



# PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9 NUMBERS 1 & 2

FALL/WINTER 1989

## PAWP DAY

Touted as a conference offering "rejuvenation, inspiration, and collegial support," the Pennsylvania Writing Project Conference Day for Teacher Consultants (October 5, 1988) drew 67 educators representing over 30 school districts to the Oakbourne Estate in Westtown township.

As the first "official" gathering of teacher-consultants for the 88-89 school year, the conference gave the PAWP "alumni" the opportunity to most proudly welcome the latest "graduates" of the Writing Project into the PAWP community. Following is the agenda:

### PAWP DAY—October 5, 1988

8:45-9:30	AM	Coffee/Registration
9:30-10:00	AM	Opening Remarks--Bob Weiss • Travel to New Zealand--Carol Straub
10:00-12:00	Noon	"What Can PAWP do for PCRP and What Can PCRP do for PAWP?" • PCRP II—Ed Bureau • Learning to Learn—Bob Weiss • Reading—Barbara Giorgio • Extending Reading and Writing —Jolene Borgese
12:00-1:00	PM	Lunch
1:00-1:30	PM	Planning the Future of PAWP —Bob Weiss
1:30-2:30	PM	Panel Discussion led by 1988 Fellows • "What Works and What Doesn't Work"
2:30-3:00	PM	Concurrent Sessions • Youth Writing Project —Jolene Borgese • How to Organize a PAWP Course in Your School District —Bob Weiss • Report on the Summer Institute in Teaching Creative Writing —Joan Flynn

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

While our intent for early production of the summer, fall and winter NEWSLETTERS has been most honorable, in the words of Dean Baldwin, a fellow editor of PE (Pennsylvania English) NEWS: "intentions grow no carrots."

It seems that the projected publication deadlines for the NEWSLETTER painfully coincide with a teacher's busiest times, i.e., the opening of school, the holiday season, and the closing of school. (We do, however, wonder if there is any such thing as a "not-busy time" for teachers). Our intentions have remained honorable; time has run out. And so with winter rapidly approaching and the fall NEWSLETTER still on the hard disk, we have decided to combine its publication with that of the winter issue.

At first we felt a conflict of publication interest. Each issue seemed to have separate purposes: the Fall issue a celebration of the past (summer programs especially) and the Winter issue a forecast of the future. Upon closer examination and careful deliberation, however, we came to realize, as does any good fellow, that in the broad sense all of this is related and what better way to celebrate the New Year than with a celebration of our past and a look into the future.

Ironically, as many of you know, we double as both editors of the NEWSLETTER and co-directors of the West Chester and Bucks County Summer Institutes (another reason for our publication lapse; nonetheless, an experience that continues to nourish our development as teachers). As such, it is with special pride that we showcase some of the "stuff" of the Summer Institutes (along with other summer programs).

We are particularly pleased that this issue introduces a new columnist, Marilyn Sandberg (PAWP '86). Her column, "Dear Teacher," deals with teachers both as writers and as teachers of writing.

When you receive this issue 1989 will have already begun--hard to believe, especially for all the new fellows who thought that July 28 would never arrive. Let us take this opportunity to wish all of you an auspicious '89, one filled with all the "write" stuff.

*Gail Capaldi and Lois Snyder,  
Co-Editors*

# PAWP DAY – OCTOBER, 1988...

*We have included some of the "on-the-spot" reports and reactions from several of the conference participants that we feel capture some of the highlights of the day.*

## **A Reaction...**

*by Meryl Goldberg Lightstone, PAWP '88*

Do you have writer's cramp? Do your students have writer's cramp? Are your response groups successful? Do you find that you wish you could share your successes with other professionals? Do you sometimes feel a little lost, perplexed or alone in your classroom? Do you wish you could discuss with fellow teachers ideas from Atwell, Calkins, Elbow, etc., without having to explain all the theory behind it? Well, you can.

Although the five-week Institute initiation is tough, those who survive have the advantage of acquiring a new family. Typically, family reunions can bring on symptoms such as dizziness, blurred vision and nausea. When fellows attend PAWP family reunions they can experience euphoria and feelings of rejuvenation.

On October 5, our latest reunion was held. Throughout the day, ideas were flourishing. Some came with questions and concerns while others were more than happy to address these questions and concerns.

This meeting helped many of us put that pen to the paper again. Our family reunion pacified those who finished all their readings and were hungry for more. These people were quickly asked to review new books. Ideas for future involvement with PAWP were discussed. Some Fellows seemed interested in the Youth Writing Project, while others wanted to bury themselves in another Institute. Some are even thinking of going to New Zealand to learn more from their fellow educators involved in the teaching of writing.

Highlights of the day were hearing from Bob Tierney (via letter), seeing "fellow Fellows" with whom you shared your most precious writings and readings, and finally meeting other Fellows whom, it seemed, we had known even before we met.

To sum up the day for those who are unfamiliar with PAWP it was a day to think together with those who have common stems and roots.

## **PCRP and Reading**

*reported by Lonnie Aul, PAWP '88*

Barbara Giorgio answered many of our questions on the Reading phase of PCRP based on her experiences moving Marple Newtown School District away from "one theme per week, then the red pen." The transition was an ongoing series of inservices filled with discussions, strategies, and the exposure to a variety of approaches to a

variety of texts. The strategies presented are for tasks used before, during, and after reading and the use of journals as a vehicle for planning, problem solving and comparison. Withing a framework employing Atwell's Reading Workshop (mini lessons followed by conferences held while children read or write in journals) and content learning strategies, Marple Newtown has revised its curriculum.

Teachers have opportunities to experience whole language activities and find support from other professionals. While Barbara sees that many compromises will have to be made with basal reading programs, she is excited that workshops are being held across the state addressing administrators who may be able to facilitate the implementation of PCRP. PCRP has pulled all the research together for reading, writing, thinking and language usage to work towards what many of us realize—children learn through critical experiences and if we integrate these critical experiences into our teaching we will facilitate better learning.

## **Learning to Learn**

*reported by Maia Brumberg, PAWP '86*

Bob Weiss' session concerned "Learning to Learn"—the question of developing children's awareness of how they learn, and methods for facilitating that end. We divided into six groups, each group being responsible for reading over one topic from the PCRP, summarizing and evaluating it.

The first topic, "Questioning," emphasized the need to "open up questioning" so that children's questions are born more out of personal curiosity and interest. Children need an environment that encourages them to be open, to ask about what they themselves want to know and seek out answers.

The second topic, "Note-Making" (as opposed to note-taking), "puts the emphasis on the learner's active selection of what and how to write..." Techniques for annotating texts, note-taking and mapping were suggested for various uses.

The next group presented "doubting and believing"—methods of analyzing texts through supporting or arguing against their suppositions and ideas. Following this a fourth group presented both "developing the reader's repertoire" and "developing the writer's repertoire." Teachers need to familiarize students with a wide variety of reading and writing experiences with an emphasis on techniques and reasons for employing specific strategies on reading or writing different types of texts. Students must discuss the strategies they use among themselves to increase their awareness of how learners learn.

The next group's topic concerned "Talking to Learn," which addresses the need to change the dynamics of class discussion so as to break the teacher question/student response cycle of conversation in class. Discourse in the

# PARTICIPANTS REACT, RESPOND & REPORT

classroom should better reflect discourse styles in "real life." The group noted that specific techniques need to be presented to teachers if they are to do this: Bob Weiss told us that, in fact, such techniques are presented later on in the report.

"Studying," the last topic presented, emphasized the "...strategic use of reading, writing and talking to learn while doing homework..." and for studying for tests. Children are presented numerous methods for studying and are encouraged to evaluate these techniques through discussion of studying styles in class.

In all the subjects presented above, it was agreed that the emphasis was upon expanding possibilities for how to learn and developing students' awareness of how they and others go about learning and why they do what they do.



## "What Works and What Doesn't Work"

*reported by Dona Lerew, PAWP '88*

Class logs can and do work according to Gloria Williams (PAWP '88), a senior high English teacher. The class log is a time saver and a great organization tool. Gloria has uses a spiral notebook for each class. She spends several days at the beginning of the year keeping the log herself, and then models its format and content for the students. Each day's log must include the date, the elements of the class instruction, classwork, hand outs, hand-ins, and homework assignment. The keeper of the log signs it so s/he can receive extra credit.

Holly Clark (PAWP '88), a first grade teacher, found that writing at the first grade level can be successful using student questions to the teacher in order to model a story as an experience story with pictures. The students can do it, much to the amazement of those of us who teach higher levels. Even at this early age, students learn to help each other, share, and use invented spelling. Talking about their work improves their language. They can learn to make a book, use the correct form, and make sense. Parent helpers are almost necessary and make sense at this level. Bob Weiss was concerned about parents changing children's words. We must be careful using their help. They may be more difficult at higher levels due to comparing and competition. The students become so excited and often want to move faster than the teacher. This happens at the upper levels too but isn't that super? The success can be seen by colleagues who may approach the fellow for information. What a great way to get your co-workers interested rather than approaching them!

Janet Kelly (PAWP '88) reported that publishing books can be accomplished at the senior high level using other content area teachers (i.e., art)-student profiles, making

children's books. Parents could be used at this level too: experiment with them!

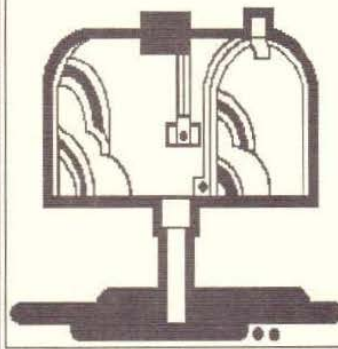
Writing goes bit by bit in Senior High also! Surprise! Some days are horrible, other successful. But the students do respond, at all levels, just as they should, if the process is utilized at the pace suitable for the class.

Karen Klingerman (PAWP '88) discovered a great approach! At the beginning of the year she shows the class their blank journal that will be their book that year and they will write it!! The parents at Back to School Night can write in the students' journals and the students in the middle school are impressed. At that adolescent time, what a great way to promote communication and parents are supportive. Both the students and the parents like it.

In conclusion, the same problems come up at all grade levels--time, conferencing, response groups, distractions. But also, every level reports that the students are happy and respond to all this writing in a positive way! What success. It is especially interesting that we as teachers learn so much more about what the students know, what they need to know, and what they want to know through the freedom of writing. Our audience was interested and enthusiastic.

## PAWP DAY IV CONFERENCE FOR TEACHER-CONSULTANTS

APRIL 12, 1989



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## SUMMER '88 • SUMMER '88 • SUMMER '88 • SUMMER '88

*For Most, the Summer of '88 will best be remembered as the summer of searing temperatures, but for two groups of teachers, one in Exton and one Bucks County, it will be remembered as the summer of "The Institute."*

*While insulated from 100 degree plus temperatures outside, the intensity of each institute, nonetheless, generated a heat of its own—a creative energy sparked by the 42 fellows pushing themselves (and each other) to new professional heights.*

*We are especially proud of these exemplary educators and include but a brief sampling of some of the sights, sound and spirit of the Summer of '88.*

### AN UNUSUAL SUMMER "VACATION"

by Karen Klingerman

"Do you know what you're doing? I've heard that being a PAWP writing Fellow is murder!" remarked the district superintendent.

"Why do you want to do this to yourself? This is supposed to be your time-off with the boys," commented my mother-in-law.

What about our plans for days just relaxing at the beach?" questioned my sister, a fellow educator.

"I guess you'll have your doctorate by the end of this, right?" questioned my well intentioned neighbor.

"What are you bucking for, a D.O. position or something?" asked my colleagues.

I just sat back and smiled. After our getting-to-know-you luncheon this spring, many of the future Fellows were concerned about the amount of work the Summer Institute would be. I reminded myself that this course was something I was doing for ME. Despite the many warnings and words of encouragement, I was anxiously awaiting to begin the program.

After all the things I had done lately for others, being a Summer Institute Fellow was something I was doing for me. From nine o'clock in the morning until four-thirty in the afternoon, four days a week, for five weeks, there would be no taxiing to baseball practices and games. There would be an end to taking phone messages from my husband, the coach, about game postponements and reschedulings because of the wet spring weather. My daily luncheon would be a picnic lunch on the scenic community college campus instead of the party menus of many family graduations, communions, confirmations, and anniversaries we had attended this June. I was looking forward the change in menu from hot roast beef sandwiches, baked ziti, potato salad and the delectable green Watergate dessert to cob salad in a pita from Betti's in Newtown. I was anticipating our after-class social hours at the Brick Hotel instead of my usual rush-home routine which included answering the questions, "Where is the game? What time does the game start? Are the uniforms clean?"

In addition to my responsibilities to my family, the school year was coming to a close, but the list of my end-of-the-year responsibilities would keep me busy to the final bell. In addition to finishing my teaching units for the year, I was completing my second year as newspaper and literary magazine advisor. Every spare moment was spent editing articles for the paper or selecting creative writing samples for the magazine. In the meantime, there was

chaperoning the class trip to Baltimore and the eighth grade farewell dance, attending the school play, organizing the eighth grade awards and promotion assemblies, and serving refreshments at the reception for parents after the promotion assembly. I wasn't opposed to doing any of these jobs, because I enjoyed doing them for my students.

However, I let out a resounding "NO" when my curriculum coordinator wanted me to attend a four-day criterion-referenced testing workshop from June 21-24. I reminded him I was attending the Summer Institute and needed time to recover from the end of school, before starting the summer Institute on June 27. After all, there are eleven other middle school Communications teachers. Surely one them could attend the workshop.

One day recently when I was feeling especially frustrated with my hectic morning routine, I noticed a Virginia Slims advertisement with the slogan, "You've Come A Long Way Baby," and I stopped to question myself. Had I really come along way from the days when my mother was a working mother thirty years ago? Here I was on my way to work, trying to calm down after an upsetting sendoff at the babysitter's and thinking about scheduling and IEP meeting and attending Bryan's class play on my last available "personal day." Lately it seemed every day started with a breakfast battle and leaving someone in tears at the babysitter's doorstep. If I commented to the boys that they were grouchy, they were quick to comment that if I didn't work they wouldn't have to get up at 6:30 AM, and they wouldn't be tired or grouchy. They are too young to realize how much I want to work and that I truly enjoy my job. I took a look at my daily list of things to do that day after school and started thinking, when was the last time I had something on my list just for me?

I have come a long way from when I always said "yes" to doing something for someone else and often sacrificed doing something for myself. Earlier in my life there were professional positions declined, trips not taken, and dreams not fulfilled during my first attempts at juggling my many roles in life. I'm more assertive now. Even though I'm still saying "yes" to other people, and maybe more often than I should be, I, also saying "yes" to the opportunities that matter to me too.

Against all the odds, most notably a last-minute change in my babysitting arrangements, I'm attending the Summer Institute this year. My husband is very supportive and I know the rest of my family will share my pride upon completion of the program. My sons will have survived the changes from our usual summer plans of the day trips the

(Continued on next page)

shore and visits to Sesame Place. Besides, we still have our family vacations to the Jersey shore and Virginia in August.

This time I'm not taking a course just for the credits. There are easier credits to be had less than a mile away from my house. I'm not taking a course for the money or salary advancement, because if money was my only motive, I would have quit teaching years ago. I'm not taking a course for my permanent certification or because my district says I must. This time I'm enrolled in a program which is self-satisfying. This time I'm doing it for me.

*Karen Klingerman (PAWP '88) is a middle school English teacher in the Bensalem School District.*

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### THE RESEARCH PAPER: A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH?

by John Tarves

*"For many decades, high schools and colleges have fostered the research paper, which has become an exercise in badly done bibliography, often an introduction to plagiarism, and a triumph of meaninglessness—for both reader and writer." (Ken Macrorie)*

*"Such assignments (research papers) are at best useless and more often counterproductive. They encourage copying rather than original thinking." (John Mayher)*

*"When I was Freshmen English director I did a survey and found that every high school in the state had taught the research paper. It was also true that few students learned to produce an effective research paper until they used research themselves and knew the reasons for scholarly conventions." (Donald Murray)*

*"A majority of college teachers who responded want students to be familiar with the library, but most of them emphatically stated that high schools should not teach the research paper." (Eric Christenson, *English Journal*, February '85)*

*"In a research paper, basically you're just taking things from another writer. You're not actually writing it yourself." (Tenth grader, *Revision/Mohr*)*

If all of the above is true, and I imagine a great deal of it is, what's an English teacher to do? Those of us in high schools face this dilemma annually. Should we teach the research paper? If so, how? And most importantly, why?

In this inquiry paper I plan to investigate the current theory in conjunction with my classroom experiences. I will also discuss the effect my reading and research will have on my teaching in the future.

A bit of personal background might be useful here. I feel a special kinship with the research paper, despite which, I will try to be objective. I currently teach two sections of Search & Research; an eleventh grade academic elective (although all college-bound students are strongly encouraged to take the course). This course was my "brainstorm" seven years ago. At the time it was my contention that by separating the research paper from English 10, 11 and 12, teachers would have more time to work on all the other aspects of language arts. To teach the research paper effectively required a great deal of time; now that task would no longer have to shortchange other areas.

I and the other teachers who have taught the course over the years have constantly been experimenting and refining it. The number of papers required, the length of the these papers, the footnote and bibliography form, the sequence of skills and other aspects have changed in the last seven years. Yet even though last year's model was a more streamlined and efficient one, Macrorie's and Mayher's quotes seem to strike a nerve. I've had these types of reservations about the course I designed and the assignments I required. This summer allowed time and the resources needed to address questions that have been bothering me for the last two years. Let's take them one at a time.

#### Should we teach the research paper?

To hear some contemporary writing theorists tell it—no. In his book, *Searching Writing*, Macrorie believes that teachers have given so many instructions to students about form and length of papers that we have destroyed their natural curiosity (55). This may be true, but it doesn't answer the question. Despite what I've read, or in some cases, because of it, I strongly believe the research paper (in some form) should be taught on the high school level. My reasoning is as follows: 1) Research papers are assigned at most colleges and universities; 2) Instruction in composing these papers is not provided at the college level; 3) How can we expect our students to work through a process that is completely foreign to them? If this type of writing product is assigned, when will it be taught? Certainly not at the college level. Is the composing and organizing of this major expository piece learned through osmosis? I will gladly stop teaching the research paper (well, not gladly) as soon as this type of writing is no longer assigned at the university. Is there a compromise in sight?

Ken Macrorie provides a suggestion here with his I-Search Paper. The key to this assignment is topic selection. Simply, the topic is chosen by the student, not assigned by the teacher. Secondly, the paper is somewhat informal as expository writing goes—it possesses voice—unlike the stuffy, detached writing inherent in most student research papers. This is a start, but a whole lot more is needed. This question isn't, "Should we teach the research paper?" but more aptly, "How can we teach the process of writing a research paper more effectively?"

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## THE RESEARCH PAPER

(Continued from preceding page.)

### How should we teach the research paper?

It should come as no surprise that the research paper probably has the worst reputation of all writing assignments. This is due largely to the way the assignment has been presented and evaluated. Too often the product is the entree while the process is the sprig of parsley. As Gracemarie Campbell noted in *English Journal* (February '84) "The students are given a detailed assignment, a date when the paper is due, and are left to produce it on their own" (72). Her insights ring true when she adds, "...for teaching the research paper seldom has any connection with teaching writing" (72). Herein lies the problem. Frequently we get hung up on library skills and research skills but allow little time for writing skills. It is refreshing to see major figures such as Dan Kirby to come right out and say, "For me the value of a research project is in the process, rather than the product" (179).

It is also essential to draw upon the pool of personal experience and interest in each student. As Mayher point out in his *Learning to Write, Writing to Learn*, research papers "...are rarely based on real questions that students ask. They're unconnected to anything the student knows or is learning" (98). Unless we personalize the topics, at least to some degree, the research paper will never change. If we don't invest the time and effort to encourage personal style, we'll continue to be fed a steady diet of the artificial, stilted prose written to impress or satisfy us.

Teachers must spend more time on the composing of a research paper. The types and ways of note-taking, the strategies of organization, the narrowing of a topic all must be addressed, modeled and practiced. Unfortunately, many of the poor research papers I've received have been a result of inadequate instruction and direction. I tried to "run" through all the steps and stages. I've found out the hard way that this just doesn't work. The most embarrassing thing of all is that I've never given a grade for the process. Who's sorry now?

### Why teach the research paper?

Let me count the reasons:

- If taught correctly, the student interprets, analyzes, summarizes, evaluates, and organizes.
- Library skills, note-taking skills, and documentation are learned.
- Learning to Write and Writing Across the Curriculum are both in evidence.
- Patty came home from college and told me the most important thing she learned from high school was how to research and compose a paper.
- Students get a chance to incorporate their voice and insights in a piece of formal writing.
- It allows students the experience of practicing a skill that will be expected of them in college.
- The successful completion of the process may reduce writing anxiety and certainly should enhance self-confidence.

This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but it is one that helps me to continue teaching "the monster." This

September, I plan on making several changes in my Search & Research course. First of all, I'm going to try an I-Search paper. I agree with much of what Macrorie says, and his ideas bear some consideration. I'm also going to slow down and spend more time on each aspect of composing a research paper. Lastly, I'm going to conference more with each student. After reading Murray's *A Writer Teaches Writing*, I've become a convert to his system. His course lends itself to frequent conferences while in the library.

I still have questions about the research paper. But I figure I'll be okay as long as I don't stop looking for the answers.

*John Tarves teaches at Chichester High School along with Fellows Beth Cox and Gloria Williams. Next to his wife, the things he likes most in life are libraries, MLA Style Sheets and annotated bibliographies.*

## NATURALLY UPTIGHT

by Janet R. Kelly

Whenever I heard my mother say that I was lucky to have such and such, I knew right then and there that I wanted no parts of it. So it was with my God given gift of naturally curly hair, a blessing from heaven as my mother often reminded me. For as long as I can remember, my one wish in life was to have long, dark silken tresses; instead, tiny corkscrews dotted my scalp, defying every grooming utensil known to woman. Naturally curly hair in the '50's was, well, the 50's; but in the 60's it was a social disease. For some of us mopsy topped dollies the curse of the natural perm was equivalent to small breasts or acne.

There is one principle that a child of five instinctively knows, and that is, if adults like something then it is not acceptable to kids. Everywhere I went, department store, church, or just walking down the street, people over forty patted my head and said those dreaded words: "What I wouldn't give for your hair." Or better yet, one which confused me until at least the age of six was. "Would you like to trade hair with me?" What a gruesome thought to a child of five! I can definitely say that in the '50's I was the epitome of cute, not Al Alberts cute, because that was Shirley Temple locks and dresses with tree stick-out slips, but rather wholesome, tomboyish, large bug-eyed cute. Once established as cute in my childhood years, I sought a more feminine and dramatic identity in my pre-teens.

In my pre-teens, which coincided with the opening of the '60's, I firmly resolved to make my wish a reality; it would be long hair at last. As all young girls do, I spent hours in my room before the mirror playing the role of blushing bride, beautiful princess, voluptuous movie star, fragile ballerina, and just plain long haired beauty. One prop which transformed me from curly top to glamour was a wonderful invention: the silk half-slip. Through a child's imagination, that half-slip placed stylishly on my head became the long flowing hair that I so desperately wanted. One look at the slip cascading freely down my back convinced me that long hair was a must; it was me! And so it was, from corkscrews to half-slips to "D.A.'s"

The early '60's was a growing time for me. When one decides to embark on this rather lengthy proposition one

must be prepared to adapt and to be flexible. The first stage in my growth was a "D.A.", or in beauty circles, a duck's ass. The "D.A." was achieved by brushing back the sides in a gentle upward motion, and then bringing all the hair available to an up-sweep on the back of the head. This was a most unnatural act for someone who wanted to grow her hair down. Finally, a constant steady brush stroke upward, with the aid of a few clips, resulted in a perfect "D.A." As the follicles grew, the "D.A." fell into the first signs of a —flip.

Keeping mind that 1963 was pre-blow dryer, the achievement of that smooth up-turned flip was a feat in itself. At this point, a girl's best friend was the hatbox dryer, a contraption which consisted of a dryer mechanism attached to a long plastic and wire tube, which in turn attached itself to an over-sized shower cap. Under this cap lurked clip-on rollers, sponges, or brush roller; all to give you that natural and casual look. In those days I must have worked on "natural and casual" for at least an hour and a half everyday. My natural curl yielded a flip which rolled clear up to the top of my ears. Armed with brush, hair spray, and clips, I set to work to wrestle the macaroni rolls to a fashionable up-turn. Needless to say, I gave new meaning to what we all refer to as our awkward years. Even if I managed to create a respectable flip, the least bit of humidity proved fatal, resulting in a condition commonly known as "the frizzies."

Only those of us who were lucky enough to have the natural curl sported a permanent halo from May to September, including all rainy and damp days throughout the year. Because "the frizzies" was an obstacle I could not conquer, I spent much of my early teens indoors. One fashion trend, the madras peasant scarf, proved to be the only match for my hydro-sensitive hair. With my scarf plastered firmly to my head, and just a wisp of flip sticking out at the bottom, my growth from puberty to full fledged teen took place.

Completely immersed in the '60's by 1965, a high school sophomore at the age of fifteen, I needed to show my disdain for materialism and authority. The conservative look was the best vehicle for this statement. This look consisted of, naturally, long straight hair parted in the middle, dark muted colors, white faces, white nails, and white lips. White not being my color and still struggling with uneven chin length locks, I quickly progressed from conservatism to flower child. The image of the flower child was free, natural, back to nature, and once again long straight flowing hair. My pseudo hippie look, which began senior year in high school, was saved by a chemical solution known as "Curl Free," a wonderful new development to relax curls and give you that "natural and casual" look. Once again, "natural and casual" proved to be anything but. "Curl Free" was a white substance with the consistency of rubber cement and the odor of rotten eggs. A heavy duty comb was thoughtfully provided by the manufacturer so that the gunk could be distributed evenly throughout the hair. As I pulled and tugged, white goop flying everywhere, the fact that it ate away the finish on my furniture and loosened my wallpaper was of no consequence to me; I was about to have straight hair. My "Curl Free" flip was relaxed and for the first time those uncontrollable curls finally touched my shoulders. However, all was not bliss. As long

as no one touched my tresses, or attempted, in any way, to be close, the mystique of the long straight coif remained. Needless to say, "natural and casual" still needed work.

It was the introduction of the blow dryer, a watershed in my late teens that finally gave me that "natural and casual" look. At this point clips, scarves, and chemicals had not worked; perhaps 1200 watts of intense heat to those rotten curls was the answer. The frying, the tugging, the wrapping, the unwrapping, the pulling, and brushing finally paid off; I was "natural and casual." Looking as if I had just stepped out of a Breck shampoo commercial, wearing bell-bottom jeans, buffalo sandals, and long straight hair, I was ready to protest materialism and corruption of the decade. "Natural and casual" was the statement, a return to the uncomplicated days of oneness with nature, a rejection of the values that those over thirty supported. God, I loved Thoreau!

As the '70's unfolded with the Woman's Lib movement in full swing, the myth of the superwoman found its origin. Once again, a statement needed to be made. Curls were in and straight was out. Fifty dollar perms, long, short medium length, tight, loose, and oh yes, even frizz was the rage.

In 1975 I entered an all new growth period. The age of the curl had arrived, but for me it was twenty-five years too late. Suddenly, the identity I tried so hard to maintain was unnecessary. A sense of freedom and inner peace washed over me as I experienced for the first time the true meaning of natural and casual. Driven no longer by my life-long obsession, free from chemical dependency, I faced the world as myself. Women began to see themselves for who they were, not what they looked like. I felt a new respect from family, friends, and colleagues; the facade had been dropped.

At the age of twenty-five I knew who I was and felt entirely secure with this uncorrupted image. And then one day, while sharing some deep inner feelings about the role of woman in our society, my last twenty-five years fell into place. Me dearest friend Mary reached out to me, as she so often did to make a point, and said: "Janet, where did you get your perm, it looks so natural and casual."

*Janet Kelly teaches English at Central Bucks High School East.*

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*The Summer Institutes were enhanced by visits from five outside consultants on site. Poets Len Roberts and Chris Buckley met with the Bucks County and Exton Fellows respectively. Bob Tierney, Mickey Bolmer, and Ann Berthoff attended both institutes.*

### **BOB TIERNEY: TEACHING SCIENCE THROUGH WRITING**

*by Peggy Schultz, PAWP '88*

I closed my eyes and put my pencil down on a word—any word of the 400 nouns in neat columns on the unseen paper before me. It seemed like a silly idea. I landed on "egg." So I wrote: "The writing process is like an egg. All the reader sees is an ordinary object, but inside grows and  
**Continued on next page.**

**BOB TIERNEY:  
TEACHING SCIENCE THROUGH WRITING**

*(Continued from preceding page)*

throbs a unique creation, increasingly articulated and lovely. When the egg hatches, the creator is often surprised and delighted with the unexpected result." Bob Tierney told his rapt audience of 1988 PAWP Fellows that students need to learn to use metaphor in all subjects, at any grade level.

This affable Mr. Wizard, a retired biology teacher and football coach from Fremont, California, surprised and delighted his listeners with ideas galore on how to improve learning through writing. He presented himself as Exhibit A. He said he never really understood football until he wrote a book about it.

Tierney told how his science department chairman used to ceremoniously cover a copy of the school's science curriculum with a red lab cloth at the beginning of every year. Since the science curriculum had already been "covered," the teachers were free to teach what they felt they needed to teach, the way they wanted to teach it. Tierney and his colleagues define "cover" as that material which one student can explain in writing to another student.

He discussed the results of a study he did with the help of another biology teacher at Fremont High. The experimental group was distinguished from the control group by its use of reading logs, "neuron notes," and practice essays. Tests given immediately after the presentation of the material showed little difference between the two groups, but five weeks later tests revealed that the experimental group had retained significantly more than the control group.

If it's clean (grandma could read it without blushing) and if it's true, it can go into a student's reading log, or "dialogue journal." Tierney requires that his students prepare a dialogue journal entry whenever he gives them a reading assignment—about five pages—or when he lectures. Each entry page in the journal is divided into four parts: the upper left quadrant is for notes, the lower left quadrant is for a diagram or drawing which helps to explain the notes, the upper right quadrant is for the student's response to the material in notes, and the lower right quadrant is for the student's "so what?". The students shared their responses and their "so whats" with pre-arranged partners the next class day.

Back in the olden days Tierney would routinely give pop quizzes and regularly scheduled tests. The reformed Tierney told the kiddies to go home and write all they knew about a general concept after a certain amount of material had been presented. They were to tell what they could remember, as well as what they weren't sure about, without notes and without text. Tierney would take home the turned-in "neuron notes," and respond to them on blank cassettes which each student had previously given him. He'd be sure to begin by telling the student everything he had done well, and then he'd point out where a student could look to find textual material that would clear up the problem areas. Tierney would then give the students tests when he felt that they knew the material.

Tierney is so confident that his writing approach to the teaching of science is effective that he gives each student

an elaborate-looking insurance policy which guarantees a grade of "C" provided that the student does every assignment and takes every test.

Bob Tierney was not only a thoroughly decent guy with an inordinate amount of chutzpah, but "he's folks." He shared with us stories of how for twenty years he lectured, and bored, his students, and how he used to correct everything that used to cross his desk. He knows kids of any age need our caring, our respect, and our humor. Now we're all anxious to meet our classes and to share with them a bit of the magic of this genial gentleman from California. It's sure to be a great year.

*Peggy Schultz (PAWP '88) teaches first grade at the Tower Hill School in Delaware.*

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**A READING - WRITING WORKSHOP BY  
MICKEY BOLMER OF THE NYC WRITING PROJECT**

*by Phyllis Girard (PAWP '88)*

The school year is underway and the holidays are rapidly approaching. It's time to reflect on the past summer and the Pennsylvania Writing Project. Changes have occurred in my classroom; we are writing more and enjoying writing more. I think my summer enthusiasm has successfully infiltrated my classroom.

It's funny how I remember that ninety-plus-degree day at Bucks County Community College. Lunch was over, time to return to our little collage for more writing, responding to writing, reading about writing, and listening to writing. But what to our wondering eyes...there were books and not books by Britton, Graves, Moffett, or Calkins. No, these were the books that none of us had had the time to read this summer and we were impulsively browsing and thumbing through them, West To the Wind, One Hundred Years of Solitude, student writings...

Mickey Bolmer from the New York Writing Project was our guest speaker that afternoon. The topic was reading and writing. We were invited to select a book to read. It was hard to decide, I found myself reading A Pair of Blue Eyes by Thomas Hardy. I think we were all ready for a change of pace as Mickey quietly asked us to first reflect on what had happened to our writing that summer. As I look over my notebook and reread, trying to recapture the feeling that afternoon, I note "The institute has broadened my scope of writing through freewriting, poetry. Being a member of a response group has given me an opportunity to share writing. I'm excited and I want to do more."

It was time to read. How relaxing on a warm summer afternoon with the monotonous humming of the air conditioner to read with a group of friends. All reading and all savoring the experience. After a few minutes, the people around me were there, but not there, I was in the imaginary world of Hardy. A voice requests write a response to your reading. My notes recall, "I was attracted to the character of Elfide for the opening description of the rather withdrawn female makes you wonder..."

Reading and the writing process go together to make meaning explains Mickey as he brings the group together. Writing makes meaning, meaning of what is important.



Return reading to the classroom. We bring the texts we value to class and students must be given a chance to interact with a text at their level sharing with other people in the same place. As students write and discuss, they will think. The meaning making should come from the students for when the answers are the teacher's, will the teachers really know what their students have learned? Meaning making leads to more meaning. Do it with them: speaking, writing, and reading. The students are the explorers and the teacher is the guide.

As I reread these brief notes, I now realize there is more meaning to what Mickey was saying that day. I have tried the techniques he initiated with us that afternoon and together my students and I are discovering new meaning from reading and writing.

Mickey Bolmer's guidelines are simple to follow. A series of questions:

Did my students read? Did my students write?  
Did my students speak? Did my students make meaning?  
Did my students make sense of something?

Try these questions with your students and discover the enjoyment and sense of discovery that can be created in a classroom through literature, writing and speaking.

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### SUMMER VERSES

by Florence Pollock

Chris Buckley, a teaching staff member at West Chester University, conducted a workshop on poetry writing for the fellows at the PAWP summer institute. Chris' poetry has been published in several important journals including The New Yorker. His critical expertise with contemporary poetry provided us with some exciting insights into the craft of poetry writing.

During the first afternoon workshop, Chris introduced us to narrative and catalog poems by contemporary writers such as David Wojahn, Gary Soto, Gary Snyder, and Azim Hikmet. We read and discussed the poems, relying on Chris for background information on the poets. This biographical data demonstrated the deeply personal qualities of the poems and reinforced Chris's advice that we tell our students their voice and lives are important enough to inspire their own poems. Chris then surprised us with our first poetry assignment—composing a catalog poem. We prewrote ideas on paper, listing details we might use in our poetic lists. Then we met with our response groups, exchanging ideas and offering critical comment to each other. That evening we labored at our typewriters and word processors, trying to equal Walt Whitman in our catalog forms.

The next afternoon Chris assigned us to our response groups once again, asking that we choose one or more poems per group to read aloud when we would convene. It was difficult choosing "the best" poems to be read. Only a few groups were able to do this. We then regathered in the classroom to hear the poems read. We applauded the verses we heard, sharing the emotions they revealed.

Chris then gave us copies of the imagistic poems which we read and discussed. Had time allowed, he would have asked us to write an imagistic poem as a second assign-

ment. He suggested that we study the imagery in the poems to note how the poets use it for effect and to arrive at surprising insights. Several of the fellows subsequently wrote poems based on imagery.

Chris Buckley provided two stimulating afternoons for the fellows, particularly for those who write poetry and teach poetry writing. The result of his two-day workshop is evident in our collection of personal writings, Confabulation. At least one-third of the contributions are poems, many of which grew out of those two days we immersed ourselves in contemporary poetry.

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### ANN BERTHOFF VISITS SUMMER INSTITUTES

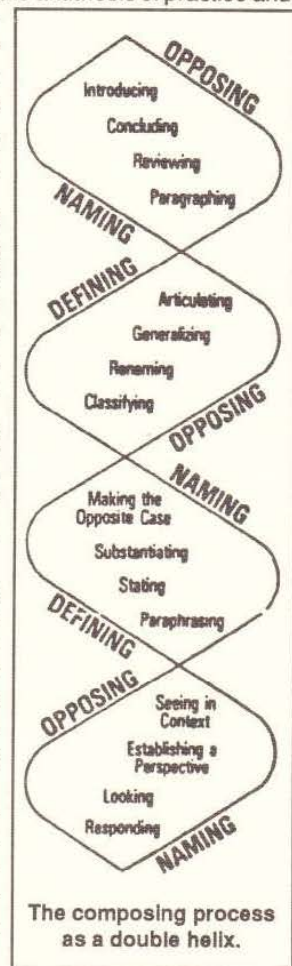
by Gail Capaldi, PAWP '86

Author of Forming/Thinking/Writing. The Making of Meaning, and Reclaiming the Imagination, Ann Berthoff looks at writing and the teaching of writing from a decidedly philosophical bent exploring implications of such concepts as knowing, meaning, and thought, and their relation to language. While certainly interested in the practical application of composition theory, Berthoff cautions that teachers must also be philosophically aware. Theory and practice should stand in what she describes as a "dialectical relationship." "But theory is not the antithesis of practice and, in fact, can only serve an authentic purpose if it is continually brought into relationship with practice so that each can inform the other." (Forming/Thinking/Writing, 1983, p.3).

As John Clifford notes in "Toward Real Philosophic Laboratories: Ann Berthoff on Writing Theory and Practice": "By demonstrating the myriad connections that writing and its teaching have with our philosophical heritage, she raises our consciousness about the humanistic centrality of composition studies." (in The Territory of Language, ed. D. McQuade, p.334).

In The Making of Meaning (1981), Berthoff has constructed her own model of the composing process as a double helix (with which she recommends Institute participants become familiar—see diagram).

The pages of the Berthoff books resonate with her energy and pedagogical enthusiasm, as did her personality, presentation and discussion.



**AN INVITATION TO APPLY TO 1989 SUMMER INSTITUTES  
JUNE 26 TO JULY 28, 1989  
AT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY AND BUCKS COUNTY**

*The summer institute is an intensive five-week program approved by the National Writing Project for demonstrating specific teaching strategies, examining research and key texts in the field of written composition, writing in several different modes, and meeting regularly in groups to share and examine manuscripts with one another. Up to 25 Fellowships are awarded to selected teachers who represent all grade levels and all areas of the region. The Fellows may subsequently serve as teacher-consultants in in-service workshops and programs.*

Two parallel summer institutes are offered in 1989, one at West Chester University and one in Central Bucks County.

**Structure of Summer Institutes**

Participants meet four days each week for five weeks. Usually mornings are spent sharing knowledge and classroom strategies through participants' presentations. Presentations by noted consultants and writers are also part of the program. Afternoons are devoted to writing and editing sessions.

**Content of the Institute**

- Phases of the writing process
- Varying forms, purposes, and audiences for writing assignments
- Writing to learn/writing across the curriculum
- Evaluating writing
- Dealing with writing apprehension

**Who should apply?**

Experienced, talented teachers are eligible to be selected for Project Fellowships. Applicants may be teaching on the elementary, secondary, or college levels in language arts, communications, and English or in other content areas. Teachers may be nominated by their schools or school districts. The Project staff interviews applicants. Teachers interested in writing across the curriculum or writing to learn are encouraged to apply, as well as teachers who are interested in improving the skills of their students.

**Responsibilities of the Writing Fellows**

1. Attend the Institute and present one classroom method or approach that has proven successful.
2. Write periodically in several different modes during the Institute.
3. Make in-service presentations and contribute to other activities during the following year as requested, and as mutually agreed between teacher and school or district officials.
4. Adopt methods gained from the Institute and participate in evaluation activities as needed.
5. Serve on one Writing Project committee for one year.

**Cost to schools or districts and participants**

A school/district endorsement fee of \$980 per participant supports operating expenses of the Project. It is payable in May after participants enroll. Stipends will be awarded during the Institute. Participants or their employers are responsible for paying tuition and fees for six hours of graduate credit (approximately \$695), and for personal expenses. Some schools and districts contribute to these costs in addition to the endorsement fee.

**What will be gained by participating teachers and schools districts?**

**For Teachers:**

1. A stipend of \$700.
2. Recognition as Fellow of the West Chester University/Pennsylvania Writing Project.
3. Six hours of West Chester University graduate credit.
4. Improved skills in the teaching of writing.
5. Training as an in-service "teacher/consultant."
6. Relationships with other writing teachers who seek to improve their teaching and writing.
7. A one-year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.
8. A library of textbooks and articles.
9. Additional credits available for follow-up work in Fall & Spring.

**For Schools and/or Districts:**

1. Trained specialists in writing to assist in staff development.
2. In-service programs to improve the teaching of writing.
3. Participating in the National Writing Project network for exchange of information about school writing programs in Pennsylvania and the nation.
4. A one year sponsorship of the National Writing Project which includes the Quarterly of the National Writing Project.

**HOW TO BECOME A PAWP FELLOW**

**Today:** Tell your administrators of your interest so they can arrange for the school district's financial commitment.

**February:** Complete the application form on the next page. Follow all directions carefully and be sure to get the necessary approval.

**March:** Submit your application materials.

**April:** You will be contacted for a personal interview.

**May:** If you are invited into the Institute, you will receive an invitation to the preliminary supper meeting on May 17, 1989.

**June:** Do reading and writing to prepare for the Summer.

# PAWP APPLICATION FOR SUMMER INSTITUTES

## Important Information:

This application form must be endorsed by a district or institution official and be accompanied by: (A) a brief description of your background and experience teaching writing, including current and planned assignments; (B) a one-page statement presenting one aspect of your classroom teaching of writing that you would be willing to develop at the institute and present to the Fellows. Send the application and (A) and (B) to the Project Director by March 31, 1989. Interviews will be held and notification of Writing Fellows selected will be accomplished by April 18, 1989.

**Return Application to:** Pennsylvania Writing Project, c/o Robert Weiss, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383

## Teacher Application:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone - Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_

Grades:

K-3     4-6     MS

7-9     10-12     college

I enclose required supporting materials and agree to accept the responsibilities of a Writing Fellow.

Check here to apply for the PAWP Institute in Bucks Co.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## School or District Endorsement by Official Authorized to Commit Funds:

I endorse the above application for a position as a Summer Fellow in the PAWP Summer Institute. I certify that this endorsement is supported by school or district willingness to contribute \$980 (per participant) to the PAWP and to conduct future in-service activities.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Supporting Statement for Applicant:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*In addition to the two Summer Institutes, the Pennsylvania Area Writing Project offered a special institute on teaching creative writing. The following are personal writings from and reactions to several of these courses.*

### HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION: OR ADVANCED INSTITUTE ON TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING

*by Dick Halsey (PAWP '87), Pam Hertz (PAWP '86), and Vicki Steinberg (PAWP '83)*

Like to explore the extraordinary? Eighteen teachers who do took the maiden voyage of the Starship Creative Writing. Its summer mission was to explore strange new poetic forms, seek out new short story and theater exercises, boldly write where no teacher had written before.

The first Advanced Institute on Teaching Creative Writing run by PAWP with the aid of National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) grant attracted 18 teachers, grades 1 through 12, who were willing to spend five weeks at the Exton Corporate Center (if they could find it) in a windowless room. Past PAWP participants like Donna Dingle (1987 Fellow), Lou Pomeroy (1987 Fellow), and Janet Smith (1981 Fellow), were joined by Rich Gilbert, Mary Inman, Joan Lorenz, Father David Powers, Marion Klaus, Dorothy Brown, Martha Buck.

The one aspect of the Institute which was new to almost all was the "workshop." All participants were required to send original poetry and up to five pages of a short story

which the visiting authors could reproduce for the workshop experience.

The workshop procedure is simple. First, all those attending the session have an opportunity to pre-read the pieces to prepare constructive comments. Second, the teacher/writer reads the piece aloud. Then, and this is the hardest part, the teacher/writer must remain silent without responding, defending, or clarifying while the critics dissect, discuss, and dispute his piece. Finally, the teacher/writer may respond to the comments.

Although this experience began as a rather intimidating one, the teacher/writers learned to value and desire the activity, discovering both strong points and weak ones.

Weekly, participants tried such exercises as poet Rod Santos' on taking a short field trip outside the building to observe the changing landscape and take notes which were turned into a poem upon returning to the classroom.

Short story author Ken Smith and playwright Tony Stafford both agreed a plot goes nowhere unless the characters are well defined in the author's mind. The conflict must grow from the characters. A good exercise is to outline a character's complete background even if it will never be needed for the plot because the author must understand the personality, indeed, hopes the characters will take over.

Poet Mark Jarman's exercises often depended on rhythm and rhyme as in sonnets, villanelles, and sestinas which few of the teachers had ever attempted before.

**Continued on next page.**

**HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION:  
OR ADVANCED INSTITUTE  
ON TEACHING CREATIVE WRITING**  
*(Continued from preceding page)*

Between authors, Chris Buckley of West Chester University and Joan Flynn of PAWP handled such logistics as printing, who'd bring goodies which day, scheduling of presentations, and editing "Views From a Windowless Room," the group's final publication.

Each visiting author's week was followed with presentations by the class members which showed how to use creative writing in the classroom. Jolene Borgese also encouraged eight participants to present for the PAWP Youth Writing Project at West Chester. Over the five weeks, topics ranged from Betty Shannon (1985 Fellow) on art as pre-writing, Marilyn Sandberg (1986 Fellow) on metaphors and similes in short stories, Joe Tortorelli (1983 Fellow) on children's books, and Phil Kearney on rock lyrics as poetry.

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**THE ADVANCED INSTITUTE  
ON CREATIVE WRITING...  
SELECTED POETRY**  
*submitted by Chris Buckley*

Below are poems representative of the high quality of work produced during the five week summer institute on Teaching Creative Writing. The writers succeeded in both traditional and open forms with a variety of subjects. They owe a great deal to the responses of the group in the workshops and to the fine poets and teachers Sherod Santos and Mark Jarman; but most of all they owe "it" to themselves for tireless revisions, the expansion of their skills and talents, and for grace under pressure.

**UNSEEN GRACE**

Ghost lady  
of trash cans  
and used cigarettes,  
grey with subway dirt,  
with foraged clothes,  
unseen  
but not unnoticed  
in the speechless station's glare  
ignoring mutually  
the two AM subway standers,  
who catch their breath  
routinely before her expected stench arrives, and exhale  
again  
as grey ghostlike  
she slips silently down the platform and  
with unseen grace,  
steps prudently  
over a suspicious puddle  
of water  
or urine.

Richard Halsey (PAWP '87)  
July 1988

**TRIOLET**

I know no windows mean less air,  
That corporate air, cooled weighs  
More heavily on us who dare  
To know no windows mean less air.  
Whose faith or hope or love will care  
To teach no windows mean less air,  
And how much the corporate air, cooled, weighs?

Joan Lorenz,  
Downingtown Area School District  
Summer, 1988

**SESTINA AT MAUI**

I walk, shrouded in clouds,  
Down to see  
The woods fill up  
With the mist, pausing by a stream  
To watch fish  
Feeding in the rain.

Streams, fed by rain  
Spilling from clouds  
Like shimmerings fish,  
Darting thoughts, in a sea  
Of memory, stream  
Through my mind, rushing up,

Swirling into imagination, up  
Into consciousness, taking rein,  
This stream  
Dispelling clouds  
Blurring the vision. I see  
Exotic images of fish,

Crystal ocean, men who fish  
Pulling nets up  
Into boats, singing. I see  
Flowers whose petals rain  
Pink carpets from sweet clouds,  
Bare feet in a velvet stream.

Faces mirroring a stream  
Of thoughts as fish  
Swim freely. Reflected clouds  
Rest on the ocean. Up  
In the sky, no sign of rain.  
A tranquil sea.

Now, I see  
Mist rising from woods and stream,  
Shafts of sunlight drying rain,  
Reaching down, touching fish.  
I follow paths leading up  
Into the mountains, into clouds.

Elizabeth Shannon (PAWP '85)  
Summer, 1988

## BRECK'S HOLLAND BULB CATALOGUE

the bold deep-purple heads  
enclosed in muddy snow  
whisper winter's final days

soon the trumpet bells  
of creamy yellow silk  
announce a veil of light

only then at last scarlet  
soldiering above the stems  
broadcasts the green to come

Vicki Steinberg (PAWP '83)  
July 28, 1988

### OCEAN VIEW

From the screened porch of the cottage  
we watch the great red and white  
Link-Belt shovel gouge out the sand  
as it digs a ditch for the water line.  
The mustard-yellow John Deere bulldozer  
with much backing and beeping  
and double-jointed flexing  
shoves the sand back in the hole  
as soon as the men have laid  
white lengths of polyvinyl chloride  
piping. (PVC resist corrosion).

The manholes are concrete,  
the men still flesh and blood—  
sweating, tanned white men on  
the machines, black men on the line.  
We'll appreciate the change.  
The tap-water tastes tarnished now.  
Yet, instead of the sea oats,  
the pelicans, the sea, we watch the  
beg FMC link belt at its work.

Our girls, in string bikinis—  
pale green, pink flowered—  
picked their way past the construction  
site seeking the old path through the dunes.  
Together we and all the work-men watch  
the rounded bottoms, firm  
tanned shoulders, golden heads  
receding over the curve of the land.

Dorothy M. Brown  
(Capitol Area Writing Project)  
Summer, 1988

### SWANS ON THE MILL STREAM

Slowly pushing  
downstream  
with Tuonelian  
grace, the swans  
align themselves

to the river's curve.  
They rudder in  
when you whistle  
a jagged strain  
or thump the earth  
with a board.  
They listen  
for the scratch-  
ingness of the grain  
bits on the white-  
spread dish.  
they scud east-  
wardly, easily,  
Their cygnets enfolded  
in the whiteness of wings.

II

Ah! Silly swans,  
Vain archangels caught  
in the frozen stream,  
swirling around  
in your frantic haste,  
knocking your sensitive thighs  
against brittle slice-edge  
of river ice,  
you arch your necks  
with unqualified disdain,  
seeking a watery avenue  
from your whirl pool.  
Pinioned archangels,  
you search into some recess  
of winters past—when  
that familiar "chop-chop"  
set you free from ice-bonds.  
The axe rests leaden against my thigh,  
but I shall keep it lifeless  
until I have my laugh at your expense,  
at your lost dignity and fettered power.

III

When we two chose  
that sun-distilled  
afternoon to make it ours with infinite dimension,  
you played a discreet role  
of watchfulness,  
leveling your black-mask eyes at us,  
backing and bumping wetly  
against the scimitar weeds,  
thrusting forward with your webs, and sliding back again  
to see if we were still there,  
seeing what—oh!—I don't know,  
but seeing and remembering it all,  
throwing back and high  
your ionic head  
to trumpet out the words  
of sight and sound.  
Sire of civilization,  
who has seen and heard a world,  
the truth lies there churning

Continued on next page

in your long snake throat.  
The secret is yours alone,  
because when you were a neophyte,  
they made you mute.

Janet F. Smith (PAWP '81)  
Summer, 1988

### CHUN

the difficulty of the beginning  
is the translation...for images  
of the storm; thunder and clouds,  
the chaotic whirl between heaven  
and earth...and I fuse the wagon  
to the horse with words,  
letting the perseverance of humility  
find a slow pace in the going.

It's caught in the nines and sixes,  
in the weak and strong relating  
lines that make the emerging possibilities,  
not insular, but a weaving, changing whole  
where messages are convincing drops  
in the ensuing rain—  
the coins of chance are divine

L.B. Pomeroy (PAWP '87)  
Summer, 1988

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### NEW LINKAGES BETWEEN WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY AND THE DELAWARE VALLEY ENGLISH ALLIANCE

To provide mutual awareness of each other's instructional contexts, goals and methods, the English Department of West Chester University and the English Departments (secondary) of the Delaware Valley English Alliance arranged a series of experimental site visits and observations. Initially, the arrangers were Bob Weiss, Kostas Myrsiades, Nick Spennato, Barbara Giorgio, Mary Ann Black, Betty Williamson, and Pam Fitzgerald. The plan was for secondary teachers to visit West Chester University classrooms. Both groups would then convene to discuss the implications of what they observed.

A preliminary meeting on May 3, 1988 drew 34 high school teachers, many of whom were supervisors, department heads, or lead teachers, and 10 WCU faculty. The gathering was pleasant and informative; it accomplished its purpose of enabling teachers to get acquainted and to plan a series of mutual observation in 1988-89. We identified some of the issues of concern to both high school and college English teachers; and we decided to hold thematic discussions in addition to observing one another's classes.

The initial discussion session, held on October 11, 1988, touched on these topics: teacher education, college writing courses and how to prepare for them, and student preparation for literature and research courses. Many WCU English faculty attended, and the interchanges were lively.

Classroom visits by high school teachers to the WCU campus were held over three weeks beginning late in October; a follow-through discussion was scheduled for December 8, and reciprocal visits are scheduled for the Spring. Specific feedback from this program will be reported in a coming newsletter.

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### RON BRANDT, EDITOR OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP, KEYNOTES DVASCD FALL CONFERENCE by Mary Lou Kuhns, Associate Director, PAWP

The Delaware Valley Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (DVASCD) heard Ron Brandt speak on the "Future of Our Profession" November 3rd at Neshaminy High School. He noted the concerns of many that education faces a critical moment in the 1980's, but he sees the strong possibility for improvement if administrators have a vision for their schools, if meaningful staff development is implemented, and if teachers are empowered with leadership roles in their schools. While Brandt finds these options necessary and exciting, he noted that many administrators and teachers are reluctant; thus he encouraged audience discussion on teacher empowerment.

Six breakout groups followed and were led by prominent Delaware Valley and Pennsylvania educators. In one session, three speakers explored "Tomorrow's Curriculum." Elinor Sylver, William Penn School District, noted the cyclical nature of modern educational movements. Bruce Burt, West Chester Area School District, stressed the need for real-life math problems and for technology such as computers and calculators to instruct grades K-12. He also stressed the importance of writing to learn in math classes, a surprise for some in the audience, a delight for those familiar with the writing process. James O. Lee, Lower Moreland School District, also praised the importance of composing and writing to learn; however, he warned against the danger of merely adding buzz-words to our curricula and vocabularies. He suggest we ban "fill-in-the-blank" and "circle-the-answer" handouts, reward and celebrate high academic accomplishments, and promote individualized professional development programs based on where teachers are and where they could be with genuine support.

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### NEW DIMENSION IN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM by Judy Yunginger

Pennsylvania's teachers of reading and writing process will be interested to know that there are new dimensions in the prewriting stages of the state's comprehensive

# FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI•FYI

(grades 2-10) assessment system being designed to replace TELS and EQA (and go beyond them), hopefully within the next few years. The reading and math segments of the test will even be equated with major standardized tests, according to present planning, so that they will be optional screening or evaluation instruments for Chapter I.

There will continue to be skills assessment but the focus will be on essential comprehension items based on a few pieces of real narrative and real exposition reproduced totally or in sections lengthy enough to have integrity, rather than on bits and pieces of artificial text written expressly for the purpose of testing. Illustrations will be included, at least for the beginning readers who need and should know how to use picture cues.

Test items are also being considered that will access other elements we know are factors in comprehension: reading strategies, prior knowledge, interest and attitudes. These items will not be scored and reported statewide, but information on student responses will be provided to teachers that should prove very helpful in their instructional planning.

Assessing writing via holistic scoring of writing samples has been recommended and is under consideration. The problem in this area is an economic one. Doing writing sample across the board would be prohibitively expensive but one accommodation being discussed is such testing at selected grade levels.

This more holistic approach to reading and writing assessment is endorsed by PDE's Leann Miller, who is directing the Statewide Assessment Committee on Communications. She is basing much of their work on the innovative assessment systems of Michigan, Illinois and Massachusetts.

*Judy Yunginger is a reading specialist in the Eastern Lancaster School District.*



## MONIES MADE AVAILABLE

The purpose of the Educational Research Grant Program is to support scientific inquiry designed to provide more dependable knowledge about the processes of learning and education. The program generally funds teacher-led-research projects in which one or more classroom teachers serve as principal investigators for the project, although involvement of other personnel such as school administrators, supervisors of teachers, curriculum specialists, and staff developers may also be appropriate. For more information, contact L. Ann Benjamin, U.S. Department of Education, Research Applications Division, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 555 New Jersey Ave. NW, Rm. 506B-M/S 1508, Washington, DC 20208. Telephone: (202) 357-6187.

## TEACHERS: WRITE AND SHARE YOUR IDEAS

The NCTE Committee on the Professional Writing Networks for Teachers and Supervisors is ready to help you. If you are interested in sharing your ideas, but feel you would like some help in writing an article for publication in a professional journal, the Committee is available to give you suggestions and support. Send your partly or fully completed manuscript (with self-addressed, stamped envelope for return) to Dr. Gail E. Tompkins, University of Oklahoma, Department of Instructional Leadership, 820 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK73019. Your manuscript will then be sent to a committee member who will read and respond to it and then return it to you with suggestions.

## SPRING COURSES OFFERED BY PAWP

### "Strategies for Teaching Writing"

Berks County Intermediate Unit  
Bucks County Intermediate Unit  
Downingtown Area School District  
Norristown Area School District  
Northampton Area School District  
Palisades School District  
Upper Dublin School District  
Pocono Mountain School District  
Upper Dublin School District  
West Chester Area School District

### "Computers and Writing"

Bensalem School District  
Cardinal O'Hara High School  
Centennial School District  
Upper Darby School District

**For more information  
contact the PAWP office**

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# PAWP-POURRI

Charles P. Martin (PAWP '81), Curriculum Coordinator for English Language Arts in the Chichester School District, was reappointed by the National Council of Teachers (NCTE) to serve on the NCTE Selection Committee for Identifying Centers of Excellence in the Teaching of English. He also serves on NCTE's Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guides and the Commission on English Education's Committee to Integrate English and Language Arts Teacher Preparation.

Also from Chichester: Beth Cox (PAWP '88) and John Tarves (PAWP '88) have been invited by the National Council of Teachers of English to present a session at NCTE's Spring Conference in Charlestown, S.C., next April. Their subject will be Chichester's experience with organizing and presenting its annual Renaissance Faire Day.

Ed Bureau (PAWP '80) had a chapter accepted by NCTE for publication in a book dealing with staff development approaches to implementing Computer-based writing programs. Ed is the Language Arts and Reading Supervisor for the Springfield School District, Delaware County.

Sue Marra, secretary in the PAWP office at West Chester University since July, 1988, is also a writer. Sue has had short stories and poems published in various publications, including D'oppleganger and Horror Show. She is also writing book reviews for the magazine Haunted Journal.

We recently learned that Josephine Bigione Jones (PAWP '85) had a busy and exciting year and a half. After a whirlwind courtship she became engaged to Gene Jones and was married in August, 1987. They now have a daughter Tracie and are living in Wallingford. Josephine is currently on child-rearing leave and sends greetings to all of her fellow Fellows.

PAWP applauds the West Chester Area School district for its effort to provide professional staff development for teachers. Recently, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Act 178 mandated all schools to have a professional development program, but for the past few years WCASD has been in the vanguard of professional staff development offering graduate level courses in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Writing Project as well as providing tuition reimbursement.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Christine Connors (PAWP-PHILA '82). Christine taught at the Stetson School in Philadelphia District #7. Our sympathy is extended to family and friends.

The District 1 PATHS (Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching Humanities in Schools) Newspaper is being sponsored by Mary Ellen Costello and edited by Cecilia Evans (former PAWP editor). In addition to providing information relevant to the teaching of writing, the newspaper also includes numerous and varied pieces of writing by both students and teachers. Keep up the good work!

On March 16th Karen Steinbrink will host a PAWP reception for all of the '88 Fellows at the Bucks County Intermediate Unit. All Fellows are asked to bring an interested guest.

PAWP really does practice what it preaches. Seven survivors of the Summer Institute on Creative Writing met on October 30, 1988 at Marilyn Sandberg's home to respond to each other's writing. They shared poems, personal essays, short stories, and student writing assignments and responded with fervor. The group includes Dorothy Brown, Martha Buck, Mary Inman, Marion Klaus, Joan Lorenz, Janet Smith, and Marilyn Sandberg.



# DEAR TEACHER

by Marilyn Sandberg

## Try Assigning Poetic Forms

I struggled with assignment after assignment in PAWP's Summer Institute for Creative Writing, trying to arrive each morning with a new idea for a script, a short story, or a sonnet. My only comfort was the people becoming Fellows across the hall were suffering more than I was. "Write about a barn or an old lady with a disagreeable husband," our leader directed. "Today you have free choice."

The free choice assignment tortured me the most because I knew I now had to write about India; six months had passed since I returned from there. All I had was my green spiral notebook with the original scribbles describing the temple priest smeared with ashes, the leper pounding a bandaged fist on the bus window, the hawkers of holy beads and sandals, the faces of the villagers so much more serene than ours. Surely that free choice assignment beckoned me to write about India. It did, and I couldn't. It haunted me. It demanded a product. But where would I start?

The puzzles of India still whirled in my mind, refusing to settle themselves into position where I could deal with them. Freedom of choice did not help, but an assignment to write a tightly structured poem did.

"Write in one of these poetic forms," demanded the visiting poet. "You have a choice of four." We groaned. Did I restrict myself to describing India in iambic pentameter or to the tricky rhyme scheme of the villanelle?

Neither. India continued to whirl. In fact, it circled right into the sestina with its six end words that must be repeated over and over again. For India is a wheel. Reincarnated souls cycle toward Nirvana, religious life revolves around the Ganges, and my own head was spinning as I visited the sacred river on New Year's morning. I chose my six end words for the sestina and India took form.

### Indian Sestina

Before dawn when the Ganges sun  
still hides in murky dust, bells  
call the pilgrims to rise  
and walk down to the river.  
Priests in yellow robes begin to chant,  
murmuring Mantras, awakening the faithful.

Shrouded in gray rags, the faithful  
await the new day's sun.  
Like ghosts they drift to the ghats, driven by the chant  
of holy men and sounds of temple bells.  
They carry small brass vessels to the river  
where they stand stone still to await the rise

of the sun. They anoint themselves with water as they  
watch the rise  
of the new day that offers solace to the faithful.  
They stand knee deep in the river  
ignoring the one chill of the morning. The sun

hints at the saffron glow of daybreak. Bells  
ring and the water sings its silent chant.

As pilgrims chant  
the ancient Hindu prayers, the sounds rise  
to a harsh, clanging cacophony of bells  
that urge the burgeoning crowds of faithful  
worshippers to meet the brilliance of the sun  
that casts its golden lightning on the river.

Burning candles float on the sacred river,  
pinpoints of flame echo the chant.  
With horns gilded as the morning sun,  
cows, resting on the bank in slumber, rise  
and amble toward the water. Their faithful  
eyes shine honey brown. They wear necklaces of silver  
bells

that sing along with temple bells  
as they wander toward the firs on the river  
ghats. Sons and fathers, faithful  
to the dead chant  
Mantras, as flames rise  
around the gray faced corpse. Billows of smoke disappear  
into the sun.

Ashes of the dead join the river that mingles chant  
and sound of bells. Prayers rise  
with faithful promises to meet the morning sun.

You and your students may enjoy trying this form. Students like to work it out as a puzzle, and if things go wrong, they can blame the form (so can you). I found an additional advantage in using the form assignment with my students. They responded to each other more naturally. The form took their attention away from their reluctance to make what they consider impolite, personal criticism. They didn't mind pointing out that someone forgot one of his six words, or that a word was out of order. They worked together in thinking up clever end-words that acted as multiple parts of speech or had several meanings. The form turned to be supportive rather than constrictive for many of us.

If you want to try it: the sestina has six stanzas with an envoy, the last three line stanza. Each stanza has six lines and no particular meter. The writer is allowed only 6 unrhymed end words which must be used at the end of the line in each stanza in a prescribed and shifting order.

For instance: stanza 1) sun; 2) bells; 3) rise; 4) river; 5) chant; and 6) faithful. To continue: pick up the first and last word and reverse them; pick up the second and fifth words and reverse them; pick up the third and fourth words and reverse them. Hence, stanza two: 6) faithful; 1) sun; 5) chant; 2) bells; 4) river; and 3) rise. Stanza three: 364125; stanza four: 532614; stanza five: 451362; and stanza six: 246531.

The envoy must use the last three end-words of stanza six and must also include the remaining three end-words somewhere within its three lines. Good luck! Your students will love you for this!



# DATA BASE



## Writing Teachers at Work

Teachers of writing may be interested in the following Bay Area Writing Project/ National Writing Project Publications. In this series, teachers describe their methods of teaching writing, including the assignments used and samples of student responses (\$40.00/set).

- *Building Self-Esteem Through the Writing Process*, by Lynn Howgate  
A complete writing curriculum for elementary or junior high, illustrating specific assignments and samples of student writing, the way teaching writing as a process can build confident, competent writers (\$6.50).
- *If Maslow Taught Writing: A Way to Look at Motivation in the Composition Classroom*, by Ada Hill and Beth Boone  
Based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, this book shows how the writing teacher can create differentiated assignments and assessment methods to better meet the specific needs of individual student writers (\$5.00).
- *Out of the Heart: How to Design Writing Assignments for High School Courses*, by Dixie Gibbs Dellinger  
Meaningful writing assignments, the author believes, must not be random exercises, but parts of a sequence of assignments based on a solid theory of discourse. This monograph includes several sequences planned for a variety of types of courses and a variety of student skill levels, all abundantly illustrated with samples of student writing (\$6.50).
- *Process: Vision and Re-Vision*, by Lillian Rossi  
A high school writing course modelled on a Writing Project summer institute, Rossi's course, outlined in this volume, follows teacher and students as they set out to discover and understand writing as a process (\$5.50).
- *Special Education Students Write: Classroom Activities and Assignments*, by Ray Marik  
The author traces, through the work of eight students the system had labelled "losers," the growth in writing competency which can be achieved through an understanding of the student's special needs and the creation of a carefully-planned series of assignments which fosters the development of their cognitive skills (\$7.00).

- *A Success Curriculum for Remedial Writers*, by Gerald Camp  
A program for teaching writing based on the premise that any reasonable writing assignment can succeed. This monograph includes a series of such assignments and documents the progress of students through a course based solely on success (\$5.50).
- *Writing: A Window to Our Minds*, by Center School's 8th Graders and Nancy Marashio  
Nancy Marashio's eighth graders spend the entire year writing and talking about writing. In this monograph they explore, and illustrate with the "themes" they wrote and shared each week, their understanding of writing as a process (\$6.50).

Contact the PAWP office for an order form.



## The Institute for Writing and Thinking, Workshops and Conferences, 1988-89

### March 31 - April 2

- Teaching Writing and Thinking
- Writing to learn
- Essay and Inquiry
- Teaching Poetry: Reading and Writing
- Writing to Teach Math and Science

### April 21

- "Language in the Middle," Conference on Teaching Writing in the Middle School (Simon's Rock Campus)

### May 5 - 7

- Teaching Writing and Thinking
- Writing to Learn
- Essay and Inquiry
- Teaching Writing and Thinking in the Middle School

For more information contact:

The Institute for Writing and Thinking  
Bard College Center  
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504.  
(914) 758-7484.

**PENNSYLVANIA WRITING PROJECT NEWSLETTER**

Published Quarterly

by the Pennsylvania Writing Project  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383

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West Chester University Bucks County Intermediate Unit Chester County Intermediate Unit  
Delaware County Intermediate Unit Montgomery 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, but it is not limited to, articles that deal with writing and teaching of writing. We seek articles from all teachers of writing at all grade levels and in all subject areas and from anyone else interested in writing. All articles will be considered for publication. Comments, questions, etc., are also welcomed. Please send all communications to: Gail Capaldi or Lois Snyder (Editors), 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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