

# Field Notes

## Where Have All the Children Gone?

**Marilyn Etheredge,**  
is a WTWP  
Teacher Consultant and  
5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at  
Trenton Rosenwald  
Middle School.

Counseling was as important as teaching to me during the school year of 1999-2000. Each Friday and Monday several students showed signs of apprehension, anxiety and pensiveness about the weekend. Hope approached me each Friday with the following words: "Daddy hasn't called yet, Mrs. ET." Keith followed with, "I don't know if I can read that much this weekend. I'm going to Dad's and we are going to Mississippi." Maggie joined with, "I'm supposed to go swimming at my Daddy's this weekend. He has his own pool."

I watched these children carefully when they entered the classroom on Mondays. After twenty-five years of teaching I have grown fairly accurate at reading children's facial expressions and body language. I usually predicted Hope's weekend by the way she entered.

Slumped shoulders, downcast eyes meant Dad never called. Bright and bouncy steps, turning immediately to chat with Laura meant a visit to Dad's. Maggie most always returned on Monday with a sad look in her eyes, but still wore her smile. Her disappointment hardened over the past four years of Dad not showing. Keith usually returned every other Monday very sleepy, slow moving and sluggish. A trip to Dad's was consistent, but busy, cramming those weeks of separation into forty-eight hours.

On the assigned visitation weekends these children spent much time at my podium or walking me to lunch. By no means were these the only children experiencing this type of dysfunction in their lives. These were the brave ones. The ones who chose to discuss their hurts and distress. Fifty-nine percent of the fifth grade students in my class last year came from broken, blended or single family homes. Believing that

writing is therapy, I transformed my reading class into a writing class at least three days a week. I learned many insights from the children's writing, details about their hearts, their losses and their anxieties. Tanika waited for father to return from prison to rescue her from the projects. Ken puzzled about the father he met only once when he was three. Stacey wrote in a family history time line report, "My mother never graduated from high school, so she never went to college and she never got married. It is hard for me to do

a time line, can I change the marks?" Cicily wrote about her desire for parents to be married, rather than just living together. "Last night was an exciting night at my house.

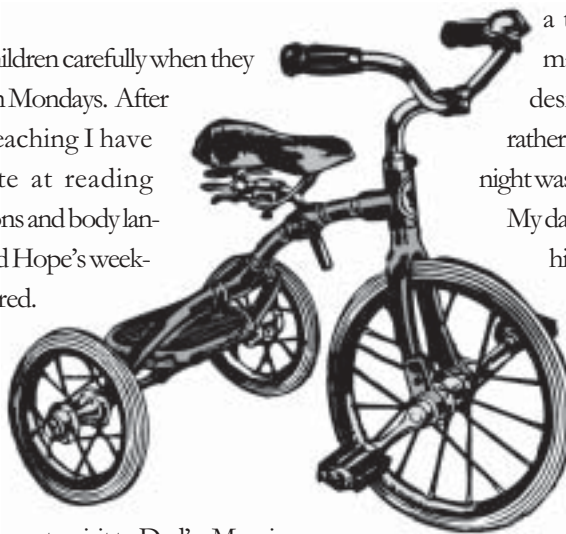
My daddy asked my mother to marry him?" Chad wrote about his special place at his grandparents' house.

The tall oak tree in the back yard, where he climbed, sat and pondered about which parent he wanted to live with on a permanent basis. The events of

these children's lives overwhelmed me. Most of them experienced more emotion, trauma and loss in their eleven years than I in my fifty-two.

Being a compassionate person and a lover of children I began to work on how to help these children. My effort to help resulted in a summer writing camp targeting children of divorce. Although the original idea involved an "invitation only" camp, it evolved into more. I invited twenty up-coming sixth graders meeting the home criteria to attend a writing camp for three weeks. Of the twenty, ten participated.

I enjoyed the afternoon session, but the thrill of the camp came from the morning sessions of remedial students stuck in summer school for failing the previous year. Without invitation these students met



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## Where Have all the Children Gone?

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my original criteria. Of the twenty students participating in the morning sessions, only one lived with both parents. It was here my real work found its base. Here I met Trey, an upcoming seventh grader whose parents divorced when he was five. "My mother left my daddy in the middle of the night. She woke me up, put our bags in the car and we ran fast. My daddy beat my mother and we left him. I don't see my daddy anymore."

In his autobiography Trey wrote about the different schools he attended, the verbal abuse he took from peers, mother's new boyfriends, and the reason for moving back to Trenton. "In January we moved back to Trenton because my mother's cancer grew worse. In April she died and I finally got the respect I deserved." His first essay was entitled, "What If I Knew I was Going to Die Tomorrow?" Death, abandonment and fear obviously occupied this young man's mind. Joining Trey with the death experience was Shae, an upcoming eighth grader. Her autobiography read, "My daddy died when I was five. I loved him so much and I cried for months after Mama told me he died. I think I am a lot like him though. Mama says I am." Charles brought a new and different slant on the workshop. Both of his parents were incarcerated. He lived with grandmother. His Bio poem entitled, "Mom," ended with "If only I could spend more time with her." In one conversation with Charles I complimented his writing and told him he had talent. He beamed. As I left that day he waited for his ride outside the school. Approaching him I heard him say to a co-student, "She did so say that!" He turned to look at me and said, "Mrs. ET, didn't you say I had talent?" I smiled and nodded. "You surely do Charles. I'm glad you are in my class!" Quickly he turned to the student and said, "Told you!"

The stories continue with Mari, the eighth grade student, already incarcerated for car theft, trying to make the grade to enter high school. Her attitude at the beginning of the summer depicted rebellion, defiance and a cry for help. Remarks in class attempting to look "smart" to her peers only red-flagged her in my mind as a child calling for help. In the beginning, she refused to write offering the age-old excuse, "I'm thinking." Talking with her one on one about her biography I discovered troubling situations in her life. The section on family included a paragraph about her stepbrother, her hero, who soon would be released from jail. Upon his release he would have his girlfriend's baby take a DNA test to prove or disprove his parenthood. The second thing on his "to do" list after release involved Mari. They planned to "cruise" and spend time together. Chills crawled from the tip of my toes to the top of my head at the thought of cruising and spending time with this brother. Mari's eyes twinkled and at last she talked. "Chad is the only person who truly understands me. I worry about him because he is in jail for something he did and something he didn't do." The only time parents were mentioned in

her story was at the beginning when she listed their names.

On the last day of summer school we played a Truth or Lie game. Children wrote ten statements telling about themselves; part to be truth, part to be lies. Other children guessed which were true and which were false. John wrote, "I hate Jerry Springer." All the children yelled in chorus, "Lie!" John smiled and nodded. I could not contain myself. "That is a lie?" I asked with open mouth. John said, "Well, of course. That is my favorite show." Before thinking I responded, "John, that show is trash and as false as wrestling!" "No it's not!" Voices responded from each part of our circle. "We watch that every day!" The conversation then led to different episodes, listing details and events. My heart sank yet again with this group of "children." As I ponder this declaration of favorite show I can only conclude this show confirms their life styles. It makes them feel normal watching adults yell, scream, and curse about the emotional problems in their lives. Where have all the children gone?

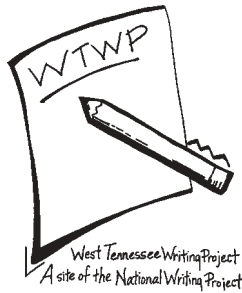
I begin a new school year with a more defined purpose. I begin a new school year striving to give these children a taste of childhood. It seems an almost impossible task – give childhood in school to children living in an adult world at home.

It almost requires a new definition of teacher. I can't, however, discover the exactly right word that describes this role. Is it transformer? I don't have that power. Is it counselor? I have been that for many years. Is it mother? I don't have the legal rights. Is it disciplinarian? That comes with the job and increases in difficulty. Is it listener? That word comes the closest to the needs of these children. How can I possibly listen to over one hundred students on a daily basis and hear their anxieties, conflicts, hurts and problems?

The obvious way to a teacher who loves writing is to have them write. Writing in the classroom always held an important part in my personal curriculum with all students, but this year it becomes top priority. It becomes an integral part of their curriculum as I realize its importance not only to their academic lives but to their personal lives as well. They must find a safe place to reveal themselves. They must learn to imagine life in different ways.

Teaching grows more complicated with each passing year. Twenty

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# Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers

## ★ **Poetry Day Camp, Tennessee Writers Alliance Workshop, Saturday 9 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. March 24, 2001, Trinity Presbyterian Church, 145 Hannings Lane, Martin.**

Sponsored by TWA in cooperation with the West Tennessee Writing Project, this workshop begins with a poetry warm-up writing exercise, with Margrethe Ahlschwede, WTWP director, continues with writer Zann Easterwood, and writer and teacher Connie Green. Includes lunch and closing reading by workshop leaders. Registration: \$30; TWA members, \$25; students, \$15. Checks payable to TWA Writing Workshop. Send name, address, fee to Writing Workshop, 131 Humanities, UTM, Martin, TN 38238. Further information: [billahls@utm.edu](mailto:billahls@utm.edu)

## ★ **“Glitter Glue: Sparkling Sessions, Dazzling Demos,” Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m, April 28, 2001, Briarwood School, 169 Briarwood Street, Camden.**

Workshop for K-8 teachers and parents of K-8 students. Workshop includes certificates of participation, interactive teaching demonstrations on reading and writing led by Teacher Consultants of WTWP. Opening session: Reading and writing off Debra Frasier’s *On the Day You Were Born*. Closing session: “A Mad Dash Through the Mountain. . . writing with Peer Gynt.” To register send \$10, name, and address to UTM Office of Extended Campus, 110 Gooch Hall, UTM, Martin, TN 38238, or call (731) 587-7080, or e-mail: [ecce@utm.edu](mailto:ecce@utm.edu). Checks payable to UTM.

## ★ **“The Reading Connection to Writing,” Saturday August 11, 2001, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Ag Center, 605 Airways Blvd., Jackson.**

Workshop for K-12 teachers; \$25 registration; includes certificates of participation, morning coffee and rolls, box lunch from Heavenly Ham, full day of interactive demonstrations led by Teacher Consultants of WTWP. Opening session: Literacy narra-

tives, for students and teachers and for writing from research. Concurrent sessions include writing clubs in school and after school; reading clubs pre-school through post-school; the writing connection to social studies; rubrics; and more. To register send \$25, name, and address to UTM Office of Extended Campus, 110 Gooch Hall, UTM, Martin, TN 38238, or call (731) 587-7080, or e-mail: [ecce@utm.edu](mailto:ecce@utm.edu). Checks payable to UTMartin.

## ★ **“Our Literate Lives: Knowing Who We Are,” English 700, Fall 2001, Camden.**

This graduate course in English offered through UTM will meet Monday afternoons, 4 p.m. in Camden, beginning August 20, taught by Margrethe Ahlschwede. This course would count toward recertification, hours toward the M.S. in Education from UTM, or toward “30 hours above.” Reading will draw on books such as *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America’s Underprepared* by Mike Rose; *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for America from a Small School in Harlem*, by Deborah Meier; *Woman in Front of the Sun: On Becoming a Writer* by Judith Ortiz Cofer. This course is directed toward teachers who want to recapture their love of teaching, who care about improved reading and writing instruction and student growth and learning in a culture that measures student achievement and teacher effectiveness by results on standardized tests. For information about admission to do graduate work contact UTM Office of Graduate Studies, 309 Administration, UTM, 38238, (731) 587-7012. For more about the Master of Science in Education, contact College of Education and Behavioral Studies, 237 Gooch Hall, UTM, 38238, (731) 587-7125. Contact supervisors of instruction for information about vouchers to help defray cost of tuition and fees. For further information about the course, contact Margrethe Ahlschwede, Department of English, (731) 587-7300.

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# I Am a Writer

**Deanna Chappell,**  
a Teacher Consultant  
of WTWP, is a Junior  
and Senior English  
Teacher at  
Obion County Central  
High School.

I am a writer, and I have the tee shirt to prove it. Actually I have a white sweat shirt, a purple tee-shirt, and a long sleeve white shirt all monogrammed on the upper left side with the logo that proudly proclaims, West Tennessee Writing Project 2000, "I Am A Writer." A feathered quill is strategically placed amidst the lettering. I have worn the sweatshirt repeatedly throughout this cold winter. I don't think I've ever worn an article of clothing with any more pride unless it was the Easter Dress my mother sewed for me to wear one Easter Sunday when I was eight years old. It was lovingly stitched out of green dotted Swiss in the waning hours of Easter Eve for me to wear Easter morning.

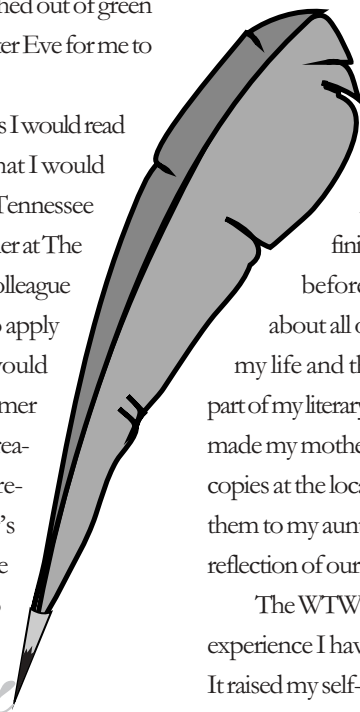
Every January for the past eight years I would read in the newspaper or in the brochures that I would see in the school office about the West Tennessee Writing Project seminar held each summer at The University of Tennessee at Martin. A colleague down the hall always encouraged me to apply to be a participant. But the deadline would pass, and I knew I needed to teach summer school or there were other conflicts or reasons that I didn't take the plunge and return to school. I received my master's degree in 1975, and I had not seen the need or had the motivation to return to school. Last January a call came from the principal of the local high school asking if I would consider transferring from the elementary school to teach junior and senior English. After twenty-seven years in the elementary classroom, I decided to teach high school English which was my first discipline. If ever I was going to apply for WTWP, it was now or never. I needed to update my writing skills and prepare myself for my new teaching experience.

From the first orientation meeting in May with all of the other teachers who would be in the four-week institute, we all became writers. Some of the teachers were returning seminar participants and their writing abilities were evident. Could I do this? It turned out that not

only could I write, but I could write well and I had something other teachers and people wanted to read and listen to. That Saturday in May began a writing odyssey with 17 other teachers including the director of the West Tennessee Writing Project, Margrethe Ahlschwede. Our guided writing activity that day was writing our own literary life history. We were to bring the completed essay the first day of class in June along with two artifacts pertaining to our literary life history. I brought my Bible and a picture of my family. I had written about how my grandmother had read the Bible cover to cover countless times and had been my Sunday School teacher growing up. I wrote about how I would slip off to my room to read on Saturday morning to escape the Saturday chores and finish the library book I had begun the night before and read until the late hours. I wrote about all of the letters that I had kept throughout my life and their meaning to me. I later turned this part of my literary life history into an essay "Letters" which made my mother both laugh and cry. She made photocopies at the local E. W. James grocery store and mailed them to my aunt and niece because the essay was such a reflection of our family.

The WTWP summer institute is the best classroom experience I have ever had as a student and as a person. It raised my self-esteem as a teacher and as an individual. The positive atmosphere, the sharing environment, and the heart-writings of the participants made the institute a learning situation out of the ordinary. When I walked into the meeting room at the Holland McCombs Center for the orientation in May, I immediately noticed that the room arrangement was not the normal college classroom. Tables were arranged in a rectangle with a large opening in the middle with space at the corners for members to walk in and out of the center area. Each participant's seat was placed on the outside of the rectangle where each of the writers could see and hear each other. A small black file box was placed in front of each seat to act as mailboxes for all of the writings and pieces of informa-

*I am a writer*



tion shared by recipients. Names of the members were placed in front of the mailboxes, and participants quickly called each other by first name. I wondered why boxes of tissues were placed within an arm's reach of the future WTWP teacher consultants. I soon found out when it was time to share our stories and essays during the four weeks we were together. Whether they were teaching stories or stories from our lives, many of the writings brought tears along with the laughter.

For four weeks in June, Monday through Thursday, the seventeen participants met from 9:00 until 4:00 each day. We brought food. We ate together. We laughed and cried together. We discussed books on writing in literary circles. Most importantly we wrote and shared together. We learned together. Youthful energy and enthusiasm merged with wisdom and knowledge. This past summer it was an all female group. We often discussed if the absence of males changed the tenor of the writing and sharing. From fresh faced young women in their early twenties to seasoned professionals in their fifties, we all wrote our stories. Twenty-one-year-old Mary Perry, fresh from student teaching, sat next to Dr. Brenda Gulledge, a former Tennessee Teacher of the Year and Tennessee Elementary Principal of the year. Dr. Gulledge, now the K-5 Supervisor of Instruction for the Weakley County School System, was instrumental in hiring Mary Perry to teach Language Arts in the Martin Middle School. Teachers in their thirties sat in writing response groups with Lindia Spears with thirty years teaching experience and listened to her read her writings about her students and her original short stories based on real life family members. The co-director Mary Lou Marks, Camden High School librarian, amazed us all with her knowledge of books. And recently National Board Certified Teacher, Co-director Paula Cox, a third grade teacher from Briarwood Elementary in Camden, taught us how to use glitter glue to teach symmetry and color theory. The result was an idea-generating piece of art and writing about an abstraction.

WTWP serves as a professional contact group for teachers with follow-up sessions conducted throughout the school year. Participants meet and share successful teaching projects. More teaching demonstrations are added to the thick three-ringed WTWP notebook. A listserv of the summer of 2000 participants allows us to query and inform each other throughout the school year.

The writer and author of *An Unquiet Pedagogy*, Hepsie Roskelly, spent one day with participants during the 2000 Institute. She autographed our course books, and she inspired us to name our class anthology *Unquiet Voices*. She put a face and a voice with her textbook of theory. Stressing "assuming goodwill," she led the participants to examine the culture of school, the culture of teaching, accountability, and how things might be

otherwise. She brought to the class the writing and teaching wisdom of Paulo Freire.

I have the certificate from this summer hanging in my classroom at the high school. I refer to my summer writing experiences as the "Institute" to my high school students. One of my first teaching activities of the school year was having my students write their literary life histories. I have a photograph of the Summer 2000 participants on a bookshelf. I also have a photograph of myself with Margrethe. The frame says, "Go, Girl." That would be my advice for anyone considering the writing institute and engaging in the writing experience.

I took another writing course this past fall semester at UTM. Who would have thought I would have gotten nine hours of graduate credit in six months? There were fourteen of us in the circle in the advanced composition class. Again the group was eclectic in age and background, but the writing bond materialized, and writers emerged and progressed. For this course I read, did inksheds, and discussed in literary circles in class the books and their authors. I did a

teaching demonstration on biopoems. My Obion County Central students and I participated in the WriteSouth Website during UTM's Festival of Southern Cultures as a result of this course.

I shared with my students teaching demonstrations that other students in the class presented. I composed over sixty pages of double spaced writing for Advanced Composition English 505. "The Baggage We Bring to School" or otherwise titled "We Have More Than Books in Our Backpacks" was an ongoing essay I wrote about my high school students in their voices. I had planned to use excerpts for this article, but I realized the contents were too personal and poignant.

My head is now full of words to write down. I view things differently now. I have recognized and developed the senses of a writer. I have met people I would never have met. I have read books that I would never have read. In "Eyes of a Writer," an essay I wrote for Advanced Composition, I described a three-hour Sunday drive through the back roads from Springville to Collierville, Tennessee. As my husband drove, I made notes of people, places, and scenes along the way. I have always been observant of my surroundings, but sensory images have become writing experiences.

One of the main things that I have learned in all of this is that I am constantly composing in my head. I stop to jot down notes at the oddest of times. The other is that learning to write is like learning to read. Anne Lamott wrote in *Bird by Bird* how she had seen Natalie Goldberg, the author of *Writing Down the Bones*, respond when someone asked her for the best possible writing advice she had to offer. Goldberg held up a yellow ledger pad and pretended to scribble with her fingers. You have to practice.

I think I will wear my purple tee shirt tomorrow. 

# The Writing Project Changed Me

**Stephanie Elliott,**

a Teacher Consultant of WTWP, teaches 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders in writing and English at Davidson Academy in Nashville.

The West Tennessee Writing Project changed me. Of course, I have only had a semester's experience after the fact, but it has changed me. During last summer's writing institute, I began to really love writing. I began thinking of all the things I could have my students write and then I would get to read them—how exciting is that. Of course, if you've never been to the "institute" you probably don't see my love of paperwork as I do. I didn't even see the joy in grading students' work before the project. Before, I saw grading papers as a chore that I had to lug home every night and then stay up until the last paper was finished. During the time that I spent with the women of WTWP, I really began looking forward to the papers that I would collect at the end of a class/week/assignment. The West Tennessee Writing Project taught me not to rewrite my students' work, but to enjoy reading what they had written; I get to marvel in products that I saw frustration in the first time I asked students to put pen to paper. I love reading the pieces that my students write. I love seeing how they have interpreted my questions in guided writing. The Writing Project helped me formulate new ideas from those presented in the teaching demonstrations and to use them in a productive way in my English classroom.


Before Thanksgiving break, I reached into my trusty blue WTWP notebook and searched for just the right thing. During the summer at the "institute" we [teacher participants] received a nearly empty three-inch binder that we would somehow fill to capacity with teacher demonstrations, articles and reflection. We each presented a lesson on some type of writing exercise that we had used in our classrooms, or at least hoped to use with the new school year. Deanna Chappell's turn was up, and she pranced into class with a bright purple dress and a floppy, red gingham hat on. Of course we thought that she had lost her mind, but when she began reading "Warning," we all smiled and nodded at her appropriate attire. Deanna's demonstration was the one I kept coming back to time and time again from all of the demonstrations that I had collected in my WTWP notebook.

I tried to imagine what the students would come up with, but I had no idea what was in store. I passed out copies of the poem "Warning" by Jenny Joseph, the same one that Deanna had given us just a few months earlier. I read with enthusiasm (just like she had), as the students just stared blankly at the half sheet of paper. "Great, what do I do now," I thought as I looked around the circle. But when I asked, "What do you think is old?" I couldn't shut them up. "Sixty." "BINGO." "Cheese!!!" one boy yelled out at the question of what does old smell like. "O.K. just write it down," I answered. I asked some of the questions that we had been asked during the summer and added a few of my own. We all wrote our own definitions of old, and now it was time to turn our answers into real stories. I told the students that I expected that they could write at least a couple of pages detailing their definitions of old. "Can we write a poem?" Kyle asked.

"Sure," I responded. "You can use any form you would like. Tell a story, write a letter. . . anything."

Students completed their writing assignment in a couple of days, and they revised, revised, and then revised again before turning them in to me. I was very pleased with the outcome of the project. I received over seventy different versions of "old."

Kyle did write his poem about being old: "Maybe Aunt Hilda or Uncle Bob/ They're getting on in years/ And neither have jobs. . . My hair will fall out and I'll wear a toupee/ And play old, slow game/ Like croquet the whole day." Most of the writers were not in any hurry to get old, and a lot described it as smelling like moth balls or stale perfume. Sarah, one of the honors students, wrote: "I won't realize that the only two places I go during the day are to the bathroom and to bed...how I suddenly like the smell of stale perfume and mothballs. . . I won't notice that a million different cure-alls, medicines, creams, and pills for arthritis have taken the place of my makeup bottles, cans of hairspray, and Bath and Body Works products."

I thoroughly enjoyed this activity for the students, and with the excellent response I received from them, they did too. After getting their papers back, they wanted to know if they could revise them again, and "write more." Of course, I smiled and answered, "Please do." 

## Warning

When I am an old woman I shall wear purple  
With a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me.  
And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves  
And satin sandals, and say we've no money for butter.  
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired  
And gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells  
And run my stick along the public railings  
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.  
I shall go out in my slippers in the rain  
And pick the flowers in other people's gardens  
And learn to spit

You can wear terrible shirts and grow more fat  
And eat three pounds of sausages at a go  
Or only bread and pickle for a week  
And hoard pens and pencils and beer mats and things in boxes.

But now we must have clothes that keep us dry  
And pay our rent and not swear in the street  
And set a good example for the children.  
We must have friends to dinner and read the papers.

But maybe I ought to practice a little now?  
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised  
When suddenly I am old, and start to wear purple.


From: *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple*, Sandra Haldeman Martz, editor, Papier-Mache Press, 1990.

## Where Have All the Children Gone?

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years ago reading stories, discussing characters, problems, solutions appealed to most children in the classroom. Today teaching involves more than reading and discussion of these characters. Most of the characters we read and discuss are about REAL children, not mini-adults. Somehow I strive for the ability to reach the inner core of these new age children, to teach them to imagine, to create, to problem solve, to be free in their childhood. Most of them are too heavily laden with adult problems shared with them by the adults in their household. It is my new task to offer an outlet, an avenue to recover the children of the twenty-first century. Somehow I don't believe today's children fit into God's plan for childhood. I believe God intended children to be carefree, to explore, to pretend, to play and most of all I believe He intended them to be loved.

Can I love them enough? Probably not. I can give them love by listening. I can give them love by being interested in their inner core and helping them discover it through writing. This is my pledge for the 2000-2001 school year - to uncover the children and lead them to the rainbows, the pots of gold and bask in the freedom of childhood. I want to find the children and I want the children to discover themselves.

What better way to do this than to write? So, fifth grade reading students in Trenton Rosenwald Middle School will write daily. They will explore themselves through writing and reading and responding to each other. I will give them a taste of love. Love from their teacher, love from peers and love from themselves. Where have all the children gone? Life and its problems cover them up. We, as teachers, must uncover their childhood as best we can. We must give them a taste of the joy of being a child. If we don't, children will grow up to be children in adult bodies and the cycle will continue.  *Author's Note: Names of children are pseudonyms.*

## M.S. in Education allows 18 hours of subject matter

The Master of Science in Education now allows 18 hours of electives, including English. Upper division courses from the Department of English also may count as points toward teacher recertification (check with supervisors of instruction) or, at the graduate level, as part of the "thirty above" the masters.

For information about admission to graduate studies at UTM, contact the Office of Graduate Studies, 309 Administration Building, UTM, 38238 (731) 587-7012.

For information about the M.S. in Education, contact the College of Education and Behavioral Studies, 237 Gooch Hall, UTM, 38238, (731) 587-7125.

Watch for mailings describing upper division course offerings in English during spring semester, contact the Department of English at UTM, (731) 587-7300, FAX (731) 587-7276 about upper division course offerings, or check the UTM website: [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu) Click on Academics, then go to College of Humanities and Fine Arts, and to English Department. Scroll down for lists of course offerings. To learn more about the masters programs in Education, off the UTM home page, go to Academics, click on College of Education and Behavioral Studies, and then to graduate degrees. See also course announcement this issue page 3.

## About WTWP

The West Tennessee Writing Project is a program of professional development for teachers who believe in the power of writing as a learning tool and as key to implementing standards across the curriculum.

Located in the Department of English at The University of Tennessee at Martin, WTWP is one of 160 sites of the National Writing Project. WTWP was established in March 1993 and currently is the only affiliate site of the National Writing Project in Tennessee. The heart of WTWP is its annual intensive summer writing institutes for selected West Tennessee teachers, all subject-matter areas, all grades K-12. WTWP also works with area schools to provide professional development for teachers. If you would like WTWP Teacher Consultants to facilitate interactive programs of professional development for your teachers, contact WTWP.

WTWP is supported by grants from the National Writing Project of the University of California, Berkeley with matching funds from The University of Tennessee at Martin.

The director of WTWP is Margrethe Ahlschwede, Hardy M. Graham Distinguished Professor in English. Co-directors are Paula Cox, 3rd grade teacher at

Camden's Briarwood School, and Mary Lou Marks, librarian at Camden Central High School. WTWP Advisory Council members include the project directors and Margie Lowe, Jackson Northeast Middle School; Andrea Russell, Dyersburg Schools; Beth Halbert, Mt. Juliet High School; and Betty Hicks, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Finley School. Staff support to WTWP is provided by Lisa Pentecost, principal secretary in the Department of English, and Mary Kay Gibson, senior accounting major from Dyersburg.

For further information on any aspects of WTWP write or call: West Tennessee Writing project, Department of English, UT Martin, 38238; (731) 587-7290, (731) 587-7300; FAX (731) 587-7276; or e-mail: [margahls@utm.edu](mailto:margahls@utm.edu)

WTWP website:

<http://fmc.utm.edu/~mahlschw/Wtwp0.htm>

or access through UT Martin home page: [www.utm.edu](http://www.utm.edu)

to Academics, College of Humanities and Fine Arts, English and then scroll down to West Tennessee Writing Project

For information about the National Writing Project, see the NWP website:

<[www.writingproject.org](http://www.writingproject.org)>

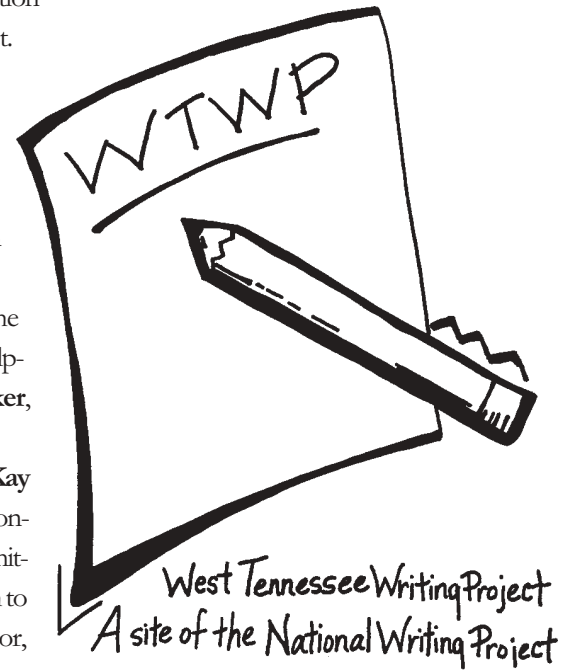
# Congratulations!

Congratulations to Teacher Consultant **Lindia Speer**, summer institute 2000, on the publication of her essay, "Eliminate Student Passiveness: Use Writing Across the Curriculum," in the Oct. 2000 issue of the Tennessee English Journal, the publication of the Tennessee Council of Teachers of English; and to **Athalia Donaldson**, Martin Elementary, from summer institute 1994, for selection to the 6th edition of Who's Who Among Teachers.

Congratulations to **Kim Hawks**, Margaret Newton Elementary in Lake County, on receipt of the Milken Family Foundational National Educator Award for 2000. Kim participated in the first WTWP invitational institute at UTM, summer 1993.

Congratulations to **faculty, staff, and students of Big Sandy School** for receiving the \$10,000 first place award in the Rice Krispie sculpture contest with the school's rain forest sculpture. Four Teacher Consultants of WTWP teach at Big Sandy School: **Angie Watson Tucker, Tracy Decker, Sonja Stepp, and Deana Seimo.**

**Mary Lou Marks**, librarian at Camden Central High School and WTWP co-director, and **Kay Griffin**, seventh grade language arts teacher at Jackson Middle School and WTWP Teacher Consultant, have been appointed to the TCAP Writing Assessment Scoring Committee. The committee is composed of 75 teachers, 25 from each grade—4, 7, 11. The committee meets in March to score a sample of the 2001 TCAP student papers. From these the committee will select anchor, training sets, and validity sets. The anchor papers set the standard for scoring, the training sets are used to qualify readers, and the validity sets ensure scoring is consistent among readers.



West Tennessee Writing Project  
Department of English  
The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Martin, TN 38238

The regional accreditation board has given its approval to the "new" University of Tennessee. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools gave the go-ahead to the consolidation of UT-Knoxville, UT-Memphis, the UT Space Institute and the institutes of agriculture and public service into one accredited university. UT President J. Wade Gilley asked the UT Board of Trustees and SACS for the merger to cut administrative costs and streamline operations. The University of Tennessee at Martin does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status in provision of education opportunities or employment opportunities and benefits. UT Martin does not discriminate on the basis of sex or disability in the education programs and activities which it operates, pursuant to the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as codified in 42 U.S.C. 2000D; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Pubs. L. 92-318; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pubs. L. 101-336; and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. This policy extends to both employment by and admission to the university. Inquiries concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act should be directed to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Compliance, 240 Gooch Hall, UT Martin, Martin, TN 38238, (901) 587-7202. Changes of violation of the above policy should also be directed to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and Compliance. R05-4530-18-003-01

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