



## Voices of 1999 Writing Institute Participants

We have come together as one writing community. We have laughed and cried together and have come to know each other on very personal levels. The intimate climate of our classroom allowed us to take risks and grow as writers. I will truly miss having someone with whom to share my writing.

*Nora Ziegler, West Chester Area SD*

One point I would like to make perfectly clear is the impact Diane [Dougherty] and Lynne [Dorfman] (the co-directors) have made on me as a learner. I have never been so comfortable or assured at every turn as I have been here with them. They are wonderful and I will never forget them or this Institute. They have made me a better teacher. I am a Fellow now and I am so proud of that.

*Carlene Ettele, Antietam SD*

I can best summarize my learning experience at the Writing Institute with my own self awakening or "coming to know" myself as a teacher and writer. I was blessed to be under the guidance of two master teachers who shared their expertise, knowledge, and bits of literacy wisdom for our own classrooms. A kaleidoscope of teachers with diverse teaching experiences where our collected talents help to reshape our philosophies of effective teaching!

*Eileen Kean, Governor Mifflin SD*

Shluggg...shluggg...shluggg...The music of the coffee pot opens our day, the morning freewrite opens our minds and off we go into another day at the Writing Institute. We are at once teachers and students. Some days I feel like a sponge—I just sit and absorb what goes on around me. Sometimes it is our turn to stand and

teach. In this small, safe community we have created through food and laughter and hard work, we can stand and share, we can risk failure, we can celebrate success. We have each had the pleasure of hearing someone say, "You have helped me."

*Marsha Knight, Rosemont College*

Before you know it, it's lunch time. "Already?" we would always ask. How often during a typical school day would you say that! We often did working lunches, munching and reading or writing at the same time. But mostly we gave our eyes and brains a rest, opting to eat our bagged lunches on a blanket under the trees in a nearby grassy area. This gave us an opportunity to bounce ideas off each other, talk about upcoming projects, and just enjoy each other's company.

*Kelley Mallon, Centennial SD*

-continued on p. 4, column 1

### VISUALIZING WORDS AND WORLDS NEWEST PAWL P COURSE A SUCCESS

In November, 1998, PAWL P received a call from the James A. Michener Museum in Doylestown, asking us to develop a course with them on the link between the visual arts and writing and literature. Project director Andy Fishman, Phyllis Schwartz, the museum's education director, and I agreed to create the course.

After six months of planning, research, and encouragement from Nick Coles of the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project and just about everyone at PAWL P, *Visualizing Words and*

*Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art* was held at the Museum in August, 1999. Twenty-one participants enrolled in this three-credit, week-long course. In addition to taking advantage of the museum setting while discussing theory and technique, each teacher chose a theme upon which to build both visually and verbally. Local guest artists, Peter Catalanatto, Joan Menapace, Arlene Frimark, and Barry Snyder, worked with the participants for two hours every day. Each teacher created a found object sculpture, a watercolor, a print, and a sketch.

These pieces were mounted in an exhibit held the last afternoon of class alongside the poems, essays, and stories each participant wrote.

Teachers were enthusiastic about the many benefits of the course. The first was the dual edged obligation/freedom to write and create. Many discovered unknown writing and artistic talents within, while others re-awakened the skills they had let lay dormant. What they accomplished both visually and verbally in that exhibit literally left us all speechless. In

-continued on p.6, column 3



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### HELP STILL WANTED!

Attention PAWLP Fellows: The Project needs your help and participation.

We need:

- \* Primary-grade Fellows interested in learning - and doing inservice programs on - the new PAWLP Domain Assessment Rubric for Primary Grades;
- \* Secondary-grade Fellows to provide writing-across-the-curriculum workshops and courses;
- \* K-12 Fellows to coordinate PSSA Writing and PSSA Reading one-credit courses and in-service programs (preparation available!);
- \* Fellows with Special Education backgrounds to develop a Literacy Institute for Special Ed teachers;
- \* Fellows with Business Education backgrounds and/or interest in workplace literacy for a grant-funded initiative involving local businesses;
- \* Fellows to help plan our 20th Anniversary Conference, scheduled for June 22-23, 2000 (Ralph Fletcher is the keynote speaker.)
- \* Fellows to help plan our 20th Anniversary Dinner, scheduled for June 22, 2000 (with Fletcher as guest speaker.)

Does needing all these people mean that PAWLP is in trouble? Not at all. Rather it means that the Project is so healthy and so vital that there are more opportunities for more Fellow involvement than ever before. Whether you're a Writing or Literature Institute Fellow, from the summer of 1980 or the summer of 1999, this is your Project. Getting involved is a great way to celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2000. Call Andy at the Project Office to get involved now.



## NEW ONE-CREDIT COURSES FOR SUMMER, 2000

*Differentiating Instruction: Writing & Reading Strategies*  
*Genre Studies: Poetry, Non Fiction, & Folktales*  
*Writing & Math: Preparing for the PSSA Math Assessment*  
*Teaching Grammar in Context*  
*Creating Author Studies*  
*Readers' & Storytellers' Theater*

## EDITORIAL

Nearly every day I read something in the newspaper or hear a feature on the radio about the dire straits of education in the good old USA, along with a well-meaning, if often misinformed and misguided "solution" to the problem. No sooner do I get my dander up about one thing when I am embroiled in what my husband calls (I think affectionately) my "Italian steam machine" about another.

The latest is a front-page Philadelphia Inquirer story headlined "States Take New Paths in Search for a New Kind of Teacher." It seems that Massachusetts is the latest in a continuing number of states offering signing bonuses to teachers willing to pursue their careers in their great state. Sounds wonderful. Finally, a recognition of teachers as a vital component of "excellence in education." But, as the story in the Inquirer goes on to say: "Current teachers and people with degrees in education need not apply. The state is looking for undergraduates with majors in the hard sciences, math or a foreign language, and midcareer professionals in those fields who are looking for a change."

Well, I wish Massachusetts and those other states, including Pennsylvania, luck in finding people who are "masters of their subjects who have top-flight records as undergraduates or have worked in their fields." I can't

wait until states have squandered their money only to find out that though the individuals they've hired may have been great students, they are not necessarily fine teachers. It takes more than knowledge of one's discipline to become gifted at moving students to an understanding of that discipline. Furthermore, if students don't have a solid grounding in the fundamentals of reading and writing in their formative years, chances are pretty good that they won't be ready, willing, or able to pursue the disciplines on which so many dollars and so much talent have been spent.

Personally, I am weary of the politics of education, of decisions being made by those in public office who apparently believe that just because they attended school, they know all about how schools should be run. I have been charging every teacher I know, and now I am charging the readers of this *Newsletter*, to be advocates for children. Write those letters to the editor; write those letters to your representatives; write and phone your local school board members. Remember: Governors come and go, Secretaries of Education come and go, school boards, superintendents, and assistant superintendents come and go, but we teachers stay. This is our career, this is our life. Shouldn't our voices be heard?

Diane Dougherty  
PAWLP Co-Director for Institutes



## **Learning Portfolios: A Lit Institute Success Story**

As a teacher I've often wondered if or what my students are learning. At the end of our first six weeks grading period this year, I decided to use an idea from the Literature Institute and have my students do a learning portfolio. I made one of my own to show the students and provided a list of topics covered in my classes. As students began to hand in their portfolios, I showed theirs as examples.

I was truly overwhelmed. Last Friday was the due date. I couldn't wait to get home and dive into them. I was moved to tears by students' reactions to a Holocaust survivor's novel they read and then met the author face to face.

One portfolio began with one of the first projects that I do each year. Students have someone trace a silhouette of their head and then write a poem following a given form, each line beginning "I Am." One student documented this project with a drawing of a head and inside the head was a quote: "I Am that I Am." -God. Talk about connection. I shivered as I read and turned each page of her portfolio. These portfolios showed me connections and affirmations that learning is taking place that I could have never known about otherwise. They gave me a clear cut vision of what happens in my students' heads. Some are way beyond me in the connections they make.

One science teacher wants to know, "How do you get your students to do that?"

A math teacher sits in amazement: "I don't see that from this student."

I've been a little nuts this first six weeks trying so many new things that I learned in the Literature Institute, but it's been worth it. In twenty-five years of teaching, I've never felt this good about what I'm doing in the classroom.

One of the western connections, Sally Maust

*Sally Maust attended the '99 Literature Institute in West Chester. She is an '86 Writing Fellow and teaches the Somerset Area School District in Western Pennsylvania.*

## **SUMMER PROGRAMS STATISTICS**

### **Teacher Programs**

Total Participants: 466  
Total Number of PAWLP Programs: 32  
Berks County: 1  
Bucks County: 11  
Chester County (WCU): 20  
Number of Fellows who Coordinated/Presented: 28

### **Youth Programs**

Total Participants: 1,299  
Berks County: 72  
Bucks County: 193  
Chester County: 593  
(includes WCU)  
Delaware County: 193  
Montgomery County: 248  
Total Number of Classes: 101  
Number of Fellows who Taught/Coordinated: 68

## **STICKS AND STONES : Tolerance, Literacy and Children**

### **A Special PAWLP Day for Teachers and Parents**

**March 26, 2000  
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Sykes Student Union Building,  
West Chester University**

**For more information please call the  
Project Office: 610-436-2202**



# EDUCATION MATTERS

a column from Michaels Associates

## Language Arts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Kathleen Strickland

I remember a lesson I learned from a thirteen-year-old named Tanya whom I once had the privilege of teaching.\* Like most teachers of language arts, I love to read. I've been a reader all of my life, and when someone asks me my hobby, I can't say gardening, or cooking, or even writing or traveling, although they've been important parts of my life. What do I love to do most in the world, what helps me to relax, what takes me away to times and places I've always wanted to go? A good book. I probably majored in English because of my love for reading, and when I entered teaching, my goal for years was to transfer my love for books to my students so they would find the same joy and satisfaction and excitement that I had found. When that didn't happen, I felt saddened, discouraged, and often blamed myself or TV, and sometimes, I admit, even my students. But Tanya enlightened me.

Tanya was a street-wise teenager, one who had seen her share of violence, poverty, and even abuse. In fact, she spent some of

her life institutionalized because of it. But Tanya was a survivor. She was smart, strong, and quite opinionated, and although she wasn't easy to deal with on a daily basis, I really liked and respected her as a person. Tanya had ability and her reading skills were progressing; I could see her connecting to literature as we read *The Cay*, *Charlie Skeedaddle*, and finally *The Outsiders*, a book she dearly loved. I was beginning to think I had "hooked" Tanya, until one day she off-handedly told me that, although she read better now, she still read little outside of school and would rather see a movie or watch TV. I felt deflated and wondered where I had failed. But then Tanya continued, telling me that she really was glad she read better now because she was more successful in her mainstreamed classes. This had been her goal. She was able to read her assignments and get grades that demonstrated to her that she could be successful. Despite my hopes that Tanya would value reading in the same ways I did, Tanya showed me that, as her teacher, my job was not to impose my values and hopes on her, but to give her the tools to find a place in her life for literacy. I was responsible for giving Tanya the tools to make decisions for her life, to decide what was "best" for her. I learned from Tanya that students' reasons

for reading and writing are varied and often hard to define, but Tanya had begun to see herself as a capable reader and writer - she had found a place in her life for literacy and saw reading and writing as useful tools. I know Tanya is now a mother of two, and I can only hope that she has continued to find uses for the reading skills she acquired - she can survive in a world that requires literacy and hopefully she is reading to her children. And maybe, just maybe, Tanya's little ones will love books, but at the very least they'll be able to see their mom as someone who can read.

I think that's my full time job - the job of all language arts teachers and the curriculum they use at all grade levels. We need to find ways to help our students join what renowned educator Frank Smith calls "the Literacy Club." Membership is open to all and the rules of membership aren't mine. I don't hold the key - the students do. Once we get them reading and writing, once they're members of the club, they can use their memberships to accomplish their goals.

\* Tanya's story (and the story of other language learners like her) can be found in Kathleen Strickland's *Literacy, Not Labels*, Heinemann, 1995 available from Michaels Associates

### Voices of '99 Institute Participants

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Twelve strangers have come together as a community, guided by two very different, very capable teachers. Now the twelve will return to other communities and spread the word (all New Testament analogies are purely coincidental).

I feel humbled, validated, and appreciated all at once by this group. Lynne and Diane (the co-directors) truly fostered a "safe" environment where we could learn from one another and from ourselves. We questioned and

encouraged one another. We were nervous, anxious, upset together. Now we are more confident. We laughed, we played, we bickered, but in the end we all grew.

Linda Neumann, Manheim Township SD

We are curious and questioning sponges as we soak in the experiences of others and strive to make them our own, but mostly we are learners. . . curious, questioning, debating and growing.

Sultana Schwartz, Interboro SD

### SAVE THESE DATES:

JUNE 22 & 23, 2000

CELEBRATE LITERACY  
A Conference Marking  
PAWLP'S 20th Anniversary

Keynote Speaker:

**RALPH FLETCHER**

author of *What a Writer Needs*,  
*Writer's Notebook*, & *Craft Lessons*



## **The Morgan Model: Making Young Writers/Young Readers Available to More Students**

by Barbara A. Reznick,  
Site Coordinator at Twin Valley

During a meeting of site coordinators, many expressed concerns about the small number of students enrolled in some of the YW/YR summer programs.

*Why can't we get more students involved at some of the sites?*

*Why must we cancel due to lack of sufficient students to run a program?*

*Why do we need to turn away interested students or send them to a far away site?*

I could easily identify with these concerns for our initial attempt to present Young Writers/Young Readers at Twin Valley suffered the same fate. On questioning parents of students who would have been potential attendees, we learned that the price of the workshop was out of reach for many of our families. Our school district itself, involved in an expensive rebuilding project, was unable to provide funds to support YW/YR at our site. PAWLP's Summer Youth Program for reading and writing was appreciated and wanted but, in many cases, financially out of reach for our general population. At this point we had two choices: forget it or find the resources necessary to subsidize tuition charges. Since we had such high interest, forgetting the project was not an option.

We at Twin Valley were fortunate to have a superintendent dedicated to providing enriching and exciting opportunities to her students. Dr. Judith Funk invited the business community to work with the district in order to offer programs over and above the usual school curriculum, enabling children to enhance their learning during the summer. Through a corporate partnership with James Irvine, Director of Human Resources for The Morgan Corporation of Morgantown, Twin Valley School District received \$6,000. The

majority of the funds from this donation were used to reduce the cost of tuition for children in our school district to attend the summer writing and reading program sponsored by PAWLP.

Another source of support for families interested in YW/YR was our individual parent teacher organizations. Presentations explaining our summer programs were given to our PTA members at their monthly meetings. Our requests for grant monies were honored by all three of our elementary buildings. The Honey Brook, Robeson and Twin Valley Education Center organizations gladly provided students from their buildings the opportunity to continue their interest in reading and writing during their summer vacations.

So it seems that even though we are a small rural school district, there does exist a means to provide our students with enriching activities. A cooperative relationship to provide funds for special projects with the community is viable.

What worked here at Twin Valley is possible to offer relief for your summer Youth Program. Remembering that each community is unique, you need to go shopping for resources available in your neighborhood. Our experiences with raising funds proves that there are many opportunities available. To gather support for your site you need to be pro-active: knock on doors, make phone calls, go out and meet people and tell them about Young Writers/Young Readers. Involve your school board and administration. They should be aware of your efforts and supportive of your involvement with the community. They may already be aware of willing participants. Present your case to anyone who will listen and your efforts will be rewarded. YW/YR will fly at your site.

Once you have become involved monetarily with a corporation or an organization, it is to your benefit to keep your mentor(s) interested and informed: invite them to visit your site, send them samples of student work, write thank you letters from teachers and students, acknowledge their support in news articles, provide

them with an anthology and a YW/YR T-shirt, make them a part of your writing/reading experience. Recognition of anyone associated with your success is of great value in selling your program. Send notes of appreciation to building principals, janitors, secretaries, parent volunteers and anyone else who supports you at your site.

Through your efforts in involving your community as we did at Twin Valley, your program will have enough young writers and readers to flourish. Questions like "Why can't we run a program in our area?" will no longer plague your mission to offer Young Writers/Young Readers to the students in your school district.

[ In 1999, the following organizations and corporations also have generously supported the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project and its Youth Programs: SAP America, Inc., First National Bank of West Chester, Encore Books, Greater West Chester Sunrise Rotary Club, State Farm Insurance Company, and Wal-Mart of Quakertown.]

### **CORPORATE CORNER**

The following organizations and corporations generously supported the Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project and its Youth Programs this quarter.

It is with deepest appreciation that we recognize their valuable support.

**ACME MARKET** in Warrington  
**BALDWIN'S BOOK BARN**  
**BORDER'S BOOKS** in Springfield  
**ENTENMANN'S BAKERY** in Exton  
**QUINTA'S THRIFTWAY** in West Chester  
**PAOLI BOOK EXCHANGE**  
**THE INQUIRER NEWSPAPER**  
**WALDENBOOKS**

To learn how your business or organization can help support PAWLP programs please call Don King, Assistant Director for Development, at 610-436-3089.



**PAT D'ARCY  
VISITS SUMMER INSTITUTES**

Dear Pat,

When you spoke on July 15 to the forty or so people who attended the PAWLP Writing and Literature Institutes this summer, you talked about "making sense and shaping meaning." You referred to Louise Rosenblatt's notion of transacting with text both efferently and aesthetically, and you urged us to respond in writing to our students' writing. You emphasized the importance of reflective rather than "product" writing. While yours was an oral presentation and not a written story, I am going to stretch your ideas and try to respond as you suggested.

I am putting myself in the middle of the room listening to your British accent. You talk of "infants" instead of children, you speak of "sugar paper" and of being "gobsmacked," and I am charmed by your words! You sip coffee from a styrofoam cup and you stand out among us in your bright pink blouse. You're a published author and you've devoted many years to your research, yet you come across as a learner yourself, not an "expert" sharing her wisdom. Your presentation is genuine, not at all "canned." I watch as you puzzle over questions and comments, and I can see the new ideas brewing in your brain as you respond thoughtfully.

The cover illustration of your handout shows a multiple helix representing the complicated and dynamic processes of learning. You speak of all those processes but in particular of visualizing. You demonstrate some specific strategies for visualizing or, as you call it, "thinking in words and images." You suggest an activity where students view some intriguing picture and are asked to write about what is happening immediately outside the picture. You suggest also drawing and cutting out characters, like paper dolls, and moving them around a scene. We practice

"picture thinking" by taking a mental snapshot of a baby and describing it in detail, in writing. Our students, you tell us, need to know what their brains are capable of doing with little effort. Picture thinking is one of these capacities.

You recommend that we as teachers take the time to respond in writing to our students' stories. The first step, you say, is to "engage" with the text, to internalize the story, to try to put ourselves in the middle of it. The second response is more interpretive. It points out specific details in the writing and the ways in which they affect us as readers and trigger our imaginations.

What you have really made me understand is the importance of responding authentically, of not just jotting notes but of appreciating what a writer has written. I can imagine how much this kind of response means to a young writer, this way of being "affirmed" by a reader's heartfelt and "brainfelt" feedback. In a practical sense, I cannot envision writing detailed responses to everything my students write. Most teachers could not manage the time. Still, I will not forget your point. Our reactions to the writings of our students carry great weight. When we respond with genuine engagement and specific appreciation, we demonstrate to our students the power of their written words.

Thank you for modeling thoughtful response for us!

Sincerely,  
Linda Neumann

P.S. I have added "gobsmacked" to my vocabulary!

*Pat D'Arcy, author of Making Sense, Shaping Meaning arrived from England to present to the summer Institutes on the Teaching of Writing and Literature on July 15, 1999. Linda Neumann is a new Fellow of PAWLP and was "gobsmacked" by a huge ball of masking tape as part of the skit the new Fellows presented to friends and guests at the PAWLP luncheon as a culminating activity. What great fun!*

**Visualizing Words and Worlds**

*...continued from page 1, column 3*

addition, participants appreciated what their students felt on the other side of the desk – the joys and agonies of producing and then publishing their work. (See Joe O'Brien's poem below for more on this.)

Because they had produced both kinds of works, they clearly saw how their composition and revision strategies were strikingly similar across media. They understood, too, the theory of connecting the arts and could cite how they would do so in their classrooms this coming year.

Overall, participants gave the course high marks. One said the experience changed the way she would teach forever. An art teacher has already signed up for next summer's Writing Institute so she can eventually coordinate this course. Because it was so successful, we already have our dates to run it again next year, July 31-August 11, 2000.

by Judy Jester, PAWLP Co-Director  
'93 Writing, '94 Lit

**Writing between the Lines  
or When the Right Brain seems Dyslexic**

In the mind's eye, a picture firm and clear  
—the house among the hills, the trees like dim regret  
—the new, still snow a mirror for the moon  
—the woodpile in the side yard a promise full of warmth

But the journey from brain to paper is clearly much too long:

The roof slants strangely to the left  
the walls can hardly stand,  
as if the one who built it  
used a ladder made of sand.

The poor children in that upstairs room  
must hate their window's pane.  
It can't keep out the cold at all  
and probably lets in rain.

And the woodpile in the side yard is  
missing from this scene.  
No fire will blaze bright this year.  
The chimney will stay clean.

So when that picture from the mind's eye  
makes the paper gnarled and smeared,  
try painting pictures with your words  
to make your mind clear.

-Joe O'Brien



# Become a Fellow of the Writing or Literature Project!

## Writing Institute

- 3 locations:  
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY,  
BUCKS COUNTY IU, HADDONFIELD, NJ
- Writing & teaching writing
  - Writing processes: theory & practice
  - Revision strategies that work
  - Peer and teacher conferencing
  - Response groups in the classroom
  - Writing to learn across the curriculum
  - Writing Workshop management
  - Portfolio & Performance Assessment
  - PSSA Writing Assessment



**Summer Institute  
Stipends of \$500  
Available!**

**six graduate credits**  
(three-credit school year  
follow-up available)

**June 26 - July 21, 2000 (4 weeks)  
Monday - Thursday, 8:30 am - 3 pm**

## Literature Institute

- 1 location:  
COLONIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT,  
PLYMOUTH MEETING
- Reading & teaching literature
  - Literature Circles & reader response
  - Multicultural literature
  - Young Adult & Children's literature
  - Fiction & non-fiction in the content areas
  - Art & visual media as literature
  - Reading Workshop management
  - Portfolio & Performance Assessment
  - PSSA Reading Assessment

Fellows of both Institutes may become paid teacher-consultants eligible to coordinate courses, present in-service programs, and teach in our summer Youth Programs.

Act now! Applications are considered on a rolling admission basis and enrollments are limited. Send us the form below or call the office at (610) 436-2202 and an application form will be sent by return mail.

## Nomination Form for the Summer Institutes of the Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project

- I nominate myself or the teacher named below for the Summer Institute in the Teaching of Literature held in the Colonial School District.
- I nominate myself or the teacher named below for the Summer Institute in the Teaching of Writing.  
Please check location preferred:  
 Bucks County IU     West Chester University     Haddonfield, New Jersey

### Nominee Information

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCHOOL NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_  
 JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_  
 CERTIFICATION \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCHOOL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
 HOME TELEPHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL TELEPHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 NOMINATOR \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form to The PA Writing & Literature Project Office,  
West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383*

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The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project *Newsletter* is published five times a year by and for those affiliated with the Project. Submissions are always welcome and can be mailed to the Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA, 19383.



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### **Time for a change?**

Please let us know by checking the appropriate box below and returning it to us with the above address label. Thank you!

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