

# The PA Writing & Literature Project Newsletter



Volume 33, Number 2 Winter/Spring 2014

## ~ *New Fellows* ~

We are delighted to welcome 36 new Fellows to the PAWLP community. Institute co-directors and coaches Chris Kehan, Maryellen Kenney, Brenda Krupp, Rich Mitchell, Debbie Dinsmore, Jean Shervais, Deanna Brown, Janice Ewing, Bethany Hunter, Brian Kelley, Molly Leahy, Rachel Trosino, Kristin Weand, and Bob Zakrzewski, along with Director Mary Buckelew joined

these Institute participants who immersed themselves in writing, reading, and research during the spring, summer, and fall of 2013.

Participants noted: "This is an incredible opportunity to develop teacher bonds, learn from other passionate teachers, and foster a love of writing. Amazing!" "The course is rejuvenating, eye-open-

ing, and will spin you around and make you a better teacher." "I am so grateful to have taken this course. It opened my mind to new ways of teaching, researching and presenting information."

These new members of PAWLP are wonderful sources for the teaching of writing and reading. Be sure to ask them for their ideas!



*New Writing  
Institute Fellows*



*New Reading and Literature  
Institute Fellows*



*New Writing  
Institute Fellows*

## *New Configuration!*

### *Invitational Writing Institutes – Reconfigured*

The Invitational Institutes have been reconfigured to include two spring meetings, three weeks in the summer, and four fall dates. Participants earn six graduate credits from West Chester University, and are eligible for stipends that can help reduce the cost.

Applications are accepted on a rolling admission basis. The deadline to apply is **April 4, 2014**. See page 5 for specific dates and times as well as application information.



## PAWLP Community, Connections, & Collaboration

### *A Note from Mary*

Dear PAWLP Fellows & Friends,

Happy New Year and welcome to PAWLP's winter/spring Newsletter! In an effort to continue to go green, PAWLP is only publishing two hard copy newsletters per year. Sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter on our website (pawlp.org), follow us on Facebook, follow PAWLP's Twitter and Blog, read PAWLP's ejournal, and check your mail for postcards and the summer/fall Newsletter to stay connected. Although print newsletters have a rich history at the Project—we are proud to announce that we are aiming for a balance of hard copy and electronic venues for keeping our community connected and informed.

2014 marks PAWLP's 34th year as a National Writing Project site. Our work continues to thrive. In this Newsletter, you will find an array of articles by PAWLP Fellows which highlight our continuing professional development initiatives, new partnerships, highlights from our popular book discussion group, and much more. If an article resonates with you, reach out to the PAWLP author, and send your feedback.

We continue to expand our summer offerings — in addition to our annual Invitational Institutes and graduate courses, we will sponsor a three day Academy for educators entitled, "Three Days, Three Modes." In preparation for this Academy, PAWLP is exploring the 6 Traits + 1 Rubric and the six point scoring scale as a more effective way to talk about writing and to teach writing. We will continue our analysis of the PA 5 Domain, 4 pt. ru-

bric as a tool for scoring test writing. A cohort of PAWLP Fellows led by Director Mary Buckelew, Dr. Jolene Borgese, Dr. Lynne Dorfman and Karen Pawlewicz are busy running scoring and calibrating sessions with an inquiry-based stance. We will share more about this exciting inquiry in the summer/fall issue of PAWLP's Newsletter, but do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in our informal research project.

In our continued efforts to expand the good work of the Project, we have focused on collaborating with other educational entities. PAWLP and the Chester County Reading Association (CCRA) are sponsoring a conference on September 27, 2014 at WCU — and the PA Writing Projects will sponsor a strand of Writing Project sessions at the Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English (PCTELA) in Pittsburgh on October 23rd & 24th, 2014. We are delighted to announce the pilot of another new partnership with the Delaware Museum of Natural History (DMNH). We will share more on our DMNH partnership this summer.

Please join PAWLP Fellows and friends at any one of PAWLP's exciting educational events — from the dinner book club, which is reading *Reign of Error* by Diane Ravitch to Continuity Saturdays — there is always something to enrich and satisfy the personal and professional aspect of our lives.

I'd like to thank the PAWLP Fellows (too numerous to mention) whose hard work, suggestions, and feedback continue to shape the vibrant community that is the Pennsylvania Writing and

Literature Project. As we go forward, we hope that more community members will add their voices to our work.

All my best,  
Mary Buckelew, Director

## KUDOS

**Brittany Carlino**, '11 Writing, is teaching in Budapest, Hungary this year on a Fulbright classroom Teacher Exchange Grant.

**Don LaBranche**, '93 Writing, published a chapbook of poetry entitled *Composed of Diamonds and the Ecstasy of Light*.

**Lesley Roessing**, '02 Writing, '04 Lit, published a book entitled *Comma Quest: The Rules They Followed; The Sentences They Saved*, a collection of catchy songs written to help students remember grammar rules.

**Ben Smith**, '11 Writing, was a featured guest on the *Huffington Post's* New Year's Eve broadcast with his piece on *Auld Lang Syne* about why we take the time to remember.

We enjoy keeping up with the accomplishments of our PAWLP Fellows. Please contact Director, Mary Buckelew at 610-436-2998 or e-mail [mbuckelew@wcupa.edu](mailto:mbuckelew@wcupa.edu) with news we can share with our PAWLP family.

Writing Institute  
Class of 2013

*West Chester Fellows*

**Sarah Agran**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Mariam Dubashi**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Shawn Dzielawa**  
West Chester Area SD  
**Amanda Groen**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Charles Henneberry**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Elizabeth Lawley**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Jeffrey Lee**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Susan Lewis**  
Agora Cyber Charter School  
**Jeanne Mastriano**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Moira Messick**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Rachel Nichols**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Christopher SantaMaria**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Matthew Scullin**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Valerie Smith**  
Twin Valley SD  
**Kenneth Vaughan**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Jennifer Ward**  
Lower Merion SD

*Bucks County Fellows*

**Kimberly Anderson**  
Central Bucks SD  
**Monica DeMuro**  
Central Bucks SD  
**Elliot Dunn**  
Plumstead Christian School  
**Kelley Finelli**  
Central Bucks SD  
**Lauren Lafferty**  
Central Bucks SD  
**Brian Mays**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Gay McPhee**  
Central Bucks SD  
**Kipp Moyer**  
Penn View Christian School  
**Donald Plump**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Katharine Trego**  
Phil-Mont Christian Academy  
**Andi Tzabari**  
Lower Merion SD  
**Trish Verdi**  
Council Rock SD



Reading and Literature  
Institute Class of 2013

**Pat Bove**  
Tredyffrin-Easttown SD (retired)  
**Megan Bruns**  
Garnet Valley SD  
**Peggy Kaplan**  
Christopher Columbus Charter  
School  
**Emily McDonough**  
Boyertown Area SD  
**Bonnie McMeans**  
Delaware County  
Community College  
**Mary Oberholtzer**  
Twin Valley SD  
**Mindy Ross**  
Penn-Delco SD  
**Kim Wolf**  
Lancaster City SD



~ ~ **PAWLP E-JOURNAL** ~ ~

Enjoy PAWLP's Electronic Journals  
by and for the Fellows of the Project at  
<http://issuu.com/pawlp>

All Fellows are encouraged to submit essays, articles,  
poetry, photography, and teaching ideas to  
[PAWLPJOURNAL@wcupa.edu](mailto:PAWLPJOURNAL@wcupa.edu)  
Look for our next issue in late spring.

**News from the**  
**WCU Poetry Center**

Teacher scholarships are available for the annual West Chester University Poetry Conference June 4 - 7, 2014. Middle and high school teachers who have not received a scholarship before are eligible. Contact Mary Buckelew at [mbuckelew@wcupa.edu](mailto:mbuckelew@wcupa.edu) or the WCU Poetry Center at 610-436-3235 for details.

# Summer Graduate Courses

## At the WCU Graduate Business Center

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. *Three credits*

<b>Writing and Children's Literature: Creating Successful Writers with Mentor Texts, K - 8</b> PWP 513-30 . . . . .	July 7 - 11
<b>Strategies for Teaching Writing, 4 - 12</b> PWP 503-30 . . . . .	July 14 - 18
<b>Popular Mechanics, 4 - 12</b> PWP 503-31 . . . . .	July 21 - 25
<b>Writing with 2.0 Technologies, 5 - 12</b> PWP 512-30 . . . . .	July 28 - August 1

Three Days/Three Modes/Five Traits Academy. 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Act 48 hours available. July 22, 23, 24

## At the Bucks County IU, Doylestown

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. *Three credits*

<b>Reading Essentials, 2 - 8</b> PWP 599-30 . . . . .	July 7 - 11
<b>Nonfiction Texts: Reading to Analyze and Writing to Explore in the Age of the Common Core, 2 - 8</b> PWP 599-40 . . . . .	August 4 - 8

## At Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

<b>Literacy in Bloom: Botanical Inspirations for Reading, Writing, and Learning, K - 12. <i>Three credits</i></b> PWP 510-30 . . . . .	June 23 - 27
<b>Nature as Inspiration for Reading and Writing: Partnering with Children at Longwood, K - 2. <i>One credit</i></b> PWP 599-31 . . . . .	July 14 - 15

## At the James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *Three credits*

<b>Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art, K - 12</b> PWP 513-31 . . . . .	July 21 - 25
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with introductory meeting date July 9 from 9 a.m. - noon

## At the Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *Three credits*

<b>Visualizing Words and Worlds: Writing, Literature, and Art, K - 12</b> PWP 513-40 . . . . .	August 4 - 8
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with introductory meeting date July 15 from 1 - 4 p.m.

## At Valley Forge National Historical Park

8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. *One credit*

<b>History and Art in Valley Forge National Park, 2 - 6</b> PWP 599-32 . . . . .	July 29 - 30
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### Tuition and fees:

Three credit course: \$1,473 (add \$50 materials/facility fee for Visualizing Words and Worlds museum courses)  
One-credit course : \$491(out-of-state residents higher)

Three Days/Three Modes/Five Traits Academy: \$300 by June 22, \$325 thereafter. Visit our website for discount opportunities.

**Register on-line at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org)**

# Spring Literacy Events

**March 29 - Persida Himmele**, author of *Total Participation Techniques*, *Making Every Student an Active Learner* and *The Language-Rich Classroom: A Research-Based Framework for Teaching ELL* will keynote a seminar at West Chester University focused on making every student an active learner.



*Persida Himmele*

Participants will also attend two break-out sessions on topics including supporting English Language Learners, exploring narratives, and differentiating instruction.

**April 26 - Julie Ramsay**, author of *Can We Skip Lunch and Keep Writing?* will keynote a seminar at Upper Moreland Intermediate School in Hatboro focused on meeting the needs of digital age writers.



*Julie Ramsay*

Participants will also attend two break-out sessions on topics such as inspiring writers through conversations and using the flipped classroom to teach writing style.

*General public: \$40 -- PAWLP Fellows: \$25  
add \$10 to have WCU record Act 48 hours  
Register on-line at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org)*

## Invitational Institute Dates

*New configuration  
3 weeks in the summer!*

### West Chester Writing Institute

**Spring:** April 12 and May 17, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Summer:** Mondays - Thursdays, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

June 30 - July 3, July 7 - 10, July 14 - 17

**Fall:** Sept. 20, Oct. 11, 25, and Nov. 8. 8 a.m. - noon

Closing celebration: Nov. 8, noon - 2 p.m.

### Willow Grove Writing Institute

**Spring:** May 3 and 17, 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Summer:** Mondays - Thursdays, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

June 30 - July 3, July 7 - 10, July 14 - 17

**Fall:** Oct. 11, 25, and Nov. 8, 8 a.m. - noon

Closing celebration: November 13, 5 - 8:30 p.m.

- For an application form go to [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org), e-mail Sally Malarney at [smalarney@wcupa.edu](mailto:smalarney@wcupa.edu), or call 610-436-2202
- Final application deadline: **April 4, 2014**
- Applicants are eligible for a **stipend** to help defer costs
- The Institutes and most 3-credit courses apply toward the WCU Master's Degree in Writing, Teaching, and Criticism

## Fall 2014 Graduate Courses

### **PWP 502-01 Teacher as Writer**

Tuesdays, 4:25 - 7:10 p.m.

August 26 - December 9

Location: PAWLP classroom, West Chester University

### **PWP 599-01 Children's Literature in Bloom**

Saturdays, October 11, 18, 25, November 1 and 15

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square

### **PWP 599-02 Nonfiction in the Writing/Reading Classroom**

Two weekends: Sept. 26, 27, 28 and Nov. 7, 8, 9

Fridays, 6 - 9 p.m.,

Saturdays and Sundays, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Location: PAWLP classroom, West Chester University

Find full course descriptions and register on-line at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org)



## Spotlight on Young Writers from the 90's

- by Rina Vassallo, Ed.D., '94 Writing, rinav818@gmail.com

Back in the 90's, two sisters and budding authors attended PAWLP's unique and remarkable Young Writers/Young Readers program. Rachel Mennies Goodmanson and Leah Mennies attended for eight years and six years respectively. How they have established themselves in successful career paths in the area of writing would make any PAWLPer proud!

I was inspired to write this article after hearing Leah's toast at Rachel's wedding in March of 2013, where she mentioned Young Writers (a first in the history of The Project, I believe). She explained her remarks by saying, "following Rachel to Young Writers camp for four summers, I used to always consider her the writer of the family since she was a creative writer. To me, that felt like writing with a capital W. I always looked up to Rachel, so when she went to Young Writers/Young Readers, I, of course, followed suit."

The Mennies' family - Rich, Janet and their 3 girls - were my neighbors in Willistown. Rachel and my daughter, Francesca (a Young Writer veteran for 8 summers) are the same age. The mother of these young ladies (a published writer, herself), said that my enthusiasm for PAWLP inspired her to enroll the girls. After attending the first summer, her daughters fell in love with the program. Youngest daughter Rebekah, now a senior at the University of Pittsburgh, also attended for three years.

Both Rachel and Leah indicated a precocious interest in language and literature. In fact, I recall discussing chapter books with Rachel as we waited for the kindergarten bus. But it was Young Writers that ignited the sisters' love of language play.

Here is a sample of Rachel's writing from Grade 7.

### *My Secret Place*

*If I'm tired  
or I need to relax  
If I need someone to relate to  
If I need someone to say what I'm thinking  
Or maybe tell me a story  
of a long-lost love  
I turn to my music  
Music is my secret place*



*Adult writers Rachel and Leah*

When asked about her experiences as a Young Writer, Rachel said, "I remember looking forward every summer to the chance to be around other writers. Writing started as a solitary experience for me--writing alone in my journals and reading alone, sometimes even at recess when other kids were playing!

The best part about my time in the Young Writers program was spending time with other children who wanted to write. Young Writers/Young Readers was the first of many programs that showed me both the rigor and the camaraderie of a writing community.

According to her mom, Leah never considered herself a writer despite winning numerous awards for writing at Sugartown Elementary School. Due to the proliferation of lizards, bugs, and frogs that Leah collected and observed, the neighborhood moms were sure she was destined for the sciences. We are delighted she is still sharing her prodigious talents of the written word.

Here is Leah's poem from Grade 4.

### *Feelings*

*Happiness is playing with my little sister  
Fear is of me or my friends and family dying  
Loneliness is a runaway dog, barking and howling  
Joy is having my birthday  
Sadness is a smushed frog lying in the middle of the road*

Leah shared, "I think a program like Young Writers is important, especially today when there are more opportunities than ever to be distracted. We didn't have smart phones and social media when I went through the program. Even then, TV and video games were enough of a sensory distraction from the discipline of sitting down and thinking creatively about rhyme scheme or how to channel inspiration into words. I especially loved seeing

- continued on p. 7



## 2014 Young Writers Camp

- The 2014 Young Writers brochure is here! We appreciate teachers sharing the information about our exciting literacy opportunities with their students.
- For a teaching application, Fellows may contact Toni Kershaw at [tkershaw@wcupa.edu](mailto:tkershaw@wcupa.edu).
- Check our website for details at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org)

## PAWLP Book Club - *Give and Take*

- by Molly Leahy, 2000 Writing, [leahmo@centennialsd.org](mailto:leahmo@centennialsd.org)



Imagine a night out to dine, sip wine, meet new people, and witness a book come alive. This is the kind of night PAWLP Fellows Rina Vassallo and Jolene Borgese created October 28, 2013 when they led Fellows and friends through a lively discussion about *Give and Take*, by Adam Grant. Rina and Jolene gave participants thought-provoking quotations and activities modeling good teaching.

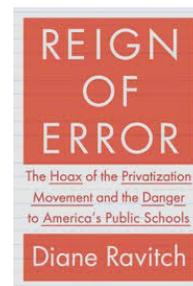
A guilt-free book group, we forgave each other and ourselves if we couldn't finish every page, even though Grant's book is compelling to the end. He offers readers a chance to reflect on whether they are givers, takers, or matchers as he outlines how these types of people succeed or fail. His book introduces readers to real givers and takers in business, Hollywood, the NBA and even teaching. Grant chronicles how givers achieve success, "maximizing opportunities for value to flow outward for the benefit of others" (9). *Give and Take* promotes the concept of the 5 minute favor for those people who want to help, but still feel pressed for time. Some ideas appear on the book's website at [www.giveandtake.org](http://www.giveandtake.org).

If you have ever felt exhausted by giving so much of your time, talent, and energy, Grant offers the option "burning out or firing up" (169) as demonstrated by a Philadelphia teacher, Connery Callahan at Overbrook High. While persevering in a challenging environment, Callahan organized and protected her time and efforts at work, which enabled her to dedicate herself to a cause she was really passionate about in a new initiative outside of school. Grant explains Callahan's success occurred "by shifting her giving to a novel domain, she was able to recharge her energy" (169) for her work at Overbrook High.

To emphasize Grant's definition of giver, Rina and Jolene asked us to introduce ourselves and name a cause we proudly support. What a fascinating way to promote philanthropic awareness! In small groups, we re-read and reflected on powerful quotations from the book. Next, Jolene and Rina led us through an activity designed to help us experience Grant's ideas which involved identifying a community need, creating an organization to meet that need, designing logos, and persuading others to donate to the best organization. Teamwork, enthusiasm, and passion flowed from the group. Then our leaders demonstrated the Reciprocity Ring that Adam Grant presents at the end of his book. What a positive way to find solutions, empower each other, alleviate concerns, and witness the strength of community!

I left this group discussion taking more with me than perhaps I gave: new ideas for classroom activities, advice on how to better collaborate with colleagues, new young-adult literature titles, an on-line reading contest for my students, and a reaffirmation of why I love PAWLP so much. Thank you, givers!

Please consider joining us for the next book discussion on **April 3rd** when Pat Bove and Linda Kerschner will facilitate a discussion of Diane Ravitch's *Reign of Error*, about the privatization movement and it's danger to public schools.



- continued from p. 6

my work bound with illustrations at the end of each program, perhaps a hint that I'd love working within a magazine format in the future."

The girls graduated from Great Valley High School and both were offered scholarships in Boston University's Honors Program.

After college, Rachel went on to earn a Masters' in Fine Arts at Penn State

University. She is currently an instructor in the English department at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and a published author. Her book of poetry, *The Glad Hand of God Points Backwards* (Texas Tech University Press), will be published in the spring of 2014.

Leah stayed in the Boston area after graduating, starting her career writing for NBC's website *TheFeast.com* when it debuted in the Boston area. In 2011,

she was recruited to *Boston Magazine* as a food writer. To sample Leah's current writing visit <http://www.boston-magazine.com/restaurants/>.

I am certain these young adults will continue to impress us with their many talents. As a former teacher in the Young Writers program, it's thrilling to see our young writers - so carefully nurtured at summer writing camp - pursue successful careers in writing.

## NWP & NCTE: Conversations, Questions, and Cannoli

- by Mary Buckelew, Director, [mbuckelew@wcupa.edu](mailto:mbuckelew@wcupa.edu); Patty Koller, '92 Lit, [pkoller55@gmail.com](mailto:pkoller55@gmail.com); and Janice Ewing, '04 Writing, [janice.ewing@gmail.com](mailto:janice.ewing@gmail.com)

PAWLP Fellows had the good fortune to attend the National Writing Project (NWP) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) annual conferences, which were back-to-back in Boston from Nov. 20th to 24th.

One of the NWP standout sessions for Janice Ewing was “Narrative Troubles (and that’s a good thing): On Why and How to Find, Shape, and Share Stories of Classroom Life.” In this reflective and interactive session, Jim Fredrickson (from Boise State University and Writing Project) guided us through the process of finding our own teacher stories, sharing them, and examining how that experience changes us. Here are a few of the ideas that we reflected upon as a backdrop: Uncertainty lies at the heart of teaching; We can try to avoid trouble or strive to understand it; Writing is a way to pause. With this common understanding, we were prompted to start our own writing during the session by listing and expanding on the questions that underlie our own classroom narratives. We were encouraged to continue this process over time, looking for patterns, insights, and directions for meaningful change. Sharing stories from our daily experiences as educators can deepen our understanding of our own teaching lives and provide windows into the struggles and successes of others. It takes conferencing among colleagues to a new level. The teacher-as-writer concept was also brought to life during several other NCTE sessions. Jim Fredrickson’s was one of many standouts for Janice!

New questions were also featured in one of the standout NWP sessions Patty Koller attended entitled, “What We Learned at the Science Museum.”

Patty selected this session due to its tie in with a partnership PAWLP is exploring with the Delaware Museum of Natural History. Attendees were asked to consider the intersections between science and literacy by viewing a variety of photographs illustrating science questions, writing their thoughts and then sharing their writing with others for feedback. Participants were also invited to step outside the classroom to take pictures of other possible science questions they discovered and to post these on Twitter. Follow this link [http://storify.com/now\\_awake/science-question-photos](http://storify.com/now_awake/science-question-photos) to the work of the UNC Charlotte Writing Project Partner School Institute to learn more. The topic of intersections between writing



*Mary, Patty, and Janice*

and other content areas offers rich possibilities for continued conversations at PAWLP.

PAWLP Director Mary Buckelew presented and participated in a session on place-based learning. Site directors and NWP Fellows from Vermont, New York, and Pennsylvania described the exciting learning opportunities that the partnership between NWP and the National Park Service (NPS) afforded young writers and readers this past

summer. Facilitators engaged attendees in conversation by inviting questions and by asking their own thoughtful inquiry questions. Going forward, one of the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project’s questions is “How do we help students uncover the untold stories that reside hidden in primary sources at Valley Forge?” The Philadelphia Writing Project asked, “What makes literacy learning unique at this out of the classroom place (Independence Hall)?” Conversation and Questions – the heart of learning.

NCTE & NWP sessions provided attendees with that time and space for thoughtful unhurried conversations about myriad topics.

So where do cannoli fit in? After a satisfying day spent with colleagues from across the nation, PAWLP Fellows Mary Buckelew, Rose Cappelli, Lynne Dorfman, Janice Ewing, Judy Jester, Patty Koller, and Brenda Krupp continued the NWP and NCTE conversations with a round of cannoli in Boston’s North End. Conversation, Community, Cannoli – a terrific trio.

**Plan ahead! Join us next year when the NWP and NCTE Conferences will be held in Washington, D.C. from November 20 - 23.**



*Follow us on Twitter @PAWLPnews  
for the very latest PAWLP news.  
Contact Judy Jester at  
[judithmjester@gmail.com](mailto:judithmjester@gmail.com)  
for details.*

# PAWLP Blog: Write ~ Share ~ Connect ~ With Us

- by Lynne Dorfman, '89 Writing, [lynnedorfman@comcast.net](mailto:lynnedorfman@comcast.net); Janice Ewing, '04 Writing, [janice.ewing@gmail.com](mailto:janice.ewing@gmail.com); and Gaetan Pappalardo, '07 Writing, [gpappalardo@wdeptford.k12.nj.us](mailto:gpappalardo@wdeptford.k12.nj.us)

In September of 2013, we launched the PAWLP Blog, with the overall theme of "Write~Share~Connect." Our goal was to create a space for PAWLPer's to: reflect and write about various aspects of their professional lives; share their experiences, wonderings, challenges and successes with our community; connect with others whose thinking might validate, expand, or change their own.

Several others, either individually or in small groups, had already successfully ventured into blogging. Our vision was to create a platform for **all** PAWLP Fellows to participate. Getting this project started was a learning experience for us, and we realized that, among the PAWLP community, there is a wide range of familiarity with blogs, from novice to expert. That led us to the idea of suggesting themes for each month, connected to the rhythms of the school year and PAWLP events. The themes are intentionally broad, to invite a wide range of interpretation, and seem to have provided a helpful starting point for many participants. Up-

coming themes include:

**February:** *Sustaining Positive Energy for Teachers and Students*

**March:** *Teaching to and for Diverse Populations*

**April:** *Exploring New Ideas – Research at its Best*

**May/June:** *The Importance of Reflection as Practitioners*

**July/August:** *From the Heart – Why I Teach (or Chose to Teach)*

We have been thrilled that so many PAWLP Fellows have been more than willing to donate their time and effort to posting on the blog. We truly are a K-12 writing community and beyond, and we continue to learn from each other in the true spirit of all Writing Project endeavors, regardless of grade level and teaching position. Every week we have "an inside look" into someone's classroom, teaching practices, and thinking. The blog has become a collaborative think tank, sharing resources and keen insights into effective strategies in a friendly way. Although we often write about the teaching of writing and writing workshop, we also write

about reading and writing connections as well as literacy across the curriculum.

We're flexible and user-friendly. We invite you to write about important ideas and practices loosely related to the themes we've chosen. Our calendar was originally designed with the classroom teacher (K-university) in mind, but our PAWLPer's include professional writers, teachers still looking for their dream job, principals, superintendents, reading specialists, and librarians too. We've also encouraged our course participants, volunteer bloggers, and friends to read the posts and respond with their thoughts. We hope our cadre of retired teachers and administrators will also post and offer response to others. It's always exciting to publish a piece of writing, especially if you can receive some feedback about your ideas. Our address is [pawlpblog.tumblr.com](http://pawlpblog.tumblr.com). Look for a new post each Monday. Check in often; our writers love to receive comments. Please let us know if you would like to contribute a blog post – we would love to hear from you!

## PAWLP Writers Group - In the Company of Story and Poetry

- by Linda Walker, '05 Writing, [lwalker@outdrs.net](mailto:lwalker@outdrs.net)

During the fall, winter and spring... once a month... mid-day on a Friday, people gather. Each brings something personal and special. The West Chester Writers are eager to begin another session of sharing their writing.

The group first met at Chester County Book Company in West Chester but has since moved to the community room at Honeycroft. Members bring prose and poetry. Serious discussions, laughter and sometimes tears follow a writer's reading. A back-story may just become the inspiration for a writer taking a new direction. On one occasion a writer recollected her evacuation from Cuba during the Missile Crisis. Her vivid memory had the group clamoring for a first person narrative of the event.

The gatherings begin with a bit of catching up; sharing must read books, places to visit and the all important ordering take-in lunch. Each writer provides a copy of their work for the group, and then reads uninterrupted. Then the writer and the listeners engage in the shared experience of constructive questioning and suggestions. It can be exciting to return the next month with a reworked piece for the group or a new twist!

Stephen King's quotation is the best way to sum up: "Writing is a lonely job." Having someone who believes in you makes a lot of difference. They don't have to make speeches. Just believing is usually enough. If you have an open Friday from 11 to 2, come and join the West Chester Writers because they believe and that is often just enough!



# Spotlight on PAWLP's

## The Power of PAWLP: One Administrator's Story

- by Barbara Giorgio, Supervisor of Secondary Humanities, Lower Merion School District,  
'83 Writing, giorgib@lmsd.org

I worried as a young teacher of English, that I was doing many things wrong. My cooperating teacher, Mrs. Torrence, a woman I liked very much but whom I feared as well, did not approve of much that I did during our 6 months together. In "those days" (1973-4), students sat in alphabetical rows, read literature no more contemporary than Dickens, and practiced grammar skills during time set aside for "writing." I had Mrs. Torrence's 7th grade students working in choice novel groups (*The Pigman* and *The Outsiders* are 2 titles I remember of 5 or 6), writing in character's voices, and keeping close reading annotations in their copy book journals (pre post-it notes!!). There were 3 English student teachers in that district that spring, and I am certain that Mrs. Torrence told the principal, in no uncertain terms, that he had made a huge mistake when he hired me, rather than the other 2 student teachers, to fill the open position beginning the following year. I continued my outlier ways yet was able to develop a collegial relationship with my mentor teacher, making sure to talk about every possible topic in the world except instruction. But I continued to fear that maybe she was right, that I was allowing my students to have too much freedom and thereby losing so much precious time in which I should be "teaching."

After that year, I moved from that state and began a new job, where I was the youngest member of the English Department and felt quite intimidated. My students were happy and producing what I thought were fabulous, thoughtful pieces of writing, so I forged ahead.

It was not until the summer of 1983, when I participated in the PA Writing Project (Literature was added some time later) that I finally discovered that there was actual research that endorsed my instructional practices. (Forgive me for having to keep reminding you, the reader, of what we did not have back then, but there simply was no internet and no instant means of keeping abreast of current thinking.) That summer I inhaled the work of Donald Graves, James Moffett, and Donald Murray and relished the opportunity to talk about their theories on teaching writing with my fellow Institute participants. I had the amazing opportunity to be led in this work by two professional women who have remained role models for me from that summer on: Martha Menz and Lois Snyder. They were dynamic young women who modeled engaging teaching practices for us and simultaneously exemplified professionalism. They each went on to hold positions that allowed them to have significant impact on public education in Pennsylvania.

That summer, I learned so very much, but the one lesson that has influenced my career and other aspects of my life more than any other is the knowledge

that everyone has a story to tell. So simple, but so powerful and so true. We wrote and wrote and wrote some more. We shared, revised, conferred, revised again, and again and again: each time revealing more depth of detail and richness of voice. I left that experience knowing for sure that I needed always to recognize that my students and my colleagues each have stories to tell and that helping them hear their own voices as writers would empower them to tell those stories in so many meaningful ways.

Fast forward through a career of 38+ years as teacher of English and/or supervisor of humanities teachers in five different school districts and not only do I keep the guiding principles of the National Writing Project in the forefront of all I do, but I also make sure that, to the best of my ability, I pave the way for teachers with whom I work to grow as I did through PAWLP. During my tenure as supervisor in Garnet Valley School District, I supported 69 teachers, from all content areas, to become Fellows and bring their newly acquired knowledge and enthusiasm back to their colleagues. Now that I am at Lower Merion School District, I am doing the same with the goal of having as many teachers as possible become confident teachers of literacy and thereby, developing a shared district philosophy around the teaching of quality writing. I cannot imagine teaching or working with teachers without the wisdom of the National Writing Project guiding me and the support of the PAWLP team right there beside me. I am not quite sure who I would be without that influence in my life.



***2013 PAWLP Writing Institute  
Lower Merion Teachers and me.***

# Professional Development



## From Lancaster to Bristol - Coming Home to PAWL

- by Jolene Borgese, '80 Writing, jborgese132@comcast.net

My return to the Project has been welcomed with open arms and with some interesting assignments. Many years ago, I was the co-director of the project with Dr. Bob Weiss. When I left, I finished my doctorate at Widener University and went to work for Houghton Mifflin. Over the last 20 years the project has grown into a sophisticated project with many new programs and a permanent home at the University.

My first assignment was to work with Diane Dougherty and Don LaBranche and the teachers at Bristol SD for full PD days. This project was started last year with the work of Lynn Dorfman and Diane Dougherty, who are enriching our workshops with classroom visits this year. Diane, Don and I are working with third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers on writing and reading strategies.

The teachers are eager to learn new techniques and try them out with their students. The project's practice of teachers-teaching-teachers is at its best with this project. The Bristol teachers

meet with us for six hours a day and have plenty of opportunities to write, revise, share and discuss possible strategies with each other.

To work with the same group of teachers over a school year has been rewarding for the teachers and Diane, Don and me. Recently, a teacher was anxious to tell me, "My students loved the "to be" revision strategy - they got it! I had them circle the passive to be verbs and rework their sentences to use active verbs." She smiled broadly at me and asked me to teach her another strategy she could teach her students. These moments are why we love teaching!

My other assignment is The New School in Lancaster - a Montessori School. The teachers wanted professional development in the six traits of effective writing. During my years with Houghton Mifflin, I became a National Trainer of Six Traits through Vicki Spandel. Once a month, I meet with a small group of Montessori teachers and we review and discuss Vicki's latest book, *Creating Writers: 6 traits, Pro-*

*cess, Workshop and Literature* (6th edition).

I am fascinated with the Montessori philosophy - teaching the same children for three years, with different abilities and ages working together seamlessly. This concept allows students to grow and move at their own pace. Teaching writing in this environment is ideal! Students write together, support and model for each other at multiple levels!

To teach the traits most effectively, we have framed them in the writing process which seems to be exactly what the New School teachers were looking for to improve writing instruction. Each month we write to demonstrate a trait and evaluate students' papers for a particular trait. I also incorporate Vicki's book *The 9 Rights of Every Writer*, which is an overview of what a writing classroom might look like. Hopefully, this will be just the first year of many years of professional development for the New School.

Many say you can never go home again - I think they are wrong...

## Grant Funds Professional Development for a Bristol Township School

-by Diane Dougherty, '89 Writing, '94 Lit, joedidoc@gmail.com

NWP provided the PA Writing and Literature Project with a generous grant to provide staff development to a district in our service area. We are working with Bristol Township School District and the Clara Barton Elementary School to provide eleven days of cooperative professional development consisting of model writing lessons in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 followed by debriefing sessions; coaching and co-teaching writing lessons in the same grades; and, also a full-day academy for the participating teachers. These sessions will be conducted throughout the year, beginning in November.

Director of the Project, Mary Buckelew, who wrote the grant, partnered with Karen Snedecker of Bristol Township to make this work happen. Teacher consultants Diane Dougherty and Angela Watters are providing the model lessons. These lessons will allow teachers to see writing workshop in action. Each model contains a focus lesson, teacher-provided and/or teacher/created examples, group and individual practice, and share time. As the participating teachers become more comfortable with the writing workshop model, consultants provide opportunities for co-teaching and coaching in individual classrooms.

We are excited about this work, and we thank NWP for the chance to continue our partnership with Bristol Township. This is our second year in the elementary schools of the district. Our experiences with the teachers and their students have been fulfilling and worthwhile. This kind of work is what the PA Writing and Literature Project is all about.

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## *Important Dates in 2014*

*E-Journal submission deadlines: February 15 and August 15*

*Continuity Saturday: March 8*

*Spring Saturday Seminars: West Chester - March 29. Hatboro - April 26.*

*Book club: April 3*

*PAWLP and CCRA: September 27*

*PCTELA in Pittsburgh: October 23 & 24*

*NCTE/NWP in Washington, DC: November 20 - 23*