

MAINE WRITES

Congratulations! Southern Maine Writing Project

Rich Kent '97



Members of the Southern Maine Writing Project

On Saturday night, November 21st, 2009, National Writing Project Executive Director Sharon Washington phoned Kate Kennedy to officially welcome the Southern Maine Writing Project as the newest

site of NWP.

On behalf of the Maine Writing Project's 300+ teacher-consultants... *Welcome!* We're proud and excited to have a second NWP site in the state of Maine.

The idea of creating a second Maine site began during the 2004-2005 academic year. MWP's Leadership Team agreed that a sister site in western or southern Maine would complement and extend our writing project work. In the fall of 2005, USM Professor Diane Wood and I met in Gorham to discuss the potential of the

WHAT'S INSIDE

Southern Maine Writing Project	1
Data Trails	1
Director's Corner	2
Southern Maine Writing Project <i>cont.</i>	3
<i>Dual Worlds</i>	4
MWP in Action	5
Data Trails <i>cont.</i>	5
Universidade Federal, Natal, Brazil	6
Save the Dates	6

Data Trails

(Honest, it's not as boring as it sounds!)

Rich Kent '97

Each year, National Writing Project site directors collect data to submit to NWP's research entity, Inverness Research Associates. This data helps tell the story of an individual writing project site. And once the stories of the 200 sites are collected, the overall vitality of the National Writing Project emerges.

This work is necessary for 1) continued federal funding through the US Department of Education, and 2) the health of any organization depends on assessing yesterday's work to plan for tomorrow's. Sounds a lot like the work of an effective classroom teacher....

As with all thriving organizations, the vitality and promise of the Southern Maine Writing Project begins and ends with its membership.

-Rich Kent

Continued on page 3

Continued on page 5

Director's Corner

Dear Colleagues,

When we welcomed in the 21st century, I celebrated near Paris (Europe's) in a forty-room countryside estate. At the time I thought this had to be the best night of my life and that the feeling of moving into a new millennium would never be duplicated. I was wrong.

The year 2010, and indeed the entire first decade of this century, has delivered so many technological wonders. I'm still amazed as I think about a speech I gave in Germany replete with PowerPoint presentation and a Q&A session with the audience... on my 15" MacBook seated at my dining room table in Rumford, Maine. These days, I sit at my laptop and it rings. Two clicks later and I am video chatting via Skype with a friend from Sweden (Maine's) or conferring with a graduate student on campus. Not so long ago I offered feedback to Michele Aronson's students after listening to them read their writing on the classroom *Kidcast* (a.k.a., Podcast). And for several years I have shared my own research with thousands of people through two online Portals that I manage.

I often sign birthday or graduation cards with the quotation, "May you live in interesting times."

I think we are.

With respect to technology integration in the classroom, MWP has helped lead the National Writing Project into the 21st century. Ken Martin, Dave Boardman, Anne Miller, Seth Mitchell (SMWP), Heather Pullen, Deborah Butterfield, Terri Kane, and many others have embraced technology, taken digital adventures hand-in-hand with their students, and then, unselfishly, shared their learning with others.

In my 1997 book *Room 109: The Promise of a Portfolio Classroom*, I shared this familiar anecdote used by progressive educationalists of the 1980s and 1990s: "If you took a surgeon from 1800s and put her in a 20th century operating room, she'd be totally lost. But if you took a teacher from the 1800s and put him in a 20th century classroom, in most cases he'd be right at home."

Is that still true? I invite you to explore the digital classroom projects and activities found on the pages of NWP's website and our *own*. If you need deeper learning in the digital arena – and really, who doesn't? – attend Effective Practices on October 1st in Belfast, take MWP's Adolescent Literacy Institute, sign-up for "Digital



Kidcast
Mrs. Aronson's Fourth Grade Class
[Room 119's Kidcast main page](#)

Writing" with Ken Martin at UMaine, or try an online course from *anywhere* (but preferably UMaine).

Twenty-first century schooling is not about cinderblock vs. cyber classrooms... this fascinating era known as the digital age is about learning and the learner.

As you have noticed, MWP has a new website thanks to the dedicated work of Heather Pullen and writing project friend and college technology director, Tim Hart. We hope to explore the potential of this website over the coming year, and we look forward to digital submissions of articles, photos, poems, artwork... that you might provide. We'd also appreciate feedback with respect to the content, access, and clarity of MWP's online presence.

And finally, but so far from least ... join me in celebrating the *Southern Maine Writing Project*... the vision, the possibilities, and the promise.

Warmly,

Rich Kent '97
Director

Southern Maine Writing Project (Continued)



*Kate Kennedy, Director
Southern Maine Writing Project*

National Writing Project coming to USM.

During that October meeting, Diane and I spoke broadly about the work of NWP and then more specifically about a plan for USM. That afternoon, I dashed off an email to NWP national director of site development Joye Alberts with a year long plan including a one-week introductory institute in June 2006 that we eventually called, "Writing Ourselves: An Introduction to the National Writing Project." Joye's response? "The plan sounds wonderful! I am thrilled..." The rest, as they say, is history (and lots of hard work). The following appeared in MWP's letter of support for SMWP:

"As with all thriving organizations, the vitality and promise of the Southern Maine Writing Project begins and ends with its membership. As director, Kate Kennedy has attracted a devoted team of wise and wonderful educators. Her own commitment to writing, learning, and teachers, her constructivist leadership style, and her joyous personality support the foundation of the site while nurturing the hearts and minds of her writing project colleagues."

The story of SMWP continues to unfold under the thoughtful stewardship of Kate and the new site's current Leadership Team of Susan Bartlett, Seth

Mitchell, Tim Hebda, Kelly Ouellette-Tukey, and Sarah Downing-Ford. Other TCs who have stepped in as summer institute mentors or presenters, have run YACs, or have given in other ways include Michele Aronson, Pat Lammers, Hannah Burroughs, Christine Bertinet, Meg Parkhurst, Gwyneth Jones Nicholson, Ian Carlson, Lori Gunn, Lori Seigny, Meghan Quinn, Dawn Pendergrass, Sarah Shmitt, and Sarah Franklin. And still more SMWP TCs work tirelessly in their classrooms and schools to share their talents with colleagues and students.

Indeed, SMWP enjoys a strong and emerging presence at the University of Southern Maine and within the southern Maine educational community. We welcome our sister site and look forward to many years of collaboration and friendship, writing and learning.



*Young writers creating and sharing at
the Southern Maine Writing Project's
Portland Young Authors' Camp held at
the Telling Room.*



Dual Worlds

Paul Frost '06

*To gkisedtanamoogk, who nurtured me from culture shock
and resistance to openness.*

Now a seedling learner of Wabanaki culture,
Taking note of unseen possibilities,
of infinite variety in Nature.

I come from a world where rocks, dirt, and trees
are only
rocks and dirt and trees,
A world framed by two's:
good or bad,
beautiful or ugly,

Now pondering possibilities that
rocks are
Ancient Ones
and dirt is
Mother,

Beginning to understand
living with trees
as Brothers.

Now noting infinite arrangements
of leaves and needles waving,
marking my path home
along Route 1A.

In this twilight trip
my Brothers of all shapes
Bless me with dances
of light and shadow.

Shock eclipses joy when I see
pyramids of wood chips,
Brothers –
yesterday rooted in Mother Earth,
today resting on dirt.

Notes:

- *The Wabanaki Confederacy is a coalition of the Abenaki, the Penobscot, the Maliseet, the Mi'kmaq, and the Passamaquoddy Nations. The last four nations have communities located in Maine.*
- *Nahmakanta, a Maine wilderness camp since 1872, was the site of the first Wabanaki Writers' Project. In 2008 Wabanaki student writers (grades 7 – 12) spent a week there with laptops and cultural leaders.*
- *A marriage of machines and men is widening Route 1a to three lanes to save three minutes.*

About the author: *Paul became the only Anglo-American Coordinator of the Wabanaki Writers' Project in the twilight of a career working with young writers from third grade to college. In early meetings he pleaded, "Are we planning a cultural camp or a writing camp?" The other Wabanaki Coordinators always responded, "We will build community." Their community included all writers and included Nature.*

My mind returns to transformation
in the Nahmakanta night.

Above, tops of pine and spruce,
a bowl of stars,
a personal window on
the Universe,

Beneath, meadow that I cross and re-cross
in an old man's endless trips
between cabin and outhouse.

During my last journey through starlit grass,
Maple leaves, before unseen,
stroke me, making
eternal connection.

Reverie ends as familiar spruce grove
signals driveway turn.

Door open to
aspen's ballet.
Lungs filling with ions of salt air and spruce;
eyes, with tears of gratitude.
Stiff limbs, now erect. Shoes on tar, then cedar,
. . . heart connecting,
Spruce, pine, and birch within beckon,
echoing cedar porch's welcome.

In gkisedtanamoogk's way I exclaim,
"Hello HOME!"

As my winter comes, I pause, shedding
decades of book learning,
Becoming a sapling of
new awareness.

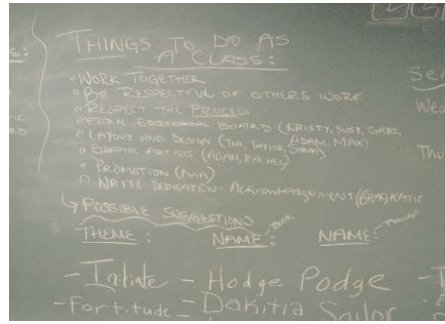


Wabanaki Writers' Project

MWP in Action

Phil Wormuth '08 has been working with his students at Ellsworth High School on a "Poet-in-Residency" program that has produced *Project 312*. In the span of less than three weeks, this project was conceived, developed, and completed. Through a series of workshops hosted by local poet, author, and former EHS custodian Edward "Just Ned" McNnis, under his tutelage, students created a forty-page chapbook. Sixty-four poems were chosen for inclusion from the two hundred and eighty-three student submissions.

The purpose of the project was to demystify the creative process by offering students a variety of prompts, exercises, and scenarios that they could experiment with and react to authentically in verse. The anthology was also created with the intention to serve as a resource for teachers of poetry, as each exercise is referenced for their convenience.



*Project 312 begins with some brainstorming and ends with a student produced poetry chapbook**

**A chapbook is an informal, self-published book that anyone with access to a computer can generate relatively easily.*



- It Can't Be Stopped**
September 2009
1. Is the Grass Any Bluer
 2. Heat of the Morning
 3. You Ain't Woman Enough
 4. Sandy River Belle / Mouth of the Tobique
 5. Where Corn Don't Grow
 6. Backbird
 7. All My Lovin'
 8. I Want to Hold Your Hand
 9. Across the Universe
 10. It Won't Be Long
 11. Indian Summer
 12. Weather and Water
 13. M.Q.M. / Prince of Seals
 14. Lover's Waltz
 15. Dance Upon the Earth
 16. Kissin'ee Kid

It Can't be Stopped, the fifth recording for the Abbott Hill Ramblers, has been released. Chris Prickitt '97 began the program in the fall of 2000 as three neighboring school districts were

sharing a large grant that supported after-school activities. Chris applied for some of this money and purchased an acoustic string bass, a fiddle, a banjo, and two mandolins to accompany the few guitars on hand. A notice was put out to Dexter Middle School students, and about a dozen started coming on Mondays after school. That spring they played a classroom concert for parents and friends. The following year Bluegrass and American Roots Music continued to grow in the school and the band gave themselves a name – The Abbott Hill Ramblers.

S.A.D. 46 (Dexter) now officially recognizes this program as an extra curricular activity. The Ramblers have produced several recordings: *Born to Ramble*, *Climbing Higher*, and *Going Places*, all available at www.abbotthillramblers.com. This year's band has ten new members, fourteen total. Except for three, all are high school age students. They attend in Chris' classroom at the Dexter Middle School. The Ramblers play about a dozen shows a year.

Data Trails (Continued)

I am sharing the most recent four years of data collected by Inverness. First, for those hearty souls (Insert: number crunching g--ks) who read past the word "data," I have to admit that we don't have the most effective data collection method in MWP. The figures I am sharing do not reflect much, if any, of our members' individual work (e.g., presentations, publications, leadership work) in departments, schools, or districts, or in local, regional, state, or national conferences, meetings, or publications. It should.

The statistics below represent the time period of September 1, 2005, through August 31, 2009, and the work of MWP programs such as our four conferences, professional development & in-service offerings, Young Authors' Camps, institutes, meetings, and courses:

- Number of programs offered.....197
- Number of participants at programs.....7495
- Number of educators at programs.....4756
- Number of program hours provided.....4274
- Number of participant contact hours.....123,160

We have done a lot over the past four years, and we have made a difference in classrooms and districts, in schools and conferences.

And now the second reason for this short article: if you read this far, you may love numbers and statistics (I know some of you Word People are smiling right now). We'd love to form a small committee of MWPer to figure out a method to collect data more effectively, including site-based data and the work of the membership. If you're interested in this challenge, please drop me a note (rich.kent@maine.edu).

Jornada De Palestras Internacionais **Journey of the Workshops of the Internationals** Universidade Federal Do Rio Grande Do Nort, Natal, Brazil

Chris Healy '08

Like many Maine Writing Project Fellows, I wished to improve my teaching and writing by attending the Summer Institute. What I did not expect out of my time with MWP was an invitation from fellow Fellow, Professor Edilson Souza '08, to travel to Natal, Brazil to present my summer institute workshop.

My journey to Brazil began years before as an undergraduate at the University of Maine at Farmington. It was there that Dr. Sue Thorson introduced me to the work of Brazilian educator and critical pedagogue, Paulo Freire. I have remained enamored by Frerie's epistemological and ontological beliefs; yet, the nagging question of his religious orientation persisted until I met Professor Souza. Edilson was surprised by my curiosity and knowledge of Freire, and the two of us began to trade articles and books on the man and his theories.

I orientated my workshop toward the difficulties experienced by students with special needs, especially when those students are asked to read and write. My presentation produced a lot of



*Maine Writing Project
teacher-consultants '08,
Edilson Souza (l) & Chris
Healy(r) and below with
students from Universidade
Federal*



feedback from my classmates, but the most came from Edilson. Soon our lunch conversations revolved around not only Freire's work but also the merits of inclusionary education.

"Would you come to Brazil?" Edilson asked. "I think your work is necessary for new teachers." An invitation to participate in the Jornada De Palestras Internacionais -Journey of the Workshops of the Internationals- arrived a few months later.

Both academically and personally my experience in Brazil proved to be profoundly educational. The Brazilian people welcomed us fully and offer a wide range of insights. In fact, my wife and I have joined the *Partnership for the Americas*, and we are in the process of writing a grant proposal for continued travel to Brazil in support of a project concerning the inclusionary education practices both here in Maine and in the state of Do Rio Grade Do Nort. I wish future fellows the same good fortune that I enjoyed during the summer institute, and I thank Edilson Souza for the gift of his invitation.

SAVE THE DATES



March 24, 2010

High School Writing Conference at Erskine Academy

For more information about this annual conference featuring student-staffed writing centers, please contact heather.pullen@maine.edu.

April 10, 2010

Writing Ourselves with Kate Kennedy

Please watch your mailbox for a special invitation from MWP for this exciting day of professional development and fellowship.

