

# Newsletter



Volume 23, Number 1 Fall, 2002

## SEPTEMBER 28TH PAWLDP DAY AT IMMACULATA COLLEGE LITERACY AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

### WHERE WRITING AND READING MEET RIGHT AND WRONG

Participants in the first Advanced Institute on Literacy and Character Education will host a PAWLDP Day at Immaculata College on September 28, 2002, from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Andrea Fishman, PAWLDP Director, who facilitated the Institute during the 2001-2002 school year. Her speech is entitled "Stories that Cling."

Breakout sessions will explore such fascinating topics as:

- \* What do students learn about character from the reading and writing curricula we teach?
- \* How can reading and writing strategies promote – or discourage – character development?
- \* What is the "moral universe" of our students? How does their world support or subvert the classroom communities we try to build?
- \* How can schools and dis-

tricts become better character educators without buying expensive programs or adding new curricula?

Advanced registration by Sept. 20 is \$10, \$15 thereafter and at the door for materials and a continental breakfast.

To register please call 610-436-2202.

\* \* \* \*

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE SUMMER WRITING INSTITUTE

Summer time, that time of year when teachers dream of lazy days and napping under a shady tree. That time of year when a productive afternoon means you've read a couple of chapters in the novel you've been putting off until you could get around to it. That time of year when you set some professional goals for yourself: I'll read a professional book each month, write in my journal daily, and organize my filing system. But somehow the professional goals never quite get met (too much

napping?), the novel sits, and you return to school feeling defeated before you even get started.

As June approached I needed an attitude adjustment. It seemed I went to school each day feeling defeated, annoyed, and downright hostile. I spent more time complaining than I did planning lessons and doing what I knew in my heart was right. I was tired of teachers who couldn't see beyond their own classroom problems to find a solution. Tired of teachers who

saw only the negative side of school, learning, and teaching. Tired of teachers who thought they were "professional" because they received a paycheck from a school district. What had happened to me? Where had I gone wrong? Would I be able to heal and return to my classroom as a teacher? I doubted it. Maybe it was time to call it quits, to surrender to the "system."

And then, this summer happened. I participated in the Sum-

*-continued on page 3, column 1*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

Accountability. A word with a definition that depends on who's being held accountable for what by whom. A word used by education stakeholders as diverse as teachers, administrators, school board members, politicians, and taxpayers' groups. A word used in conjunction with teaching and learning, test scores and grades, contract negotiations, even attendance and behavior. A word used so often in the past few years that most of us no longer groan just inwardly when we hear it. A word whose time has come and, we wish, were gone.

It occurred to me this summer, though, that there's one area of education in which the word "accountability" is rarely used but perhaps could do some actual good – and that's the area of professional development for teachers. The state of Pennsylvania decided to institutionalize accountability for professional development by implementing Act 48. Not a bad idea in theory. In practice, however, Act 48 seems more intent on holding people accountable for amassing hours rather than for the quality of the experiences those hours represent.

School districts try to hold themselves accountable for their teachers' professional development by providing staff development opportunities in a variety of ways, but I have yet to meet a district administrator who thinks their district is doing – or could do – enough in the limited inservice days and hours school

calendars and union contracts allot. Teachers, too, hold themselves accountable for doing the best work they can in their classrooms, so they, too, want more professional development opportunities than their school-year contracts require. It seems both administrators and teachers are willing to be accountable for professional development that meets real classroom needs in applicable classroom ways. Yet both groups have difficulty finding the time, the money, and the wherewithal to create substantial opportunities that address real needs.

One local superintendent seems to have found a way around this problem, however. As you will see on page 5 of this Newsletter, the Upper Moreland School District in Montgomery County has partnered with PAWLP to create a Literacy Certificate program specifically designed to meet the professional development needs of Upper Moreland teachers. Looking at district PSSA scores, the PA Standards, the Pennsylvania Literacy Framework and teachers' requests for various professional development topics, a group comprised of the district's superintendent, assistant superintendent, curriculum and instruction supervisor, an elementary extension teacher, and me – created a cumulative series of courses to be offered on site between fall 2002 and fall 2004. These courses build on each other to strengthen reading and writing instruction in line with PA Standards and the PLF (and designed to improve PSSA scores, too). District teachers who earn 15 credits during the two-year

period (including summers) will earn a PAWLP Literacy Certificate that not only improves their teaching but meets district requirements for reimbursement and for movement on the salary scale as well.

Upper Moreland has been kind enough to open this series of courses to out-of-district teachers, if there are spaces available. I wonder how many other districts might want to take the same, district-tailored approach to professional development, holding themselves accountable in meaningful ways for the professional development of their faculties, too.

### SUMMER STATISTICS

**Number of participants in courses:**

**528**

**Number of Fellows who taught or presented in courses:**

**45**

**Number of participants in Youth programs:**

**1,260**

**Number of Fellows who taught or administered Youth Programs:**

**73**

*-continued from page 1, column 3*

mer Writing Institute at West Chester as a co-director. Each day 19 teachers came into a portable classroom that has seen better days. Expectantly they looked at us, waiting for us to unlock the secrets of "writing" and "teaching writing." They came prepared to learn but unsure of their ability to write or contribute to the process. They came as learners, ready and willing. They came as individuals but soon learned that writing and learning cannot happen independently. They must happen in a community. And it was as this group became a community of learners that I relearned the joy and excitement of teaching.

Freewrites began each day and friends shared, first shyly, but later with boldness and confidence, the words they penned each morning. They discovered their voices and looked forward to having their way with words. Book panels, writing workshops, peer conference groups, and presentation work helped create friendships and learning partnerships that will last well beyond the four weeks of the Institute. And, I was lucky enough to be part of it all.

When I left my classroom in June, I had come to the conclusion that learning and professional growth were not possible for teachers. They were just too stubborn, too proud, and too tired. They just didn't want to be bothered. But 19 new Writing Project Fellows have proven me wrong. There is hope for our profession. Teachers do care about each other, about their

teaching, and about their profession. There is hope and there are 19 new Fellows to lead the way.

Here are the words of our 2002 Fellows:

The Writing Institute has prepared us to be instruments of change. It is through these instruments that we see ourselves as change agents:

***As musical instruments...***

I will be a piano...eighty-eight keys, many octaves...able to adjust to changes in my class, to prepare mini lessons for writing...able to be flexible to help all students so that the final written product will sound like "Moonlight Sonata."

I will be a trombone...reaching out at times to involve my teachers and other times pulling back to give them space and time to make it their own.

***As building instruments...***

I will be a mason's chisel...shaping the foundation stones for developing a writing workshop and a community of young writers.

I will be a painter's brush... coloring my students with new ways to learn.

I will be a plunger...dislodging the clogs so that the writers' workshop concepts flow through my classroom.

I will be a hammer...building scaffolding and a framework for a successful writing program.

I will be a level...trying to balance high standards and expectations with fun and interactive learning.

I will be the tool box...offering my students whatever tools they need to get the job done.

***As household instruments...***

I will be a message board...supplying notes to help the writing process flow smoothly.

I will be a mirror... reflecting back to my students their own beautiful authentic voices.

***As cultivating instruments...***

I will be a cultivator...lifting the crusted-over creative writing experiences my students have buried through their years of education.

I will be a garden...where the soil is rich and nurturing, allowing my students to develop deep roots and spectacular blossoms.

*-by Brenda Krupp, Co-Director  
and the  
2002 West Chester Writing Fellows*



# WHEN ONE HAS GIVEN YEARS TO TEACHING CHILDREN

By Donald LaBranche

After Galway Kinnell

1.

When one has given years to teaching children  
The final languid days of summer fade away and  
One relishes the impending arrival of the First Day,  
Energized with jittery stage fright or perhaps the delicious  
Tension of a blind date. New pencils, a clean white page,  
Lists of unfamiliar names are all rich with possibilities.  
History is irrelevant to the First Day. Nothing from any  
Previous year matters any longer, nothing sticks,  
Nothing corporeal exists that can impede this sense of  
Possibility when September leans in with all its grace,  
Stronger than memory, stronger even than one's experience  
When one has given years to teaching children.

2.

When one has given years to teaching children  
One learns to measure the passage of days and  
Seasons, the everyday highs and lows, by the pulse  
Of blood in their eyes, by the tone and tenor in  
Their voices, by the static electricity ransacking  
The hair on the back of their necks. One learns  
That at six, or ten, or fourteen, the gravity of any  
Moon or planet will set off a lunacy in their  
Hearts and a larceny in their plans as they gather  
To howl like wolves on a fog-enshrouded hilltop  
To devour the words and numbers that one believes in  
When one has given years to teaching children.

3.

When one has given years to teaching children  
Each day is a day at sea on a grand schooner.  
One brings to the job a mariner's instinct  
For smelling out a storm on a sunny morning; how  
To foretell an impending Nor'easter by the odd banking  
Of sea birds, or a shifting current by the harbor's mouth.  
One reads the signs as they swirl about the room, blend  
With pubescent sweat or the essence of watermelon  
candy,  
Charge the air in a classroom with a sudden squall  
So that lessons need revision like a new course plotted.  
One learns that an overlooked storm is rife with danger  
When one has given years to teaching children.

4.

When one has given years to teaching children  
One learns that they are perfect mirrors indeed,  
Reflecting the culture that bore them, absorbing  
The spirit of their time and place like weathered boards  
Thirsty for gallons of new paint. Their energy, the way  
They turn a phrase, how they move with the world, all  
Emerge from the kinetics of their people. One responds  
To them out of an alchemist's skill for balancing  
Light and dark. The spell that transforms the base metal  
Slowing down a classroom is one's ability to spin gold  
When one has given years to teaching children.

5.

When one has given years to teaching children  
One learns to be flexible, to breathe deeply, to  
Give and give again of what they need because  
One loves them, dreams about them, frets  
That it won't be enough, that some of them might be  
Left behind, or lost along the road. One learns to  
wait  
And see, to laugh first at one's self. One learns  
to rail  
Against the powers and principalities that try to  
Lead them away from what one believes is best.  
One learns when discretion is advisable and  
where a stand  
Is necessary in the face of anything that threat  
ens them  
When one has given years to teaching children.

6.

When one has given years to teaching children  
One comes to envy the gardener tending to  
flowers  
That bloom predictably, having poked their tender  
Heads out of fertilized soil on the very day they  
should.  
Stems grow, buds appear, blooms burst out  
calling on  
The name of bees. The gardener pokes about in  
faith  
While the law of living things predominates. But  
the teacher  
Endures a hot house of lurching, of stop and start  
growth, of  
Unrequited love. Nothing predictable happens in  
this garden  
But for the tension that reigns between seed and  
medium,  
And one suspects it is the tension itself that  
evokes the miracle  
When one has given years to teaching children.

*-Donald LaBranche is a '93 PAWLP Writing  
Fellow and has been a teacher in the Chichester  
School District for 28 years.*

**THANKS DON!**  
**WHAT A WONDERFUL INSPIRATION**  
**TO START THE SCHOOL YEAR!**

## 2002/2003 COURSE OFFERINGS

<u>COURSE/LOCATION</u>	<u>COORDINATOR</u>
<b>Teacher As Writer (3 credits)</b> North Penn SD	Brenda Krupp
<b>PA Literacy Framework (3 credits)</b> Avon Grove SD Bucks County IU Conrad Weiser SD West Chester SD Tredyffrin-Easttown SD	Marion Dugan Hilde McGeehan Vicki Steinberg Patty Koller/Judy Jester Diane Dougherty
<b>Strategies for Writing in the Domains (3 credits)</b> Colonial SD	Lynne Dorfman/Linda Christensen
<b>Strategic Guided Reading &amp; Writing in a Balanced K-3 Classroom (3 credits)</b> West Chester SD	Rose Cappelli
<b>Reading in the Content Areas (3 credits)</b> Bristol Township SD	Vicki Steinberg
<b>Readers Theater (CPE credit)</b> Chester County IU	Maria Banks
<b>Non-Fiction Craft Lessons (CPE credit)</b> Chester County IU	Starr Troup
<b>Pushing the Envelope (CPE credit)</b> Chester County IU	Judy Jester

**DATES AND TIMES TO BE ANNOUNCED. PLEASE CALL FOR INFORMATION  
610-436-2297**

### ***PAWLP Announces a New Site for Graduate and CPE courses The Teaching & Learning Center, Upper Moreland School District***

**\*\*\*Earn a Literacy Certificate (15 – 18 credits)\*\*\***

PWP 503-01 **Strategies for Teaching Writing in the PSSA Domains, Grades 3 – 8**  
Wednesdays, Oct. 16<sup>th</sup> - May 9<sup>th</sup> 13 sessions, 3 graduate credits

PWP 599-08 **Readers' Workshop, Grades 1 – 6**  
Mondays, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> 5 sessions, 1 graduate credit

PWP 599-17 **Guided Reading & Writing for Comprehension**  
Mondays, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> 5 sessions, 1 graduate credit

PWP 599-07 **Nonfiction Craft Lessons for K-8 Classrooms**  
Mondays, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> – Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> 5 sessions, 1 graduate credit

PWP 599-03 **Developing Literature Circles for Your Classroom I**  
Mondays, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> – March 10<sup>th</sup> 5 sessions, 1 graduate credit

PWP 599-04 **Developing Literature Circles for Your Classroom II**  
Mondays, March 17<sup>th</sup> – April 21<sup>st</sup> 5 sessions, 1 graduate credit

**For questions or to register, call the Project Office at (610) 436-2297 or (610) 436-2202.**

## MEMORABLE TEACHERS AND SPECIALTY COURSE KEEP CLARE MCGREGOR COMING BACK FOR 8TH YW/YR SUMMER!!

Even though the beach beckoned and soccer camps called, more than 1200 Pennsylvania children spent two to six weeks attending the 2002 summer writing and reading camps sponsored by the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project (PAWLP). Now in its eighteenth year, PAWLP's Young Writers/Young Readers program has served thousands of children and teenagers from a six county area in southeastern Pennsylvania. Summer after summer, hundreds of these children return to PAWLP's Young Writers/Young Readers program — never tiring of writing poems, revising stories, reading stories, conferring with new and old friends and, finally, sharing some of their best pieces in an anthology.

Clare MacGregor, entering her junior year of high school, has just finished her eighth summer of writing and reading in the Young Writers/Young Readers program. This summer, Clare chose to take the Fantasy/Tolkien class taught by Don La Branche. We asked Clare if she would share with our readers why she continues to attend PAWLP's summer program. When we called Clare, she said she would be delighted to share her thoughts and feelings. She penned the following response even though she was leaving for vacation the very day we called.

*I have been attending the Young Writers/ Young Readers Program at West Chester University for eight years. I had fun*

*the first year I went, and I love to read and write. In the past few years, I have written many pieces of poetry at PAWLP. I actually love writing stories and poems so much I don't know which style of writing I love more! I especially loved the class I had this year. I was in the Tolkien/ Fantasy class. This year was a refreshing perspective on writing. I was actually hoping that PAWLP would do something like this for a few years now. I think I enjoyed this summer so much because the class was focused on one genre only! I learned more about J.R.R. Tolkien in this class than I ever would have learned by myself. I also (hopefully) improved on writing fantasy stories, which up until now I wasn't too good at. I hope that PAWLP will continue the same kind of classes next year because I will definitely be coming back next summer! It's great to meet new people and learn valuable writing skills.*

*All of my PAWLP teachers have been memorable because they taught me so many helpful things about how to make my writing better. They are all very unique, and that is why they're all memorable. It's also great to meet new people, which I do every summer.*

*My list of favorite pieces from PAWLP grows with each year. I would have to say that three of my favorites are **A Newspaper Clipping, Phantom, and Return of King Arthur.***

Below is one of Clare's favorite Anthology entries.

### A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Old, from the Vietnam War,  
A person I never met  
The sounds come to me  
The gunshots  
The screams of the soldiers  
March!  
The uniforms  
The blood stains  
The strength they had  
In each other  
The faith that some day  
They would return  
Home.

To the wives, the cousins,  
The sisters, the brothers,  
The mothers, the fathers  
They left behind.

-CLARE MACGREGOR

We thank Clare for sharing her enthusiasm for the program and for allowing us to share one of her poems. We look forward to seeing you next summer!

-by Mary Buckelew,  
Associate Director



## EDUCATION MATTERS

*a column from Michaels Associates*

The Heinemann national sales meeting has just concluded. Michaels Associates LLC was announced as the longest serving and largest distributor in the U.S. for Heinemann professional materials. Naturally we're proud, but more important to PAWLP readers is the amazing lineup of books coming this fall.

Every major Heinemann author has a new book coming as well as some notable authors publishing their first books with Heinemann. Dick Allington has put together a controversial title with some other contributors. The title says it all, *Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum: How Ideology Trumped Evidence*. Don Graves has also written a political book entitled *Testing Is Not Teaching: What Should Count in Education*.

In reading, two books stand out in a strong list for fall. Secondary teachers will want to check out Kylene Beers' new book. She is well known in NCTE circles and is the author of the excellent though expensive Christopher Gordon book *Into Focus*. Her new Heinemann book this fall is titled *When Kids Can't Read - What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12*. The book has many features including a guide that will appear inside the back cover. The busy teacher can see at a glance which chapter will help serve individual student needs. Regie Routman has written a new book entitled *Reading Essentials: The Specifics You Need to Teach Reading Well*. Regie continues to be a voice teachers relate to. The new book won't disappoint Regie

fans and may produce some new converts who were scared off by the size and price of her previous books. The new book is just 272 pages and priced at \$25.00.

The biggest news from Heinemann will be a new imprint and approach for materials to help teachers. The series will be called "First Hand" and features very detailed lessons. This may not be for everyone since actual scripts of authors conducting minilessons will be included. The format will be a book that provides the scripts and the theory that supports the lessons and a binder of reproducibles, readings for students, posters, overheads, and examples of students' work. Nancie Atwell, Gay Su Pinnell, Irene Fountas, and Lucy Calkins are the first to sign on to this project. Heinemann emphasizes that the "scripts" are not to read verbatim to students like basal teacher guides but rather are to serve as models of the language used by master teachers.

In addition to good new books from first-time authors, new books are also coming this fall from Yetta Goodman, Jim Burke, Maureen Barbieri, Wendy Saul, Lucy Calkins, Fountas & Pinnell, Marie Clay, Linda Hoyt, Thomas Newkirk, Susan Ohanian, Shelley Harwayne, Alfie Kohn, Patrick Shannon, Sandra Wilde, Tarry Lindquist, Georgia Heard, and a great new book by Jim and Kathleen Strickland entitled *Engaged in Learning: Teaching English 6-12*. This book will be valuable for newer teachers or teachers moving toward more reflective practice. For more information, please call us for a free catalog at 1-800-869-1467 or visit our website:

[www.michaelsassociates.com](http://www.michaelsassociates.com)

Cordially,  
Greg Michaels

## KUDOS

**CAROL ROHRBACH**, '94 WRITING, '95 LIT, WAS A FINALIST FOR TEACHER OF THE YEAR. CAROL TEACHES HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH AT SPRINGFIELD HIGH SCHOOL IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

**JOHN SWEENEY**, '98 WRITING, PUBLISHES ON-LINE POETRY. JOHN TEACHES KINDERGARTEN IN THE WALLINGFORD-SWARTHMORE SD

**CHRIS COYNE-KEHAN**, '95 WRITING, '97 LIT, PRESENTED "THE WRITER'S NOTEBOOK: LIVING OUR LIVES AS WRITERS" AT THE PENN STATE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE MATTERS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 6, 2002.

TWO STUDENTS OF PAWLP FELLOWS WON TOP HONORS IN A STATE-WIDE ESSAY CONTEST SPONSORED BY THE PENN STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH. DANIEL BOX, A WEST CHESTER EAST HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OF TONY ROTONDO, ('93 LIT, '94 WRITING), WON FIRST PRIZE AND JANE ULANOVA, A COUNCIL ROCK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OF PEGGY WALSH, ('92 WRITING), WON THIRD PLACE.

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The Pennsylvania Writing & Literature Project  
West Chester University  
West Chester, PA 19383  
(610) 436-2202 FAX(610)436-3212  
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