

# The Prairie Voice



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[www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands)

Applications due March 1

## 2002 Institutes announced

Applications for the Prairie Lands Writing Project (PLWP) 2002 Summer Invitational Institutes will be accepted through Friday, March 1, according to **Jane Frick**, PLWP site director. (See page 3 for application submission directions.)

"This summer, we will hold two workshops for participants who wish to improve their writing and/or teaching writing repertoires—an Invitational Institute for up to 20 educators with at least two years of teaching experience; and an Advanced Institute: Publish Your Teaching, which will be limited to Writing Project Teacher Consultants/ alumni who have previously completed a National Writing Project (NWP) Invitational," Frick said.

A recent study conducted by the Academy for Educational Development shows that educators who have completed a NWP Institute spend more time engaging their students in writing and other literacy tasks than other teachers—particularly in teaching the kinds of "authentic intellectual work" which result in standardized test gains.

### **\$500 stipend or six free graduate credits will be awarded:**

Thanks to federal funds provided by the National Writing Project to the Prairie Lands site, participants who are selected for and who complete the Invitational Institute will receive six free Northwest Missouri State University graduate credits or a \$500 stipend. Advanced Institute participants, however, must pay a \$275 fee to cover instructor costs, texts, email/Internet access, and two hours of Northwest



*Lynn Tushaus, Diane Mullen, Pat Smith, and Tom Pankiewicz share teaching writing projects at the 2001 Invitational Fall Finish in October.*

Missouri State University graduate credits (optional).

"The Invitational was a boost to my teaching. I enjoyed the fellowship with other teachers, the demonstrations, and the dialog," said **Amy Grier**, St. Joseph middle school gifted teacher.

**Tom Pankiewicz**, English professor at Missouri Western and former English teacher and chair of the Language Arts Department at St. Joseph's Benton High School, will direct the Advanced Institute, which will meet for six afternoons in June and one day in July at Missouri Western (Tuesday through Thursday, June 18-20 and June 25-27, from 2-5 p.m.). Participants will either develop a text for publication submission or prepare a teaching writing workshop for presentation as an in-service offering or at a professional conference.

Co-leading the 2002 Invitational with Pankiewicz and Frick will be Joyce Finch, PLWP Program Co-Director and teacher at Skaith Elementary School in St. Joseph. The 2002 Institute will hold all sessions at Missouri Western,

beginning with a day-long orientation on Saturday, April 27. From July 8 through August 1, participants will meet Monday through Thursday, where they will participate in a writing workshop:

- Writing together
- Sharing classroom expertise
- Energizing one another
- Reading about and reflecting upon recent theories and research
- Emerging as teachers of other teachers.

The Institute will conclude on Saturday, October 19, when the teachers will present the results of their classroom teaching projects and submit a portfolio of their Institute writings. Upon completion of the Institute, participants will become Writing Project Teacher Consultants (TCs). As such, they may take on site leadership positions such as conducting professional development seminars and workshops about writing and teaching writing in area schools, leading summer youth writing camps, and mentoring teachers and pre-service teachers.

The Prairie Lands Web site ([www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/institutes.html](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/institutes.html)) contains information about past Invitational Institutes, including summaries of the teaching writing projects conducted by the 2000 participants and the 2001 *E-Anthology*.

This issue of *The Prairie Voice* is available online for viewing and printing at [www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands).

# Teacher Consultant Achievements

## TCs present at NCTE:

**Dawn Terrick**, English lecturer at Missouri Western, made a presentation, "(D)iverging and (E)merging Language Communities in the Writing Classroom," at the annual National Council of Teachers of English meeting held in Baltimore last November. **Jane Frick**, Missouri Western English professor and Prairie Lands director, and **Heidi Mick**, English teacher at Platte County R-II High School, made a presentation, "Case Study and Mentoring Project," at the "Frameworks for Recreating Teacher Training Programs" session at NCTE. **Tina Janc**, St. Joseph Benton High School English teacher, received a Missouri Association of Teachers of English outstanding leadership award at the 2001 NCTE state affiliates breakfast.

## Apple Seed grants awarded:

The St. Joseph School District's Apple Seed Foundation funded five Prairie Lands TCs' grant applications last fall, allowing the teachers to implement innovative teaching writing projects in their classrooms this year. The teachers, their schools, and the projects include: **Joyce Finch** and **Theresa McAvoy** at Skaith Elementary School for "Writing Circles"; **Marie Puett** at Eugene Field Elementary for "Strategies at Work"; **Jocelyn Washburn** at Bessie Ellison Elementary School for "The Write Zone Across the Curriculum"; and **Jeanette Westfall** at Lafayette High School for "The Learning Environment."

## Writing Project alumni elected to professional positions:

**Janet Jelavich**, English teacher and department chair at Maryville, Mo., High School, was elected secretary/treasurer of the Missouri Academic Coaches Association at the state convention held in August in Columbia.

**Marie Puett**, elementary education teacher at St. Joseph Eugene Field School, has been elected secretary for the St. Joseph Area Literacy Coalition.

**Keith Rhodes**, English professor and Director of Writing Placement and Developmental Writing at Missouri Western, has been elected to serve a three-year term as the Coordinator for the Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment.

## TCs active in state writing group:

Prairie Lands Teacher Consultants had active roles in the 2001 annual meeting of the Missouri Colloquium on Writing Assessment, held at Missouri Western last October. **Keith Rhodes** served as co-host for the meeting attended by writing professionals from Missouri high schools and colleges. **Jane Frick** made a PowerPoint presentation, "The CWA Surveys, 1989-2001: Reflections of the Composition Shift." **Tom Pankiewicz**, Prairie Lands co-director and MWSC English professor, coordinated the conference's evening banquet session.

## Dow receives grant for outdoor classroom:

**Connie Dow**, gifted teacher at Chillicothe, Mo., Central Elementary School, recently received a \$2500 grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation to create an outdoor classroom at her school. In October, Dow and Janet Zion, Central teacher, made a presentation at the Gifted Association of Missouri Conference about their school's student-run cable broadcast, "Central Live News."

## Grier and Smith publish poems:

**Amy Grier**, St. Joseph middle school gifted teacher, and **Patricia Smith**, St. Joseph Benton High School social studies and English teacher, have published their poems, "Bedroom Window" and "Teacher's Joy" (Grier's); and "Compatibility" (Smith's); in the fall 2001 issue of *Missouri Teachers Write*, a Missouri Association of Teachers of English publication.

## Nelson creates cookbook:

**Laura Nelson**, PLWP co-director and English teacher at St. Joseph

Central High School, served as the editor and project co-chair for *The Roux We Do: Tastes and Tales from the Land of Joseph Robidoux and the Pony Express*, a cookbook recently published as a fund raiser by the St. Joseph Junior League. **Nancy Reese-Dillon**, adjunct English instructor at Missouri Western, was the book's copy editor.

## Pettit writes grants:

**Sandra Pettit**, School Improvement Coordinator for the North Kansas City School District, wrote the following funded grants during 2001: "School Reform Demonstration," grants for five elementary schools (\$375,000); "Goals 2000 Local Reform," (\$22,500); and "Dan Kahler Innovative Teaching," (\$1000). Pettit is a member of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's management team for the University City School District, and she served as a member of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) 2001 evaluation team in the Excelsior Springs School District.

## Smith teaches at MWSC:

**Melody Smith**, St. Joseph Benton assistant principal, completed a Specialist in Education Degree at Northwest Missouri State University last July, and she is teaching Secondary Reading Techniques as an adjunct instructor at Missouri Western during 2001-2002. She and Nancy Mooney, elementary education director for the St. Joseph School District, conducted a workshop, "Developing Professional Portfolios," in November for pre-service teachers at Missouri Western. Smith also conducted a workshop, "Reading in the Content Areas," in October for elementary teachers in Mound City, Mo.

## Washburn conducts workshop:

**Jocelyn Washburn**, teacher at St. Joseph's Bessie Ellison Elementary School, conducted a two-hour in-service workshop, "Six Traits of Writing," for her building's certified staff last November.

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# 2002 Invitational Institute Application

**Submit the following materials in a single application package:**

- (1) **A letter of application** which describes:
  - ✓ why you use writing in the classroom
  - ✓ your professional development and/or teaching goals
  - ✓ why you would like to participate in the Institute

- (2) **A professional resume**

Include teaching experience (subject areas and/or grade levels), professional development and/or leadership roles, co-curricular responsibilities, honors, college degrees (majors and teaching certification areas, if applicable), interests (community activities, hobbies), and contact information (home and school email and snail mail addresses and telephone numbers).

- (3) **A letter of recommendation** from a principal, department head, or other administrator qualified to comment on your teaching and professional work



*Tom Pankiewicz and Jennifer Van Ness write at the 2001 Invitational.*

**Deadline for submission of application packet:  
Friday, March 1, 2002**

**Send to: Jane Frick, Prairie Lands Writing Project  
Student Services Classroom Building - 201  
Missouri Western State College  
4525 Downs Drive  
St. Joseph, MO 64507**

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We will contact you in March to arrange for an interview with three members of the Prairie Lands Advisory Board.

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# 2002 Advanced Institute Application

**Send a letter or email application to Tom Pankiewicz, Advanced Institute Director, by Friday, March 1, 2002 (Email: [pankiew@mwsc.edu](mailto:pankiew@mwsc.edu)). Include the following:**

- (1) A description of the writing or teaching writing project which you would like to develop for presentation and/or publication during the Advanced Institute
- (2) The name of the National Writing Project site and year(s) in which you completed an Invitational Institute
- (3) Your present professional position (if teaching, include grade level(s) and subject(s)) and contact information (school and home address and telephone numbers; email address)

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Invitational Institute and Advanced Institute participants will be selected by April 5, 2002.

**Flyers and application materials for the Invitational and Advanced Institutes are also available at [www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands).**

# PROFESSIONAL outreach

*Increases in programs and participants*

## Prairie Lands completes successful year

Members of the Prairie Lands Writing Project's (PLWP) Advisory Board held a strategic planning session at Missouri Western on Monday, November 26, 2001, to review the site's activities and to plan 2002 programs, especially as they relate to the National Writing Project's Basic Assumptions. (See page 8 for listing of spring events.)

The Project is jointly supported by Missouri Western State College, by the St. Joseph School District, and by \$28,000 in federal funds from the National Writing Project (NWP).

"Writing and brainstorming with the Board members at the planning meeting was especially helpful in evaluating our programs and determining the kinds of workshops we wanted to build into next year's reauthorization grant proposal, which we had to submit to NWP in December," Frick said. "I was pleased to be able to report dramatic growth in Prairie Lands' activities and participants in the last two years—primarily because we have a wonderful cadre of active Teacher Consultants (TCs)."

### Dramatic growth noted:

During the 2000-2001 school year, Prairie Lands TCs conducted 46 writing and teaching writing programs with 1458 participants for a total of 11,823.50 contact hours—a significant increase

**Valerie Scheckells** views the *Prairie Lands 2001 E-Anthology* with creator **David McElwee** at the 2001 Invitational Fall Finish.



over Prairie Lands' 1998-99 activities: 18 programs (**158% programming increase**) for 347 participants (**320% participant increase**) for a total of 3012 contact hours (**293% contact hour increase**).

### 2002 goals adopted:

As they reviewed the preceding year's programs, the Advisory Board adopted the following goals for PWLP for 2002:

#### ✓Improve the visibility of the Prairie Lands Writing Project with members of the educational community and with area literacy providers

PLWP publishes two issues of its *Prairie Voice* newsletter each year which is distributed to 750 educators in the area through the Northwest Regional Professional Development Center. The Prairie Lands Web site at [www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands) lists open and invitational-only programs and services and is updated regularly.

#### ✓Increase the number of extended (year-long) professional development programs conducted by Prairie Lands

During 2000-2001, Prairie Lands Teacher Consultants conducted extended professional development programs related to improving the teaching of writing for all of the teachers in the Eagleville, Laidlaw,

and Chillicothe school districts and building-level extended in-service workshops for all teachers at Chillicothe's Central Elementary School and at St. Joseph's Mark Twain and Bessie Ellison Elementary Schools. As a free teaching resource, Prairie Lands electronically published case studies featuring the successful teaching and research practices of seven northwest Missouri high school English teachers—Prairie Lands TCs who conducted action research projects while mentoring pre-service students who observed their work and wrote the case studies.

#### ✓Continue to develop and provide continuity programs for pre-service teachers and educators which support the practice of reflective teaching

During 2000-2001, Prairie Lands continuity programs included: Writing Groups for Educators, Polaroid Workshop for Educators, Grant Writing Workshops for Educators, Critical Issues Forum: How Do We Respond to Students Who Write About Violence? PLWP also co-sponsored literacy week

(Cont. on p. 5)

"We have a wonderful cadre of active Teacher Consultants." — Jane Frick

## 2001-2002 Prairie Lands Writing Project (PLWP) Advisory Board

The Prairie Lands Advisory Board meets quarterly and serves as the PLWP planning and evaluation team.

### Directors

#### Jane Frick - Director

Professor of English - Missouri Western State College  
Email: frick@mwsc.edu

#### Joyce Finch - Program

Teacher at Skaith Accelerated Elementary School - St. Joseph  
Email: joyce.finch@sjsd.k12.mo.us

#### Laura Nelson - Professional

##### Development

English teacher at Central High School - St. Joseph  
Email: laura.nelson@sjsd.k12.mo.us

#### Thomas Pankiewicz - Invitational

##### Institute

Assistant Professor of English - Missouri Western State College  
Email: pankiew@mwsc.edu

### Invitational Institute Representatives

#### Janet Jelavich - 1999

English teacher and Language Arts Chair - Maryville High School  
Email: jelavich@maryville.k12.mo.us

#### Christine Deihl - 2000

Teacher at West Englewood Elementary - North Kansas City  
Email: Cdeihl@nkcsd.k12.mo.us

#### Lynn Tushaus - 2001

Science Teacher at Savannah High School  
Email: DLTushaus@netscape.net

### Regional Representatives

#### Christine Hudson - Central

School-to-Work Coordinator at Turning Point Alternative School - Cameron  
Email: cghudson@hotmail.com

#### Connie Dow - Eastern

Gifted teacher at Central Elementary School - Chillicothe  
Email: adow@greenhills.net

#### Jeanne Rost - Northern

English teacher at Savannah High School  
Email: jeanne@savannah.k12.mo.us

#### Heidi Mick - Southern

English teacher at Platte County High School  
Email: mickh@pcruii.k12.mo.us or Heidil\_64@hotmail.com

### St. Joseph School District Representatives

#### Melody Smith - Administration

Assistant Principal at Benton High School  
Email: melody.smith@sjsd.k12.mo.us or melodymas@earthlink.net

#### Terri McAvoy - Elementary

Teacher at Skaith Accelerated Elementary School  
Email: theresa.mcavoy@sjsd.k12.mo.us

#### Marnie Lucas - Middle

Language arts teacher at Bode Middle School  
Email: marnie.lucas@sjsd.k12.mo.us

#### Jan Reeder - Secondary

Creative writing and English teacher at Central High School  
Email: jan.reeder@sjsd.k12.mo.us

### Missouri Western Representatives

#### Nancy Reese-Dillon

Adjunct English instructor  
Email: dillon@mwsc.edu

#### Cindy Heider

Assistant Professor of Education  
Email: heider@mwsc.edu

#### Keith Rhodes

Director of Placement and Developmental Writing and Assistant Professor of English  
Email: rhodes@mwsc.edu

#### Diane Watson

Education Instructor at Missouri Western and St. Joseph School District elected School Board member  
Email: diane.watson@sjsd.k12.mo.us

### Technology Coordinator

#### David McElwee

Assistant Professor of English at Missouri Western  
Email: mcelwee@mwsc.edu

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## 2002 Prairie Lands Writing Project goals

activities, including the annual Corporate Spelling Bee and Writer-in-Residence program at five St. Joseph elementary schools.

### ✓Ensure that the 2002 Invitational Institutes meet the NWP "Essentials of the Model"

During summer 2001, two pre-service teachers and 23 teachers and administrators, grades 3 - 16, successfully completed Prairie Lands Invitational Institute, held at Missouri Western, April 21, June 5 - 28, and October 13. Next June, Prairie Lands will offer a two-week Advanced Institute for Teacher Consultants who have already completed an Invitational Institute, as well as an Invitational Institute with

orientation in April, four-week session in July, and follow-up session in October.

### ✓Continue to develop and sponsor youth writing programs, and if feasible, offer a writing camp for teenagers in summer 2002

During 2000-2001, Prairie Lands conducted an after-school writing club at St. Joseph's Skaith Elementary School, two summer writing camps for youth in St. Joseph, a summer writing camp in North Kansas City, and a day-long computer writing camp for children participating in summer programs at MidCity Center for Educational Excellence in St. Joseph.

### ✓Continue to participate in the NWP Rural Sites Network and in the Missouri Writing Project Network

Prairie Lands received a \$3000 Rural Sites Network grant in 2000 which the site used to increase professional development programming in western rural Missouri. With the three other NWP sites in Missouri (housed at the University of Missouri - Columbia, Kansas City, and St. Louis, respectively), Prairie Lands has established the Missouri Writing Project Network, a sites information exchange network which co-sponsors sessions related to writing at professional meetings and which is developing statewide writing programs.

## Case studies on Web as teaching resource

Case studies featuring the successful teaching and research practices of seven Prairie Lands Teacher Consultants, all northwest Missouri high school English teachers, are now available as free teaching resources which can be viewed and printed from the Web ([www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/2001cs.html](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/2001cs.html)).

"The case studies document excellent teaching writing and critical reflection strategies," said **Jane Frick**, Prairie Lands director and Missouri Western English professor who supervised the project.

In fall 2000, the Teacher Consultants participated in a Missouri Western Funding for Results (FFR) Teaching Innovation project by conducting action research projects in their secondary classes while serving as mentors to students enrolled in Frick's English methods course at MWSC.

The pre-service teachers completed research in support of their mentors' projects, posted summaries of their mentors' progress to the class's Web "Case Study Project" site, and analyzed published examples of teacher research. Then, they drafted the case studies describing their mentors' projects.

In August 2001, Missouri Western FFR Reward moneys were awarded for the mentoring/case study project, making it possible to publish the revised, TC-approved case studies online. The case studies include:

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### **"Reflection Through Portfolios Case Study" (Tina Janc's project conducted at St. Joseph Benton High School)**

In her honors English classes, Janc studied the effects of allowing students to choose their own topics and genres and requiring their participation in teacher conferences and peer writing groups in preparing their first-quarter writing portfolios. Students' final writings in their portfolios were improved over their beginning-of-the-year diagnostic writings.

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### **"The Daybook Action Research Project Case Study" (Jennifer Hoecker's project conducted at St. Joseph Central High School)**

In her tenth-grade English classes, Hoecker implemented lessons designed to improve students' language arts scores on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) test. At the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year, she had students develop essays and short written responses to texts, which simulated appropriate responses to MAP questions. Pre- and post-project scores of students' responses to released MAP tests were encouraging; they showed that three-fourths of the students' scores remained the same or improved—after only 10 class sessions.

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### **"Poetry Improves Student Writing of Traditional Prose Case Study" (Vickey Meyer's project conducted at St. Joseph Central High School)**

Meyer hypothesized that studying and writing poetry would not only change students' attitudes from negative to positive about writing, but would also improve students' writing of descriptive essays in a project conducted in her tenth-grade language arts classes. One class studied and wrote poetry, including compiling their poems into a booklet. The students in the other class were assigned writing tasks focusing on essay development.

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### **Journaling in Writer's Workshops Case Study" (Dawn Smith's project conducted at St. Joseph Central High School)**

Smith conducted a successful classroom action research project in which she implemented journaling and writer's workshops in her classes to improve students' writing fluency and attitudes about the value and importance of writing. She gave students a writing prompt at the beginning of every class period and allowed approximately ten minutes for them to respond in their journals. Students also met in their writer's workshops to complete

peer editing of papers and collaborative work on grammar mini-lessons, MAP practice questions, writing techniques, and reading comprehension.

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### **"Journalistic Writing Case Study" (Marlie Williams' project conducted at St. Joseph Lafayette High School)**

Williams conducted her action research project in two junior-level English classes in which students wrote journalistic pieces as a part of their study of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. She successfully hypothesized that journalistic approaches to teaching writing would improve her students' writing fluency and organizational abilities as well as enhance their understanding of real events described in Angelou's autobiography.

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### **"Dialectical Journals Case Study" (Mary Pat Whiteside's project conducted at Chillicothe High School)**

Whiteside required her students to write dialectal journals in her senior English composition courses during the first quarter of the 2000-2001 school year. An analysis of the students' entries and their essays of reflection about the project documents that the use of a dialectal journal increased students' ability to think critically, especially in their ability to reflect about their own writing and reading.

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### **"Grammar B/Alternate Style Case Study" (Heidi Mick's project conducted at Platte County R-III High School)**

Mick conducted an action research project by introducing her ninth-grade students to Weathers' "Grammar B" and Romano's "Alternate Style" of writing as a part of a beginning-of-the-year unit in which students also read and critiqued Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She designed the unit so that her students improved their fluency and writing style—one of the goals in English I—while also acquiring skills in textual analysis.

# Spring Writing Groups scheduled

Prairie Lands Writing Facilitators **Tina Janc**, **Vickey Meyer**, and **Dawn Smith** want you to join them this spring at one or more of their Writing Group sessions, to be held on the third Thursday evening each month, beginning January 17, from 6-7:30 p.m. in Room 106 of the Janet Gorman Murphy (JGM) Building at Missouri Western.

Open to any educator seeking the camaraderie and critiquing support that a peer writing group provides, each session allows participants time to compose and/or edit their writings as well as share and receive feedback regarding their drafts. No reservations are required; no fees are charged.

**Tom Pankiewicz**, Prairie Lands co-director and English professor at Missouri Western, developed the following essay at the Prairie Lands Writing Group's August 2001 session.

## NO to Artsy-Crafty Exercises!

I dislike the artsy-crafty exercises that seem to come in workshops. I know that these are ways to reach the whole person, ways to reach those with different learning styles. Yet I hate them so much that if I knew they would be part of the workshop, I would stay home.

I do not need psychotherapy to remember grade school and what horrible messes a klutzy lefthander could make in a room full of scissors and ink. Even my mother would not display my oddly smudged drawings on the refrigerator or save them in scrapbooks. If my presence on earth could be proven through my childhood art projects, I would be an invisible man.

Some of my grade school friends were gifted. Jim could draw with a sense of drama and humor. I envied his talent as I glimpsed at his doodles or laughed at his cartoons. Susie's projects glowed with vivid designs and razor sharp cuttings. I envied their perfection. Mine were held up as examples of what happens when one erases too hard or not hard enough, as lessons on what happens if one tries to erase wet ink or crayon.

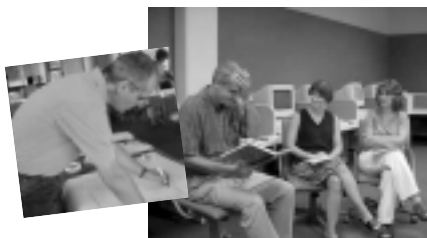
Still today I find the colors in a box of crayons beautiful and mocking. Their smell reminds me of creativity and personal failure. When a workshop leader brings out markers and yards of paper, I search for an exit.

At the National Writing Project Director's Retreat last May in Estes Park, Colorado, Sherry Swain did that. She announced after a mid-morning break that our next task would be to describe our Writing Project sites as floor plans for a house.

"So you want a description," I asked hoping.

"Not a description in words, but visually," she replied.

Swain blocked the only exit. I considered bolting over her, but I realized



*Pankiewicz struggling to design his 'house' at the NWP Director's Retreat and sharing his writing at Writing Group.*

that that might affect our grant. I thought if I worked slowly, I could be rescued by lunch. I was working on my explanation about getting lost for the afternoon on a mountain trail when Swain announced that lunch would be delayed so we would have time to finish our floor plans, explain them, and display them.

Little did she know how close she had come to being run over.

I know my face flushed. I know my jaw clenched. I know I wanted to mock those who cheerily scurried about gathering sheets of papers and markers and who decried the lack of glitter glue. I sat brooding over my notebook armed with my blue Bic.

I drew—a crooked line. I switched to pencil, telling myself that I could erase my mistakes yet knowing that it allowed for my lines to be smudged by my curled left hand. I drew an outline loosely based on the first floor of my house and labeled the rooms. Then with my pen, I jotted down what each room represents for the Prairie Lands Writing Project. My details were very common stuff. I wrote that the summer institute takes place in the kitchen because it is informal and experimental. The kitchen is a place for friends to chat over coffee and cake. It is the place for cooking up new ideas. I continued to write the obvious for each downstairs room except the bathroom, the place I wished to flush the artsy-crafty exercises. As I worked, it occurred to me that there might be a connection between the inability to sketch and an over-reliance on cliches.

I glanced around the room at the colorful, creative drawings. I panicked. I thought again of home and, of course, of my wife Cathy. She is the one responsible for the beauty and comfort of our home. She is the one who decorates and organizes, who makes our home warm and inviting. If it were left to me, every room would be painted beige and bursting with stacks of books and magazines, boxes that might come in handy one day, and newspapers for recycling.

I began to understand that Cathy has the vision for our home; I have hands that don't mind getting dirty. She picks the paint, and I brush it on. She selects the flowers, and I dig the garden. She is the artist who makes our home worth living in; I supply the muscle.

I missed Cathy and was beginning to feel lonely when Sherry Swain said that the sharing would begin in five minutes.

I wanted to be the first to share, but others were more enthusiastic in their requests, so my presentation was buried toward the end. When I did stand, I did not show my sketch. I told the group that the PLWP has a solid structure. Everything has its own place, its own room. I was not concerned about the project's foundation but about its décor. When strangers drive down Frederick Avenue and see my home, I told the directors, they see the results of Cathy's vision and decisions. When teachers look at the PLWP, I'm not sure what they see. Has the PLWP taken the time to decorate, to make each room—Summer Institute, In-service programs, Continuity—warm, inviting, and friendly? Those questions, I said, were what I learned from this exercise and what I needed to take back with me. Then I sat down.

Sherry reminded me that I had not shown my drawing. I unrolled it. It only received a few snickers. Sherry thanked me for my work, but did not ask me to place my sketch on the wall beside the castles, the plantation homes, and the tree houses.

Rejection only hurts for a little while after you get used to it.



Revolutionary Books

## Need annotations for Web listing

Prairie Lands Writing Project will issue \$5 Hastings Bookstore Gift Certificates to any Teacher Consultant who submits three annotations for recent texts about writing and/or the teaching of writing for posting on the PLWP "Revolutionary Books" Web site at [www.mwsc.edu/~prairie/html/revolutionbks.html](http://www.mwsc.edu/~prairie/html/revolutionbks.html).

The books must have been published since 1990 and should be books that revolutionized the annotator's teaching.

Send the annotations, with complete bibliographic information, to David McElwee, Prairie Lands' Technology Coordinator, via email ([mcelwee@mwsc.edu](mailto:mcelwee@mwsc.edu)).

## Contact Us



**Prairie Lands Writing Project, a National Writing Project site, is jointly supported by Missouri Western State College and the St. Joseph School District. Our offices are located in the Student Services and Classroom Building, Room 201, at Missouri Western (St. Joseph, MO 64507).**

**Phone & Fax  
(816) 271-4166**

**SS/C 201 at MWSC  
[frick@mwsc.edu](mailto:frick@mwsc.edu)**

**[www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands)**

Prairie Lands offers graduate courses in affiliation with the Northwest Area Regional Professional

Development Center located at Northwest Missouri State University.

# Prairie Lands Spring Events

**Th 1/17, 2/21, 3/21, 4/18, and 5/16: Prairie Lands Writing Group, 6 - 7:30 p.m. in Room 106 of the Janet Gorman Murphy Building at Missouri Western. Open to any educator. No reservations needed.** (See page 7.)

**S 1/26: Workshop on Workshops: Building a Community of Learners, 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 223 of the Student Union at Missouri Western. Melody Smith, Assistant Principal at St. Joseph Benton High School, leads this workshop about developing and conducting successful professional presentations for teachers and administrators. Reservations needed by Tuesday 1/22/02. (Email: [laura.nelson@sjsd.k12.mo.us](mailto:laura.nelson@sjsd.k12.mo.us)) Open to any educator; \$20 registration fee waived for Prairie Lands Writing Project alumni.**

**M 2/4: Prairie Lands Advisory Board Meeting, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. in Room 106 of the Janet Gorman Murphy Building at Missouri Western.**

**Th 2/28 - S 3/2: Write to Learn Conference, Tan-Tar-A Resort, Osage Beach, Mo. Attend the Missouri Writing Project Network sponsored sessions conducted by Prairie Lands Writing Project Teacher Consultants Theresa McAvoy, Christine Deihl, Jocelyn Washburn, and Amy Grier.**

**F 3/1: Deadline for applying for 2002 Invitational Institutes** (See [www.mwsc.edu/prairielands](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands) for application submission details.)

**S 3/16 - T 3/26: Literacy Action Week** - Activities include the sixth annual Corporate Spelling Bee at Missouri Western on T 3/19 and a two-day

residency in area schools and at Missouri Western conducted by Lisa Campbell Ernst, children's author and illustrator. Contact **Marie Puett** ([Marie.Puett@sjsd.k12.mo.us](mailto:Marie.Puett@sjsd.k12.mo.us)) for details.

**M 4/1: Prairie Lands Critical Issues Forum: Teacher Stress and Teacher Burnout, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. in Rooms 222/223 of the Student Union at MWSC. Registration and program information will be posted at [www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/events.html](http://www.mwsc.edu/prairielands/html/events.html) by 2/15.**

**S 4/27: Invitational Institute Orientation and Renewal Dinner, 9:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. in Room 218 in the Student Union at MWSC. All prairie Lands alumni are invited to the Renewal Dinner at 6 p.m. in SU 223. (Email dinner reservations to [frick@mwsc.edu](mailto:frick@mwsc.edu) no later than W 4/24.)**

# The Prairie Voice

The Prairie Lands Writing Project

Jane Frick, Director

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