

Newsletter



Volume 27, Number 2 Summer, 2007

OVER 1,000 PAWLP FELLOWS!

With the addition of 32 new Institute graduates, summer 2007 saw PAWLP exceed the 1,000 Fellows mark. We now have 1,011 Writing and Literature Fellows prepared to become teacher leaders in their buildings, departments, and school districts as well as for PAWLP itself. These teachers come from districts in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, and Montgomery Counties, as well as from private, parochial, and charter schools.

PAWLP teachers find the Institute experience truly transforming. "The summer Institute made me totally re-evaluate what I was doing in the classroom," explained Karen Venuto, a fifth-grade teacher in Rose Tree Media School District. And now, 15 years later, "I continue to re-evaluate my planning and my teaching every year."

"I've taken a lot of professional development

courses, but it was the Institute that was most applicable to teaching and made me want to continue growing and learning," says Sue Fitzgerald, primary-grades reading specialist in the Solanco School District.

"The Institute makes sense to teachers," commented PAWLP Director Andy Fishman. "It helps them renew their teaching skills in the company of their colleagues, while it reconnects them to the university and recommits them to their students."

"As a proud Writing Fellow myself, I am thrilled to invest in our teachers by offering them this outstanding opportunity to grow and reflect as literacy learners and leaders. Our students reap the benefits," said Rina Vassallo, Secondary Director of Teaching and Learning for the Springfield School District in Delaware County.

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Meaningful and Memorable

"To improve reading, kids must read," began Janet Allen on the first day of 2007's Celebrate Literacy Conference. She went on to encourage attendees to use engaging material that is "M&M" - meaningful and memorable - because if teachers use such materials, they "can teach anything."

Throughout her keynote address, Janet gave both theory and philosophy behind strategies as well as the practical strategies themselves.

The time she spent discussing the importance of teacher read-alouds in improving student reading really resonated with teachers, as was evident in almost all the papers of 14 teachers who took the conference as a one-credit course. They referred to several points

she made: use no-risk readings of approximately three or four minutes in different genres and look for charm, magic, impact, and appeal in the selections.

Janet offered suggestions for types of books to include in a classroom library: books at the independent reading levels of the students such as the Blueford series from townsendpress.com which are high interest for middle school readers but low reading level, nonfiction texts, multi-genre texts, and mentor texts which the whole class can use together to share big ideas and essential ideas.

A surprise for some was Janet's assertion that students who are reading two or more grades below grade level need to read 90 minutes a day to catch up, while

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Fall Opportunities on pages 4 - 5

FROM THE DIRECTOR

ANDREA
FISHMAN

This issue of the PAWLP Newsletter marks the beginning of my 18th year at West Chester. Until almost the end of my 17th year, I never took a sabbatical. I had all kinds of reasons to keep moving along, doing my job, year after year, suffering from what I now realize was a form of active inertia. Last spring, though, life conspired to push me out of my orbit and I did it: I took a one-semester sabbatical to do practitioner research as a staff developer in an achievement-gap focused middle school.

The Montgomery County district in which I worked turned out to be a fascinating place. From a data perspective, it looks a lot like most of its neighbors in southeastern Pennsylvania. Predominantly white, predominantly middle and upper-middle class, with a strong tax base, good starting salary, high percentage of college-bound seniors, making AYP, even if only by a few students in some categories. The district's achievement gap (or "opportunity gap" as some prefer to label it) was easily obscured by high over-all proficiency and student participation numbers.

What made this particular school different, though, were eight African-American fathers who wanted to help the middle school principal meet her goal to close the building's achievement gap. These dads were not angry or confrontational. In fact, none of their children lived on the wrong side of the gap. They just

believed all children could achieve, and they believed it was their responsibility to help them.

The way these men construed their efforts will be the topic of future columns. My focus here, however, is on the fact that these "Adults Committed to Excellence" - now referred to as the ACE dads - did make an effort, and their effort made all the difference in turning one principal's abstract goal into concrete reality. It was the force of their presence, their dedication and their effort that moved their middle school into action. It was Newton's First Law come to life.

An object in motion tends to remain in [the same] motion unless acted on by an external force. An object at rest tends to remain at rest unless acted on by an external force.

This lesson from high-school Physics elegantly explains what happened when ACE came on the scene. The principal, teachers, and students at this middle school were not at rest. They were moving along quite well according to all the data. They weren't delighted with everyone's progress, but there wasn't enough friction to be dragged down by it either. A high proficiency percentage created considerable comfort with the status quo. Until they were acted on by an external force - ACE.

Which brings us to Newton's Second Law.

The acceleration of an object resulting from an outside force is directly proportional to the mag-

nitude of the force and in the same direction as the force, and is inversely proportional to the mass of the object.

This more complicated law is most clearly exemplified by the No Child Left Behind legislation. The magnitude of *that* force is so great, that even the mass of an entire school district can be moved in an NCLB direction. But NCLB, for all its strength, dissipates on its way to the classroom. Many teachers do not feel the pressure of NCLB in ways their administrators do. There are too many intervening forces, other vectors - like children, parents, and their own professional ethics - moving teachers in other directions. The powerful local vector that is ACE moved teachers in ways they had never experienced before, personal ways NCLB could not begin to approximate. Teacher strength boosted by ACE power created a significant new force.

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

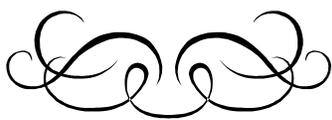
Newton's Third Law recognizes that forces always come in pairs. Push down on someone and they push up. Push down harder, and they push back similarly. So why haven't school districts risen up and stalemated NCLB? Because *acceleration and mass are inversely proportional*, i.e., the federal government is bigger than any school district. And any school district is bigger than any individual teacher. But what about the aggregate - teachers together? Teachers together with parents? Teachers and principals in that Montgomery County district together with ACE?

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- From the Director from page 2

Add all those individual vectors, and a significant force results. Not that they're fighting NCLB. In their eyes, that law just is what it is, which is not what they most care about. They care about "all of us helping each of us" (the ACE motto). Rising test scores will just be a side effect of changing the middle school culture. NCLB's disaggregated groups revealed the problem, "pushed down," if you will. ACE and the middle school are pushing back.

So what's the lesson for all of us in this abbreviated physics curriculum? As educators in recent years, we've learned to see "outside forces" as negative because, in too many cases, they have been. Instead of pushing back, however, we've closed our doors, put up our heat shields, and tried to simply withstand the pressure, giving way - as Newton's Law says we must - a little more every year as more and more of us burn out. My sabbatical experience suggests we needn't try to withstand outside forces alone. Not only is there strength among us when we join together in networks like PAWLP, but there are forces for good in the communities all around us. We just need to join forces with them.



- 1,000 Fellows from page 1

Diane Dougherty, who has been co-directing Institutes for nearly 15 years, stated "I continue to be amazed and gratified by the number of talented and dedicated teachers with whom I have had the privilege to work."

"I would not be in my current position as a Professional Development Coach [in Souderton Area SD] without the Institute and the Project," explains Brenda Krupp.

A 2007 Fellow, Jen Kapanjie, who teaches at Garnet Valley High School summed up her Institute experience: "This past winter, 2006, I earned my Master's Degree from Temple University. While I had a huge sense of relief upon graduation, the feeling of achievement I have from this Institute outweighs earning my Master's. That is powerful."

Everyone associated with PAWLP knows that the power of the Institute is the power of the Fellows, those who become our co-directors - Diane Dougherty, Judy Jester, Patty Koller, and Brenda Krupp - and those who become our participants. Now we are 1,000 strong. We look forward to meeting the wonderful teachers who will help us grow even stronger.

We also want to acknowledge all of our former Institute coordinators - Martha Menz, Lois Snyder, Jim Trotman, Chris Kane, Cecelia Evans, Bob McCann, Mary Lou Kuhns, Jim McCall, Jolene Borgese, Gail Capaldi, Irene Reiter, Mary Ellen Costello, Hilde McGeehan, Shari Stem, Lynne Dorfman, Chris Kehan, Cheryl Stahle, and Wendy Hopf.

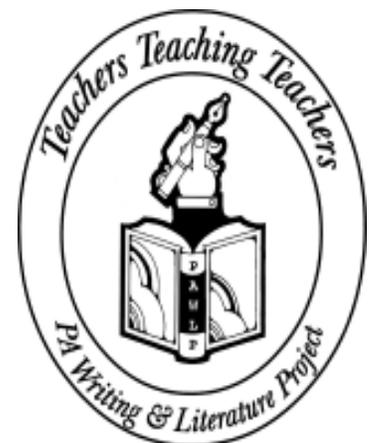
- Meaningful and Memorable from page 1

to stay on level students need 25 minutes a day. She stressed the necessity for volume and diversity in student choices for reading materials. It was clear from teachers' faces they were trying to figure out how to get that 90 or 25 minutes into a student's 24 hour day.

Another catch phrase which resonated with teachers was Janet's use of "tender teacher" to describe the teacher attitude which best helps students. A tender teacher is one who shares her expertise in an "it's okay to make mistakes" manner. Janet herself is an exemplar of this attitude.

- Vicki Steinberg,
PAWLP Co-Director

For much more on ideas Janet touched upon as well as additional ideas for becoming a more effective teacher, contact PAWLP. We can bring courses or professional development on learning to read to reading-to-learn to your school district.



Fall PAWLP Days

Practical Reading and Writing Strategies . . . More than Anything Else



Keynote Speaker: Chris Soentpiet

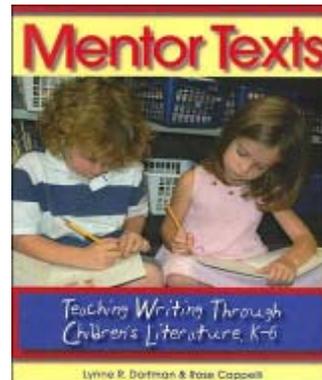
Author/Illustrator Chris Soentpiet has illustrated over 20 titles including *Something Beautiful* and *More Than Anything Else*. His gorgeous illustrations bring to life wonderful, culturally diverse stories from history and the present-day.

Four breakout sessions follow the keynote with incredible strategies for reading/writing classrooms grades K - 12. Useful for classroom teachers, literacy coaches, and reading specialists.

Date: September 29
Time: 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Place: Mill Creek Elementary School
Central Bucks SD
Cost: \$40 if registered and paid by Sept. 15
\$45 thereafter and at the door
Lunch included
Certificate of Attendance and
6.5 Act 48 hours available

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Using Literature in the Writing Workshop ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Date: November 3
Time: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Place: Graduate Business Center,
West Chester University
Cost: \$10 if registered and paid by October 20
\$15 thereafter and at the door
Certificate of Attendance and
3.5 Act 48 hours available



Keynote Speakers Rose Cappelli and Lynne Dorfman, authors of *Mentor Texts, Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K - 6*, and members of the PAWLP leadership team, will share strategies on creating successful writers with *Mentor Texts*.
Two breakout sessions follow the keynote address.

To register please call 610-436-2202 or e-mail Sally Malarney at smalarney@wcupa.edu with your name, grade level, and school district or name of private school.
Checks should be made payable to **West Chester University** and mailed to the PA Writing and Literature Project Office, West Chester University, West Chester, PA 19383.
www.pawlp.org

Fall Courses

PAWLIP Classroom at WCU

Teacher as Writer

PWP 502-01

Thursdays, 4:15 - 7:00 p.m.

August 30 - December 6

Coordinators:

Lynne Dorfman and Frank Murphy

Nonfiction in the Writing/Reading Classroom

PWP 599-01

Two weekends:

Sept. 28 - 30 and November 2 - 4

Fridays 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturdays/Sundays

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Coordinators:

Lynne Dorfman and Bill Crowley

Conrad Weiser SD, Berks County

PA Literacy Framework

PWP 510-01

Wednesdays after school,

September - December

Coordinator:

Vicki Steinberg

Teacher as Writer

PWP 502-02

Two Wednesdays/month

4:00 - 7:15 p.m.

October - April

Coordinator:

Steve Heffner

Kutztown High School, Berks County

Reading to Learn

in the Secondary Content Areas

PWP 510-02

Tuesdays, once/month beginning Aug. 28

3:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Coordinator:

Diane Dougherty

Bucks County IU in Doylestown

Writing Essentials, 2 - 8

PWP 599-03

Two weekends:

October 12 - 14 and 26 - 28

Fridays 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturdays/Sundays

8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Coordinators:

Chris Kehan and Angela Watters

**To register for courses please call 610-436-2202
or e-mail Sally Malarney at smalarney@wcupa.edu
www.pawlp.org**

Courses and In-Service Programs

The Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project can customize a course or in-service program to meet your district's needs. We offer assistance with curriculum development and classroom coaching.

To find out more contact Director, Andrea Fishman, or Associate Director, Mary Buckelew.

610-436-2202

New PAWLP Fellows, Class of 2007

Writing Institute

Heather Winterbottom,
Avon Grove SD
Kimberly Kraf,
Coatesville Area SD
Jillian Chaudrue,
Garnet Valley SD
Kelly Brientnall,
Springfield SD
Danielle Yoka,
Springfield SD
Monica Braconnier,
Springfield SD
Michelle Monteith,
Ridley SD
Dorie Martin,
Springfield SD
Julie McGirl,
Unionville-Chadds Ford SD
Patrice Bove,
Tredyffrin-Easttown SD
Sarah Staats,
Springfield SD
Catherine Poulos,
Rose Tree Media SD

Maureen Naylor,
Rose Tree Media SD
Barbara Donaldson,
Home School
Mary Ryan,
Abington SD
Elizabeth Kazanjian,
Owen J. Roberts SD
Jennifer Kapanjie,
Garnet Valley SD
Jona Gavin,
Garnet Valley SD
Madeline Kessler,
William Penn SD
Elizabeth Stone,
Souderton SD
Elizabeth Pavone,
Downingtown Area SD
Gaetan Pappalardo,
West Depford SD
Jane Ann Said,
Interboro SD

Reading and Literature Institute

Donna Fay,
Pennsbury SD
Deborah Uff,
Springfield SD
Amy Kratz,
Pennridge SD
Dipa Richardson,
Hatboro-Horsham SD
Jeffrey Cary,
Pennridge SD
Dianne Pizzi,
Central Bucks SD
Andria Kaskey,
Radnor Township SD
Bill Brown,
Springfield SD
Jill Dougherty,
Springfield SD

FREE!!

Professional Study Groups for Fellows

REMEMBER:

- ◆ *Your* Writing or Literature Institute experience?
- ◆ Conversations about what really counts in writing?
- ◆ How you miss the Fellows and the food?
- ◆ What it means to be a teacher of writers?
- ◆ How you sometimes need a new point of view?

Recapture those memories and come to an informational meeting:

**Saturday, September 15, 2007
9:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the PAWLP office.**

GROUPS:

- ◆ Are flexible (will choose where and when to meet)
- ◆ Can be for Act 48 hours or independent study credit
- ◆ Focus on student work to improve achievement
- ◆ Practice what PAWLP preaches: conversation and collaboration about supporting our students' literate lives

Please call 610-436-2202 or
e-mail Sally Malarney at smalarney@wcupa.edu to let us know you are coming.
Interested but can't come? Contact the office for more information.

Education Matters, a column from *Michaels Associates*

Recently, this column described a unique way to promote authorship and raise money for your school. Some friends at the newly chartered Endless Mountains Writing Project (EMWP), co-directors Dick Heyler and Nancy Werner-Burke, have gone through the process. I've asked Dick to complete this column by giving his first hand experience working with **Pen and Publish**.

Cordially,
Greg Michaels

In the summer of 2006, the teacher consultants from the Endless Mountains Writing Project came together to establish a writing contest. The committee explored a variety of themes, formats and target audiences. Eventually, we realized that one idea kept recurring: the area in which we live and work is defined by a unique combination of characteristics that defy easy categorization. So rather than follow in the footsteps of previous regional contests, we decided to not target a specific grade level, topic or even a particular type of writing.

We live in a borderland area that views aerially like a giant piece of Swiss cheese; rich farm and dairy land dotted here and there with industry, cultural centers, shops and institutions of higher learning. Cutting-edge technologies are developed virtually alongside cemetery markers from the heyday of the lumber and coal industry. Geographically, our nearest neighbors span six counties—three in New York, and three in Pennsylvania, and we chose to recognize those boundaries as guides for marketing. The “Voices of the Twin Tiers” contest encouraged

people from all walks of life to take pen or keyboard in hand to share their stories and memories with the rest of the community. From schools to grocery stores, libraries and senior centers, radio and web ads, our contest information blanketed the region.

In response, more than 200 entries poured into the EMWP office. While the protocols and processes of sorting and ranking them were long and detailed, it was good work. Here were stacks of vividly written pages, tales that were heart-warming and heart-wrenching, nostalgic, uproarious and just plain fun. We notified the winners, had certificates made, and planned a dessert reception to honor our authors. Yet to simply acknowledge such quality writing with a handshake and a piece of cake seemed a bit anti-climatic.

We knew some of the local newspapers would likely cover the reception and the contest, but that seemed short-term. The questions loomed; how could we guarantee that instead of just reading about the contest, people could actually access the writing itself? Moreover, how could we accomplish this in a way that also honored our winning writers, so that they felt truly recognized for their achievements?

The answer came in the form of **Pen and Publish**, the vehicle to actually publish the pieces that made up our local “voice.” Paul Burt, owner of **Pen and Publish**, made the publishing process easy. Each time a question came up, Paul was ready with an answer. He also anticipated any problems we might have from sales to layout. Entries were sent electronically, the cover photo was taken, the intro was written. Within a couple weeks our first published book was assigned an

ISBN number and was listed on Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com. We were happy. When we announced this at our awards ceremony, the response affirmed our labors. Gasps and then applause filled the room. Many of our writers have seen themselves as authors, but most have had no way to actually publish other than in local presses. Now they were actually published and didn't have to pay to do it.

A teacher approached me several weeks later. Emily, one of her 9th graders, is a shy, self-assured young woman. When the teacher announced that she had won a local contest, the classroom, typically, was tepid. When she announced that Emily's work was in a book to be published and purchased at local bookstores or online, the tepid response changed to one of congratulations. Emily's writing was now important to her family, classmates, and friends. We've had many such responses to this book. As we go into our second year of the contest and ready ourselves for another set of winners and a second book, we are already getting entries, months before we did last year. Our voice is getting stronger. The ability of **Pen and Publish** to produce these collections within our budget contributed significantly to our site, our contest, and our two-state, six-county region.

Please contact Michaels Associates LLC to learn more about publishing books on a reasonable budget.

Michaels Associates LLC
836 East Pittsburgh Boulevard
North Versailles, PA 15137-1702
Voice: 1-800-869-1467
Fax: 1-866-869-1467
www.michaelsassociates.com

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Director
Andrea Fishman
Associate Director
Mary Buckelew
Program Coordinator
Ann Mascherino
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Phone: 610-436-2202
Fax: 610-436-3212
www.pawlp.org

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