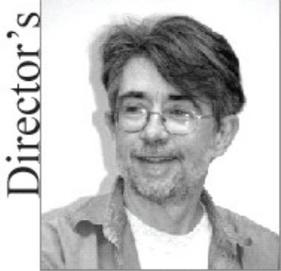


# Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project



November 2006

## Corner



Director's

By Richard Louth

Even though Hurricane Katrina disrupted operations for a while last fall, SLWP bounced back fairly quickly with a number of events last year:

- Our annual **Fall Marathon**, on November 7, 2005, brought together about a dozen Teacher Consultants for a day of writing around Covington, the first time we could gather after the storm.
- Several Teacher Consultants attended the **NWP Annual Meeting** and NCTE in Pitts-

burgh, where they presented, attended meetings, and also took leading roles in the Pittsburgh Writing Marathon.

- A **Katrina Blog** of student and teacher writings about the hurricane eventually was turned into a radio program, **Katrina in their Own Words**, aired in January and heard across the country by NWP sites listening to KSLU's "live feed" on their computers. An anthology based on that blog and radio program is hot off the press, and has been sent by the NWP to every site across the country. NWP is also selling copies at the annual meeting in Nashville, and others can purchase this anthology for \$15 by emailing [rlouth@selu.edu](mailto:rlouth@selu.edu).

- In order to celebrate anthologies of writing by the pre-Katrina Summer Institute

and Advanced Institute, and also in order to bring our spirit of writing back to the city we love, SLWP held a **New Orleans Writing Marathon** in January. What was most unusual about this marathon is that it was our first "**Virtual Writing Marathon**" (and also the country's first) in which NWP friends from around the USA were invited to write along with us—electronically—and send their writing to those in the French Quarter. Over a dozen writers from around the country joined us electronically, and when the 20 writers who walked the streets of the Quarter finally gathered at the end of the day in Rob Ramsey's Decatur Street apartment for a read-around, we also shared work from those who had posted electronically.

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## Local TC Wins Bob Costa's Teaching Award

Billie Smith, TC 2006, and winner of a Bob Costas Teaching Award, used funding from that award to help her create an anthology entitled *Katrina Journeys* with her students at McKinley High in Baton Rouge. The anthology contains three different approaches to writing about the storm. In the first section, students took the idea of "Spoon River Anthology," with its poems about the dead, and applied it to Katrina: stu-

dents read obituaries and stories about those who perished in the storm, and then used this material to write poems about the victims (whose names were changed). In the second section, Billie asked students to interview people affected by the storm, and in the final section, students who went on a New Orleans Writing Marathon with her submitted their journal entries on New Orleans and their experience of it. On Tuesday, No-

vember 7, Billie hosted a ceremony to celebrate the publication of this anthology at which students and faculty read their work. The celebration was attended by school officials as well as by the *Morning Advocate*, which wrote a front page story, and Channel 2 News, which did a segment on TV that evening.



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- A **Mandeville High School Inservice** series coordinated by Co-Director Tracy Amond and a brand new "**Spring Showcase of Best Practices**" continued our professional development efforts for local schools and teachers. The Spring Showcase was so successful that we're planning now on holding two each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring.
- SLWP had a presence at the **NWP Spring Meeting** in Washington, D.C., where SLWP led a roundtable session on "Writing about Katrina," and we also visited congressional offices to drum up support for NWP. Our letter writing efforts helped convince Senator Mary Landrieu to sign a letter of support for NWP, which was a cause for celebration at NWP headquarters.
- A **Spring Marathon** in Covington in May and a **Pre-Institute Dinner** for the new Summer Institute in early June prepared us for the upcoming summer. At the Spring Marathon, members of the upcoming Advanced Institute met for the first time to exchange readings and to prepare for the Advanced.
- **The Advanced Institute**, entitled "The Art of Teaching and the Art of Writing," was new in several ways. It was the first time that we scheduled an Advanced before the regular Summer Institute (June 5-16), and that worked out so well that we plan to do it again. Also, for the first

week of the Advanced, we invited Kim Stafford (author of *The Muses Among Us*) join us. The Advanced kicked off with a "**Kim Stafford Day**," held in the Alumni Center, and attended by the 15 members of the Advanced Institute as well as by about 50 Teacher Consultants and Directors from across the state. Kim then presented a special workshop for the Advanced Institute on the following day, and accompanied us to New Orleans for an Advanced Writing Marathon. From this Advanced Institute grew a radio program, now in production by Todd Delaney, and an anthology of "Teacher Stories," which is being edited and should be available before the New Year.

- **The Invitational Summer Institute** (June 26-July 28) brought 10 new Summer Fellows and 3 returning Mentors together for five intensive weeks of writing, teaching demonstrations, inquiry, and professional exchange. This year's Invitational included the expected New Orleans Marathon centered at Le Riche-lieu Hotel in New Orleans as well as a nature-writing marathon at Tickfaw State Park.
- **Our Young Writers' Camp**, coordinated by Mary Koepp with the assistance of Brandy Autrey, brought together 20 young writers, and ended with a magnificent ceremony at the Alumni Center where author Bev Marshall did a reading and talked about her fiction, and where

young writers read their own work.

- We had planned a September "**Visioning Retreat**" at Tickfaw State Park before Hurricane Katrina, but it wasn't until a full year later that we were able to hold the Retreat. About 20 TC's gathered for a long weekend to look at where we have been and to chart out where we are going.

- Our **Fall Showcase of Best Practices**, held for the first time at the KIVA on Oct. 21, brought together about 20 TC presenters and an audience of local teachers and prospective teachers. The following week, a team of TC's hosted writing activities for children at the LAWP "Kids Tent" at the **Louisiana Bookfest** in Baton Rouge. And just last weekend, a dozen writers gathered in Covington again for the **2006 Fall Writing Marathon**. And in Mid-November, about a half dozen from SLWP will attend the **NWP Annual Meeting and NCTE in Nashville**. Meanwhile, we have **Inservice Programs** in the works with Covington High School and Fontainebleau Junior High School.

This will give you some idea of how active we have been. And there's much more planned for the winter and spring, so stay tuned!



## Tech Tips

By **Natasha Whitton**

[www.writingproject.org](http://www.writingproject.org) - Read issues of The Quarterly online and check out new publications for teachers.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> - The online writing lab at Purdue has handouts that help with issues from composing to documentation.

<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/write/118876.htm> - The National Council for Teachers of English sets out beliefs about the teaching of writing based on a Writing Study Group of the Executive Committee in November 2004.

<http://www.luminarium.org/lumina.htm> - A visually stunning website designed for highlighting literature of the medieval, renaissance and 17-C periods.

<http://writingfix.org/> - An interactive writing site for teachers and students with hundreds of writing games and thousands of prompts.

# Katrina Book To Be Highlighted at National Convention

*Katrina: In Their Own Words*, an anthology of writing by teachers, students, and friends of the Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project, is hot off the press. The anthology, which grew out of a blog sponsored last fall by SLWP and a radio show, features the voices of 50 writers. The National Writing Project was so impressed by the book that they funded the printing of 1000 copies, and they sent one to every writing project site in the country. The National Writing Project will also be selling copies at the NWP Annual Meeting in Nashville and at NCTE (November 15-18) and returning profits, we are told, to Louisiana's schools, students, and writing projects. This is the first time the NWP has distributed and sold the writing by an individual writing project site, so it is all quite an honor to this book, our writers, and our site. Each book contains 127 pages of writing and photos as well as a CD of the radio show from which this book grew. Those who would like to purchase a copy of the book may do so by making out a check for \$15 to SLU DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION and mailing that check to Dr. Richard Louth, SLU 10327, Hammond, LA, 70402. Please make sure to include the address that

you want the book mailed to. (A number of people have purchased copies to send to out of state friends to give them an idea of what the storm was like and how our Writing Project responded.) §



**“This is the first time the NWP has distributed and sold the writing by an individual writing project site, so it is all quite an honor to this book, our writers, and our site.”—  
Dr. Richard Louth**



## English 646—Workshop in the Teaching of Writing

Join us this spring and explore the complexities of your own writing and the challenges of composition instruction. Class participants will join in a workshop approach to develop personal writing, study current theory, and explore best practices in the teaching of writing.

Taught by Dr. Ruth Caillouet, SLU English Education Coordinator, National Writing Project Teacher Consultant, Veteran High School English Teacher

Class Time: Wednesday 5:00-7:50

Contact Information:  
ruth.caillouet@selu.edu

# New Southeastern Graduate Program for SLWP Teaching Fellows

by Jeff Wiemelt

SLWP Teaching Fellows have discovered a new graduate-level English program at Southeastern designed to meet their specific needs and interests as writing and language teachers. Over the past year, TCs Vicky Tangi, Mary Koepf, and Margaret Westmoreland have enrolled in the department's graduate concentration in *Language & Literacy*. A growing number of other TCs are also taking individual courses in the program as part of their ongoing professional development.

In the *Language & Literacy*

concentration, students are invited to pursue a more focused program of graduate study than the traditional literature degree offers, one that provides additional professional credentials prized by our area K-12 programs. Students in the program select courses in composition studies, linguistics (including Teaching English as a Second Language), stylistics, and literacy studies. They focus portions of their comprehensive exams in those areas, and submit a final thesis, most typically reporting on research or instructional practices drawing on their own teaching experiences. Two features of the program are especially attractive to

TCs like Vicky, Mary, and Margaret. First, the credits earned at our SLWP Summer Institutes can be applied to the degree program. Second, the *Language & Literacy* faculty are also themselves SLWP TCs, including Ruth Caillouet, George Dorrill, Richard Louth, Christine Mitchell, and Jeff Wiemelt.

Anyone wishing to find out more about Southeastern's new *Language & Literacy* concentration are encouraged to speak with Vicky, Mary, or Margaret about their experiences. Or just contact Jeff Wiemelt, the *Language & Literacy* Coordinator at [jwiemelt@selu.edu](mailto:jwiemelt@selu.edu).

by Mary Koepp,  
SLWP Continuity Coordinator

Another successful Showcase!

On October 21st, SLWP Teacher Consultants came together to host our annual October Showcase of Best Practices in Teaching Writing. Workshop Sessions Included:

**Technology and Writing** – Nancy McKeand and Christine Mitchell

**Microthemes: A Strategy for Writing across the Curriculum** – David Faul

**Writing and Oral History** – Billie Smith

**Writing Profiles on People, From the**

**Interview to the Essay** – George Dorrill

**Writing Strategies in the Writing Process** – Roslyn Varnado

**The 13th Month Calendar: Motivating Young Writers** – Jeralyn Spiehler

**College Panel: Writing Expectations** – Ruth Caillouet, Richard Louth, Christine Mitchell, Sarah Ross

Thanks to all of the TCs who shared their classroom practices during the poster session and our in-house Writing Marathon:

- Tracy Amond, Walker High School
- Jane Blades, Sumner Junior High School
- David Faul, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Noni Futch, Live Oak Elementary
- Olga Jackson, Franklinton Elementary
- Mary Koepp, Covington High School
- Richard Louth, Southeastern Louisiana University
- Beth Meyers, French Settlement High School
- Nancy Stokes, Sumner Junior High School
- Ashley Tibbs, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
- Lynne Vance, Sumner High School
- Margaret Westmoreland, Covington High School

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### Small Town Marathon

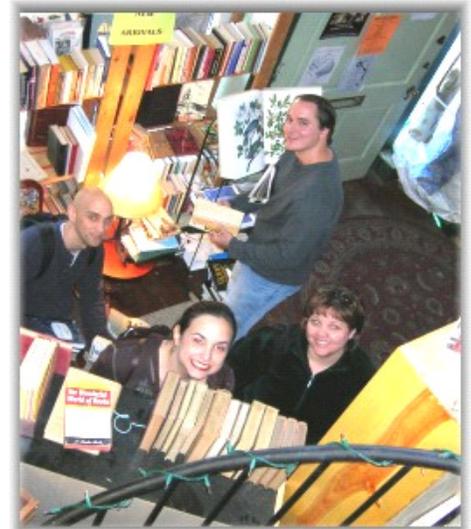
On November 4th, a group of TC's convened at the Farmers Market in downtown Covington. The weather was perfect, the company even better. We made our way down Columbia Street, stopping here and

there in what have come to be some of our favorite writing spots. Groups' paths crossed, members switched, some writers wrote alone. At the end of the day, we shared a meal and our writing at Etoile.

We talked a bit about wanting to try a marathon in late winter / early spring in downtown Hammond. If anyone from that area is interested in laying the groundwork, please get in touch with me:

[marybkoepp@aol.com](mailto:marybkoepp@aol.com)

Watch your email and the SLWP listserv for future continuity events!



## SLWP Members Present at NWP/NCTE Annual Conference

Several members of SLWP attended the NWP/NCTE annual meetings in Nashville. Richard Louth, Tracy Amond, Margaret Westmoreland, and Mary Koepp did a panel presentation at NCTE entitled, "Thinking through the Mandated Curriculum: The Teacher as Reflective Practitioner." Also at that presentation, lending support, were George Dorrill and Beth Meyers.

Technical Liaison Tasha Whitton also attended the NWP Annual meeting and presented a session on technology. On the Friday afternoon of the meeting, over 100 Teacher Consultants and NWP Directors from across the country participated in a

"Nashville Writing Marathon," co-led by Richard and by Julie Conason from the New York City Writing Project. (Next year's NWP meeting will be in NYC, and NWP is laying the groundwork already for the writing marathon there, which promises to be spectacular.)

One of the most popular spots for writing in Nashville was the window at Tootsie's Bar, a honky-tonk where the music starts around noon and where members of the SLWP team are pictured.



2007 NWP/NCTE Annual Convention will be held in

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[http://www.selu.edu/  
acad\\_research/  
programs/slwp/  
index.html](http://www.selu.edu/acad_research/programs/slwp/index.html)

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**SLWP Director, Dr. Richard Louth at NWP  
exhibit of Katrina book.**

*Southeastern Louisiana  
Writing Project*