

PAWP Newsletter

Murray State University

Volume 1 Issue 3



May '08

Editor's Intro

Whew! Testing is over and I feel exhausted. I am as bad as the students are at this time of year; just wanting to shut down. It is so hard for the students to realize that school is not over just because we are finished with testing, and I have to admit, it is hard for me as well.

With that said, my brain is too exhausted to fill this space with any valuable insight, so I think I will just give you something we all need—laughter.

These are just a few of my favorite “You might be at teacher if.....” jokes. They can be found all over the internet. Enjoy!

YOU MIGHT BE A TEACHER IF.....

- you have an overwhelming urge to nod and say, “Now I understand why your kid is the way he is” after meeting the parents.
- You can't have children because there is no name you can think of that doesn't give you high blood pressure.
- You think people should get government permits before they reproduce.
- You wonder how some parents ever MANAGED to reproduce.
- Any sustained loud noise causes you to flick the light switch on and off.
- You think it is perfectly normal to go through four years of college to earn a salary that's below the poverty line.
- Most people allow you to tell their child what to do.
- You believe in aerial spraying of Prozac.

And finally, you might be a teacher if you've ever had your job slammed by someone who would NEVER, EVER dream of doing your job.

Inside this issue:

Interview with Frank X. Walker	2
Summer Workshops offered	2
Publishing Co. offers Free Resources	3
How to Become a Blogger	6
Student Reflections on Portfolio Process	7
PAWP Summer Institute Participants	8
PAWP Contacts	8

Retreat Planned

A Sharing our Stories: Teachers Speak Out Retreat has been planned for July 14–16 at Brandon Springs in the Land Between the Lakes. The topic on hand: reflecting on the state's nationally recognized but also controversial writing program. The purpose of the retreat is to give teachers a chance to

write articles for publication on the topic.

Eight teacher-consultants were selected to participate. They include: Jamie Moss, Todd Ross, Susan Weatherford, Mary Ann Waltman, Susan Hancock, Jennifer Gobin, Kimberly Barrett, and Pam Dossett.

Debbie Bell, Michele Hill, and Doris Cella, members of the writing project's leadership team, will also attend. Dr. Fred Cornelius, PAWP's director for ten years, will serve as retreat facilitator. Each participant will receive a Free Dell Laptop and free room and board at Brandon Springs.

In Frank's Words: Writing Queries Answered by Frank X Walker by Carol A. Withrow

Kentucky native and co-founder of the Affrilachian Poets, Frank X. Walker's artistic declaration is a challenge to our region's predominantly white literary notions. Flip the pages of most any Kentucky history book and you'll note the disproportionate number of white authors and poets. Historically oppressed by slavery, poverty, and bigotry, far too few African American voices are chronicled for our present and future

generations. Authors construct one sense of history through the words their voices weave, enabling the reader to relive the experiences and perceptions within a particular time and place. This is why Frank X. Walker embraces the dual responsibility of articulating his own truths and empowering the prospective poets within us all.

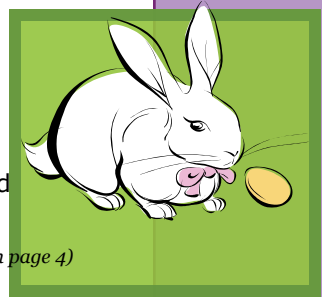
On the evening of April 16, Frank X. Walker read

aloud from his works* and spoke with an audience largely composed of Paducah Middle School students. Here are their questions and what he had to say. May his words inspire you to pick up your pen and write!

Q: What do you write about?

A: I write about social justice issues and my family. I write

(Continued on page 4)



"To know how to suggest is the art of teaching."

-Henri Amiel

Summer Outreach Workshops Planned

The Purchase Area Writing Project has released details on their 2008 Summer Outreach Workshops. These workshops will offer teaching strategies, resource materials, lesson ideas, hands on experience, and information on portfolio changes.

There are currently three workshops to choose from.

These include:

Nurturing K-3 Writers

offered June 3-4 at the Paducah Crisp Center. This two day workshop will provide strategies for encouraging young students to compose prose that is meaningful to them.

Lorrie Booth and Hannah Stark, both from Murray Ele-

mentary, will lead this session.

Inquiry Learning and Unit Design for Middle and High School Teachers will be held June 17th at the James Madison Middle School in Madisonville. Kimberly Barrett and Christi Walker, both from Calloway

(Continued on page 3)

NCTE Resources for Encouraging Readers

We all know how important it is to support children and teens as readers. However, we sometimes do not know how to successfully encourage them to continue their reading at home. The NCTE Inbox Blog posted a few resources and ideas we can use,

whether we are planning a Reading Night, a reading project, or just trying to keep them reading during summer break.

NCTE suggests you:

—Provide families with a list

of short, everyday activities that can support reading and writing.

—Visit the *ReadWrite Think's Learning Beyond the Classroom* site for reading and writing activities you an

(Continued on page 6)

"I like a teacher who gives you something to take home to think about besides homework."

-Edith Ann

Summer Workshops Planned (*continued*)

(Continued from page 2)

County Middle School, will facilitate this session.

In this workshop, teachers will get hands on experience designing units of study that will incorporate writing– to– learn activities and on– demand topics.

Writing in Elementary Math and Science Classes will be held June 18th at the

Crisp Center in Paducah. This workshop is designed to assist elementary teachers in learning ways to enhance student learning by incorporating writing in math and science.

Craig Carter of Lone Oak Elementary and Matthew Houser of Hendron- Lone Oak Elementary will lead this session.

A 25 dollar registration fee is required for each workshop. If you are interested in attending,

or have questions, contact Doris Cella, PAWP Outreach Coordinator at doris.cella@murraystate.edu.

Congratulations to Molly Goodman, PAWP '07, for being chosen as our representative to the KWP/KRP advanced institute at Rough River State Park in July.



PAWPer's Publishing Company Offers Free Resources

Teachers who are looking for a fun way to review Core Content in PLVS or Arts & Humanities classes can get a FREE Bingo Review Game from EvaMedia, Inc., the folks who publish the PLVS and A&H textbooks used by hundreds of schools in Kentucky.

The free Bingo Review Games are being offered to teachers as a THANK YOU from the Ken-

tucky– based publishing company, according to the publisher.

“We know that teachers don’t hear these words— THANK YOU— often enough,” Eva Media publisher (and former PAWPer) Kate Larken said.

“So many teachers have sent us encouraging or helpful notes since we’ve been developing instructional materials for them over the past four years,” she added. “We just wanted to give something back.”

“Nothing would make me happier,” Larken said, “than to give away hundreds of these games to teachers in our state. They deserve a little something extra for all that they do for Kentucky’s kids.”

To get one or both of the free products, teachers can visit www.EvaMedia.com and click on the Bingo links from the homepage. Additional ver-

sions of the Bingo Review Games are also being marketed on the company’s website; however, the free games are really a gift with no strings attached.

“There’s no obligation to purchase anything,” Larken said. “Free means free. It’s our way of showing appreciation to teachers in the Commonwealth. Teachers work hard; they’ve earned a reward. I’m a former teacher and have always been a teacher advocate, so this kind of thing is important to me and to all of us at EvaMedia.”

Larken noted that teachers who request the free review games through the company’s website will also be notified of other free gifts in the future.

“We want to make this sort of thing part of what we do,” she explained. “It’s about being a contributor to Kentucky’s educational community. This

little gift is just one modest token of how much appreciation those teachers really deserve.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Kentucky Writing Project’s fall conference will be at Murray State’s Curris Center September 20, 2008. AVI, a nationally known writer of Young Adult fiction, will be the keynote speaker. Mark your calendar. More details coming in August.

Craig Carter, former PAWP assistant director, reports that ALL 18 of his gifted/ talented students at Lone Oak Elementary school received distinguished ratings on their portfolios. Impressive!



(Continued from page 2)

about difficult issues that involve identity and place, like being a Black man in Kentucky and the perception of what that means. When I get together with my family at Thanksgiving we reminisce about our childhood. We actually romanticize it. I think about the values instilled in me by my mother and how she would always impress upon me that, no matter what, we always had enough.

Enough

I remember tying up dirty clothes

in bed sheets to be transported to the laundry mat across town in a yellow cab

I remember large block letters on plain white boxes and cans and discovering that USDA peanut butter was not as smooth or creamy as the neighbor's Jif

Before free lunch and food stamps we could leave school at noon to eat. Sometimes we would split a fried egg sandwich. Sometimes we would have a long walk home.

Summers were spent under the bed shirtless and reading, stuck to the cool tile floor. Government housing didn't come with air conditioning.

I remember quietly disappearing and running

home and away from the sound of the ice cream man before we learned to pour red Kool-aid into ice tray pop sickle treats

Other kids always had more house more toys, more food, more daddies but mamma said we were rich cause we always had enough.

I also write Tribute poems – to people or experiences. Growing up in Danville, Kentucky, a sports town (if you can imagine that), I had to find my own way through life as a nerd.

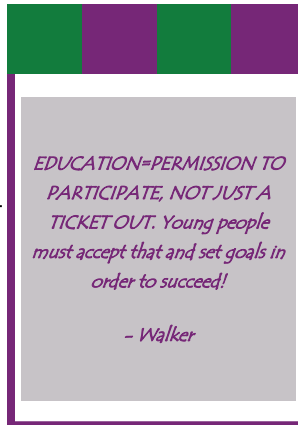
Writes of Passage

Nez Perce boys go hunting or fishing for salmon or trout. The Zulu sent Chaka into the wild to find a lion. My tribe sent me down the gauntlet that was the aisle of a yellow bus the first week of senior high.

Every red, white and blue Converse high-top step was punctuated with double slaps to the hook of my head or quick kicks to the back of my knees.

I carried a nerd load of books and teared up way too fast to become one of them, but excommunication was its own reward.

I learned to enjoy the solitude and long walks to class were I polished up the angry young



(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

couplets I wrote in my head
and tried to understand the square root
of meanness.

How many cultures choose their griots,
their shamans, their poets
by putting them off the bus?

From *Five Poems* by Frank X. Walker, <http://www.snreview.org/0205FWalker.html>

Q: How did you get into writing poetry?

A: I started writing poetry in high school as a class exercise. The teacher said I was good and all that did was to stroke my ego. Later I actually trained as a fiction writer but then I realized that poetry takes less time. I guess I need that sense of accomplishment as I make commentary on the world on a daily basis, interrogating and investigating and eventually finding a solution on a page.

Q: How did you first get published?

A: I was first published in a high school journal, but that's not the important thing. Just share your writing out loud. Even in class. If people are listening to your writing, that's being published.

To get started, I would recommend submitting your writing to journals, magazines, newspapers; anywhere you can get it in print. And the beauty of technology is that just about anyone can self-publish. Create a website or an e-magazine. I spent 10 years as a playwright. Getting published was never my goal. Then I realized that I didn't hear anyone in my community saying what I needed to say. Nobody's born doing jumpshots, just like nobody's born writing poetry. You have to be willing to put in the time if you want to be a poet or writer. It takes time to get the words carved just so and finally hugged into a nice finished product.

Q: Who are your heroes?

A: First of all, my mother. And also young people who refuse to give up. I read a startling statistic recently that only 34% of kids in a particular large city will graduate. It's amazing that in this day and age people don't realize that without a degree, it's hard to make it. EDUCATION=PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE, NOT JUST A TICKET OUT. Young people must accept that and set goals in order to succeed!

Read more about Frank X. Walker (his books, special projects including "Coal Black Voices" – *Affrilachian Poets Documentary*, interviews, etc.) at <http://www.frankxwalker.com/index.htm>.



(Pictured from left to right: Paducah Middle student Jamal Lee Collins, Frank X. Walker, and Paducah Middle student Jay McKinney.)

***Works by Frank X. Walker**

Affrilachia (Old Cove Press, 2000) ISBN 0-9675424-0-5 • \$14.50

Buffalo Dance: the Journey of York (University Press of Kentucky, 2003) ISBN 0-8131-9088-6 • \$15.00

Black Box (Old Cove Press, 2005) ISBN 0-9675424-1-3 • \$15.50

When Winter Come: the Ascension of York (University Press of Kentucky, 2008) ISBN 978-0-8131-9184-3 • \$15.00

How to Become a Blogger by Greg Gierhart

Why do we Blog? The answer to this question is very complex. For some it is a way to communicate with the world. For others, it's an avenue to communicate ideas, beliefs, concerns, etc

Face it, this newsletter is a form of Blogging. But Blogging moves the information from a small group setting to a global setting. People from around the world could possibly read what is happening with the Purchase Area Writing Project.

There are many web-based blog systems available that can host your blog. Some of these are free and some charge a fee. Recently, I've started my own blog based on some of the recent literary works. Check mine out at: <http://greggierhart.blogspot.com/>. I've just

begun my journey into this new and fascinating medium. My challenge now is how to use it within the classroom.

To me, the use of Blogging within the classroom presents promise but some challenges that I must consider. The first promise that blogging presents is the sense of ownership. Students will have something that belongs to them to control and monitor. Second, students can write to a purpose that is real and to meaningful audience. As a teacher, a challenge I might face is inappropriate materials. But this can be handled easily with assignments that are purposeful and meaningful and leads little or interpretation.

How should I organize my blog? There are great blogs out there for whatever you're looking for. But if you want to

create a blog, consider the following:

What theme? Blogs can have many different themes much like a magazine. Recipes, diaries, book review, etc. can be the focus of the blog. For example, my blog contains information about different books that I've been reading.

Select a site to host your blog. There are many sites. Some of the most popular free blogs are: <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/> and <https://www.blogger.com/start>. One must keep in mind that these "free" blog spots have limited to space. So if you would want to add a video clip within the blog.

Setting up the blog is important. Google and Blogger both have wonderful tutorials to assist you in designing your

NCTE Blog Highlights Found and Headline Poetry

When scrolling through the NCTE Inbox Blog recently I came across a posting by Traci Gardner that discussed "Found and Headline Poetry". I was intrigued, as a former English teacher who is always trying to find thought provoking writing assignments for my History classes.

As I read, I discovered that a found poem is similar to a 'word collage'. The writer

searches through original texts for meaningful words, phrases, and images they can then use to shape into an original work. It works as a 'quick start' poem—beginning with ready made samples, and then shaping them into something new.

What I really found great about this type of poetry is that it can be adapted to any topic or subject area. If the prose should be about the Civil

War, the student simply browses through primary and secondary sources about the Civil War for the words, phrases, and images to arrange into their original work. The production of a first draft is quick and easy for students of various learning levels to accomplish.

NCTE Reading Resources (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

share with families.

—Visit the **Why Summer Reading?** Page on the site for a link to a printable flyer you can send home with students.

—Show families the booklists available on the *ReadWrite*

Think's Learning Beyond the Classroom grade level pages for suggested best books.

—Encourage families to check out *ReadWrite Think's* podcasts and videos for book reviews on books appropriate for ages 4-11 and ages 12-18. Some of the videos also suggest reading strategies that families can use

with their children. *For more suggestions, you can visit the NCTE Inbox Blog on the web. Many of the resources are available for review or use without a subscription.*



blog.

Write your first blog posting. After you have posted the blog, see what it looks like by going to the blog site and viewing.

Add any "bells and whistles" that would make the blog attractive. Add pictures and video clips if necessary. Always remember to give credit where credit is due—or in other words "cite sources".

Tell people about your blog and invite them to make comments. You will need to monitor this and delete inappropriate material.

Write often and update your blog.

Blogging offers promise to many writers. Give it a try and see what develops. Once you've accomplished Blogging, try creating Wikis.

Students Reflect on the Writing Portfolio Process

Doris Cothran, of PAWP '86, recently had her seniors at Livingston Central High School write down their thoughts on the writing portfolio in response to the current issue of revising the assessment methods at the state level. She graciously sent along some of their reflections to share with us.

“Having to complete a portfolio has helped me in my growth as a writer by making me try harder. If I didn't have to do really well on my writings because they need to go into my portfolio, I honestly might not try as hard.

Having to complete a portfolio has also made me take more responsibility for my writing. I will admit that having to complete a portfolio has also helped me with my writings in other classes because it caused me to have to learn how to write well (or at least better than before).

It also helped me in my growth as a writer by making me analyze the way I write, or the way things “sound” when I write them. I may write something and make it sound one way, but in reality I mean it to sound the complete opposite of what it sounded like. Writing a portfolio has given me practice as a writer and has kept this from happening as often as it used to.

I will admit the portfolio has helped me.”

—Micaela Kirk

“Having to complete a portfolio as a part of the curriculum has helped me grow as a writer in many ways. It has taken my thought processes to a new level. Now, I not only write just to get the paper done, but I

really delve into the piece that I'm writing on. I do an in-depth analysis and think of all the possibilities and shapes that my paper can take. Another way that my writing has grown is in its creativity. The topics of the writing world are both vast and varied. Being able to tackle these topics with alacrity and enthusiasm helps my writing in every way. The creativity spruces up writing and allows the reader to be at ease and actually want to read the paper. My writing has also been enhanced grammatically. Before, grammar had always been a problem area: now, its just another step in the writing process. Sure, I still make mistakes and I probably always will, but I notice simple mistakes that I hadn't in past writings. Completing a portfolio has taken my thoughts, my creativity, and my grammar to a whole new level, one that I'm enthused about encountering.”

—Danielle Cole

“Having to complete a portfolio has helped me to become a better writer in many ways. First of all, going through the correction processes (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing) has helped me learn to write better. When I am corrected on something, I learn how something is supposed to be, and that helps my writing in the future because I learn from my mistakes. Second, I have learned how to structure my writing better, so it is more understandable. When writing port-

folio pieces, we have to meet certain deadlines and reaching those deadlines helps us become responsible. Also accomplishing tasks a little bit at a time makes us able to spend more time making our writing better because we are not trying to finish really fast.”

— Emily Duncan

“ Writing and editing previous pieces for my portfolio has improved my writing. I can easily see mistakes and errors in writing that were unclear to me before, and I can easily see the difference writing a portfolio has done to my writing. Editing my own mistakes and ideas has made me more analytical about my own writing and able to portray my ideas to other people. A portfolio is an excellent way to show what I truly have learned in the few years in high school.”

—Amanda Kittel

“Having to complete a portfolio has helped me as a writer by teaching me to use my time wisely, narrow my thought process or focus, and develop my thoughts and ideas into a proficient, clear writing. It helps me for future reference on my papers and gives me practice to become an even better writer in the future. Writing portfolio pieces teach discipline and punctuality in my writings also. Deadlines are to be met and portfolios stress that. It will later make my assignments the best they can be.”

—Brandon Croft

Murray State University

I hope you have enjoyed our spring issue! I will be in touch soon for items to include in the summer edition. Remember to keep sending anything and everything!

Brittney McCord

WE'RE ON THE WEB!!!

<http://campus.murraystate.edu/pawp/index.htm>

Congratulations and Good Luck to the chosen PAWP '08 Participants!

Janea Dowdy, Lone Oak High

Carol Sanecki, Christian County High

Ruth McCullaugh, Christian County High

Jenny Darnall, Marshall County High

Barbara Peirpoint, North Drive Middle

Robin Blotevogal, North Drive Middle

Amy Bell, Murray Middle

Lori Phillips, South Marshall Middle

Lori Hall, Browning Springs Middle

Gilmar Siza, Graves Central Elementary

Jessica Clark, Southside Elementary

Toni Spence, Southside Elementary

Stephanie Sandage, South Livingston Elementary

Lisa Hershey, Hendron Lone Oak

Monique Lewis, Belmont Elementary

Vickie Mings, Grapevine Elementary

Hilary Moore, South Christian Elementary

Kim Booker, Sharpe Elementary

Karen Smith, McNabb Elementary



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“Smartness runs in my family. When I went to school I was so smart my teacher was in my class for five years.”

- George Burns