

what will work best for you. Remember, though: The goal is to set up a publication with realistic outcomes. Be sure that the structure you decide to go with allows this growth naturally and with good results for you, your students, the publication, and your community.

4. Finally Funding: The (Simple) Foundation of a Successful Publication

The backbone of any strong publication is money. For school publications, however, money is not an easy thing to come by, and few publications that are started in this country (primarily for-profit, and for the larger public) can boast that they were able to make it through the first two or three issues before going broke. If the odds are against us, why even bother?

We bother because we know that the opportunities afforded our students and the importance in documenting these stories is worth the effort to make it work.

Specifically, your publication does not need to have outrageous expenses. Stay simple in everything you do, especially in the beginning stages. Network through email, word of mouth, and a Web site. Find a local printer that is interested in supporting your immediate school community and express the potential exposure they will get from a larger audience. By offering them free advertising in your

Voices, chances are they will be eager to work with you financially, especially with your first and second volumes.

Be on the lookout for mini-grants from your school system (we were awarded \$2,000, which allowed us to cover some printing costs and curriculum materials, especially for classes with a high number of reluctant writers). Plenty of other small grants are available for projects like this publication. Simply check with your Grants Support Services division of your school system for a list of some of these opportunities.

Finally, publish within your means. Make the decision that this publication is going to be offered to the students throughout your community for many years to come, so starting out small and successful is much better than trying to woo the world with a 400-page book that puts you in the red before the third volume ever goes to print. In Volume 1, our students were just as excited to be published in this low-budget, 32-page, stapled journal as they were when Volume 2 was released: a 128-page bound book that took our breath away. Publishing is publishing, and going about it slowly but successfully is the only sure-fire way to make sure your kids keep ending up in print—for a very long time to come.

Creative Nonfiction Conference Generates Ideas

By Stephanie Leddy, T-C '90, smled@hotmail.com

Saturday, February 12, 2005 was no ordinary Saturday. Yes, it was Abraham Lincoln's real birthday and my daughter's as well but this was no typical February 12th either. Instead of starting the day in my usual slow-moving Saturday routines, I was getting up to the alarm, showering, dressing, and heading out the door. I had the dog believing it was a school day and for me, it was. I was going to be the student learning more about using creative nonfiction with my own students from Rus VanWestervelt '89, the advisor to *Maryland Voices*, and his very able editors at the First Annual 2005 Creative Nonfiction Conference for Maryland High School Teachers.

About 20 other high school teachers from across Maryland joined me in the library of Centennial High to discuss, write, read, listen to and query the experts. We learned the five characteristics of creative nonfiction:

- It shares a good, narrative story that contains a defined setting, a solid plot and strong characters.
- It has an apparent subject and a deeper subject.
- It tells a timely story that is also timeless.
- It offers a sense of reflection on behalf of the author.
- It pays careful attention to the craft of writing.

We learned the importance of writing creative nonfiction and of the need for its publication. A panel discussion by the editors clarified their criteria for accepting work into *Maryland Voices*. We received copies of *Maryland Voices 2005* that accepted submissions from students across the state for the first time. Everyone also received packets from the Maryland Writing Project with our new brochures and information sheets. We will be receiving a DVD with the information needed to help us teach creative nonfiction and to submit to *Maryland Voices*.

The three hours flew past and I felt really ready to work with creative nonfiction with my students. We will be doing *Maryland Voices*' "This Day in Maryland" activity using Friday, March 25th, recording our hourly activities and picking one to write more about. Perhaps some of my students will have their voices heard in *Maryland Voices 2006* because I did not have an ordinary Saturday.



Stephanie Leddy