

# Newsletter



Volume 26, Number 2 Spring, 2006

## Renew Your Spirit at Celebrate Literacy VII

Ah...the end of June! It's that precious time just after the final chalk dust settles and the last book is packed away. It's that can't-wait-to-relax time just before we free our feet from the constraints of hard shoes. It's that quiet time when we reflect on the past year, renew our spirits, and begin to make plans for the fall. It's that time of year for the PAWLP Celebrate Literacy Conference!

Plans are almost complete for Celebrate Literacy VII, to be held June 27 and 28 at the WCU Graduate Business Center. The Conference will open on Tuesday with a keynote address by author Linda Rief. Ms. Rief, a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teacher in Durham, NH, has authored several books including *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents*. She

is cofounder and coeditor of *Voices from the Middle*, a journal for middle school teachers published by



Linda Rief, author of *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents* and co-editor of the NCTE journal *Voices from the Middle* is Tuesday's keynote speaker.

the National Council of Teachers of English. Linda will speak about literacy for life, and how all of us

as teachers can enhance the reading/writing experience for ourselves as well as our students.

The keynote speaker on Wednesday is children's author James Howe. Mr. Howe writes books for young children as well as teenagers. His works include *The Misfits* and *The Watcher* as well as several series - the popular and funny *Bunnicula* and *Pinky and Rex* among others.

Also scheduled on each day are many breakout sessions conducted by PAWLP Fellows. This is an opportunity for participants to hear fresh ideas and to learn new ways to approach reading and writing in the classroom. There will be sessions for primary, intermediate, middle and high school teachers offered each day on such topics as

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## Summer Course News for Summer 2006

Summer is just around the bend - even the daffodils are pushing through the cold/warm soil to show off their greens. Soon their pretty yellow bonnets will decorate our yards and fields. And soon, teachers will be making summer plans. Some days will be devoted to sun-soaking-fun-at-the-shore time, and

other days will be devoted to knowledge-soaking-fun-at-the-Project time. Teachers are lifelong learners who often use summer for professional enrichment and growth. That's where PAWLP comes in.

Three courses offered at the Graduate Business Center run during our Celebrate Literacy Confer-

ence. **Manage a Writing/Reading Classroom** has two sections, K-2 and 3-8. **Growing Readers** is back for another season. All three courses include our conference and have been very popular with teachers.

We are pleased to hold **Teacher as Writer** this summer

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**SUMMER COURSE SCHEDULE ON PAGES 4 - 5**

**FROM THE DIRECTOR  
ANDREA FISHMAN**

*Scientifically-based research.*

The very phrase strikes a combination of fear and loathing in the heart of a qualitative researcher like me. At least it did until the National Writing Project's Local Site Research Initiative (LSRI) came into our life here at PAWLP. While I can't say I've become a quantitative convert, I now publicly testify that I can at least understand how scientifically-based research enables me – and us – to demonstrate the effectiveness of PAWLP's inservice programs not only in terms of teacher change but in terms of student achievement as well. And that, as we all know, is everyone's bottom line, including ours.

This change in understanding became necessary when we all had to confront the No Child Left Behind legislation and its requirement that schools receiving Title I money "use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically-based research." PAWLP needed this kind of systematic, standardized data to demonstrate the impact of our work on students as well as teachers. We needed evidence school districts could use to prove money spent with us was money legitimately spent under the new guidelines. Of course, we had decades of anecdotal evidence that PAWLP changes teachers' professional – and writing – lives. And these teachers have evidence that their growth led to their students'

growth. But what we knew based on the kind of evidence we had was not the gold standard of proof required in this age of NCLB-defined accountability.

So we proposed and won an LSRI research grant using a quasi-experimental, matched comparison group design – a form of scientifically-based research valorized in the world of educational researchers. Our "quasi-experiment" involved all the K-5 teachers and students in one Lancaster County school district. Because neither they nor we were willing to randomly create a control group within the district, we enlisted the help of two neighboring districts with almost identical demographics. Their teachers and students willingly became our control groups because that meant we would administer and score fall and spring in-district writing assessments, K-5, at no cost. The only difference was that between the

*... scientifically-based research enables us to demonstrate the effectiveness of PAWLP's inservice programs*

September pre-test and the May post-test, we would provide a year of inservice – combining workshops, coaching, modeling, and study groups – in the experimental district but not at the control sites.

This research was conducted in the 2003-2004 school year. In 2004, we submitted our report to NWP. Then, in late 2005, our report became part of a meta-study by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center

(CSRQC) of the American Institutes of Research in Washington. The CSRQC reviewed 800 studies of elementary-school comprehensive reform models. They used what they describe as "rigorous standards that are aligned with the requirements for scientifically based research established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Each model [was] rated on a number of dimensions, including evidence of raising student achievement." Of the 800 studies reviewed, only 22 were considered "conclusive, which means the Center has confidence in the results reported." PAWLP's study is one of the 22.

Naturally, we're more than delighted to have conclusive proof of PAWLP's effectiveness in increasing student achievement, but what else we learned from this experience is the true focus of this column. Our research design made us "scientific," but what did it mean to be "scientific"? What impact did it have on what we do or who we are? In a word, none. Our philosophy, practice, and integrity all remained in tact during this foray into the quantitative world. Our workshops, coaching, modeling, and study groups reflected and focused on best practice – in staff development and in teaching writing. We may have referred to teachers and students as "experimental" or "control groups" in our report, but that language never entered our work or our thinking. Yes, we compared similar student groups' performances on the same tests. The tests were administered and scored by the same people, none of whom were connected to the schools, the students, or the staff development work itself. The scor-

*-Continued on page 7*

## - Summer Courses

*Continued from page 1*

with Dr. Mary Buckelew. This course is always a gift – a chance to become a writing teacher who writes. For many, it is a chance to pursue the dream of being published. It is always BIG fun!

Welcome back to **Writing and Children's Literature** with Rose Cappelli and Lynne Dorfman, a course that has a solid decade-long history with the Writing Project. Rose and Lynne have many new titles to share in a classroom that holds about 1000 books as resources for teachers.

A three-credit course offered for the first time, **Teaching Writers' Craft to Enhance Voice and Style, grades, 1 – 8**, will help teachers inspire their students with mini-lessons and specific strategies to find their own writing voices.

Two new additions make their debut as one-credit courses. We are pleased to announce **Teachers as Poets**, a K-12 course with Don LaBranche, sure to give teachers a chance to write poetry and a chance to become reacquainted with a genre that serves children well at every grade. (Even Nancie Atwell is writing about poetry in her latest book.) **Reading Workshop**, offered for teachers of tweeners and teeners, is also scheduled at the West Chester Business Center for the first time.

**Linking Technology to the Reading/Writing Classroom, 1-8**, is a course we believe many teachers have been waiting for. It will be offered at the Upper Moreland Intermediate School during the week of July 10. The class is limited to 25 participants. Learning will be differentiated depending on the comfort level of each teacher. Next year, an

advanced course will be added for those ready for the next level.

Bucks County Intermediate Unit will open with **Nonfiction in the Writing/Reading Classroom** and present a host of interactive reading and writing strategies using quality nonfiction literature.

**Multigenre Writing** is the new creation of Chad Watters and Chris Lodwig, popular presenters at our conferences, PAWLPDAYS, and courses.

Teachers have an opportunity to take **Reading Essentials: Teaching Readers What Really Matters, 2-8**, a course that has been offered in a weekend format during

*Every course is about building communities of writers and readers through an interactive workshop approach.*

this school year. Chris Kehan and Angela Watters will focus participants' attention on strategic reading and how to build a community of readers through interactive read alouds, independent reading time, conferring and feedback, and authentic, ongoing assessment practices.

A new one credit course, **Writing Workshop: Secondary Survival Strategies, 6-12**, is also offered at Bucks County I.U. with Vicki Meigs and Charles Thomas who promise to send teachers back to their classrooms "armed and ready" with myriad approaches for establishing and maintaining a writing workshop.

We are thrilled with a brand new location for **Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art** - the Reading Public Museum

in Reading! The course will also run again at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford. This course is a special treat. Find inspiration for writing in various art forms and discover the powerful synergy between words and images.

Maybe this summer you will consider becoming a Fellow by enrolling in one of our **Invitational Summer Institutes** on the teaching of writing or literature. This Fellow can tell you that it changed her professional life in ways she never imagined, including the gift of a powerful network of colleagues for feedback and friendship. What more could anyone ask for?

We hope you will start your summer with our two-day **Celebrate Literacy Conference** featuring Linda Rief and James Howe as well as a team of PAWLP Fellows facilitating quality, interactive workshops. Last year was an early sell-out. Physical space at the WCU Graduate Business Center requires us to limit enrollment, so don't wait to secure your spot!

As always, PAWLP welcomes old friends and new friends. We hope to provide you with best-practice strategies in a friendly, non-threatening environment. Every course is about building communities of writers and readers through an interactive workshop approach. Theory is blended with practice and practical tips we hope will serve you well when you return to your classrooms. You are always our first concern. After all, teachers DO make a difference. They touch lives. PAWLP is here to serve you and your students. We hope to touch your lives in lasting, meaningful ways. Join our PAWLP family this summer.

*- Lynne R. Dorfman  
PAWLP Co-Director*

# • SUMMER COUR

## At the WCU Graduate Business Center

### Three-credit courses:

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(except Teacher as Writer)

#### SESSION II

#### Manage a Writing/Reading Classroom, K - 2

June 26 - 30 PWP 599-02

Coordinator: Reene Martin

#### Manage a Writing/Reading Classroom, 3 - 8

June 26 - 30 PWP 599-03

Coordinators: Teresa Moslak and Jan Pizzaro

#### Growing Readers, K - 5

June 26 - 30 PWP 599-04

Coordinators: Debbie Dinsmore and Rose Cappelli

PWP 599-02, 599-03, and 599-04 include attendance at the Celebrate Literacy Conference.

The cost of the conference is waived if registered and tuition paid by May 12.

Add \$50 conference fee after May 12.

#### Teacher as Writer, K - 12

Hours: 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

July 5 - 7 and 10 - 14 PWP 502-01

Coordinator: Mary Buckelew

#### Content Area Writing and Reading, 5 - 12

July 10 - 14 PWP 510-01

Coordinator: Francine Perrine-Wittkamp

#### Writing and Children's Literature, K - 8

July 17 - 21 PWP 513-03

Coordinators: Lynne Dorfman and Rose Cappelli

#### SESSION III

#### Strategies for Teaching Writing, 4 - 12

July 24 - 28 PWP 503-01

Coordinators: Tina DiLiberato and Sharon Sweeney

#### Teaching Writers' Crafts to

#### Enhance Voice and Style, 1 - 8

July 31 - August 4 PWP 599-05

Coordinators: Frank Murphy and Bill Crowley

### One-credit courses:

8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

These courses may be taken for 15 activity hours.

#### SESSION II

#### Celebrate Literacy VII Conference

June 27 - 28 PWP 599-01

Additional \$50 conference fee applies to registrations received and/or paid after May 12.

#### SESSION III

#### Reading Workshop, 5 - 9

July 31 - August 1 PWP 599-11

Coordinators: Lesley Roessing and Sue Rodebaugh

#### Teachers as Poets, K - 12

August 2 - 3 PWP 599-12

Coordinator: Don LaBranche



Please register as soon as possible.  
The Conference and all courses have participant limits.

SESSION II courses must be paid in full by  
June 29 to avoid University late fees.

SESSION III courses must be paid in full by  
August 3 to avoid University late fees.

# SES SCHEDULE •

## At the Bucks County Intermediate Unit

Three-credit courses:  
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### SESSION II

#### Nonfiction in a Writing/Reading Classroom, K - 6

July 10 - 14 PWP 510-02  
Coordinators: Angela Watters and Kristin Simon

#### Multigenre Writing, 2 - 8

July 17 - 21 PWP 513-04  
Coordinators: Chad Watters and Chris Ludwig

### SESSION III

#### Content Area Writing and Reading, 3 - 8

July 24 - 28 PWP 510-03  
Coordinators: Maria Banks and Maryellen Kenney

#### Reading Essentials: Teaching Readers What Really Matters, 2 - 8

August 7 - 11 PWP 599-06  
Coordinators: Chris Kehan and Angela Watters

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One-credit course: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

### SESSION II

#### Writing Workshop:

#### Secondary Survival Strategies, 6 - 12

June 29 - 30 PWP 599-10  
Coordinators: Vicki Meigs and Charles Thomas

## At Other Locations

Three-credit courses:

### SESSION II

#### Linking Technology to the Writing/Reading Classroom, 1 - 8

July 10 - 14 PWP 508-01  
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Upper Moreland Intermediate School in Hatboro  
Coordinators: Mark Curtis and Sue Powidzki

### SESSION III

#### Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art

July 31 - August 4, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
with introductory meeting June 20, 1 - 4 p.m.

Two locations:

Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford  
PWP 513-01

Coordinators: Judy Jester and Judy Asselin  
Reading Public Museum, Reading  
PWP 513-02

Coordinator: Donna Searle

### **Invitational Summer Institutes for Master Teachers**

**6 graduate credits  
June 26 - July 20**

Writing Institutes at the Graduate Business Center (GBC) in West Chester and the Bucks County IU in Doylestown.  
Literature Institute at the GBC.

Participants become Fellows of the National Writing Project.

Call 610-436-2202 for information and an application packet.

## “WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?”

It is the infamous question that every teacher hears from colleagues and parents as spring nears and then draws to a close: “What are you doing this summer?” I remember hearing this question the first summer that I decided to teach for Youth after having attended the Institute the prior year. I can still remember the reactions from my colleagues: “You’re going to what? Teach? But don’t you need a break?”

At the time, I remember thinking that I needed the money, and this was a feasible option. How bad could it be, working for two weeks (or four) for three hours each day teaching a small group of kids who love to read and write, especially without having to worry about PSSA scores or report cards? It sounded pretty good to me, although I was awfully nervous that first summer!

As it turned out, not only did I not need to be nervous, I didn’t realize how truly energizing it would be. Imagine having an opportunity to teach only reading and writing for three hours a day with no interruptions! Imagine working with a group of students who are as passionate and enthusiastic about reading and writing as you are. Imagine having quality time to really workshop pieces of writing with your students or to share one of your favorite books. Imagine a bond that develops with and between your dozen-or-so students after just a few short days because you are finally able to create that classroom community that you always wanted. I left the site each day feeling tired not because of the myriad of issues that crossed my desk throughout the long

school day but tired because my energy level was on high the whole three hours because I was actually having fun! Remember when you first entered the teaching profession with the thought that teaching would be fun? Didn’t that feeling fizzle soon after you realized the bureaucratic position that is actually a teacher? I found a way to reclaim it, and the answer is PAWLP Youth!

When I returned to school after that first summer, I reminisced with my colleagues about summer adventures. Most had relaxed and vacationed in fun, sunny places; a few took courses to try to attain that top spot on the pay scale; some even worked part-time jobs tutoring, teaching summer school, or working in state liquor stores (forever eyeing that pension).



**Writing  
and  
Reading  
Brighten  
Your  
Mind!**

No one, however, came back as excited and refreshed as I did. None of them were truly looking forward to another year in the classroom. Sure, they were eager to meet new students and try out some new ideas or materials, but the thought of a long school year loomed beyond that first sparkling week.

I, on the other hand, had discovered the “fountain of Youth,” you might say, and could not wait to recreate in my classroom what I had unlocked that summer. The teaching of literacy really is fun, and the teaching profession itself really is the best job there is. The ideas that I had learned from my PAWLP colleagues that summer were invaluable, and I knew my classroom was about to become the place I always wanted it to be. My batteries had gotten re-charged, and I was raring to go!

Now, here it is, eight years later, and I haven’t missed a summer yet. I can’t think of any other summer-time activity that refreshes me more and prepares me better for the upcoming school year. It restores my faith in teaching! So now when people ask me that question, “What are you doing this summer?” my answer is simple: “I plan to relax, rejuvenate, and have fun! I’m working for Young Writers/Young Readers.”

*- Kelley O’Leary,  
PAWLP Youth Co-Director*

**All PAWLP Fellows  
are eligible to teach in  
the summer Youth  
Programs.**

**For information and a  
Youth teacher applica-  
tion form call 610-  
436-3089.**

**- Renew Your Spirit**

*Continued from page 1*

reading and writing in the content areas, exploring nonfiction writing through literature, meeting the needs of all the writers in your classroom, starting up a reading workshop, empowering writers to revise, enhancing reading comprehension, and building reading fluency. All presenters are fellow teachers who share a wealth of classroom experience



James Howe, author of many books for teenagers and children including *The Misfits*, *The Watcher*, and the best-selling *Bunnica* series is Wednesday's keynote speaker.

and knowledge gained from their work with PAWLP.

So after the chalk dust settles and the last book is packed away, before you finally free your feet from those hard shoes, come to the PAWLP Celebrate Literacy Conference. Renew your spirit with fresh ideas, and reflect with your fellow teachers on how you can enhance the reading and writing instruction in your classroom. You won't be disappointed!

- Rose Cappelli, '96 WC Writing,  
Celebrate Literacy  
Conference Committee

## KUDOS

**Meg Clementi**, '05 WC Writing, was the subject of a feature article in the Neumann College paper on the topic of Writing in Math. Meg will present at the NCTM conference. Her session is entitled, *Writing in Math? Yes!*

**Brenda Krupp**, PAWLP Co-Director for Elementary Schools, has been named Director of Staff Development for Souderton School District.

**Jason Finn**, '00 Lit, published a young adult novel, *The Gift of the Realm*. Jason has participated in the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program and been listed in Who's Who Among America's Teachers.

**Mary Buckelew**, PAWLP Associate Director, was named to the national steering committee of NWP's Local Sites Research Initiative.

**Chris Kehan**, Central Bucks SD, **Cheryl Stahle**, Norristown Area SD, and **Wendy Blankin**, Springfield Township SD, have been named Co-Directors of the Bucks Writing Institute.

**- From the Director,**

*Continued from page 2*

ing was blind, i.e., scorers never knew which district's or students' papers they had. The scores were analyzed by computer under the supervision of a statistician not connected to the Project. So our measure was taken using the criteria that define "objectivity," but our work with teachers never objectified anyone.

And that may be the most important lesson I can share from this experience. "Scientifically-based research" uses the language of science and the criteria associated with its judgments. It frames the world through the lens of the laboratory, removing the clutter most of us consider constituent of being human. These words and criteria – this frame and lens – eliminate variables and complications. They zero-out context, capture the teaching-learning process in numbers without names, people without identities, products without processes. Because scientifically-based research did not change who we are or what we did, however, I have a new-found respect for what it can reveal.

Next time you see me, Mary Buckelew, Diane Dougherty, Vicki Steinberg, or Dori Hoch ask us about the LSRI experience. The quantitative results are interesting, too.



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