

# Central WV Writing Project

Fall 2016 Newsletter

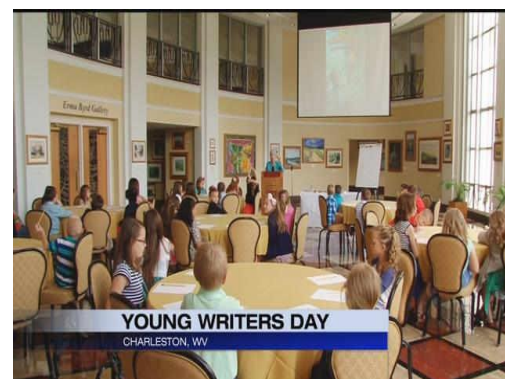
## WV Young Writers Day: The Tradition of Excellence Continues

By Dr. Jeradi Cohen

Over 700 students, parents, and teachers gathered on the University of Charleston for the 32<sup>st</sup> West Virginia Young Writers Day on May 13. Dr. Barbara O'Byrne, Director of CWVWP, opened the day's events. Dr. Edwin Welch, President of the University of Charleston, gave a warm welcome to all in attendance. Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary for the Department of Education and the Arts, read Governor Earl Tomblin's Proclamation that formally acknowledged May 13, 2016 as Young Writers Day in the state of West Virginia. Dr. Michael Martirano, WV Superintendent of Schools shared greetings and remarks. Bil Lepp, storyteller and author, gave an entertaining presentation that showcased his West Virginia roots.

Authors from West Virginia and neighboring states, Anna Smucker, Angie Wilson, Bil Lepp, Belinda Anderson, and Joe Stevens led workshops for students that engaged them with the craft and encouraged them to expand their vision of creative writing. Another noted West Virginia author, Cat Pleska, engaged teachers with insights to implement in their classroom writing instruction. Stephanie Burdette and Dr. Fran Simone invited parents to craft letters to their young writers.

As each of the state's first place winners were recognized, the audience was then treated to an oral reading by each of these writers. The day concluded with recognition of county winners in each of six grade categories.



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.

## 2016 CWVWP Spring Workshop Provides a Variety of Training Sessions

The Annual CWVWP Spring Workshop was conducted on April 9, 2016. Despite an unexpected snow storm, participants engaged in a series of sessions which focused upon expanding the role of writing within the classroom. Participants included students from West Virginia State University, the University of Charleston, graduate students from Marshall University, as well as teachers from Kanawha, Lincoln, Boone, Putnam, and other surrounding counties.

The sessions focused upon a variety of topics which ranged from using memoir writing in the classroom to using the arts to infuse classroom writing. The sessions were led by the following teacher-leaders: Susie Garrison, Becky Ryder, Cyndi Smith, Katie Endicott, Justin Endicott, Travis Vandal, Brianne Vandal, Carrie Blankenship, Cat Pleska, and faculty members from the MU Literacy Education Department. Feedback from the



sessions was very positive. Plans are underway to expand the scope of the next workshop which will be held in spring 2017.

## Marshall University Day at the WV Legislature

The West Virginia State Legislature hosted Marshall University Day on February 26, 2016. The event featured the best in educational programs and other offerings which are available at Marshall University. The CWVWP was represented by Stephanie Burdette, co-director of the project. She had the pleasure of meeting with member of both the House and Senate Education Committees. Each member of the committee was presented with a copy of the 2015 Young Writer's Anthology as a token of the writing project's gratitude for their support over the past year. Ms. Burdette was also present at a WVDE presentation which focused upon the stellar working being done by secondary schools in WV. It was at this event that Governor Tomblin and Superintendent Martirano were also presented with a copy of the anthology. Photo: Burdette with Superintendent Martirano.



## Summer Writing Camp: Another Successful Year

By Rebecca Ryder

The Central WV Writing Project had their 5<sup>th</sup> Fun with Words Writing Camp on June 13-17, 2016 under the direction of Becky Ryder. Twenty-one students from various schools in Kanawha County attended the five day camp at Ruffner Elementary. Many writing activities were done throughout the week from whole group to small group to individual. Writing activities included the use of mentor texts, playdough, chalk, and a mystery box. The students wrote narratives and informational text along with poetry. The week was culminated with a celebratory lunch for the children and parents, followed by a read-aloud of writing created during the camp.



## Summer 2017: A Busy Season for CWVWP Initiatives

### Advanced Institute

Summer 2017 proved to be a busy season for the CWVWP as the two initiatives were undertaken. June served as the kick off month for an Advanced Institute which focused upon argument writings at the secondary school level. Participants from several Kanawha County secondary schools took part in the three-day training which was facilitated by Susie Garrison and Stephanie Burdette.

The institute sessions featured interactive sessions aimed at bolstering the quality of student writing.

The activities were underscored by a variety of professional readings by top authors in the field of writing.

### Improving Teacher Quality Grant with Jackson and Wood Counties

The following month, Garrison and Burdette traveled to Ravenswood Middle School to begin a year-long Improving Teacher Quality Grant with teachers from Wood and Jackson Counties. The summer component of the grant featured nine days of dynamic interactive presentations with teachers working in the field of language arts, social studies and special education.

The workshop focused upon several influential texts which include *The Core Six* and *The Writing Thief*. The fall component of the grant will begin in September with teachers drafting a reflective narrative based upon their own experiences as writers. There will also be an ongoing book study which serve to initiate conversations about collaborative teaching practices.

### LOOKING AHEAD

Young Writer's Day 2017 will take place on May 12, 2017 at the University of Charleston



## Extending the Writing Project to OIEP School

In January of 2016, the CWVWP rolled out its first of a series of writing workshops for middle and high school students registered in OIEP schools. Dr. Christine Chambers, TITLE, approached Dr. Barbara O'Byrne in 2015 about creating some writing activities for teachers and students who were in these institutional schools.

Dr. O'Byrne vetted the idea with the CWVWP leadership team in November 2015 and developed the broad plan for these writing workshops. Several site leaders expressed interest in participating in the workshops. The plan included a series of three workshops sessions at each workshop with a view to participants taking at least one piece of writing through all phases of the writing process.

In December, the site developed three unique workshops to be delivered in the spring and summer of 2016.

The first of these challenged students at White Oak School to create personal narratives. Barbara O'Byrne, Travis Vandal, and Sheila McEntee, led the activities of the three sessions were well received by participants. Teachers, Kalya Orr and Tracy Lott, worked with students between the sessions to continue work on the emerging narrative pieces, and reported on the enthusiasm of students for the work. Author, Cat Pleska, spoke to the students at the last session, reading from her memoir, *Riding on Comets*, and engaging with participants in a lively Q&A session. Cat provided each student

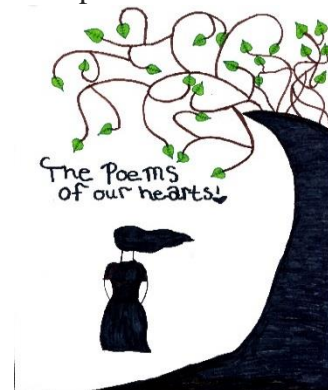
with individual feedback on the personal narratives.



The second workshop series engaged students at the Mountain School with the development of *Other Worlds*. Students worked in collaborative groups to design a WIKI that featured a map, stories of origin, leaders, and challenges facing those who inhabited the worlds of fantasy, science fiction, and dystopia. Instructors Travis Vandal and Isaac Larison guided students in activities that fleshed out the pieces of writing and encouraged collaboration among the students. Teacher, Heidi Jeffers, noted that students continued to work throughout the days and weeks between sessions and were eager to revise and reshape pieces to better reflect the overall features of the world their group had agreed to create. A highlight of the workshops was the sharing of the worlds. Students presented their world to peers, showing their amazing constructions and acumen with technology. Author Cat Pleska visited with this group and again offered valuable, individualized feedback to each participant.

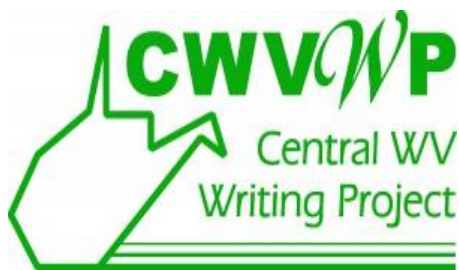
The third workshop series took place at the Barboursville School and featured poetry. Barbara O'Byrne, Sheila McEntee, Marc Shoemaker, and YA West Virginia author, Sarah Dooley, facilitated the sessions. Paint,

miles of construction paper, drums, and random words circled on a page of text that engaged participants in the creation of more than a dozen poems across the four week workshop series. The final session featured author, who read from her work and led students in a clever poetry making-activity. At the end of the session the two groups of students met for a final drumming session and a reading of selected works. A unique feature of this session was the challenge to create a book of poems. Students designed covers and voted for the one they wanted on the cover of their book. *Poems from the Heart*, an anthology of poems from the Barboursville School, is in press and will appear in September 2016.



Plans are in the works for additional workshops in the upcoming year. Participating schools will be able to select from a menu of workshops an option that works best for their students. Any teacher-leaders with ideas for developing a new workshop series or interest in delivering one of the existing series should contact Barbara O'Byrne, [bobyne@marshall.edu](mailto:bobyne@marshall.edu)

## 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:

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