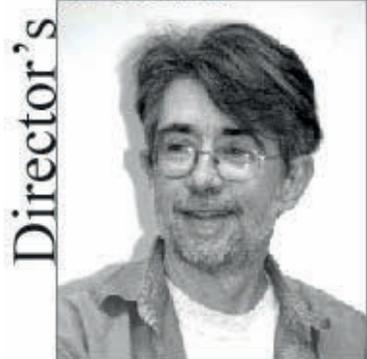


Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project

May 2010 Issue

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Director's Corner

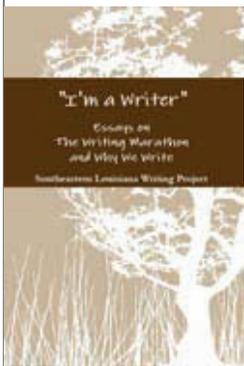


Overview from the Director

It has been another active spring for SLWP, with leadership meetings, a monthly book club, writing contest, a public reading, Summer Institute interviews and dinner, and Advanced Institute planning.

by Richard Louth

I'm a Writer Marathon Book Published



January 2010 saw the official release of *I'm a Writer: Essays on the Writing Marathon and Why We Write*. This project had been in the works for quite a while and we now have a lovely book to show for all the time and effort the contributors put into it. *I'm a Writer* includes contributions from over twenty teacher consultants, a lovely poem by Kim Stafford, guidelines for running your own marathon, and various approaches to the question of why we choose to write. Edited by Dr. Kathryn Lane, there are already plans for a second edition following this summer's Advanced Institute focused on the marathon experience. This first edition won't be available for long so get yours today! The book is published by the online publisher, Lulu.com and is available for purchase here: LULU.com

Book Release Celebration

SLWP Public Reading

Personnel in the News

Upcoming Events

Spring Marathon

NWP Radio Program

The SLWP 2010 Advanced Institute

The SLWP 2010 Advanced Institute, entitled *The Writing Marathon: an Inquiry*, will meet June 7-June 17. The Advanced Institute is designed to bring together a group of Teacher Consultants who have a serious interest

and experience in writing marathons in order to study writing marathons, to look deeply into what makes writing marathons work, to study related issues in writing, and to publish an expanded, 2nd edition of *I am a Writer: Essays on the Writing Marathon and Why We Write*. (The first edition is now available from LULU.Com.) During the first week, members participate in a traditional "Natalie Goldberg" -style writing marathon in our new home, the Writing Studio in DVic 319. This in-house marathon will be led by Melanie Plesh. Also during the first week will be a three-day New Orleans Writing Marathon. What's different about this year's Advanced Writing Marathon is that along with the marathoning, there will be meetings and discussions focusing on how writing marathons work. During the second week of the Advanced, participants read, write, and present to the Institute on a questions related to writing marathons including:

- What are the possibilities for a writing marathon?
- What forces and issues underlie writing marathons?
- How can marathons better connect to academic goals and professional development?
- How can SLWP better lead the way, nationally, in promoting writing marathons?

Participants include: Andre Cobsy, Jeanne Northrup, Carolyn Vosburg, Robin Perrere Parrott, Michelle Russo, Richard Long, David Jumonville, Jeralyn Spiehler, Brant Osborn, Kate Lane, Ellen Steigman, Christy Mayfield, Annabel Servat, George Dorrill. The Advanced Institute will be co-directed by Richard Louth and Leina Ball.

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The SLWP 2010 Advanced Marathon New Orleans "Advanced Writing Marathon" June 9-11, 2010, Le Richelieu Hotel , New Orleans, LA

The 2010 Advanced Writing Marathon is a three-day event held in conjunction with the Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project's Advanced Institute on The Writing Marathon: An Inquiry. During the marathon, participants will have an opportunity to write in small groups across the French Quarter and other New Orleans locations on different days, exploring diverse kinds of marathon experiences, locations, and groupings. Discussion sessions at the beginning and end of each day will also be scheduled for inquiry into the nature of writing marathons. During these sessions, participants will be invited to explore the workings of writing marathons; to share marathon experiences; and to

discuss the potential of marathons within Writing Project sites and classrooms. Participants will be invited to submit articles about the New Orleans writing marathon experience, their inquiry, and other writing marathon experiences to the second edition of SLWP's anthology, *I'm a Writer: Essays on the Writing Marathon* and *Why We Write* (LULU.com, 2010).

Writing Marathon Events

Tuesday Evening, June 8, OPENING RECEPTION

5:00-7 p.m., Le Richelieu "VIP Suite" (Room 417)

Wednesday, June 9

10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Introduction: Writers Meet in VIP Suite. The Marathon starts with a brief overview of events by Richard Louth. We'll then write together before we hit the streets. Late arrivals, look for writers at Molly's (Decatur Street) or nearby coffeehouses like Envie, on the corner behind Le Richelieu. If you are arriving on Wednesday, store your belongings at front desk if your room is not ready, and come directly to VIP Suite, which will be open by 9:50.

5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Debriefing/Social: Writers Meet in VIP Suite (unless announced otherwise) to discuss the first day. Bring snacks and drinks. Dinner on your own.

Thursday, June 10

9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Introduction and Meditation: Writers Meet in VIP Suite. David Jumonville leads meditation session to prepare marathon writers for the day. Late arrivals, look for writers at Molly's. VIP Suite will be open by 8:50.

5 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Reading/Social. Writers Meet in VIP Suite (or TBA) to debrief, read and socialize. After the reading, there'll be time to socialize. Bring snacks and drinks. Dinner on your own.

Friday, June 11 Writers begin the day on their own. At 11:30 a.m., writers gather for discussion of Marathon in VIP Suite (or TBA). VIP Suite opens by 11:15. Check-out time: 1 p.m.

NWP Guests

NWP guests are invited to join us for the entire marathon or any part of it. Guests should make their own travel and room arrangements, and may want to book rooms at Le Richelieu Hotel, where the Advanced Institute members are staying. Mention that you are part of the SLWP Advanced Writing Marathon to get a special rate. (Doubles generally are less than \$100.) To register for the marathon, there is no cost; however, please email your arrival and departure information and any questions to Richard Louth rlouth@selu.edu.

Hotel Contact Information

Le Richelieu Hotel
1234 Chartres Street, New Orleans, LA 70116
Corner of Chartres and Barracks (Free parking behind hotel!)
504-529-2492 or 800-535-9653 FAX 504-524-8179

For group rates, contact Tamra at groupsales@lerichelieuhotel.com

SLWP Staff Contact information Richard Louth, SLWP Director and Advanced Institute Director
Office: 985-549-2102 or 2100

Rlouth@selu.edu

Leina Ball, Advanced Institute Co-Director

Leina.ball@stpsb.org

Tracy Ferrington, SLWP Co-Director

tcferrington@gmail.com

Tasha Whitton, SLWP Tech Liaison

Nwhitton@selu.edu

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Summer Institute (June 21-July 22)

SLWP's 19th Pre-Institute dinner was held at Jacmel Inn on May 18 to welcome the newest members of SLWP into the 2010 Summer Institute:

SLWP 2010 Summer Fellows

Kelly Parker
Jenny Larkins
Angie Beach
Janice Krantz
Karen Seamens
Pacian Miller

Tucker Elementary
Midway Elementary
St. Tammany JHS
Fountainebleau JHS
Southside Elementary & JHS
McKinley High School

2nd grade, inclusion teacher
2nd grade, Sped inclusion
6th, 7th, 8th ELA gifted
7th grade, gifted ELA, Social Studies
K-8 English as Second Language
9th and 11th grade

Christie Varnado
 Kimberly Rayborn Spitale
 Deborah Laney
 Tracy Valentine
 Jessica Kastner

Springfield High School
 St. Helena High School
 Adult Learning Center, BR
 SLU
 Ponchatoula High School

12th grade, Honors, HS 101
 10th and 12th grade
 Adult Learning, GED Prep



Summer Institute Staff

Richard Louth	Director
Leina Ball	Summer Institute Co-Director
George Dorrill	Institute Mentor 2002-2010
Tasha Whitton	Technical Liaison

Other Guests: Tracy Ferrington, Terry O'Mara, Beth Meyers, Angela King-Corkern, Kate Lane, Vicky Tangi, Brant Osborn, and Jeralyn Spiehler.

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Young Writers' Camp

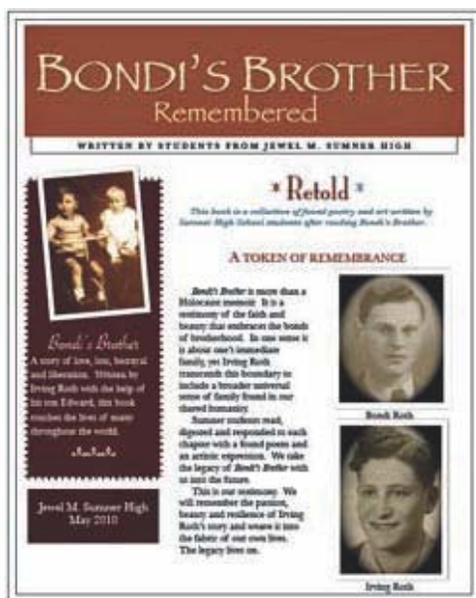


The SLWP Young Writers Camp, June 21-25, will be directed by Dr. Beth Calloway and co-directed by Christie Atkins on the SLU campus. Admission is \$195, and further information is available by contacting Beth at scalloway@selu.edu.

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Best Practices in Writing

By Lynne Vance



The book evolved after reading a memoir of Holocaust Survivor Irving Roth entitled *Bondi's Brother*. The book is simply written and communicates experiences of the Holocaust through the eyes of a 10-year-old boy. He goes into hiding, is caught and deported, and survives Auschwitz I and II and Birkenau. He chronicles day-to-day life including a death march and personal acts of resistance. He loses his brother Bondi in a selection. Bondi was taken to Bergen-Belsen but no evidence of him remains. Mr. Roth was liberated in 1945 when he was 15-years-old. His book is an effective teaching tool enabling the power of narrative to reach even resistant teenagers in comprehending the effects of the Holocaust. Although we read several other pieces and viewed films, the highlight of our Holocaust study was a video conference with Mr. Roth from New York City. Students were able to interact and speak with him personally. It was a wonderful experience. *Bondi's Brother* consists of 31 chapters. Each class did an assignment communicating with Mr. Roth through letters, poetry or art. My first hour class consisted of 31 students. They chose to

each take a chapter of the book and create a found poem and piece of art to "retell" the chapter. We sent Mr. Roth both the original art and poems in a handmade coffee table book and also a reproduced 8 x 10 color version of the book. I first met Mr. Roth in 2007 while participating in the NWP's Holocaust Educators Network Seminar. He has started a project known as the "Surrogate Survivor Project." His goal is to have the youth of today become the surrogate survivor by carrying their stories into the future. We are surrogate survivors. We

carry his story with us. A copy of the book will be sent to Sondra Pearl and the Holocaust Network along with Holocaust lessons used this year to place in the archives to document the continuation of their work.

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SLWP Book Club

PJ'S FEB 24, 2010

Teaching as Waiting

by Richard Louth

While reading *The Courage to Teach* at Book Club, we all took the following prompt from the book, completed the sentence, then freewrote for 10 minutes.

Prompt: When I am teaching at my best, I'm like a _____.

I said that my teaching was like being a WAITER. How? I'm waiting. Listening. I've got other things to do, other things on my mind, but am totally interested in the moment. I'm looking at you, at everyone at the table, trying to figure out what they all need and also how the whole table is doing.

So, I see a similarity between what I do and my favorite waiter at Irene's, who picks up your empty glass, holds it up, looks at it, looks at you, and then with a nod and a smile says, "Coming right up," and brings another Manhattan. Sort of like that-keeping the class going is like keeping the meal going, knowing when each course is at an end, when people just need time, when people really need to be goosed a little to try the dessert. And it's delivery of good things-hot food or literature. It's a treat. It's all there for them to ingest. But the delivery and service is what makes the meal. You ask what they'd like. You tell them what's special. If you are a good waiter and they order the fish and you know it's three days old, you assess them and reveal, "You know, I'd stay away from the fish tonight." Well, it's like telling the student who only wants to write rhymed poetry and 5 paragraph themes, "You know, I'd stay away from those stinkers. They're no longer fresh."

So, like a waiter, you appear to enjoy your job. You appear to know your job so well that people are comfortable around you. So they ask your advice. "How is that Spanish wine?" and you say, "It goes very well with lamb or fish." Well, when a student asks you if she should say a certain thing in her paper, you reply with that same level of interest and confidence.

You walk by and observe a lot-you are always there or nearby, but somewhat invisible, and you appear exactly when people need you and you have even anticipated their questions and have the dessert menu already with you.

If they question the bill, you take it seriously, look at it closely, and expect that wouldn't bring it up if it weren't important. They really want to be there and have a good time. They may or may not care for the company, but they want to have a good experience, and you know that they can't unless you help them. You know that some know exactly what they want, and others are mixed up, and others need a bit of a lecture. You may have to repeat the specials twice. So you do so as if that's natural. Your best customers, you bring them a free appetizer or a little cordial on the house at the end. You are not their servant, though some may think that. You are absolutely in control of how things go depending on how you read your audience and act towards them.

But you are a waiter, and you must wait.

When things taste good and you see smiles, you say, "Wasn't that good?" and if you see a scowl, you don't ignore it. You ask what the matter is and suggest an alternative. "I'll have the chef put that back on the grill for a minute, and can I get you a Cabernet, on me, while you wait?"

I like to think of my teaching, at its best, being part of someone else's great meal. As *The Courage to Teach* says on p. 50, "Good teaching is an act of hospitality."

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SLWP Writes! Contest

The SLWP Writes! competition is in its second year. The purpose of the competition is to recognize excellence in writing within local schools. Blind judging of all entries is performed by SLWP teacher consultants. This year there were twelve winners from nine schools and twenty-eight honorable mentions selected from the over 200 entries. Those students awarded first, second, and third place will be published in the 2010 edition of SLWP Writes! Each student and their teacher will be supplied a copy of the publication with additional copies being available for purchase from Lulu.com. Honorable mentions are entered into the Louisiana Writes competition. Thank you to all those students and teachers that participated in the 2010 SLWP Writes! competition.

2010 SLWP Writes! Winners

Division I Prose (Grades 6-9)

1. Sarah Smith, "Writer's Block," Covington HS (Eugenie Martin)
2. Rebecka Nall, "Him, Her, and I," Dutchtown High (Amy Parker)
3. Brianna Herring, "No One's Going to Change That," Holden High (Reba Case)

Honorable Mention

Courtney Jones, "A Sweet Little Angel," Franklinton Jr. HS (Brandy Roberts)
Jillian Carlos, "The Cure," CHS (Eugenie Martin)
Andrea Lee, "When Destiny Calls," Franklinton Jr. HS (Brandy Roberts)
Brittany Stitt, "The Documentary of Autumn Jones," French Settlement HS (Jennifer Draper)
Ethan Pittman, "My Coon Dog," Franklinton Jr. HS (Brandy Roberts)
Christopher Dalton, "Teague (Essence of the Fallen)," Dutchtown High School (Mark Ebarb) 9th
**Olivia Soler, "Resilient," Walker Freshman High School (Robin Parrot)

Division I Poetry (Grades 6-9)

1. Jon Mitchell, "The Emperor of Legos," Pearl River HS (Karen Maceira)
2. Lauren Heffker, "Love," Fontainebleu Junior High (Leina Ball)
3. Sierra Ourada, "I Had a Name," St. Tammany Junior High (Elizabeth Haddad)

Honorable Mention

Micheala Thorpe, "Another Part of Me," North Corbin Jr. HS (Carolyn Vosburg)
Ryan Brown, "Curtains for Certain," Covington HS (Eugenie Martin)
Linda Lin, "The Return of Persephone," JD Meisler Middle School (F. Mouton)
Hunter Thompson, "Beauty Is," Fontainebleu Jr. HS (Leina Ball)
Breann Brown, "Anti- Annabel Lee," North Corbin Jr. HS (Carolyn Vosburg)
Madelyn Heppel, "the Dark Queen," St. Tammany Senior HS, Angie Beach, 8th
Emily Ruppel, "Human's Nature," Slidell Jr. High School, Stephanie Chapman, 8th

Division II Prose (Grades 10-12)

1. Kaytlyn Kyathfield, "Hero," Covington HS (Eugenie Martin)
2. Molly K., "Green Ribbon In Her Hair," Covington HS (Eugenie Martin)
3. David Cox, "Last Night," St. Thomas Aquinas HS (Dr. Lane)

Honorable Mention

Caleb Thorp, "A Proposal," Walker High School (Margaret Westmoreland)
Joshua Alexander, "Secret's Scar," Jewel M. Sumner High School (Lynn Vance)

Hannah Fohne, "A Friend Like Joy," Walker High School (Margaret Westmoreland)
Tiffany Brashear, "Magic in a Can," Walker High School (Margaret Westmoreland)
Jordan Archibald, "Silly Boys, Books Are For Girls," Walker High School (Margaret Westmoreland)
Chelsie Batiste, "Sportsmen Paradise," Lutcher High School, (Carly Zeller)
Trent Davidge, "The Lesson," St. Thomas Aquinas HS, (Dr. Lane)

Division 2 Poetry

1. Krystal Raylynn Klugh, "No Longer," Walker High School (Margaret Westmoreland)
2. Randi Ditta, "The Game," Covington High School (Eugenie Martin)
3. Joshua Alexander, "Mosquito," Jewel M. Sumner High School (Lynne Vance)

Honorable Mention

Kimberly Blair, "Hate," Doyle High School (Lena Taing)
Randi Ditta, "Who are you hurrying my way?" Covington High (Eugenie Martin)
Dakota Shaffett, "Reno Waltz," Jewel M. Sumner High School (Lynn Vance)
Sable Dyson. "The Path of No Return"
Martin, Radiance. "Don't Even Think About It." Jewel M. Sumner High School (Lynn Vance)
Catherine Beverly, "Love", Covington High School, (Sonya Willie)
Adam Hines, "The Loss of Tom Robinson," Fountainbleu High School (Christy Mayfield)

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New in Print



SLWP in *Country Roads*

SLWP's writers have been recognized in the recent *Country Roads Magazine* annual June creative writing issue. Richard Louth's "Francesca" won the magazine's creative nonfiction award. Richard tells us that this piece about an encounter during a personal writing marathon in Paris was actually brought to an SLWP Summer Institute and workshopped in response group before being sent out for publication.

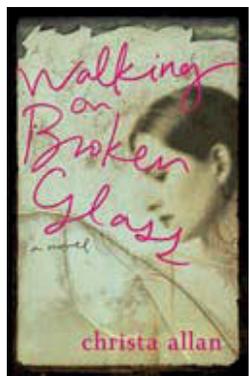
Also, Antonio Muse (TC'08) had his story entitled "Going to the Store" accepted as one of 10 honorable mentions in the *Country Roads* fiction contest. It is published online with other Honorable Mentions, and is being considered for the "Readers' Choice" award. Readers are asked to go online, read the Honorable Mentions, and vote for their favorite. The winner of the "Reader's Choice" award will be published later in *Country Roads Magazine* and receive a monetary prize. Antonio, who was so well known for his writing of dialogue during the Summer Institute, would love for you to read his story (and obviously to support it!).

You can check out Richard's story in the recent *Country Roads Magazine*, available at coffee houses and other area establishments, or you can access it online. And you can read Antonio's story and vote for it online by going to <http://countryroadsmagazine.com>.

Louisiana Author's Debut Novel Bridges Gap Between Mainstream and Christian Fiction

December 24, 2009—The author of **Walking on Broken Glass**, which will be released February 1 by Abingdon Press, thinks too many Christian families suffer in silence when it comes to addiction. In her debut fiction,

Christa Allan addresses an issue not often discussed so straightforwardly in Christian novels—what to do when someone you love is struggling with alcoholism.



"I want to reassure families that they're not alone," said Allan, who herself has been in recovery for over twenty years. "Alcoholism, drug, food, shopping, sex addictions are all the big elephants in the room we don't talk about. And it's time we did."

Her novel tells the story of Leah Thorton, who medicates herself with alcohol. Behind the façade of her Southern Living life is a trail of empty bottles, a messy marriage, and a well of pain. When her best friend confronts her about her drinking, Leah has to choose between what she wants and what she needs. Readers follow Leah on her journey, one filled with both amusing and tragic episodes, as she decides to embrace sobriety.

"We have to breakthrough barriers that prevent real recovery and offer compassion and hope and grace," said the author who uses Louisiana and Texas as the settings for her

characters.

Publishers Weekly wrote: "When a narrator opens her tale by declaring, "I lost my sanity buying frozen apple juice," the reader knows she's in for a witty ride. . .This nonformulaic look at the spiritual redemption of a life is a bright start; debut novelist Allan is one to watch."

A high school teacher for twenty-two years, Allan was born in New Orleans and currently lives in Abita Springs with her husband, Ken. She has participated in the Southeastern Louisiana Writing Project under the direction of Dr. Richard Louth, and was one of the seven teachers selected to the Annenberg Foundation's Rural Voices, Country Schools project. In addition to *Walking on Broken Glass*, she has also written essays for *Chicken Soup*, *The Ultimate Teacher*, and *Cup of Comfort*. She is presently at work on two more novels.

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Spring Marathon

by Terry O'Mara, Continuity Coordinator

The May Writing Marathon in Covington found us all in good spirits as we sauntered down Strawberry Jammed streets with notebooks in hand. The festival provided food for thought and music for the soul. After writing and cavorting in various venues, writers met to read, share, and eat delicious petroleum-free seafood at Pier One-Twelve. On tap for the last half of 2010 are other writing marathons for the institutes in June and our Fall marathon in October. Don't forget about the October Showcase also, the monthly book discussions, and stay tuned for other e-mails on even more.



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