



# Central WV Writing Project

Fall 2015 Newsletter

## IN THIS ISSUE

## CWVWP Sponsors Summer 2015 Advanced Writing Institute

By Dr. Jeradi Cohen

The Advanced Writing Institute was held June 9, 10, and 11 at the South Charleston Campus of Marshall University. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. Barbara O'Byrne. The participants were guided by the concepts in the book, *The Writing Thief: Using Mentor Texts to Teach the Craft of Writing*, by Ruth Culham. The participants engaged in lively discussions, periods of personal writing, strategic planning for teaching concepts to teachers as well as giving thoughtful consideration to the Common Core Standards and the place of reading and writing within them. This consideration included examining closely the teaching of Informational, Narrative, and Argument writing that are woven through the Common Core Standards and West Virginia's adaptation of them.

Participants gained first-hand experience with several of the mentor texts described and presented in the book by Culham through interactive implementation. The

emphasis in each case was the recognition of and practice with one of the Writing Traits identified by the author. While the predominant text format was picture books, a modest amount of time was also allocated to the examination of web sites that featured possible mentor texts to use in the content areas, specifically social studies, science, and mathematics. The use of the Internet reinforced that fact that mentor texts abound in traditional and digital formats. All of the texts and activities provided a clear and decisive "roadmap" for using a wide variety of authentic texts in future teaching scenarios, whether a classroom teacher, an adjunct instructor for the university or a professor. While standards are an integral part of an educator's daily life, the Advanced Writing Institute clarified and underscored that genuine and appealing instruction is highly possible in proliferating the writing and reading growth of students.

Fun with Words: Young Writers  
Camp Summer 2015 Page 2

CWVWP and Clay County Teachers: A  
Story of Successful Collaboration Page 2

CWVWP Goes to Washington Page 3

Spring 2015 Writing Workshop for  
Teachers Page 3

Young Writers Page 4

## Fun with Word: Young Writers Camp Summer 2015

By Becky Ryder

During the week of June 22-26, 2015 the Central WV Writing Project sponsored their fourth writing camp for students going into 2<sup>nd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades. Twenty-two students from various elementary schools in Kanawha and Putnam Counties attended the camp. Whole group, as well as small group, activities took place during the week. On Friday, an invitation was sent to the parents to join the campers for lunch and a presentation by the student of their favorite piece of the week. Each student was given an anthology and a camp picture to



remember the week. Positive comments were made by parents as well as students. We are looking forward to another fun and learning-filled week of camp again next year.

### UPCOMING SUMMER CAMP

Please monitor the CWVWP website for updates on the 2016 summer writing camps:

<http://www.marshall.edu/cwvwp/>

## CWVWP and Clay County Teachers: Teamwork Made the Dreamwork

By Susie Garrison

Beginning in the fall of 2013, the CWVWP teamed up with Clay County Middle and High School teachers to accomplish the goal of raising student writing scores in Clay County. Through a grant provided by the CWVWP, teachers worked month after month for a year to explore, share, problem solve, and implement more focused writing activities into their curriculum. The results were phenomenal.

Clay County's writing scores rose significantly from 2012-2013 as a result of hard work, buy in, and implementation by and from teachers. Instructors from the subject areas of social studies, English, and special education all worked diligently to push students and also to make writing fun for them. Students who had previously been disengaged performed willingly to produce more solid writing, and the results were evident in the higher scores that spring, for both middle and high school students overall.

## CWVWP goes to Washington by Dr. Barbara O'Byrne

In November 2014, Barbara O'Byrne and Jeradi Cohen led a round table discussion at the National Writing Project fall conference. Their session presented artifacts from a year of professional development at Clay County West Virginia and asked the question: how do you go from professional development to a school-wide writing curriculum? In March 2015, Barbara O'Byrne returned to Washington and lobbied on behalf of the Writing Project, sharing site accomplishments with Senators Joe Manchin and Shelly Moore-Capito and Congressman Evan Jenkins.



## Spring Writing Workshop for Area Teachers

By Staff

On March 14 2015, the CWVWP hosted a writing workshop at Marshall University South Charleston. Over 85 participants participated in lively sessions that explored writing across the school curriculum. Workshop leaders, Susie Garrison, Becky Ryder, Cyndi Smith, Anne Johnson, Travis Vandal, Dionne Canterbury, Brianne Vandal, Melanie Smith, Sharon Huffman and Carrie Blankenship engaged participants in interactive workshops on the broad theme of connecting reading and writing.

Participants included pre-service teachers from West Virginia State University, the University of Charleston, graduate students

from Marshall, and teachers from Kanawha, Lincoln, Wood, Clay, and Boone County.

An interaction panel presentation was a highlight of the workshop. Teacher leaders and participants from recent professional development initiatives of the CWVWP spoke of transformations in professional practice that were having a positive impact on student writing and learning. More than one audience member asked, "How can we get this kind of professional development at our school?" The question validated the fine work of the teacher leaders in preparing and delivering professional development for the CWVWP.

Everyone had nothing but praise to say about the smooth operation of the sessions and the fine lunch. Hats off to Stephanie Burdette, co-director of the Central West Virginia Writing Project, who coordinated the workshop.



### LOOKING AHEAD

Plans are in place to continue and expand this workshop in 2016. Look for announcement on the new CWVWP website.



# Young Writers Day May 15, 2015

By Dr. Barbara O'Byrne

Over 700 students, parents, and teachers converged on the University of Charleston for the 31<sup>st</sup> West Virginia Young Writers Day. Dr. Barbara O'Byrne, Director of CWVWP, opened the day's events. Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Education and the Arts, read the Governor Earl Tomblin's Proclamation that formally acknowledged May 15 at Young Writers Day in the state of West Virginia. Marc Harshman, WV Poet Laureate, gave an intriguing and at time funny presentation that showcased his West Virginia roots and his amazing poems.

Authors from West Virginia and neighboring states, Belinda Anderson, Cheryl Ware, Marie Bradby, and Marc Harshman led workshops for students that engaged them with the craft and encouraged them to expand their vision of creative writing. Cat Pleska, author of a new memoir, *Riding on Comets*, modeled writing succinctly by having teachers write stories on Twitter. Stephanie Burdette and Woody Wilson invited

parents to craft letters to their young writers.

The day concluded with recognition of county winners in each of six grade categories and the state winners. The audience was thrilled to hear the pieces of a first grader, who was the second miracle awarded to Randal McCloy, a talking chicken, a giraffe who liked to pose for the camera, a gifted painter, echoes of the holocaust, and a place called Appalachia.

The CWVWP is honored to host this contest each year. Together with our partners, Marshall University, the University of Charleston, and the West Virginia Department of Education, our site affirms its commitment to young writers and celebration of the printed word.

## YOUNG WRITERS DAY PHOTOS



## LOOKING AHEAD

**Young Writer's Day 2016 will take place on May 13, 2016 at the University of Charleston**

## About Us



Central West Virginia Writing Project (CWVWP) is a site of the [National Writing Project \(NWP\)](#), the largest on-going staff development initiative for teachers. Faculties across the disciplines – from kindergarten through the university level – collaborate through various initiatives. The WV site follows the NWP teachers-teaching-teachers model. The primary goal of this website is to offer information about the programs offered by CWVWP and to connect teachers with information to help improve their practice.

There has been a West Virginia National Writing Project site supported by Marshall University, South Charleston since 1978. Since 2002, Central West Virginia Writing Project has delivered professional development in teaching writing across the curriculum to hundreds of K-

adult teachers through partnerships with county school districts and individual schools. CWVWP is dedicated to improving writing in grades K-16 through partnerships with schools and county school districts. We believe in the power of classroom-tested knowledge. Successful practicing teachers are designated as Teacher Consultants (TCs) after completing the Invitational Summer Institute. Supported by CWVWP, TCs provide classroom-tested professional development that is grounded in theory, practice, and published research.

### Mission Statement

As an affiliate of the National Writing Project (NWP), the Central West Virginia Writing Project (CWVWP) endorses the NWP mission and assumptions and has adapted this mission to reflect our locality.

The mission of the CWVWP is to improve the teaching of writing and improve learning in the schools of central West Virginia. Through its professional development model, CWVWP recognizes the

primary importance of teacher knowledge, expertise, and leadership which impact students, schools, and extends into the community. CWVWP believes that access to high quality educational experiences that incorporate 21st century skills is a basic right of all learners and a cornerstone of equity. Through its network of teachers, the CWVWP seeks to promote exemplary instruction of writing in every classroom in central WV. CWVWP values diversity—our own as well as that of our students, their families and their communities. We recognize that our lives and practices are enriched when those with whom we interact represent diversities of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and language.

For more information contact:

**Dr. Barbara O'Byrne,**

**Director**

**Central West Virginia Writing Project**

100 Angus E. Peyton Drive  
South Charleston, WV 25303  
304.746.1986

[bobyne@marshall.edu](mailto:bobyne@marshall.edu)