

Mapping and brainstorming about the structure of sites provided multiple visual representations of all of the projects that sites are implementing to help teachers around the country and the world. The information from the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project and the Alabama A&M University Writing Project allowed us to interact and discuss the ways for sites to continue branching out and helping teachers improve their craft using the National Writing Project's philosophy.

At the general assembly meeting, all of the speakers were extraordinary. Richard Sterling, the National Writing Project's Executive Director, addressed the issue of how writing instruction is progressing as technology continues to evolve. Both of the teacher speakers were extraordinary and received thunderous standing ovations. Second year teacher Johna Dowdall spoke the language that we all know so well, the perils of one's

first year of teaching. Her honesty, humor and sincerity touched every member of the crowd. The idea of school atmosphere and environment and the importance of welcome were the highlights of Vanessa Brown's address. All of the information presented at the General Session was moving and pointed specifically to the significance of the Writing Project's efforts.

The rest of the weekend was filled with all of the goodies that the NWP has to offer: social gatherings, networking, bonding with other MWP folks, and culling information from a broad spectrum of faces and talents. This monkey certainly learned a lot and felt privileged to look up into the branches to see just how far the Writing Project has climbed. It's exciting to be involved with an organization that will continue to ascend in order to create writers of tomorrow, in ourselves, our teachers and our students.

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## Editor's Notes, Spring 2005

Beth Edelstein, T-C '00, [sbeth428@aol.com](mailto:sbeth428@aol.com)

The snow on the rooftop seems to belie that spring is coming. Yet it is. By the time you receive this newsletter the change of seasons will no longer be in doubt. We will be in full-throated spring with its budding trees, blooming flowers, and calling birds. Gone will be the snow and thoughts of school being canceled. Gone will be the coats, gloves, and hats. We'll be edging toward sweater weather and beyond. Now we long to breathe unfettered air and dream of warmth and growth. We want to move freely. We want to learn the pirouette of spring, to leap with the crocuses and tango with the daffodils. We can feel our creative juices flowing after a belated winter storm. The ice has melted and so have we. C'mon out. Let's walk together.

My spring fever is coming early this year and I want you to share my affliction. My favorite author, Anonymous, seems to support both spring fever and procrastination.

I meant to do my work today —  
But a brown bird sang in the oak tree,  
and the crows were chasing the owl in the field,  
and the leaves were calling me,  
and the wind went sighing over the land,  
tossing the grasses to and fro,  
so what could I do but laugh and go?  
And go we must to the fields, woods, and sidewalks.

We become wild things in our own way of being wild. How do you celebrate spring and the beginning of new life? Our friends Frog and Toad from *Wind in the Willows* know the spring means a trip down the river. Annie Dillard chose a smaller body of water for her musings in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. We join Annie at her creek, Thoreau at Walden Pond and others on first spring meanderings, reawakening our limbs after the winter's hibernation. We walk in the sunshine and wonder about supper, like Snoopy. We dig in the dirt and find worms busily enriching the soil as they go about their wormy lives.

If spring is here, can the end of the school year be far behind? How has this year been different from last? What have we and our students learned? How will we share that learning with each other? How will we build on what we have already done? Spring is a time of digging and reflecting on the digging. I hope we all have ample time for both.

As I think of editing *Writing Works*, I realize how much I have learned from all of you. You have taught me to appreciate again the joys of teaching and of writing, to recognize the importance of revision, and to know when a piece is finished. My time as editor has reached an end. Daniel Rozmiarek, who was photography editor for this edition, will be editor in chief for the fall. I wish you all well with your teaching and your writing. Thank you.



Beth Edelstein