



## Silver and Pearls

### 25th anniversary of Young Writers/Young Readers

The Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project's (PAWLP) Young Writers/Young Readers program celebrated its 25th anniversary this summer. We started the program in 1984 with 55 students and a handful of teachers at West Chester University. Now, 25 years later, seventy-five teachers inspired creativity and excitement in close to 900 students in sites across the Delaware Valley. Each summer, we watch our program grow because of the dedicated and creative PAWLP teachers and the enthusiastic young writers and readers. As more teachers become Fellows, new sites sprout. This year seventy students attended two new sites in Lower Merion and West Deptford, New Jersey.



While most of our students attend the general Young Writers/Young Readers program at the various sites, specialty courses draw hundreds of students as well. "What's the Buzz" and "Meet Me in the Tree House" met at Longwood Gardens and a Historical Fiction course was taught at three locations in Montgomery County. Other specialty courses included science fiction, satire and parody, poetry, and creative writing for middle and high school students.

Teachers and students were impossible to miss this summer. Our bright green 25th anniversary T-shirts were a big hit with both the children and their parents. We also celebrated with three fantastic guest authors: Jen Bryant, Linda Oatman High, and Rob Levitt.

This was truly a memorable year for the Young Writers/Young Readers program. Thanks to all who were involved: staff, teachers, site-coordinators, aides, parents, and especially the children who are our inspiration and will always be at the center of the YW/YR program.



### Celebrating the Project's 30th year!

Thirty years ago a handful of teachers in a Writing Institute in West Chester became the first participants - and first Fellows - of the brand new Pennsylvania Writing Project. That was the year the comic strip *Garfield* debuted, the accident at Three Mile Island occurred, and Margaret Thatcher became the first woman Prime Minister of Great Britain. Johnny Carson hosted the *Tonight Show*, and the Phillies had yet to win a World Series.

That was a long time ago. Since then the PA Writing Project has become the PA Writing and Literature Project. The West Chester Writing Institute was joined in 1989 by the Bucks County Writing Institute, and both were joined in 1992 by the Reading and Literature Institute. Over 1,000 teachers have become Fellows, and thousands more have participated in our graduate courses, inservice programs, and conferences.

PAWLP has developed many wonderful partnerships throughout our five-county service area. Some of these are with school districts, including fourteen that host our Youth sites, and many more where we provide professional development. We have ongoing partnerships with Chester, Bucks, and Berks County Intermediate Units. And we have partnerships with cultural institutions throughout the area, including the James A. Michener Museum, the Brandywine River Museum, and Longwood Gardens.

None of this would be possible, though, without those wonderful Fellows and teachers who participate in, create, and inspire all we do. If you are reading this *Newsletter*, you are one of those people and we thank you.

2010 is our 30th anniversary year. Jordan Sonnenblick, Frank Serafini, and Kelly Gallagher will kick off the celebrations this spring. A special keynote speaker will highlight our big anniversary party in the fall. Stay tuned for details, and plan to help us celebrate the past and welcome the future of your Project as together we move into our second 30 years.



**FROM THE DIRECTOR**  
**ANDREA FISHMAN**

Summer is an especially good time to read. Something about the release from responsibility, the longer days, the more flexible schedule. Usually I indulge in nothing but novels over the summer, but this year I was drawn to a work of non-fiction called *You Don't Have to Be Wrong for Me to Be Right*. While that sounds more Oprah-esque than my usual fare, it was recommended to me by someone I trust implicitly. And the subtitle drew me closer: *Finding Faith Without Fanaticism*. I've always been fascinated by the religiously devout - from my Amish friends to my ultra-Orthodox stepchildren - and I'm a true believer myself as the Director of a National Writing Project sub-cult. I'm not writing to recommend this particular read - I can't because I haven't finished it yet. Rather, I'm writing to share two things Brad Hirschfield says that seem like wonderful mentor texts as we start a new school year.

The first is his definition of compassion, which he considers a synonym for empathy.

*Compassion - or empathy... - is about noticing the person in front of you before the ideology inside of you. And it's about making choices to privilege that person.* (p.30)

Hirschfield writes that after telling the story of an elementary school teacher who sent him to the principal's office for saying something seemingly blasphemous in class. The principal asks why he said it. And when he learns the reason, sends him back to class unpunished.

Putting a person before an ideology makes sense in a religious con-

text, but it has implications for those of us who teach in the secular world, too. We have ideologies. We value some ideas over others. We have beliefs of our own, and attitudes about attitudes. It was only a few months ago, in a June inservice workshop, that I found myself facing a teacher who insisted - loudly, emphatically, and repeatedly - that we didn't need to be spending "all this time" talking about how to reach struggling minority students. That everyone in the room already knew how because "that's what we do all the time! We should just do what we always do," he insisted. "We don't need to talk about it."

I was angry. He was challenging the very premise of what I do. I wanted to retort, "Oh yeah? Obviously that's not true. If you're already doing such a good job, why am I here?" Instead, I responded much like the teacher in Hirschfield's story. I pushed my problem off on the principal, saying something like, "That's an interesting perspective. We need to hear what [your principal] wants to do," (or something else distressingly reminiscent of, "Wait 'til your father gets home!"). It never occurred to me to ask where his idea was coming from and what else he might mean. The attack on my beliefs was all I saw.

I remember, too, an 11th grader who chose to argue with me about something - I don't remember what - but I do remember the look on his face and the sound of his voice. And I can still feel the anger that caused me to throw Jake out of room 23, sending him to the principal for punishment. I never thought to ask where he was coming from, what he was thinking. I just threw him out because he had pushed some

arbitrary button of mine. I stopped seeing the teenager in front of me, conscious only of the rule I chose to enforce.

Hirschfield's second mentor text comes when he's talking about trying to make converts of other people. Those of us who hold deeply felt beliefs - whether about religion or writing - often feel compelled to "share" others into becoming believers, too. That's a risk PAWLP Fellows often run when they return to school after their summer Institute experiences. So excited about what they've learned and how they've grown, they want the same for people they care about. But, Hirschfield wonders,

*Do we really want a world of people who look, think, and act just like we do? That's not...depth or...growth [on our part], but simply narcissism with lots of footnotes.* (p.31)

That really caught me up short. How many times have I tried to prove how right I am "with lots of footnotes," not realizing that my argument is more about proving how right I am than how right my ideas are for the audience I'm teaching?

We all know that teaching is not about us, that it's about the students in our classes, no matter who they are. Yet as the school year progresses, as standards and tests, lessons and unit plans, IEPs and report cards, duty periods and meetings dominate our days, we can't help but get caught up in the personal toll teaching takes. Our jobs do occupy much of our time, actual and psychic. That's why I chose to share Hirschfield with you in August. So together we can "keep the faith" not only now but throughout the 2009-2010 school year.



3 graduate  
credits

# Fall Courses

## At West Chester University

### Teacher as Writer, K—12

PWP 502-01

Tuesdays, 4:15—7:00

Sept. 1 - Dec. 8

Coordinators: Diane Dougherty/Don LaBranche

### Nonfiction in the Writing/Reading Classroom, K—8

PWP 599-02

Two weekends: Sept. 11—13/Oct. 9—11

Fridays, 6:00—9:00 p.m.

Saturdays/Sundays, 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Coordinators: Lynne Dorfman/Pat Smith

## At Bucks County IU, Doylestown

### Using Reading Strategies to Strengthen Math Instruction, K—8

PWP 599-01

Thursdays, September 10—November 19

4:15—7:45 p.m. + 6.5 independent hours

Coordinators: Michelle Jacobs/Angela Watters

### The Essentials of a Writing Workshop, 1—8

PWP 599-03

Two weekends

October 2—4 and 16—18

Fridays, 5:00—8:00 p.m.

Saturdays/Sundays, 8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

+ 5 independent hours

Coordinators: Chris Kehan/Angela Watters



*PAWLP Fellows receive a \$200 stipend  
for one course each semester.*

Register on-line at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org)  
Please register at least two weeks  
prior to course start date.

Tuition and fees on-campus: \$1,357.68

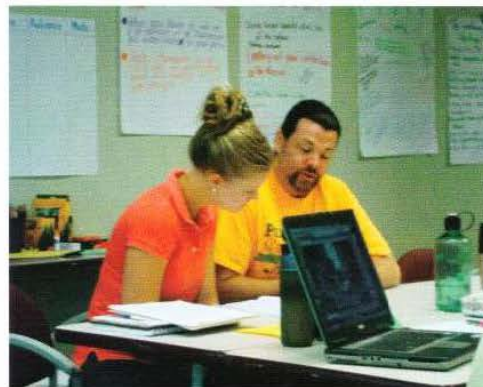
off-campus: \$1,293.57

(Out-of-state residents higher)

For information call Sally Malarney at

610-436-2202

or e-mail [smalarney@wcupa.edu](mailto:smalarney@wcupa.edu)



# Fall PAWLP Days

## *Notebook Connections: A Look at Writer's and Reader's Notebooks*

Enjoy a FULL DAY workshop with

**Aimee Buckner**

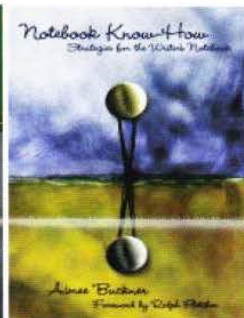
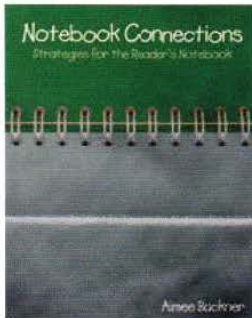
AM: Writer's Notebook

PM: Reader's Notebook

**Date:** Saturday, October 10, 2009

**Time:** 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Bucks County IU, Doylestown



Seating is Limited - Register NOW!

General Public - \$100

PAWLP Fellows - \$90

Registration and payment must be received by Sept. 19

**No registrations accepted at the door.**

Includes light breakfast and lunch.

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

or call 610-436-2202

Act 48 hours provided

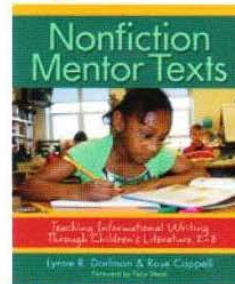
## *Fall in Love with Reading . . .*

### *All over Again*

**Keynote Speakers:**



**Lynne  
Dorfman**



**Rose  
Cappelli**



*Authors of Nonfiction Mentor Texts*

**Date:** Saturday, November 7, 2009

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Location:** West Chester University's  
Graduate Business Center

**Cost:** General Public \$45/PAWLP Fellows \$35

Registration deadline: October 30

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

Call 610-436-2202 for more information

# Spring Conferences

*Lessons that Matter to Your Writers and Readers*  
Featuring

## Jordan Sonnenblick

A fabulous author of children's books who creates characters you will love!



April 10, 2010  
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.  
Central Bucks High School South  
Cost: \$100  
(\$75 for PAWLP Fellows)  
Registration deadline: March 31



## Dr. Frank Serafini

An author who shares his passion for teaching reading in his professional texts!

*Save the date!*  
*Katie Wood Ray to Keynote Bucks Spring Conference*  
*April 30, 2011*

**Coming to West Chester**  
**May 1, 2010**  
**Kelly Gallagher**



**Kelly Gallagher is Co-Director of the South Basin Writing Project and author of *Teaching Adolescent Writers, Deeper Reading, and Readicide.***

Register on-line for all conferences at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org) (Click on Coming Events)  
For more information call 610-436-2202 or e-mail [smalarney@wcupa.edu](mailto:smalarney@wcupa.edu).

# Spring Courses

## Strategies for Teaching Literature, 4 - 12

PWP 520-01

**Location:** PAWLP Classroom,  
West Chester University

**Dates:** Tuesdays

January 19 - April 27, 2010

**Time:** 4:15 - 7:00 p.m.

**Coordinators:** Diane Dougherty and  
Tony Rotondo

*"The strength of this course is the plethora of strategies provided. All are usable, realistic, and standard-based (but creative, too!). You will learn enough to fill your plan book for the entire year."*

## Units of Study in the Writing Workshop, 2 - 8

PWP 599-01

**Location:** Bucks County IU, Doylestown

**Dates:** Wednesdays,

January 13 - March 24, 2010

**Time:** 4:15 - 7:45 p.m. (+6.5 independent hours)

**Coordinator:** Angela Watters

\*Registration deadline is December 22, 2009

*"This class turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I received such a wealth of information that I now feel completely prepared to deliver a stellar writing curriculum to my students: a curriculum in which every student knows exactly what is expected and in which every student is successful."*

## Literacy in Bloom:

### Botanical Inspirations for Reading, Writing, and Learning, K - 12

PWP 510-01

**Location:** Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square

**Dates:** January 23, February 6, 27, March 20,  
April 10 (snow/make-up dates Jan. 30,

Feb. 20, April 17), 2010

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

**Coordinator:** Patty Koller

*"It's fabulous! Excellent, practical ideas, beautiful setting, wonderful instructors. It's a great way to correlate nature and literature."*

## Reading Essentials:

### Teaching Readers

### What Really Matters, 2 - 8

PWP 599-02

**Location:** Bucks County IU, Doylestown

**Dates:** Two weekends, March 19 - 21/April 9 - 11

**Times:** Fridays, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays/Sundays 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

\*Includes the spring conference with

Frank Serafini and Jordan Sonnenblick

**Coordinators:** Chris Kehan and Angela Watters

*"Phenomenal course! It has truly changed the way I teach reading."*

3 graduate credits from West Chester University

Tuition and fees - On-campus: \$1,357.68 Off-campus: \$1,293.57

Out-of-state residents pay higher tuition and fees

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

or e-mail [smalarney@wcupa.edu](mailto:smalarney@wcupa.edu) for a registration form

**Registration must be received at least two weeks prior to course start date.**

**PAWLP Fellows receive a \$200 stipend for one course each semester.**

## Education Matters

a column from Michaels Associates of PAWLP Fellows in leading the

### A Tisket a Tasket, It's Poetry Baskets Part Deux

In my last column, I described an exciting new product that was conceived and brought to market by a collaboration between Boyds Mills Press and Michaels Associates LLC. Books were carefully selected, teaching strategies were created, printed and laminated for the classroom, ISBN's were assigned, a full color brochure was designed, website images and text were html encoded, and the brochure was mailed to over 10,000 lucky recipients across the country - all within three and one half months. As a bonus, Ralph Fletcher wrote a blurb for us for the brochure.

Several PAWLP'ers were among the first to inquire about Poetry Baskets, so I thought an update might be in order. The mailing's success was pretty unprecedented. Orders were received from individuals and from school districts - including Chicago Public Schools - and they're still coming in. Representatives have agreed to promote Poetry Baskets in about one third of the country so far with more still evaluating the product. We've seen the birth of a very healthy "baby" product and we're grateful for the support

of PAWLP Fellows in leading the way towards acceptance of a new concept.

To recap, Poetry Baskets are groups of grade-level-appropriate books of poetry by some of America's best known and loved poets like Donald Graves, Nikki Grimes, Sara Holbrook, Lee Bennett Hopkins, David Harrison, Ralph Fletcher, Brod Bagert, Jane Yolen and, as they say, many more. The books are placed in a basket with a laminated sheet of teaching ideas that help a busy teacher know when and how to include this important genre in their already crammed day. There are baskets for PreK through grade 8. The baskets, books, and teaching strategies are priced well below retail.

From my previous column: Why poetry? Poetry gives children a chance to experience the richness of our language without being overwhelmed. It also helps students develop an understanding and appreciation of rhythm and rhyme which have been shown to help kids become better readers. Poetry is also easy to memorize which gives children a feeling of success and ownership. Finally, writing poetry gives students of all ages that special feeling of being an author and discovering their writer's "voice."

Reading poetry aloud provides teachers with a wonderful opportunity to let students hear the sounds, feel the rhythm, see the images, fall in love with the beauty of the words, and learn new words that are not common in their everyday discourse with peers. Also important to teachers is that poetry can fit into nonstructured moments such as at the beginning and end of each school day, before gym, or that transition time between classes. It lightens the mood and brings smiles to the students' faces.

A free brochure is available for the asking by calling or sending an e-mail to Jan Michaels at [jmichaels@michaelsassociates.com](mailto:jmichaels@michaelsassociates.com). Poetry Baskets are also described at [www.michaelsassociates.com](http://www.michaelsassociates.com).

Cordially,  
Greg Michaels



**The Newsletter is going green!!**

**We plan to publish an electronic Newsletter several times/year  
and reduce the frequency of the paper version.**

**Please sign up for the electronic Newsletter on our website at [www.pawlp.org](http://www.pawlp.org).**

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The Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project *Newsletter* is published two times a year by and for those affiliated with the Project. Submissions are always welcome and can be mailed to the Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project, West Chester University, West Chester, PA, 19383.

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