

BUZZARDS BAY WRITING PROJECT

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Barry Lane to Give Keynote at 6th Annual Spring Conference

By Pam Oliveira

Buzzards Bay Writing Project will present their 6th annual Spring Conference on Saturday March 21, 2009 at Keith Middle School in New Bedford, MA. The conference, which runs from 8:00 to 3:30, will feature nationally acclaimed author and speaker Barry Lane. Mr. Lane's most recent publication is *But How Do You Teach Writing?: A Simple Guide for All Teachers*. You can find information about other books he has published at the website, www.discover-writing.com. You can also access video clips at YouTube.com to view some of Mr. Lane's unique writing strategies. In addition to his keynote speech, Mr. Lane will also offer break-out sessions for the first 60 people who register. Other workshop sessions will be presented by BBWP Teacher-Consultants.

Seminar Series Begins

By Lisa Maucione

BBWP's first seminar of the 2008-09 school year continued with the theme Sense of Place. Marjorie Rowe (ISI 2005) gave a presentation in which she discussed how she immerses her students in texts as exemplars of the type of writing she is teaching. She discussed the books she uses to teach various units of writing including Reading Like a Writer, Where Writers Get Ideas, Poetry, and Literary Nonfiction. She focused on texts she uses within those units that address place. Marjorie began her presentation by discussing how she

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The regular price to attend the conference is \$75 per person. However, BBWP is offering a district discount which allows five participants to attend for the price of four and a discount of \$60 for BBWP Teacher-Consultants. A light breakfast and hot lunch will be served. ALRAN books will offer a 10% discount on books. All participants will earn 5 PDP's for attending. Additional information may be obtained from Pam Oliveira at pam1oliveira@aim.com or Russ Maynard at russmaynard@comcast.net who are this year's co-chairpersons.

helps her students get ideas for writing. The literature she shares with students leads to a discussion of how and where the author got the idea for the text. As an example of how writers write about places they know well, she shared the book *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, by Cynthia Rylant; then she showed a student sample of writing called *When I Was Young in Fall River* that was inspired by this book. Other texts Marjorie uses to help students understand where ideas for writing come from include *From Dawn to Dusk* by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock, *Roxaboxen* by Alice McLerran, and *Time of Wonder* by Robert McCloskey.

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BBWP Published Author

By Jeanne Prevost

(Editor's Note: Jeanne Prevost (ISI 2004) is one of BBWP's published authors. Here she describes the process of writing two books for children.)

One day, I learned that there was an actual *river* in Fall River.

"Where is it?" I asked.

"Oh, they built Route 195 right over it."

"Can you see it from the highway?"

"Yes."

I looked and there it lay as always. I had never looked at it before. I was 48 years old and had lived in or near Fall River for most of my life.

I learned that if you take 17th street to a small park behind the Police Station on Pleasant Street, you could approach the river. You could even touch it and take a canoe on it. I drove my car down the streets leading up to the river, streets that were lined with stores and tenement houses. There, buffered by a grassy field lay the Quequechan River. Despite the roar of the highway cutting its banks, despite the occasional discarded tire or shopping cart, the river flowed with life and tranquility just as if the two centuries of neglect and abuse had never passed. I sat on the bank, and let the river tell me its story. It began before the first humans ever discovered it. Back then it teemed with animals and plants. Later the Wampanoag people depended on the river for transportation and food. Much later factories used it for energy and for waste disposal. After the factories closed and the river's power and usefulness were exhausted, it was in the way. Route 195 took its place, the waterfall was obliterated, and everyone forgot about the river. Now the river is hoping that someone will notice it and take care of it.

After much thought, discussion, and revision, I sent the manuscript to three publishers. Operation

Outreach USA of Natick, Massachusetts accepted it. A wonderful artist painted stunning scenes depicting the river's history and its hopes for the future. *Quequechan: Forgotten River* is sold on Amazon.com, at Baker Books of Dartmouth, and at the Fall River Historical Society. (Support your local independent bookstore!)

In 2004, when I decided to take the plunge and be serious about developing a second career as an author, I joined the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI), The Children's Literature Network, and Jacketflap. The former helped me the most. I attended workshops and conferences, and I kept up to date on the publishing world with the SCBWI Bulletin and listserv. Through this organization I met (in cyberspace) Emilie Buckwald of The Gryphon Press in Wisconsin. Her passion is to make a difference in the lives of animals by publishing

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Meet BBWP Author: Jeanne Prevost

Jeanne Prevost is a "country" girl who grew up in the city of Fall River, Massachusetts. The day she graduated from college is the day she bought Gus, a yellow Labrador puppy, her first of many animal friends. She has worked as a medical assistant for a veterinary hospital, and trained puppies for the Guiding Eyes for the Blind. She's raised chickens, ducks, a goat, numerous dogs, and has ridden many horses. Jeanne lives near the Quequechan River in Fall River, Massachusetts. She is an elementary school teacher in Somerset, and was formerly a teacher in Fall River Elementary Schools. She loves woodland beauty, hiking and backpacking, swimming, boating, and bicycle riding. Most of all, she enjoys sharing her deep and abiding love of nature and animals with children.

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picture books for young children that teach about animal welfare in an engaging way. She believes that the way to change society for the better is to begin with children and to teach them while young about the right way to treat animals. Though she rejected my first two book ideas, she mentioned that she was at a loss as to how to educate young children about the pet overpopulation issue and the importance of spaying and neutering. Through talking with my daughters and listening to their ideas, I created *It's Raining Cats...and Cats!* This story takes a humorous slant on what would happen if pet cats didn't have a "special operation" to stop them from

having kittens. The story incorporates mathematical concepts, patterns, and literary devices to teach that not only can cats have a great many kittens, but that each kitten is a living individual being with its own personality and needs, not just a number. The story also demonstrates the difficulty of finding homes for cats and kittens. I am grateful to Emilie Buckwald for her excellent revision ideas and for the opportunity to participate in the mission to help animals live better lives by helping children learn responsible animal stewardship. *It's Raining Cats...and Cats!* is available at Baker Books in Dartmouth, Borders in Providence, amazon.com, and can be ordered at any bookstore.

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Throughout her presentation, Marjorie gave many more examples of mentor texts that can be used within various units of study. To teach Literary Nonfiction, Marjorie shares *Atlantic* by Brian G. Karas and *Mojave* by Diane Sebert with her students. Both these books illustrate how an author can take on the perspective of something and write as if they are that thing. During a unit on poetry, Marjorie also includes poems that address place. These include "Cellar," "Lunchbox," and "Ocean" all by Valerie Worth (from *Peacock and Other Poems*), "Until I Saw" by Lilian Moore (from *The Sea is Calling Me*, Lee Bennett Hopkins), and "Skyscraper" by J. Patrick Lewis (from *Doodle Dandies: Poems That Take Shape*). To provide a model for excellent writing during a unit on descriptive writing Marjorie uses the text *Twilight Comes Twice* by Ralph Fletcher. She also takes her students on a nature walk, teaches them to take notes about what they observe, and models how to incorporate notes into a descriptive paragraph that contains rich language.

I think all who attended Marjorie's presentation appreciated the many ideas they received for

using mentor texts within the writing workshop. Although Marjorie is an elementary teacher, the material she presented seemed to be useful to a wide range of grade levels. I'm sure those who attended will adapt some of her ideas to fit the needs of the students within their own classrooms.

Resources for Teaching Sense of Place

Recommended by BBWP Teacher Consultants

Elementary

If You Are Not From The Prairie by David Bouchard
(recommended for imitation writing)

A Quiet Place by Douglas Wood

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Home: A Collaboration of Thirty Distinguished Authors and Illustrators of Children's Books to Aid the Homeless edited by Michael J. Rosen

Secondary

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

"Querencia" from Writing Toward Home: Tales and Lessons to Find Your Way by Georgia Heard

Saturday Seminar

February 28, 2008

8:30 a.m–11:30 a.m.*

Location: CUSP Suite, second floor, 200 Mill Road, Fairhaven

Presentation by Adele Dockendorff

Surfacing Stories: The Discovery Draft

This presentation will address ways to help students realize that writing is the act of thinking and discovering. The lesson that is the focus of this presentation involves students in responding to a memoir writing prompt and gives them the opportunity to participate in writers' circles and a writer's metacognitive activity. The strategies presented can be adapted to various grade levels and content areas.

Ten PDPs will be given for attendance at three seminars and fifteen PDPs will be given for attendance at four seminars.

*Coffee and pastries will be served.

(Remember to bring a book to participate in the book swap.)

Calendar of Events

January 31 - February 1		Massachusetts Writing Project Retreat
February 7	9:30 12:00	Leadership Team Meeting 2008 ISI Reunion
February 14-17		Nantucket Soundings Writing Retreat (February 14 th is optional)
February 28	8:30-11:30	Saturday Seminar: <i>Surfacing Stories: The Discovery Draft</i>
March 7	9:30	Leadership Team Meeting
March 21	8:00-3:30	6 th Annual Spring Conference

Please contact Kit if you have questions about any of the events listed above.