



# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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## COMPUTERS AND THE WRITING PROCESS

The Regional Computer Resource Center (RCRC) in cooperation with PAWP has begun a one-credit graduate workshop for elementary teachers on "Computers and the Writing Process." Bob Weiss and Judy Yunginger are instructing.

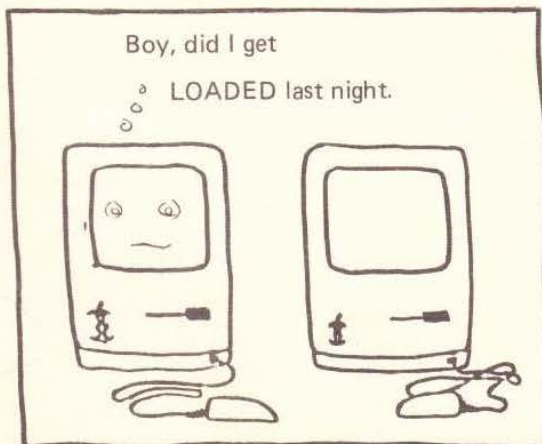
The course is focusing on micro-computer applications at all stages of the writing process. In five three-hour sessions, participants get basic awareness, demonstrations and hands-on experiences in pre-writing and planning, word processing, revising, editing, skill building, evaluation and classroom management.

Specific topics in the course include overviews of computers and the writing process, pre-writing and drawing, revising and editing, poems and stories, classroom publishing, and word processing applications in content areas. All applications are for Apple IIE and IIC computers.

Anyone interested in tuition scholarships for subsequent Computers and Writing courses should contact John Kerrigan, RCRC, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

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### Computer Talk



From the 1986 Advanced Institute on Computers and Writing.

## ABOUT THE SUMMER INSTITUTE

by Lois Snyder

If the Summer Institute isn't a "writing course", what is it? The first-rate teachers selected for the 1986 Pennsylvania Writing Project fellowships would agree with their "fellow fellows" from the Summer Institutes of 1980-85 that you begin to understand the difference between a course and an institute only after experiencing twenty full days from 9:00 to 4:30 on the West Chester University campus immersed in writing and the teaching of writing.

Anyone considering applying for a 1987 PAWP fellowship would be interested in knowing something about what keeps these fine teachers busy during those weeks.

A thread of sameness runs through the fabric of each Institute. In a setting that replicates the National Writing Project model, Fellows each earn six graduate credits while raising issues, learning strategies, identifying problems, working on solutions, reading current research, and assimilating and internalizing new experiences in the field of writing.

There is always much reading and writing and sharing. Fellows become familiar with much of the past and current literature and research about the writing process through extensive reading of books, monographs, and articles. Theory-sharing sessions provide an opportunity to share these readings. The writing process becomes internalized as Fellows learn about themselves as writers so that they can better understand the writing process of each student. They write to learn more about writing: a position paper about the teaching of writing, a personal piece such as a narrative, a poem, or a children's story, and an action piece about writing designed to elicit reaction from someone outside of the Institute. Fellows also write book reviews and they freewrite. They share the responsibility of logging the days' activities. In addition, each Fellow prepares a one-hour presentation which includes several writing assignments. As each presentation is given in "draft" form, other members of the Institute act as the audience and offer comments and suggestions for revision. Fellows learn the value of sharing and work through writing problems in Response Groups. Each summer, several writing consultants visit the Institute.

No PAWP Institute, however, is exactly the same as another. This summer twenty-five teachers from nineteen school districts and all grade levels brought their unique backgrounds to West Chester. They worked with a diverse

(Continued on next page)

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WRITING PROJECT PARTICIPATION AND TAKING A COURSE

<u>TAKING A COURSE</u>	<u>PARTICIPATION IN PAWP INSTITUTE</u>
<p><b>B</b> <b>E</b> <b>F</b> <b>O</b> <b>R</b> <b>E</b></p>	
You are a student	You are a colleague
You pay	You get a fellowship
You are admitted if qualified, even barely	You apply in writing, are selected by your school district, then interviewed by PAWP staff, then admitted
You come on the first day	You come a month early to meet PAWP staff, current fellows, and all other Institute participants; to buy texts, and to gain a greater sense of membership in an enterprise. By the first day of the Institute you have read at least 2 books and written 2 pieces.
You are with others who teach on your level	You are mixed with teachers at all levels and of all subjects
<hr/>	
<p><b>D</b> <b>U</b> <b>R</b> <b>I</b> <b>N</b> <b>G</b></p>	
Teaching is dominated by one authority—a university professor	A team made up of the project director and two co-directors who are classroom teachers coordinates the instruction. One outside consultant a week adds authority and fresh perspective, and all participants are individually and as a group simply made to be their own authorities.
Teaching method is predominately lecture	PAWP's approach balances time for reading, writing, responding orally and in writing, presenting, thinking and interacting in large and small groups. Very little lecturing occurs—probably 10% of Institute time. Your learning is largely experiential.
Focus is on research and theory	Focus is on practical applications with supporting rationale from research findings and theoretical perspectives
You submit written work and are evaluated by a professor	Your writing develops with continual assistance from "response groups." Several pieces are made public, either sent to a named audience outside of the Institute or submitted for publication. Less than half of your writing is evaluated.
You work independently, competing for grades	You work independently and collaboratively. You are guaranteed a good grade if you accomplish all tasks reasonably well and participate fully in the Institute. Institute socials help bond participants. Your administrators support your efforts in the application phase, at the Institute luncheon, and in follow-up.
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<p><b>A</b> <b>F</b> <b>T</b> <b>E</b> <b>R</b></p>	
There is no after, unless you are in a degree program	PAWP staff respond to your writing. Your presentation is considered for use in PAWP courses. You receive the PAWP newsletter and all mailings. You are invited to participate in monthly continuity meetings and to provide in-service in your school. You self-assess your teaching practices in project surveys. You are invited to publish your teaching logs, your students' work, and your reflections on both. You may be a teacher-writer, a teacher-consultant, a teacher-researcher, or a project staff member.

group of inspirational consultants. Dan Kirby, teacher-researcher and author of *Inside Out*, came from the University of Georgia to talk about teaching writing. In sometimes humorous presentations, he focused on strategies especially useful with 7th to 10th grade students. Bob Tierney, teacher-writer-consultant from the Bay Area Writing Project, came to us from his biology classroom in Fremont, California and talked to us about teaching writing in science. Carin Hauser, teacher-consultant from the Northern Virginia Writing Project, came to talk about her conferencing techniques with third grade students. She also encouraged us to begin thinking about the classroom teacher as a researcher. Olivier Dunrea talked about his experiences as a noted author and illustrator of children's books. Len Roberts, award-winning Pennsylvania poet, talked about his work in schools with young children. We learned about writing poetry ourselves and about teaching poetry to our students.

There were several new activities added to the institute this summer. For the first time, Fellows worked in pairs to

write a collaborative book review. There was a stronger emphasis on the use of learning logs as a tool for reflecting on learning through writing. A long-term writing group was formed which, along with the monthly continuity meetings, will deepen the sense of an on-going writing community.

The Fellows came to understand the difference between a course and an institute—the camaraderie between teachers of all levels and subjects, the involvement in their own and each others' learning, the value in combining the practical and the theoretical, and the fulfillment of search and discovery. Look for more information about the writing group and about the theme of reunion which will be the focus of the 1986-87 continuity meetings. It was indeed a successful summer both intellectually and socially for the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Call the Project office if you believe that the Summer Institute of 1987 might be for you.

*Lois Snyder, a guidance counselor in the Upper Darby School District, is a 1980 PAWP Fellow and has been co-director of the Summer Institute for several years.*

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## TIME

by Harry C. Bradley

To make time or not to make time? That is the question! Whether 'tis nobler to the student for the teacher to teach the writing process and suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous supervisors and principals for not covering the "curriculum" or, by going along with them, get better ratings.

How does one accomplish both? The Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP) leaves the content area teacher in a dilemma. How much of the curriculum can be skipped in order to implement these ideas; these wonderful, learning centered ideas. 'Just the facts, nothing but the facts' gets all the curriculum covered, but little learning takes place. Through writing we learn, we understand, we retain knowledge. When a student learns and remembers we have accomplished what we are paid to do, we teach.

Through PAWP we have learned that there is a writing process and that it can be taught. When prewriting, writing, revising, editing and publishing are all used together and/or in part, a person can produce the best writing they are capable of and the material becomes a part of them.

When Bob Weiss said, "Writing is the ability to clearly express your thoughts and ideas to others on paper," I began to wonder if I could do that. Donald Murray said that writing "... is the process of using language to discover meaning in experience and to communicate it" (p. 73). Was I concerned with my students' abilities to express thoughts and ideas or only the "facts"? How many "research papers" have I assigned, collected, and read only for fact and grammar, not the child's thoughts or opinions? How often do I put such strict boundaries on a paper that there is no room left for the student to get involved or to feel? Hopefully not as much as I did before I took the PAWP first course, but probably still too often. My students probably write for me, write what they think I want to hear. "What pleases the teacher is apparently of major importance to these pupils" (Martin, p. 13). How do you become a teacher that "... is concerned not only with what he asks his pupils to do but also with how he allows them to respond ... then he may find that they discover their own strategies for learning through writing" (Martin, p. 16). How does one do this and still follow a curriculum that allows little time for experimentation or exploration of new ideas or methods?

Time, time, time, where does one find time? Donald Graves suggests that one finds time by taking time. What a wonderful and simple solution! I am confused. I do believe in the broad, basic ideas of the project. Brainstorming, clustering, mapping, listing and other pre-writing activities can be used in the social studies with excellent results, but they take so much time. How I would love to stop teaching civics for a month or two and let the children experience their own thoughts, show them through the process and allow them to experience real learning. When my students are given the freedom to pick and write on topics they find interesting within the social studies, they write. When they are allowed to read and listen to each others papers in response groups, they revise. The finished products are of a higher quality than I thought possible and they remember what they have written about. The process does work but it is time-consuming. The little I seem to be able to do within my curriculum seems insignificant. Far too often I cannot take the time needed.

This year I hope to try using Learning Centered Writing again. "What did you learn today?" "What would you like to know more about?" Perhaps I will even try using double entry journals and more pre-teaching questions to find out what the students already know and what they think they

know. I have already revised my notes into framed paragraph worksheets (that was before Bob Tierney from the Bay Area Writing Project complained about teachers using worksheets). There are so many other things I would like to try, but it takes time, time I must spend on covering content. Incorporating all the ideas and suggestions from PAWP will probably never be possible. I wonder if I will even be able to use more than I do now?

A solution might be found if we could unetch the "curriculum" from stone and put it in erasable ink. We need to rewrite the social studies curriculums, taking out material that is meaningless and adding that which is vital. We need to allow our students the time to experiment, to find their own answers and their own questions, to make learning the social studies an internal part of themselves. We must get away from the memorization of names, dates and places and allow thinking and questioning to take place. I am quite certain that most social studies students will be able to go through the rest of their lives without needing to know who Washington's Secretary of State was or why the Blue Men of Morocco are blue. We social studies people must begin to re-evaluate our courses and teaching in order to make them useful and meaningful to our students. We must give the student purpose and stop giving written assignments that have "... no inherent interest for the writer; it was not being put to use by him in any way other than to prove that he had 'done his homework'" (Martin, p. 63).

To me this sounds good—perhaps too good. How does one implement the changes and not just pay lip service to them? Perhaps I have become too involved with PAWP, becoming an "evangelist". I sit and listen to the various presenters tell of their wonderful experiences in their writing or elementary classrooms and I am jealous. I must remind myself that I am not a "writing teacher," I am a social studies teacher that hopes to use writing to make his subject more interesting and meaningful to his students. The first few days of the Institute made me angry that the material was always presented to English and grammar school teachers looking for better ways to teach writing. I felt left out (and still do sometimes). However, I now realize that maybe that is the only way the material can be presented and I must adapt what I can to my curriculum for my students. Dan Kirby, the consultant from the University of Georgia, said that the process cannot be taught in an hour, a day, or even a year: it takes 10, 12, 15, or 20 years. "We may not be able to teach our students to write, but as teachers we can create an environment which will encourage them to pass through the stages of writing necessary for effective written communication ... ." (Murray, p. 11). Writing can only improve with writing. Then again, "You are always right and always wrong" (Elbow, p. 106).

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*A 1986 Fellow, Harry C. Bradley teaches social studies in the Southeast Delco School District.*

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SUMMER 1986  
YOUTH WRITING PROJECT  
AT WEST CHESTER

by Jolene A. Borgese

"The teachers treated us like humans and we had time to write about what we wanted," said a youth writer. Such comments characterized the second summer youth writing project of the Pennsylvania Writing Project at West Chester University.

In two sessions (from July 7 to August 1), 91 students from Delaware, Chester, Bucks, and Reading counties as well as the state of Delaware attended the two general sessions and one computer youth writing project. The students ranged in abilities and age (6 to 17 years old) but came together to form a writing community that shared and wrote together. Seven teacher-consultants instructed: Guy MacCloskey, Sue Smith, Chris Cardamone, Brenda Hurley, Jim MacCall, Mark Ruppel and Jolene Borgese. The youngsters were grouped according to age and at the conclusion of each day came together to share their writings.

Olivier Dunrea, a children's illustrator and author, and Len Roberts, a teaching poet, worked with the first session of youth writers. Olivier encouraged creativity and used his dynamic personality and books as springboards for ideas. Len had everyone thinking about images that would surprise the reader. The youth writers enjoyed meeting and working with real authors who reaffirmed that the writing process really works.

In the second session Phil Miller, a publisher from Scholastic, and Helen Griffith, a children's writer, worked with a small group of twenty-three writers. Phil illustrated what an editor actually does while Helen dazzled the writers with stories and had them rewrite well known fairy tales.

As a culminating activity, the youth writers published a book with writing samples from all the writers and teachers. A Writing Conference was held at the end of each session to celebrate the publication of their book and the end of the session. Following this article are samples of poems, short stories and essays from the youth writers and teachers. Permission to publish was granted from all writers.

*Jolene Borgese, who teaches at West Chester's East High School, directs the Youth Writing Project.*

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PIECES FROM THE  
1986 YOUTH WRITING PROJECT

The Knights of the Round Table

by Matt Tirpak

The Knights of the Round Table were very good at fighting except for one, Shorty. Shorty was very small. The knights made fun of him a lot. King Arthur was a very good king. He called the knights to the dinner table. He said, "Now I have a mission for you men. Go to the baron's castle and bring the princess back and one of you may have the hand of Princess Diana. Send a message to every living man on Earth that could go try." Then Shorty said, "I could try." Then one of the knights said, "Don't press your luck, Shorty. You could never even get to the beginning of the never-ending forest."

The next morning they started off on their white stallions going down the rugged path through the forest of no return. Shorty was a little scared. Then suddenly a large wolf popped out of the forest. Shorty took out his trusted sword and chopped off the wolf's head. The knights were

amazed at what Shorty could do. It was night fall and the knights went to sleep. The next morning the knights and horses trotted into the sunrise.

They finally reached Elftown. They were the first visitors for one hundred and ninety-five years. They were very well treated since they hadn't seen people for a long time. The knights went to the kitchen but Shorty went to bed. He knew the next morning they would have to go a long way until they would get to the baron's castle. The horses were hungry and thirsty so one of the knights took a fresh horse and looked for a lake. Finally he found one. He rode as fast as the horse would carry him. After the horse drank they climbed a mountain.

The castle was in sight. About six more miles, thought Shorty. They found a little hut outside the castle. Shorty said, "We have to walk from here on." They reached the moat of the castle. The drawbridge was down and Shorty thought to himself, that is strange, usually it is closed. The knights slowly walked in. Then they heard a voice that said, "Stay a while, stay forever."

"What was that?" said Shorty.

"I think it was the baron," said his friend, Sir Lancelot, the knight. They got in the baron's weapon room and said, "Wow."

They went up to the third floor and met a wizard by the name of Surplexo. Surplexo is a good wizard. Then suddenly a guard came and said, "Halt, intruder." Shorty ran as fast as he could. Then he saw the baron. He was a giant. He yelled, "King Arthur didn't tell me that he was a giant." Shorty ran up and stabbed him in the arm.

Part 2

Shorty killed the baron. The next week the knights came back with the princess and Shorty blushed. The people called him a hero and said, "Hail to Shorty for he has killed the baron." He married the princess Diana and was King Shorty. The knights didn't make fun of him anymore.

*Matthew Tirpak goes to Leedom School and lives in Ridley Park. He likes to play sports a lot.*

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Summer Memories

by Meghan Nealis

The excitement of spending the whole summer at Brigantine stung me like a bee. Imagine, over two and a half months at the beach. I closed my eyes and tried to think what the summer was going to be like. Thoughts crossed my mind of the boardwalk, the beach, the white, golden sand, the towering waves, walks with my grandfather on the beach, playing with summer friends, Nicole and Heidi. Soon, a building came into view, it was still under construction; another casino no doubt. What else would you expect in Atlantic City. We rode across the bridge. Finally, after a two hour drive, we were in Brigantine. We had to drive to 31st Street to get to my great-grandmother's house. Our green Volvo pulled into the spot right in front of the house. Nicole and Heidi were at the beach; but grandmom, grandpop, and great-grandmom were there smiling, waving, giving us a warm welcome. My sister and I slowly climbed out of the car and tried to relieve our cramped legs.

As summer dragged on, it got hotter and drier. We spent our days on the beach splashing in the water. We had this thing about the waves. There were "A" waves (A for all-right), "B" waves (B for beware), "C" waves (C for caution) and "D" waves (D for dangerous, destructive). For each wave, we did a certain motion. For "A" waves we just stood still; for "B" waves we turned our backs; for "C" waves we went under water; and for "D" waves, waves that were

## MORE PIECES FROM THE 1986 YOUTH WRITING PROJECT . . .

twelve feet and up, we would curl up in a ball and sit on the bottom of the ocean.

Another thing that we did to make the summer more fun was that we changed our names. I was Tonya, Kate was Mary, Nicole was Trish, and Heidi was Meg.

Sometimes it rained and we didn't go to the beach. We spent those days in each other's garages (they were very big); singing in our rock band, or dressing up, or putting together our shows. These shows we put on for our parents and grandparents, were *shows*, honest-to-goodness shows. We had a stage and a curtain. We usually sang or danced. These shows lasted about a half hour. We also had refreshments.

One evening in July, we put our great-grandmom in the wheelchair and went to the boardwalk. Boy, did we have fun.

Too soon the summer ended; and we were packing the car and leaving, not knowing we would probably never go back again. Grandpop got really sick and died, my great-grandmom went into a nursing home and the house down at the shore had to be sold.

Now, as these summer days go on, I remember those lovely days in Brigantine, and I have wonderful memories to keep me going.

*Meghan Nealis was born in Summit, New Jersey. She is eleven and will be going to Springton Lake Middle School in the fall. Meghan enjoys creative writing, horseback riding, sports, and reading.*

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### A New Beginning

by Susan Smith

As the morning  
finds its way under my curtain,  
I am reminded of  
new beginnings;

Photographs in the driveway  
on first days of school  
A composer's hum  
Whispered vows

A drop on the windshield  
signaling rain,  
Lilies open  
Cocoons unfold

Pink satin toe shoes  
under the tree  
A "sold" sign that smiles  
A license to travel

Even the quiet songs  
of newly hatched wrens  
from the planter that swings from my porch.

Each as if in celebration  
of the birth of my first child

Lauren.

Someone who wasn't  
yesterday.

*Susan Smith, a 1984 fellow of the PA Writing Project, teaches fourth grade at Media School. She is presently taking maternity leave to "oversee" construction of a new home built by her husband, and to write about her newest student, Lauren Elizabeth, born March 23, 1986.*

### The Newcomer

by Roshanne S. Etezady

the only thing harder than understanding  
is being understood  
the socially downcast,  
the "neophyte"  
the newcomer  
is there any jewel more precious than the one unknown?  
or any gift more valuable than that  
of understanding?  
though they hurl their taunting arrows,  
and though they strike him full,  
his soul is since scarred and bleeds little  
but absence of blood does not signify absence of pain  
and pain flows from his soul as water from a font.  
compassion is the balm that heals him,  
but there is so much more hatred than compassion  
that he continues to bleed  
even if only a little bit.

Someday,  
Some glorious day,  
the "neophyte"  
(the newcomer)  
will take the trait that separates him from the rest  
and rise above them  
in rebirth  
through newfound acceptance.

*In spite of her young age, Roshanne Etezady's work is often mature and full of heartfelt emotion. She enjoys writing short stories, which all have an inside meaning that one person or another will understand.*

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### Hardcore Punk

by Candy Horton

Upon first entering, the club is dark. As his eyes adjust he can see the small red ends of cigarettes, and after looking harder in the dim light, tables. He is early, so he sits down waiting for the others to arrive. The club starts to fill. Punks of all shapes and sizes file in. Some wear leather. Others have colored hair or no hair. Most wear black or dark colored clothing. The time to dance is now.

He stands up from the table and walks towards the already filling dance floor. All light is shut off. The music starts and with it a strobe light flashes to the beat. He and the crowd start to bounce, slamming into each other, but not forcefully. The song picks up and the real slam dancing begins. After two songs he is in a daze. The drums control the beating of his heart. He has lost his sense of direction. He doesn't even notice that a spike has cut him on the neck. Still the dance goes on. The floor is slippery with sweat. The strobe is making everything and everyone appear to be in black and white. The people are unseeing and seemingly unaware of who is around them.

Ten minutes later the dancing stops. He walks slowly out the door. Standing in the night air he feels content, bruised and cut, but content. As he gets on the trolley a woman drags her child away from him.

"That's a bad, bad man!" she says.

"No," he says to himself, "Just a hardcore punk."

*Candy Horton was born in Mt. Holly, New Jersey and has lived in Marlton, New Jersey for the past twelve years. Her hobbies are art and horseback riding. She plays piano, french horn, and mellophone exceptionally. She aspires to be a professional musician.*

## MORE PIECES FROM THE 1986 YOUTH WRITING PROJECT . . .

### The Return

by Brenda Hurley

The old, square house still stands on the same corner way out in the country on Travilah Road across from Herman Hinton's Clover Leaf Store except now it is a High's.

The hedges curving around the corner stop abruptly now and the white fences that were scraped and painted every hot summer have disappeared along with the nasty Belgian pony and the golden dispositioned Palomino, Sugar.

The protected patio has not changed where a little girl sold mudpies to siblings who clambered off Mr. Parker's bus and trugged books in hand up the long walk.

A blacktop replaces the graveled hilly driveway where five incipient drivers learned to manipulate first gear.

Gone too, is the red barn, scene of many acted out fantasies.

The old oaks still shade the long front porch and the three sets of square pillars solidly interrupt the line of precisely, now clipped hedges. Here children perched during August days and grabbed the bounty that the overhanging oak branches purloined from Drew Pearson's farm trucks.

No woman emerges from the side door to call for a teenager who sits and daydreams across the street in the window seat of the old country store.

The house still stands. The child, the woman has changed, but the daydreams remain.

*Brenda Hurley is a writing teacher in Bucks County. She enjoys reading, racquetball, aerobics and word processing.*

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### "Dad"

by Chris Pesotski

The huge crash startled Phil, but in a courageous mood, he leaped across the late summer field of golden wheat toward the strange craft. I hope the pilot isn't hurt, he thought quickly. He sure did kill his plane, though.

As he got closer, a sickening feeling welled up from the pit of his stomach. It's definitely not a plane, but maybe it's a Russian . . . "Oh my God," he squeaked aloud.

A short, squat horse-like creature with arms clip-clopped out of the ship. While it surveyed the damage to its craft, Phil stepped closer. This movement attracted the space creature's attention. It turned quickly and pulled from a pouch around his neck a picture of Billy Dee Williams holding a can of beer.

At that moment, Spot, Phil's dog, ran excitedly toward the horse-man. The creature began to say something that sounded like "It works every time." Then panic-stricken at this strange world and its strange creatures, the horse-man ran back to its ship.

Spot scratched at the door of the alien craft then backed away. With the blink of an eye, the ship zipped upward and was lost in the blue above. Phil turned toward home.

Breathlessly, he crashed into his dad's den, "Dad, Dad, you'll never believe what I saw!"

"Let me guess, a spaceship crashed, and a horse-man came out, was scared to death by Spot, and then flew away, right?"

"Uh-uh, right Dad," said Phil perplexed, "You should be a comedian."

As Phil wandered to his room, he had already forgotten the strange pouch around his dad's neck, and the picture of Billy Dee Williams on the desk.

*Chris Pesotski hopes to study English at the college of his choice. He enjoys reading the comic strip Bloom County and the works of Katherine Kurtz. He likes baseball and his computer, and claims the combination is addictive.*

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### Warts

by Linda D. Johnson

Deep, deep in the forest, there was a noise! It was coming closer and closer, and I saw it. It was a big, fat wart with legs and a fat face. It was ugly. It saw me and started running after me and shouting, "Food, food, food." It scared me and I started off at a fast sprint. I screamed, "HELP!" More warts came and they were all after me. I quickly climbed the nearest tree and waited. Lucky for me warts can't climb trees. They finally gave up and went home . . . I thought. I was on my way home and  
THEY GOT ME!!!

*Linda Dane Johnson is 9 years old and goes to West Chester Friends School. She loves horses and horseback riding. She wrote this story because she likes monsters too.*

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### The Hell Trap Room

by Lora Patton

Why'd we have to move to this old, spooked up house anyway, I wondered to myself as I looked at my new bedroom. It was a large, dull room with white walls (painted), and a bare wood floor. My bright orange bed-spread stuck out like a sore thumb.

"Stupid room," I muttered. STUPID ROOM . . . STUPID ROOM . . . echoed off my walls. I covered my mouth to stifle a scream, but even the tiny whine that came out crawled up the walls in an eerie way.

One of my topmost phobias was echoes . . . echoes coming from dark corners . . . echoes imitating you in hoarse shrieks. I shuddered. I could hear a pounding on the walls. I covered my ears.

Quickly I darted for my shut door. I'll never live in this room! NEVER! As I turned the doorknob, it wailed in a metallic shriek. Suddenly pain shot through my arm, pain so unbearable, so intense, that my heart gave a leap so high that if my mouth hadn't been shut, it would have shot out and that would have been the end of me. Outside it was getting darker. I was frantic.

I was about to try the door again, when I realized my left pinky was nothing but a stump. This time I wasn't fast enough to stifle my scream. Loud echoing shrieks came from all sides, changing into bursts of laughter, then dying away.

Suddenly I heard footsteps behind me. I whirled around, and froze. I saw in front of me, an opening in the wall, shutting like a garage door with no marks to see that there had been an opening there. When I saw what was behind that opening, it seemed, for a single moment, as the opening shut, that my throat went dry and my heart stopped beating. Behind the wall were the terrorizing, flaming fires of hell. Through the terror, I thought I saw a

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 6)

dark figure fleeing into the fires. It was too terrorizing to scream.

Then it was shut. I walked cautiously over to examine the wall. I could see no marks on the wall where it had been. The only proof were scorched floorboards around where it had been. Somewhere I thought I heard my mother's screaming . . . Get out! . . . GET OUT . . . GET OUT . . .

My lights went out, leaving my room in pitch blackness. I ran for my bed, and buried my face in the familiar pillow. I heard footsteps coming from all sides, then a horrid laugh that sounded like a replay from the end of thriller.

Suddenly all became a peaceful silence. I could hear birds chirping outside, and when I opened my eyes, my mother was sitting on the edge of my bed, trying to wake me up. So it had all been a dream. Sun was beaming through the window. I was about to get up, when I heard my mother scream. A scream shrill and full of terror. I looked down and saw what was triggering her terror.

"Stephanie!" she screamed, "YOUR FINGER! IT'S GONE!"

WHAT WAS A DREAM? . . . A DREAM . . . A DREAM . . .

*Lora Patton is eleven years old. She hopes to have her first book published when she is fourteen. Lora enjoys writing, drawing, swimming, skating, and reading. She hopes to become a famous writer and a teacher when she grows up. She wrote this story because she enjoys strange happenings and the idea of dreams. She began writing when she was 2 years old.*

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## TEACHERS AND WRITERS COLLABORATIVE

Membership holders in Teachers and Writers Collaborative (T&W) are entitled to a number of different items. A series of occasional papers, *For Our Membership*, are mailed out. Among these papers are a comprehensive list of children's magazines and a list of periodicals where youngsters can get their work published. The member is entitled to a 10% discount on all book orders for the year (and 50% off back issues of T&W Magazine) and special invitations to all T&W sponsored events and receptions. For more information on memberships, write: Ron Padgett, c/o T&W Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003.

\*\*\*\*\*

## DID YOU KNOW . . . ?

For the past four years, Invitational Summer Institutes for Teaching Writing and Literature have been held in Gothenburg, Sweden. Sponsored by the South Carolina Writing Project, two institutes were offered in 1986. If you are interested for 1987, contact Dr. Patricia Candal, South Carolina Writing Project, College of Education—010, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C. 29208, Telephone: 803-777-6090.

These institutes are for teachers of all disciplines and grade levels.

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The Project Office now has an answering machine! Leave your messages any time, but remember that callbacks are 8:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m. by the secretary. Bob Weiss can reach you at other times. Please leave the appropriate phone number.

## ATTENTION!!! PHILADELPHIA PAWP FELLOWS

The Center for Teaching and Learning, a project funded by the ARCO Chemical Co. and the Douty Foundation, operates for teachers in the Philadelphia School System. The Center held an Open House on September 15, 1986 at Community College of Philadelphia.

The Center, under the leadership of the Citizens Committee on Public Education in Philadelphia, uses a collegial format to "encourage teachers to swap recipes for teaching reading, math, science, writing and much more."

The Center is open on Monday and Thursday from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. For further information contact:

Jennifer Heymsfeld, Executive Director  
Citizens Committee on Public Education  
in Philadelphia

Room 1006  
311 Juniper Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

or call (215) 543-5433.

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Rosemary Buckendorff (Exeter Township High School) is addressing English teachers of the Berks County Academic Alliance in October.

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Bob McCann, PAWP 1981 Fellow, was the supervising teacher of second place winner Brooks C. Rathet from East High School, West Chester in the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers Outstanding Writers Contest. More than 200 schools participated in the contest, and the six winners and fourteen finalists were chosen from over 400 nominees already identified in their schools as excellent writers.

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On the program at the fall conference of the Delaware Valley Writing Council is Gloria Wetzel (Bryn Athyn Church Schools), speaking on writing across the curriculum.

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Barbara Georgio has been appointed English Department Head/Language Arts Supervisor for the Marple-Newtown School District.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ed Martin, of the West Chester Area School District, was invited to present a session on teaching African literature at the PCTE Annual Conference in Pittsburgh.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob Weiss has been asked to make presentations on holistic assessment of writing as part of the Pennsylvania Adult Basic Education Fall Workshops in Villanova, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh.

## GED ESSAY TOPICS: SOME SPECIFICATIONS ... AND AN INVITATION

Essay topics, like all other items to be used on the GED Tests, undergo a rigorous scrutiny before they are included on a final form. The process begins, logically enough, with the writing of "raw" topics that address the test specifications. In the case of the essay topics to be used on the GED Writing Skills test, the following general specifications must be met:

- The topic must be based upon information or a situation that is general enough to be familiar to most examinees.
- The topic must offer an idea that examinees view as worth writing about.
- The topic should not elicit an overly-emotional response from the writer.
- The topic should be clearly stated and contain only the amount of information necessary to provide the prompt for writing.

Only topics which meet these specifications become eligible for field-testing with GED examinees and with high school seniors. After topics are field-tested, the papers written on topics are holistically scored by experienced readers who use the 6-point GED Essay Scoring Guide. This type of "scoring session" differs significantly from one concerned solely with producing scores for essays. In this "topic selection reading," readers are asked not only to score the papers using the Scoring Guide, but also to evaluate how well the topic is working. Readers evaluate topics according to the following specifications:

- The topic should elicit papers with characteristics comparable to those described in the essay scoring guide. If, for example, the best papers written on a field-test topic seem significantly less accomplished than those described in the six (top score) category in the scoring guide, the topic may be more difficult for writers than desirable and therefore unusable. In the interests of making all of the topics as equal as possible in difficulty, all papers produced by the topics must conform to the scoring guide. If the papers exhibit characteristics that are clearly different from those described in the scoring guide, the topic will be rejected; the scoring guide will *not* be revised to conform to a new topic.
  - The topic should elicit papers which illustrate the full range of student writing ability. A good topic allows strong writers to display their skill in writing, yet still allows weak writers access to the question. Because the field tests involve significant numbers of examinees and seniors, the total pool of papers produced for a topic should include essays at all points on the six point scale.
  - The topic should elicit papers which clearly address the question provided. If papers written on a topic consistently show that writers are unclear about the question asked, or if an unusual number of writers are writing on a topic other than the one asked, the topic is ineffective. A topic which fails to meet this criterion was probably not clearly stated to begin with.
  - The topic should elicit a variety of responses. To say that all papers must address the topic is not to say that all papers must appear the same. A good topic will yield papers whose ideas mirror the diversity of the population tested. Papers with a wide range of ideas will be less tedious for readers to score, and thus readers are likely to score more accurately. While scoring large numbers of papers-inevitably becomes-tiresome, a good topic produces papers that engage readers' interest to the extent possible.
- The topic should elicit fully-developed responses. A topic which yields a large proportion of incomplete papers may be too demanding for the time allowed. If papers consistently exhibit a shallowness of thought and inadequate development, examinees might not have enough information immediately at hand to write well about the topic.
  - The topic should not elicit an emotional or biased response from readers. In the same way that care is taken not to trigger emotional reactions from writers, the resulting papers must not fuel preconceptions or biases among readers. Essay readers are urged to evaluate the writing, not the writer or the writer's values, and the scoring process contains numerous checks of this standard. However, readers cannot be expected to remain immune from emotional reactions, so an effective topic produces few papers that are likely to set off an emotional response in readers.
  - The topic elicits papers for which readers can readily agree on scores. Readers should be able to distinguish upper half (6,5,4) from lower half (3,2,1) papers with relative ease. Where these distinctions are blurred, the topic itself may well be at fault. Among the many statistical checks on a topic's performance is the rate at which readers agree on scores for particular papers; a significant rate of disagreement among readers often indicates that the topic is yielding papers that cannot reliably be scored using the standards provided.

At this point, you may be wondering how GED ever hopes to produce even a single operational topic that passes all of these stipulations (along with a few others relating to topic equating). In the spring of 1985, GEDTS field tested fifteen topics with a national sample of high school seniors, and six of the topics were judged acceptable for use in operational forms. To produce the fifteen for field testing, however, they began with well over a hundred topic ideas.

### Your Turn

A good topic requires, first and foremost, a good idea—the posing of a question or issue that significantly touches the experience of people from 17 to 90 who have richly diverse backgrounds. Experience has shown that only one out of many such ideas has enough merit to get to the field test, but that the odds of surviving the field test may be as high as one out of three.

So, send GED your ideas for essay topics—and they'll pay you if your ideas are good! If the topic you submit survives to the point where it is field tested, you will be paid an honorarium of \$50. The honorarium secures exclusive rights to the topic for the GED Testing Service, and they cannot inform you as to whether or not your topic will be used in an operational form because that would compromise the topic.

If you are interested in trying your hand at writing topics, follow the format of the sample topic provided in *GED Items*, 11.4. Contact the Project office for a copy of this format. Submit as many as you like. They will consider all entries and pay you for every one they use in a field test. Because they develop tests on a continuing basis, there is no closing date for this offer.

Send your topics to: Essay Topics, GED Testing Service, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036-1193.

(From *GED Items*, Vol. 3 #1, January 1986.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help.*  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN



## WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION AND WHAT I LEARNED . . .

Dear Bob,

Seven summers ago, you posed the question "Can we teach students to write?" The question confused me and led me to many discoveries about writing. I'm not completely convinced that we can, but after 7 years with the Writing Project I at least know strategies to guide my students to become better writers.

This summer I heard a similar question: "Can we teach students to think?" As it was seven summers ago, this question will probably change the course of my teaching and thinking. We know that thinking isn't like baking a cake but more like solving a problem where there is more than one way to solve it (as researchers Linda Flower and John Hayes put it). Writing as an act of problem-solving, and problem-solving has many constraints; in writing these constraints need to be juggled. This then parallels to the teaching of writing: thinking and writing go hand-in-hand, one can not function without the other.

I attended the Writing/Thinking Training of Trainers Workshop (University of California, Irvine) this August to gain a better understanding of how thinking and writing were related. As with the 1980 summer institute, I came home with many unanswered questions: How to transfer problem solving skills to writing and real life situations? How to get my students to become thinkers, think about their thinking and become problem solvers? Most importantly, how can I foster thinking and writing skills that students will carry over into other areas of study? Along with many unanswered questions I was overwhelmed by the amount of information presented to us. The George Hillocks report, an ERTC search of twenty years' worth of research on the study of writing, intrigued me the most even though the results were not statistically significant. The findings, however, did support the writing process approach and indicated the need for less grammar instruction and more writing for real purposes. Reflecting back, I realize I need to think about my own thinking process and read more on what the researchers have to say. One of the requirements of the workshop was to design a practical lesson for thinking and writing. My lesson developed from a favorite writing activity of retelling an anecdote about you or someone in your family. This assignment forced me to apply the levels of thinking to a writing activity and thus to really analyze thinking process.

Carol Booth Olson and the UCI Writing Project Staff were gracious hosts. The six-day workshop was balanced with theory, sample lessons and an opportunity to share information with twenty-eight other teacher/consultants from across the country and Canada. We were wined and dined and shown the sights of Laguna and Newport Beaches.

For me to better understand the research on writing and thinking I needed to get a handle on certain "buzz words," some of which were new to me while others were reminiscent of my undergraduate educational psychology course.

-precomposing: a stage in the writing process that follows pre-writing. This is where the writer decides on a focus and either continues to generate ideas on that particular focus or plans out what he is going to write.

-the prompt: the writing assignment, in written format so that no further explanation is needed.

-cognition: is thinking! The act or process of knowing—perception of knowledge.

-metacognition: is the awareness of and conscious control over the use of this knowledge, being more conscious about your own thinking.

This workshop was only the beginning for me, and the

thinking and writing connection. Learning-centered writing, which you introduced years ago, already showed me the idea of writing what you already knew about a particular subject and/or idea or what you thought about it. I need to restructure my teaching of writing strategies to include having my students do more thinking about their writing and asking themselves more questions about their writing. Learning logs will enable students to write about their thinking and writing process, much like learning-centered writing.

This course was a needed shot in the arm, Bob. See you in September.

Jolene

Jolene Borgese, a high school Writing/English teacher for the West Chester Area School District, is assistant director of the Pennsylvania Writing Project.

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## THOUGHTS FROM AN EMERGING WRITER

by Doris Kirk

### High School:

I remember writing a paper for a practice exam. I liked it. It was about "the City". That's what we Staten Islander's called Manhattan. I really loved the city when I was a kid. I loved the ferry ride, the smell of the salt water, the sounds of the tugs and ships and boats and people. I walked to school in those days and the memory of early morning light, the fragrances and colors of spring, are still with me. I think that's what I tried to put in my paper. I don't think the comment on the paper was drastic, but I do know I didn't know where to go with this story. I didn't know if it was very good, so-so, or terrible. I left high school, then, not knowing if I could write, but not too concerned because only authors needed to write.

### College:

Exams, papers, research papers, my favorite—the writing done in the literature and English courses. I still wasn't a writer though, because all these papers were required. They didn't count and I still wasn't sure if they were very good, so-so, or terrible.

### Teaching:

There were always more courses, graduate school, and papers. Writing under the gun, getting it in for a grade. There was very little pleasure derived from this, but I did get the satisfaction of a grade, gaining new insight, and learning. Now it was my turn to educate—to lead the student out of himself and into the world around him, to give him the tools of learning throughout life. I wonder if I did this through the avenue of writing.

### My Personal Life:

AT&T, Bell, SPRINT . . . These were my ways of communicating. Yes, there were lists, notes, some letters, but certainly I was not a writer.

### PAWP:

I am now a writer. So are my students. I'm enjoying it much more now after four years of learning about the writing process and sharing this information with my students. They love it. I don't think that's too strong a statement, knowing that there are ups and downs, and that their development as writers will be personal to them. But what a way to start out.

### Would Be Published Author:

I sent a children's story out to twelve different magazines. WHEW! Now I'm pretty sure it didn't fit the

(Continued on next page)

audience. You do need to know your audience and what it enjoys, what tickles the imagination, what speaks to them.

I sent out greeting card material.

This was all before PAWP. Was a writer trying to be born? I remember always pleading that I was too busy. I always had other papers and professional writing that had to be done.

**PAWP Continued:**

If you're going to be in any of these courses, they're going to make you write.

This was modeled on a poem from a basal reader:

Rain

From the dark clouds  
rain sheets pour down,  
of silver  
and piercing sounds.

A man runs by  
No more than a blur,  
Some errand  
to pursue.

I just like the way it sounds, the picture this poem gives to me, the author.

I like this line too. I don't know if it sounds too feminine, too yuck! I need a response group . . .

I ache for the soft evening light to come and smooth the edges of this day.

. . . a free write

Had a good, hearty, soul-satisfying laugh lately? There can be no sweeter tonic than sharing laughter, all kinds of laughter, with others.

I remember sitting around our dining room table when I was about seven or eight. We were all there — we three girls and Mom and Dad. A laughter attack struck, peels of it circling around the three kids. I wound up with the hiccups. I don't remember what Mom and Dad said, but it sure felt good.

I remember my cousin Mary. We were a year apart and I was staying over at her house. We were two adolescent girls, dissolved in tears of laughter, giddiness personified, driving my aunt and uncle crazy. Memories of shared laughter hold such warmth. There's a future in many a shared laugh. My husband and I will crack up when ever certain past incidents are brought up. They involve canoes, friends, an argument, us.

I revised and edited as I wrote and typed this piece.

**Writer/Teacher:**

A writer is slowly emerging. The writing process is going on in my classroom and in every course where teachers come together in the Writing Project. They have been my teachers, my coaches, my sounding board. And to all of you, in this June, 1985 course, a big thank you! You've helped this writer and shared much laughter with me, much learning, and much of yourselves.

*Doris Kirk, a 1981 PAWP Fellow, wrote this piece while she was coordinating a project course for the Pottsgrove School District in the Summer of 1985.*

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The pen is the tongue of the mind.

—Cervantes

## OVERVIEWS OF THE NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

The National Writing Project has had a major impact upon American education, and the pervasive dimension of that impact can be seen in all of the following:

- in the wide acceptance of its staff development model and program design, not only in the field of writing but other fields as well, not only in the steadily increasing number of universities—in this country and abroad—that have established affiliate sites within the National Writing Project network but in the scores of local programs that advertise themselves as based on the Bay Area model.
- in the thousands of teachers who annually participate in the summer and school year programs sponsored by the network of National Writing Project sites.
- in the recognition given its model collaborative university-school design—cooperation in fact as well as in word: co-administration, co-program planning, and co-financing.
- in the recognition that what is known about writing comes not only from research but also from the day-to-day classroom practice of successful teachers.
- in the recognition that successful teachers can become the most effective teachers of other teachers.
- in the recognition that school reform happens over time and that reform efforts to be successful must be planned as ongoing programs, with continuing summer and school year follow-up.
- in the recognition that teachers of writing must also write and practice what they teach.
- in the reform of writing instruction over the past decade: the increasing expertise of the classroom teacher of writing and the increasing use, amount, and variety of writing in the schools.
- in the gradual increase in the professional status of classroom teachers.

The National Writing Project has grown this past year into an international network of 143 affiliated sites in 45 states, six foreign countries (Canada, England, Australia, Norway, Sweden, and Finland) as well as overseas American sites that serve American teachers in both Department of Defense Dependent Schools and U.S. Independent Schools in Europe, Asia, Central America, and in the Middle East.

With the new sites now being planned in Delaware and Indiana for summer '86 start up dates, only three states will not be served by local sites of the National Writing Project. Iowa and Vermont have independent writing projects of long standing, and the NWP site in New Hampshire is not currently active.

Interest in establishing new affiliate National Writing Project sites continues with no indication that the project has realized or is even approaching its maximum growth. Sixteen universities are now preparing proposals for summer '86 and '87 start up dates, and new site inquiries have been received, as of this date, from an additional twenty-one universities and educational agencies.

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While the continuing expansion of the National Writing Project into additional states and regions of the country is the most obvious indicator of the project's growth and impact, the project has grown in other dimensions as well with the increase in the number and range of its programs and services. Beyond the basic Summer Institutes and follow-up school-year staff development programs, NWP

sites now conduct teacher research programs, programs in writing across the curriculum and writing in the humanities, programs for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, adult literacy programs, programs for school administrators and parents, and programs for community, state, and federal agencies.

\* \* \*

This past year the British government funded its own UK National Writing Project, a multi-site project with close linkages with the National Writing Project. The Director of the NWP was invited to describe the National Writing Project at an international conference on writing held in England last spring, and the Director of the UK project was invited to describe the British National Writing Project at the annual NWP Directors' Meeting in Philadelphia this fall. A group of American NWP Teacher/Consultants will participate with their British counterparts in a joint institute in England this coming summer. One British site, the Learning about Learning Project, is affiliated with both projects.

\* \* \*

The National Institute of Education granted the award to establish the nation's first Center for the Study of Writing to the University of California-Berkeley. Because N.I.E. is as interested in the dissemination of research as in research itself, the National Writing Project, with its 143-site network and its headquarters at UC Berkeley, was a major factor in deciding the award competition. The National Writing Project will have major responsibility for disseminating Center materials and findings from Center-

sponsored research in writing. The Center will co-sponsor future issues of the *NWP Network Newsletter*.

\* \* \*

The NIE-supported research study "The Role of Response in the Acquisition of Written Language" (Freedman, 1985) included a survey of the response practices of 560 teachers who were among the most successful in their communities as judged by directors of the National Writing Project. The teachers came from all regions of the United States as well as a small percentage from other countries, and taught kindergarten through twelfth grade. The finding of this study revealed that the students of National Writing Project teachers wrote more frequently and wrote longer pieces than the students of previously surveyed teachers (Applebee, 1981). The teachers in the Applebee survey put significantly more stress on mechanics and writing as testing; whereas the teachers in the NWP survey put significantly more stress on writing as thinking, clarifying concepts, and relating ideas to personal feelings and experiences. The NWP survey showed teachers using writing to force students to think for themselves. (See appendix).

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### LOVE AND INSPIRATION

Some readers feel that revision, which plows and plods, is the enemy of inspiration, which strikes like lightning. Not true: revision is the desire to have a long love affair with inspiration and not just an evening's fling.

—John Frederick Nims

### DELAWARE VALLEY ASCD CONFERENCES

Thursday, October 16, 1986

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Benjamin I. Troutman  
Director of Curriculum and Staff Development  
Virginia Beach City Public Schools

"Future Strategies for Shaping Learning"

Keith Valley Middle School, Hatboro Horsham School District  
3:30 P.M.

Thursday, April 30, 1987

Details to be announced  
Save the date. These conferences are worth attending

### SCHEDULE OF PROJECT MEETINGS

<u>Date &amp; Time</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Place</u>
Friday, Nov. 14, 1986 6:00 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.	"A Milange of Mistakes: Our Roughest Moments as Teachers of Writing"	West Chester University Campus
Saturday, Jan. 24, 1987 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. (Snow date, Jan. 31)	"Fredwriter: a Free Word Processor for All Ages"	West Chester University Campus
Saturday, Feb. 28, 1987 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M. (Snow date, March 7)	Program To Be Announced	West Chester University Campus
Saturday, May 16, 1987 11:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.	PAWP Luncheon Meeting for New Fellows	West Chester University

# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

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West Chester University  
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Chester County Intermediate Unit

Delaware County Intermediate Unit  
Pennsylvania Department of Education

The purpose of the *Pennsylvania Writing Project Newsletter* is to link together all teachers of writing in our area. The *Newsletter* features articles on the teaching of writing, information about writing courses, conferences, project meetings, reviews of books, and events relating to the writing process.

We seek articles from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and from anyone else interested in writing and the teaching of writing. All articles will be considered. Please send all articles, questions, and comments to: Robert H. Weiss, Pennsylvania Writing Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.

The Pennsylvania Writing Project (PAWP) is an affiliate of the National/Bay Area Writing Project and a training site for the nationally validated New Jersey Writing Project. PAWP was created by the sponsors under grants from the William Penn Foundation and the University of California at Berkeley, with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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