. I began to identify. I noticed myself in Prior. First, in his reaction to the outside world: always trying to help others, obsessing over his apartment, denying his vulnerability, and ignoring his loneliness. Then Prior gets sick. The kind of sick that keeps gay men and mothers of teenagers awake at night hoping for the existence of angels. As with Joseph Smith (an allusion to a Mormon sub-theme of the play), Prior's wish is answered, an angel arrives. He will have to change. He will become a prophet. The major opus begins.

Kushner's focus now becomes serious. The world must be saved and the Angels have chosen Prior. But Prior is dying; the last thing he wants to do is work on change. I'm getting nervous. Like Prior, I've had enough of change. It is never-ending. Everything I like to eat is now no good for me. I can't sit out in the sun. I can't read a book written by a man. I can't give an objective test or use a worksheet. I can't use my air conditioner or fly in an airplane. I can't get away from telephones even in the car. One son wants to dye his hair blue, and the other son wants two pierced holes in his ear—his friends have holes pierced all over their bodies. Prior, I can't stand it anymore either! For you, it is

a decision of living or dying. You can't continue without change. You must save the world or at least the homosexual community in which you live. As the Angel knows, AIDS has changed the world, especially your world. But you won't change until you're almost dead. I'd probably be the same. "Change or die," the Angel's message. But, you don't hear it until it is almost too late. I understand. I recognize the pathology. Change is hard, sometimes even harder than living through a disease which you know will kill your body. Somehow you feel more comfortable enduring this rather than the pain of confronting that well established lie. But you are a survivor and AIDS is your vehicle for change. How will the world react?

Kushner now begins to answer the question as the play changes books. Book Two: *Perestroika*. The world must change, as the old Bolsheviks know. The angel has visited them. Society must change, they must lead the way. Like Prior and me they are not crazy about this idea. In fact, they refuse to change without a new theory to replace the old one—something from the past to make this trip into the future easier, safer. They don't know about AIDS. They do know about chaos. The theory will guard them against chaos—the chaos in Prior's blood. Without the theory, they refuse the Angel. They won't change.

I have heard many of the arguments against change before. In fact, just today it came up in class and many of those good arguments were raised. Especially the part about the theory; I think Kushner borrowed that from some old school teacher somewhere who only feels protected and bolstered by an irrefutable theory. S/he, like the old Bolsheviks, will refuse to change until threatened. I too have been known to resist the new. That is why I am here taking this course. That is why I chose to read this play, to push myself into new situations which might generate new ideas. (So far the course and the play have been excellent generators).

Well, the Kremlin goes down. Angels aren't big on negotiations with Communists. Prior, on the other hand, knows a good deal when he sees one so he opts for the change. I'd do the same. In fact, Prior's courage gives me new hope. *Angels in America* has given me hope. As I read the struggles of this gay man with AIDS and the struggles of eastern Europe, I was very depressed and demoralized. I thought about my own struggles to change my life and it became even worse. But then Kushner introduced hope and I realized with many deaths come new beginnings. From chaos the angels grew.

Finally, this play compelled me to consider the nature of the AIDS epidemic in America. As Kushner proposes, AIDS as an agent of change is a gripping reality. This disease has forced many Americans, like me, to reconsider the nature of homosexuality. Once, I believed that the word "queer" was an appropriate descriptor for gay men and women. It was because I believed homosexuals were different, threatening different. But as the AIDS pandemic hit

America, the story of the gay man became, for me, more heroic than different. I believe that their stories, *Stories From the Quilt*, *And the Band Played On*, and *Angels in America*, all taught me lessons of love, passion, honesty, and courage. These things aren't so different after all. But would I have noticed them without the work of the Angels? I probably would not have. My new motto reads, "Being unaware is dangerous and arrogant." Thank you, Tony Kushner. ➤

Jennifer Mullen-Haaz is a 1996 PennLit teacher-consultant who teaches in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

SUMMER CONFERENCE (*cover story continued*)
 education teacher, reading specialist, and a district resource teacher. Now she is an Associate Professor of Education at California State University in Long Beach, and teaches courses in reading methods and research. She has authored numerous articles and chapters in educational texts and has served as a consultant word wide. As past president of the California Reading Association, she received the Marcus Foster Memorial Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Reading. Currently, she is on the Board of Directors of the IRA. ➤

ROHRBACH (*continued*)
 not "portfolioing" in your class because you are not sure if you will do it right, Carol's advice is—just do it. It is still the best experience for students even though you may make mistakes.

The pure joy for you and your students will be well worth the revisions you may need to make.

Everyone in the packed room took volumes of ideas from this presentation. Whether you were just thinking about portfolios or you have used them for years, Carol Rohrbach offered a wealth of knowledge, management hints, perks, and additional resources. Many thanks to Carol, a master of her craft! ➤

Donna Dougherty ('96) teaches in the Central Bucks SD.

PCTELA CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER

The Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (PCTELA), a state affiliate of NCTE, is holding its annual conference October 24, 1997 at the Penn State Conference Center. Keynote speakers will be Jim and Kathy Strickland, authors of *UN-Covering the Curriculum: Whole Language in the Secondary and Post-Secondary Classroom* (Boynton/Cook, 1993). Their new book, *Reflections on Learning: The Role of Assessment and Evaluation in Secondary Classrooms* (Heinemann-Boynton/Cook), has just been released. Both Stricklands teach at Slippery Rock University. Membership information is available from P. Ellen Tatalias, President, PCTELA, Northwestern Lehigh High School, Rte. 309, New Tripoli, PA 18066. ➤

CALL FOR YOUR CLASSROOM TALES OF HUMOR AND HORROR!

For the spring 1998 NCTE conference, three National Writing Project Directors intend to share English teachers' amazing stories that happen "All in a Day's Work"

Please submit your tale to the NWP using the address and form below, and make sure to tell them if you want your tale to be anonymous or recognized during their presentation by name and school. No matter which, they will send you the collected stories as a thank you.

The voices from an English teacher's classroom are sometimes poignant, sometime embarrassing, and sometimes inspirational. But the ones that collect in the tales of English teachers around coffee shops and dinner tables often begin with, "You can't believe what that kid said next..." or "I wanted to just burst out laughing but knew that would be rude..." or "I was scared to death that I couldn't handle what was coming...." Such stories recount the time a student shot a bottle rocket up the aisle, or the time a fistfight broke out in class, or the time the student dropped a full bag of marijuana out of her bookbag. Sometimes they scare us to death, make us worry about the lives and homes of our students, and other times we have to resist dissolving into laughter. Always, they make us think on our feet.

The anecdotes will cover the range from inexperienced, novice teachers to veteran, retired teachers of English, with a purpose of distilling the commonalities that keep English teachers coming back for more.

Your name: _____

Your school name: _____

City & state: _____

Your mailing address: _____

You may use my name in your presentation: Y N

What age group is represented in your story? _____

How many years had you been teaching when this event happened? _____

Please mail to: Ruie Jane Pritchard
 Capital Area WP, Box 7801,
 402C Poe Hall
 North Carolina State University
 Raleigh, NC 27695-7801

Ruie@poe.coe.ncsu.edu
 tel: (919) 515-1784

WOMEN WRITING THROUGH PAWP

Fifteen area women who postponed or missed a chance to attend college were participants in *Women Writing*, a six-workshop series by Andy Fishman, new PAWP director. Funded by a grant from the State System of Higher Education, the series was intended to help participants develop the skills—and the confidence—to enroll as non-traditional students.

The participants began by writing personal narratives, essays, and poetry with the group as their audience. They learned to respond effectively to each others' drafts and to revise their drafts based on peer and teacher response. Then participants began writing for other audiences and purposes, composing essays and editorials on issues of importance to them. They received a packet of articles and essays written by women including bell hooks, Joan Didion, Maya Angelou, and Patricia Hampfl about their own education and literacy-related experiences, which address concerns of gender, class, race, and ethnicity as they affect women's lives and learning. Discussing these articles from their perspective as writers helped participants further develop their personal and academic voices.

As a result of the series, each participant has a writing portfolio as evidence of her enhanced writing ability. The portfolio may be used as part of the college application process. Each woman also contributed two pieces of her choice to the class anthology that will be published through the grant.

Because immediate positive response to the initial advertising of these workshops brought enough applicants to fill the workshop and create a waiting list, the Project hopes to find funds repeat the series next year.

The following story was written by one of the women participating in this workshop. ➤

MY DREAM COME TRUE

by Linda (Lynn) MacElroy

When I was twenty, I had a dream. I begged and pleaded with my dad to help me make my dream come true. I had an answer for each of his questions. I had a defense against all his arguments. He had previously had an unhappy experience with my older sister and wanted no part of another one.

I asked my mom to speak with my dad and try to convince him that I would not let him down. After endless arguments, he gave in. He took me car shopping. Not just for any car; we were shopping for the car of my dreams.

One summer night, after I returned home from work, my dad took me to a car dealership close to home. We drove in his 1964 powder blue Dodge Dart to the Auto Mall. We drove with the windows down since he didn't have air conditioning in the car and it was a hot night. The Auto Mall was near the airport and we had to pass the refineries to get there. The odors, pungent and obnoxiously foul on a

hot, summer night, make an experience you do not want to repeat too often.

We went to the Ford dealer, and the salesman went into his sales pitch.

"What can I help you with today, sir? We have a nice Maverick or some Pintos I can show you."

He gave his pitch to my dad since he figured Daddy must be buying his little girl a new car. I did not need a sales pitch; I knew the car I wanted.

My father straightened him out real quick. "Talk to the boss," he said, "she's the one buying the car. She's the one with the money."

"Well, miss, how about a nice Maverick. I have just the one for you. It's a nice little fire engine red number that I'm sure you'll like."

"I don't think so. First of all, I hate red and second, I have an exact picture in my mind and a fire engine red Maverick is not in that picture."

The salesman finally gave up and took us out to the car lot to look around. Then it happened. The oddest feeling came over me as we walked around the lot. There, in all its splendor, with the setting sun reflecting off its polished exterior, was the car of my dreams. This car was exactly as I had pictured in my dreams. It was a 1970 Mustang, black vinyl interior, black vinyl top, bucket seats, color coordinated mirrors and last, but not least, it was green. "We call the color 'Grabber Green,'" said the salesman. It was the color of a shamrock, the color of the green on a street light. It was my color. This was my car.

My decision was made in about 60 seconds. We went into the showroom and filled out all the papers and were told to come back the next day to pick up the car. I was so excited, I could hardly hold the pen to complete all the paperwork. That night, I couldn't sleep thinking about my new car.

The next evening, my dad and I drove back out to the dealer to pick up my car. I was so nervous and excited that I started shaking, and I was afraid to drive it home. So, my dad was the first person to drive it. I didn't feel too bad about that when I saw how thrilled he was to drive it home. He drove with the windows down and the radio blaring. He was acting just like a teenager. I almost had to beg him to give my car back to me.

I finally did get up the courage to drive it, and I drove it everywhere, through anything, mud, snow, ice, even a flood.

One summer, a sudden thunderstorm came rolling in and the rain came down in buckets. The rain was so hard and so fast that the ground could not soak it in, and we found ourselves stranded at work surrounded by water. After a while, the water started to recede and I left work with my fingers crossed, hoping I would arrive home safely. I had to take a number of detours since the roads were still flooded in spots and I couldn't get through. I have a terrible sense of direction, and taking detours is not my idea of a good time. Most of the time I am lucky if I can find my way

around the block without becoming lost. I followed the cars in front of me—wherever they went, I went. I drove around for about an hour in a car that was as hot and stuffy as an oven. Even though I was sweating, I was afraid to turn the air conditioning on since I did not want to stall the car. I found myself in an unfamiliar area with no idea how to get home when I saw some friends from work who were standing on the side of the road next to their stalled car.

One of them flagged me over. "Can you give us a ride home? This car isn't going anywhere tonight."

"If you can put me in the direction of home and give me a cigarette to calm my nerves, you can all hop in."

Luckily for me, they knew the area. They gave me directions, a cigarette, even a Pepsi and with six hot, sweaty, extremely unhappy people crammed into My mustang, we were on our way.

By that time, the sun was shining, the roads were dried, and the only signs left of a hard driving summer rain were the cars stranded on the side of the roads. What a nice feeling it was to be one of the few cars still running. After about three hours of driving, I arrived home. My car had made it through all the puddles and continued running, but my brakes finally gave out and I glided into a parking space with my fingers crossed, hoping for the best. The car stopped, I arrived safely, and I went home to a glass of wine to still my shaking knees.

My Mustang took me to so many places and gave me so many great memories. It was the perfect car and fulfilled my dream.

But, as with all things, there came a time when I had a need for a change. My lifestyle was changing and my Mustang was no longer the car for me. I needed something more "practical." I was traveling to the seashore quite a bit and needed transportation that fit that arrangement, and my Mustang was "too small" and "too cramped" for my friends, luggage, bikes, and all the other "essential" items needed by young women.

Unfortunately, it was that time again. I was going car shopping. I did not feel any of the same excitement that I had felt when I bought my dream car. There was hardly any emotion with this purchase. This new car was transportation, nothing else. I had no dream to follow. I listened to the sales pitch, I bought a car, and I went along my merry way.

When I completed the paperwork for my new car, the salesman asked if I had a trade in.

"Of course, I have a trade in," I said, "a 1964 powder blue Dodge Dart." I gave my dad the Mustang and passed my dream to him. I often think I helped make a dream come true for him too. As I look back, I realize I had more than most people ever get. I had a dream. It came true and gave me more happiness and memories that will stay with me always. ◀

Linda (Lynn) MacElroy works at West Chester University. She hopes to eventually find time to catch up on her reading, complete an entire crossword puzzle, and learn to paint.



NEWSWORTHY DOINGS

■ **Christine Kane** ('82), formerly with the Philadelphia SD and currently Assistant Superintendent of the Colt's Neck SD in New Jersey, is active in the Northeast Affiliate of the Association for

Supervision and Curriculum Development and is helping to organize its next conference.

■ The Keystone Integrated Framework Project of the Pennsylvania Department of Education includes two PAWP Fellows among its summer institute staff: both **Nancy Letts** ('82), Social Studies Coordinator for the Wallingford Swarthmore SD, and **Rosemarie Montgomery** ('88), School-Business Partnerships Coordinator for the Central Bucks SD. Rosemarie recently represented PAWP as an in-service presenter in Delaware with **Rosemary Buckendorff** ('82) of the Exeter SD.

■ "The Consortium of Pennsylvania Writing Projects: 17 Years of Service," an article by **Bob Weiss**, was published in the Spring 1997 issue of Pennsylvania Educational Leadership, the official organ of the Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. The article explains the history and function of the eight National Writing Project sites in our state. PAWP is the oldest and largest of these.

■ **Dorothy "Fred" Brett** ('93) won third place in a writing contest sponsored by the General Federated Women's Club. Her winning story was called "The Debut of the Tooth Fairy."

■ **Dina Cassidy** ('96) and her husband recently welcomed their first child; Gabriella Ann was born on March 27, 1997 weighing in at 7 lbs. Dina will be co-coordinating our Youth Program in the Upper Moreland SD this summer, and has a piece featured on page 10 of this newsletter.

■ The National Writing Project recently developed an award for a teacher-consultant "who, through classroom practice, workshop presentations, and professional writing, makes significant connections between research and practice," and Project Director Bob Weiss has nominated **Mary Lou Kuhns** ('88). This award is named for Fred Hechinger, formerly an education writer for the NY Times, who was chair of the National Advisory Board of the Center for the Study of Writing (which is down the hall from and relates to NWP).

■ One of the unique components of our summer youth program is the opportunity to work with a published author, and this summer we are happy to announce that **Bill Mowery** ('96), **Cecelia Evans** ('81), **Kathy Geesey** ('88), and PAWPDAY keynote **Judith Schachner** will be joining our group of visiting authors this year. ▶

THE DEPARTURE

by Elizabeth Early

I cannot start at the beginning for it begins before me, so I will begin at the end. This is how she died.

In the end, she sat at a table alone and ate her dinner slowly. Her last four bites were of macaroni and cheese, heavily salted, and an iced tea in a small glass holding three ice cubes. Her small, knobby head bent to meet the fork and she chewed slowly. It took her twenty minutes to eat those four bites. Honestly, she didn't care anyway. She was only eating because she had to. Otherwise, she'd get hungry in the night. This was her only chance at a hot meal before morning.

Her head was splitting open in a neat line of pain opening up as though it had been split with a surgeon's knife. She held it in her hands. It felt light and hot. Her skin, nearly translucent, was tissue paper between her hands and her skull.

A young girl, nearly eighteen, appeared beside her and asked if there was anything else she could get for her. Nonie's blue eyes slowly lifted up and met the brown eyes and innocent smile of the uniformed girl. "No honey," she said, "I'm all done now". The girl said something else about it being summer and hot outside, but her words were lost in the flutter of clearing the table. She was so fast and Nonie was so slow. Nonie wanted to return to her room.

Voices surrounded her, but none were directed toward her as she placed her left hand on the rubberized metallic arm of the walker. Her right hand, placed on her seat next to her side, pushed with the force of a newborn fawn, wobbly and unsure and incredibly, she stood.

Nonie walked down the tan carpeted, teal and cream walled hall to her room, #408. It took her seven minutes to go the distance that would have taken her thirty seconds in her youth. The door swung open to reveal her life compacted into pieces of furniture arranged tightly and neatly. Everyone had told her that it was too much to hold on to. Didn't they know it was all she had left? That her walnut secretary held in its arms treasures she'd collected with friends? That those treasure were memories and moments frozen in object form?

The routine was to sit in her blue wing back chair of velveteen, the only piece of furniture in the room that wasn't fine, and watch the evening news. Not tonight, she sighed. Her head was throbbing. Instead, she sat on the edge of her bed and rang the bell for the nurse. "Honey, I'm not feeling too well. Can I have some Tylenol?"

Minutes later, a nurse appeared, a small paper cup in her left hand, a plastic cup one third filled with water in her right. "Here you go, Nonie. Your head really hurting you? I'll be back to check on you in a while."

A small nod in reply, Nonie lay back on her bed. The ceiling above her looked so white and so high. Her room was silent. Several lights were still on, but her head hurt too badly to move. The effort was truly too great. It would have been the same as sprinting down the hall, would have

required the same effort to turn off those lights. No, they could stay on. Bonnie, the nurse, would turn them off later. Her eyes closed.

This is how I imagine it, though I cannot be certain it was so. I am told that the nurse returned only to find Nonie unconscious and hemorrhaging. A phone call to my aunt and uncle and to the hospital were made quickly, efficiently; nothing more to be done.

The phone rang at 6:00 a.m. in the small apartment. I heard it from somewhere in my restless sleep. We were staying in the apartment of a friend in San Francisco who had graciously given us his bed for the night. Insistently, the phone rang again. I pushed Bo and whispered, "It's my mom".

He was closest to the edge, to the door, to the hall, to the phone, and he jumped to answer it. I followed behind. The hallway was long, my steps sluggish. His voice was quiet and concerned and I heard him say, "I'm sorry. I'll let you tell Liz."

Tell me what! I screamed silently. My hand grasped the phone and my step-father's voice so calm, so smooth, found me across all those miles. "Nonie died this morning..." He went on but his words hung like wet cement in my ears. I did not know what to do with them. They dripped and hung there heavy, heavy, heavy. I tried to grasp them, but I couldn't put a form or structure to what I was hearing.

And that was it. That was how she died. ➡

Elizabeth Early ('95) teaches in the Manheim SD.

Multicultural Literature Circles for Teachers (K-12)

These groups provide an opportunity for teachers to experience and discuss multicultural literature as readers, find multicultural literature appropriate for curriculum and classroom use, and to share strategies for integrating and teaching this literature.

Coming this Fall to three locations:

- 1 West Chester East High School
West Chester, PA (secondary)
- 2 Springfield High School
Montgomery County (secondary)
- 3 West Chester University
West Chester, PA (elementary)

For more information and to register, please call the PAWP office at (610) 436-2202

PAWP ADVISORY BOARD NEWLY CREATED

Twenty educators, civic leaders, and community members who support the Pennsylvania Writing Project have been invited to join our newly formed PAWP Advisory Board. The Board will meet twice annually to review and advise on all current and future Project operations and goals, including funding, and to provide advice and counsel to help our programs continue and grow. The Chairman of the Board for its first year will be Bob Weiss.

While we have regularly sought the advice of our internal leadership of teachers and of educational administrators in our region, we have decided in favor of a formal advisory group that would represent the public as well as educators in the counties we serve. Board members are invited by county to serve a renewable term of one year. The number of Board members has not been limited, so new members who may be helpful to PAWP may be added at any time. The members are listed below.

◆ **David Buchanan, Ph.D.**

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
West Chester University
Chester County

◆ **Ann Evans Buhman, Ph.D.**

Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Colonial School District
Montgomery County

◆ **Andrew Dinniman, Ph.D.**

Commissioner, County of Chester
Professor, West Chester University
Chester County

◆ **Cecelia Evans, Ed.D.**

Retired Language Arts Supervisor
School District of Philadelphia
PAWP Fellow '81
Delaware County

◆ **Theodore L. Feldstein**

Supervisor of Multihandicapped & Elementary
Physical Support Programs
Bucks County Intermediate Unit
PAWP Fellow '91
Bucks County

◆ **Janet Greco**

Co-President
Transition One Associates
PAWP Fellow '80
Montgomery County

◆ **Lori Latta**

Parent Representative
Montgomery County

◆ **Karen M. Meade**

Associate Editor
Advance Newsmagazines
Montgomery County

◆ **Joan Misirian Munro**

Parent Representative and Reading Specialist
Methacton School District
Montgomery County

◆ **Carol Reigh**

President
Buckhollow Llamas
Adjunct Professor, Kutztown University
PAWP Fellow '87
Berks County

◆ **Hannah Schwartz**

Owner
Children's Book World, Haverford
Montgomery County

◆ **Jeff Singleton, Ed.D.**

Teacher/Special Assignment
Downingtown Area School District
Chester County

◆ **Lois Snyder, Ed.D.**

Principal, Norwood School
Director of Elementary Curriculum, Interboro SD
PAWP Fellow '80
Delaware County

◆ **Nicholas A. Spennato, Ed. D.**

Language Arts/Staff Development Specialist
Delaware County Intermediate Unit
Delaware County

◆ **Judith Stoudt**

Activities Specialist
Berks County Intermediate Unit
Berks County

◆ **The Honorable Elinor Z. Taylor**

State Representative
Chester County

◆ **Charles Weber**

Principal, Oliver Heckman Elementary School
Neshaminy School District
Bucks County

◆ **The Honorable Curt Weldon**

Member of Congress
7th District-PA
Delaware County

◆ **Robert H. Weiss, Ph.D.**

Retired Director, Pennsylvania Writing Project
Chairman of Advisory Board
Chester County

◆ **Gloria H. Wetzel, Ed.D.**

Principal, Leary Elementary School
Centennial School District
PAWP Fellow '83
Bucks County ➤

STUDENT WRITING ON THE NET: "THE BOOK NOOK" TO "SURROUNDED BY MORONS"

by Stan Karp

One good way to introduce students to the Internet is to take advantage of the opportunity it offers to publish student writing. There are several excellent Web sites designed to help.

KidPub (<http://escrime.en-garde.com/kidpub/>) is one. Begun by a parent who wanted to give his daughter a place to circulate her stories, *KidPub* has evolved into a many-sided project that allows kids to publish, find pen pals, and read and react to the work of other children. It also has a section for class projects where students—whether from P.S. 21 in the Bronx or the Pizzoli Elementary School in Italy—can post their efforts. Helpful screens tell students and teachers how to submit their work either by e-mail or by completing handy online submission forms. Counters also keep track of how many readers each story or page attracts, offering hard evidence that this busy site draws many viewers.

Other publishing sites for younger children include *The Book Nook* (<http://i-site.on.ca/booknook.html>), where students can read or contribute reviews of books in searchable libraries organized by age and subject. There are also many "e-zines," online magazines, devoted to student work. *E-Link Magazine* (http://www.inform.umd.edu:8080/EdRes/Topic/Education/K-12/MDK12_Stuff/hompers/emag) is for elementary school children. *Midlink* (<http://longwood.cs.ucf.edu:80/~Midlink/>) is for kids in middle grades aged 10-15. Both include past and current issues with student work and guidelines for hooking up students to future issues or on-going projects.

The fall issue of *E-Link*, for example, includes a "Picnic in Multicultural Park" project that is in turn tied into several school-based multicultural and prejudice reduction efforts.

High school students can find outlets, advice, and support at *Inkspot's* Resource Page for Young Writers (<http://www.interlog.com/~ohi/inkspot/young.html>). Interviews with young writers, suggestions, and opportunities for publishing both on and off the net are available. Another site of interest to young adult writers and their teachers is *Writes of Passage* (<http://www.writes.org/index.htm>) which describes itself as "the on-line resource that takes young writers seriously and provides opportunities for them to show case their work." Along with student stories and poems, *Writes of Passage* has useful teacher's guides that make it easy to use student work to teach writing skills like point of view. Another new site, provocatively dubbed *Surrounded by Morons*, (<http://www.pangea.ca/~aturner/index.html>) was started by two young writers who wanted to get their stories published easily without a lot of hassle." Their site is attractive, easily navigated, and open to all.

Despite uneven access to online technology and the growing commercialization of the Internet, these self-publishing sites reflect the democratic potential the Internet has for increasing dialogue and communication among

schools and young people. Using them is a good way to introduce students and teachers to "the net's" best face. ➤

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BOOK LOVERS REJOICE!

Check out this item forwarded by Steve Heffner: *The New York Times* has just introduced its books section on the web. It includes over 50,000 *Times* book reviews back through 1980, searchable by title and author. You may need to register, but there's no cost.

The WWW address is: <http://www.nytimes.com/books/> and don't forget to check out Steve's web page at: <http://www.pipeline.com/~sheffner/classroom.html> when you're finished! ➤

Advice to Young Poets

by Lynne R. Dorfman

Had a poem inside my head
An idea from all I'd read.
It swirled around and grew and grew,
Had rhyme, rhythm and humor, too.

Tasted sweet and rang out loud,
Thoughts collecting in a crowd.
Followed me throughout the day...
This tiny voice had much to say!

And when I finally found some time,
I opened my journal to draft this rhyme.
Grabbing a pen to write it down
My smiling face soon turned to frown.

You see, I'd waited all too long
To capture the verses of this song.
I concentrated and searched my mind,
And yet, no poem could I find!

So poets, please take this advice:
Don't put poetic thoughts on ice!
Keep a journal close by your side,
And let your poems there reside.

For if you wait too long to write,
Your poems will ascend in flight.
They'll float on high and sail away,
But in a journal...they will STAY! ➤

Lynne Dorfman ('89) teaches at the Round Meadow Elementary School in the Upper Moreland SD.

LIVING THE WRITERLY LIFE

by Patti Lipton

The stillness is peaceful and productive. I hear the birds chirping. All else is quiet. The day is just beginning. Awake, alert and already thinking, I am uncontrollably drawn to my word processor.

I should be tired, for it's only 6:30 a.m., but I'm not. My body is being controlled by my mind's constant state of thought and reflection. It's exhilarating and astonishing. I have become an observer of life; mentally scripting each action as a reporter details an important news event. Consumed with thoughts, I feel compelled to capture each image through the permanence of print. I am living the writerly life and it's rather invigorating!

I sat at this same table until very late the night before—reading, searching, thinking, writing. The house was totally quiet except for the television that no one was watching or listening to, as everyone in my family was asleep. After all, it was 2:00 a.m. And now, I find myself back in this same spot, in this same quiet house, in the very early hours of the next day. "Discovering your own literacy" requires stamina.

One of the other participants of the PAWP Summer Institute, a close friend, had shared a similar concern in class yesterday. She, too, was consumed with thought and found it difficult to be away from a word processor or pencil and paper for very long. We were both experiencing the same symptoms of what must be some form of a "communicable infection" which spreads through communities of literate people.

The days have turned into weeks at the PAWP Summer Institute and the intensity and rigor have proven to be both stimulating and exhausting at the same time. I'm still constantly composing stories and poems in my mind. These thoughtful, compositions usually sound great as they unfold in images and mental words. However, when I sit down to write my "literate occasions," the words don't flow as easily as they should. Somehow these wonderfully perfect words get lost in their journey from my mind to the paper. It's not as easy as I'd like it to be.

My mind seems to have its own delete key, erasing the first thought as the second or third ones come along. I need direct access to my mind without having to involve moving my hands to type or write. Maybe then, the words would be captured fast enough and writing would be less frustrating.

If only someone could invent a way to immediately capture a thought onto paper. This "direct access" to one's thoughts would put everyone "online." There would no longer be secrets or private thoughts. Wow! Talk about controversy on the "Internet!" Even so, this invention would definitely make my "writerly life" easier. I could carry on with such mundane routines as laundry, cooking, eating, showering, sleeping, etc. and write at the same time.

Living a literate life can be intense and contagious. I have a feeling that I'm never going to fully recover from this "communicable infection." I'm sure the symptoms will

weaken as time goes on (probably not until after the summer institute, however), but vestiges will remain in my system forever, for now I've experienced a "writerly life," the constant call of the written word, and that is inviting! ➤

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

COMMEMORATING PAULO FREIRE

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator who linked adult literacy to social consciousness in the poor, died May 2 at age 75. The following comments commemorating Freire's life and accomplishments were written by Ray Padilla of Arizona State University.

Freire was born in 1921 in Recife, Brazil. He received a law degree from the Universidad Federal de Pernambuco but did not pursue a career in law. Instead he became an educator and created innovative approaches to literacy development and adult education. He was the first director of the Cultural Extension Service of the Universidad de Recife.

The Brazilian military coup of 1964 ended Freire's cultural and educational activities. He was persecuted and jailed for 70 days until he found refuge in the Bolivian embassy. This led to several decades of exile during which Freire worked in Chile, taught at Harvard, and finally joined the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. Following publication of his signature work, "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Freire gained world renown as an original, imaginative, and critical thinker who emphatically chose to work with and for the oppressed. He reminded us that the truest aim of humans is to become more human and that to know is to know through critical dialogue. He will be missed by his many admirers throughout the world.

The Paulo Freire Memorial Fund has just been established to benefit the Institute of Paulo Freire in Sao Paulo, Brasil. Contributions should be mailed to: Shirley Steinberg and Donald Macedo, 637 West Foster Avenue, State College, PA 16801. Please make check in U.S. dollars or Brazilian currency to the Paulo Freire Memorial Fund. ➤

There are writers whose gift is to make terribly complicated things simple. But I know my gift is the reverse: to take relatively simple things and complicate them to the point of madness. But there you are: one learns who one is, and it is at one's peril that one attempts to become someone else.

- John Barth

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The purpose of the *Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter* is to link together all teachers of writing in our geographical area of southeastern Pennsylvania. The Newsletter features, but is not limited to, articles that deal with writing and the teaching of writing. We seek manuscripts from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and in all subject areas, and from anyone else interested in writing. All articles and submissions will be considered for publication. Comments, questions, etc., are also welcomed. Please send all communications to Judy Fisher, Editor, *Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter*, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

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