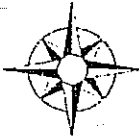


Southern Discourse

Newsletter of the Southeastern Writing Center Association



March 1998

Volume 1, No. 1



SWCA President Welcomes Participation

My brother's first full-time job was to run a small sailing magazine out of a one-person office in a Chicago suburb. I used to tease him about the masthead, which read "Editor, Todd Cozzens; Advertising, Todd Cozzens; Layout, Todd Cozzens." Most of the articles were written by—you guessed it—Todd Cozzens.

In its first issue after a long absence, *Southern Discourse* doesn't look quite that repetitive, but as president and editor for this first issue in years, I do want to reassure readers that future issues of the newsletter will more fully reflect the broader membership of the SWCA. Although my term as president is about to end, I will continue as newsletter editor, and with your help I am looking forward to making the newsletter a vital part of the organization once again.

But allow me one last plea as president. . .

I want first to welcome you to the Macon meeting and to ask that all of you who would like to see the SWCA be a strong organization find roles for yourselves in making that happen. We need people to run for office, to write for the newsletter, to set up an SWCA Internet site, and to participate in discussions about the organization's future. We are eager to set up a calendar of annual conferences, so that each conference host has plenty of time to plan. We would like the SWCA to play more of a role in the national organization, the NWCA, and to define new roles for itself in the Southeast. We need center directors, writing tutors, and others associated with the writing center to chime in with their questions, concerns, and ideas.

To do all these things and more, we need your voice and your participation, so don't wait to be asked!

When I moved to Atlanta twelve years ago and soon found myself directing a fledgling writing center, I attended my first SWCA meeting in Knoxville looking for wisdom and friends—I found both and was welcomed into the organization with a warmth that made my first years as the only writing person in my college bearable. Through the years, that experience was repeated at meetings in Birmingham, Washington, Myrtle Beach, Atlanta, Williamsburg, and Augusta, and for others at meetings I couldn't attend.

Whether you are new at the writing center business or a veteran with wisdom to

"Whether you are new at the writing center business or a veteran with wisdom to spare, . . . I intend to make sure that the Southeastern Writing Center Association has a place for you."

spare, whether we will see you in Macon or at the next annual conference in 1999, I intend to make sure that the Southeastern Writing Center Association has a place for you. Look for me in Macon, get in touch by any means available to you, and tell me how the SWCA can make your job easier and more enjoyable.

Meanwhile, here's to *good writing at the center of your institution!*

Christine Cozzens
SWCA President
Agnes Scott College

Stories We Tell: The Significance of Lore in the Writing Center"

SWCA Conference in
Macon, GA
April 23-25, 1998
(see page 4)

National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing

Join Plattsburgh State University of New York in Plattsburgh, New York on November 6-8, 1998. The National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing provides an opportunity for peer tutors and faculty at the high school and college levels to share ideas and meet like-minded people involved in teaching or tutoring writing.

Cost: Students \$30
NonStudents \$75

For more information, contact the conference chair:

Marry Dossin
tel: (518) 564-6138
e-mail: dossinm@splava.cc.plattsburgh.edu

Or check out their website:
www.plattsburgh.edu/cas

Registration materials will be available in September.

Editor's Note

Southern Discourse, the newsletter of the Southeastern Writing Center Association, lives again!

Though the first issue is small, we hope it is only the beginning of a revived communication link among our members and friends in the southeastern states and beyond. Laura Brandon, a senior French and Art major here at Agnes Scott and a veteran writing center tutor, created the new design, which will evolve as the newsletter redefines its role in the SWCA in the age of increasingly electronic communication. I couldn't have managed this first edition without her.

To make the newsletter lively and relevant, we need your suggestions and your contributions. Do you have brief questions about the running of a writing center? Experiences or anecdotes that you'd like to share? Are you a tutor who would like to have a real clip for your portfolio of writings to start a publishing career? We see the newsletter as having a vital role in announcing and publicizing conferences. What other purposes could it serve?

Send your ideas—large and small—and your contributions to the editor by e-mail, fax, or U. S. Mail at the following address

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Southern Discourse
Box 710
Agnes Scott College
Decatur, Georgia 30030
Fax 404-638-6369
ccozzens@ness.AgnesScott.edu

Include a telephone number and e-mail address in case I need to get back to you for any reason. At the moment we can publish articles of up to 600 words, but that may change in the future if there is a need and a willing group of contributors.

In the meantime, see you in Macon!

Christine Cozzens, Editor

When It Works: An End-of-Term Reverie

Leo came into my office this evening, flashing that radiant smile that charms most of his clients into eager conversations on their writing. "I've figured out that it works all over the place," he said. I knew enough to be quiet. "I mean collaboration. I just changed the Philosophy and Religion club. It works wonders."

"How did you do that?" I asked, pretending I understood. Leo never likes to explain.

"By not giving more ideas. Waiting; letting other people talk. Asking the right question. I asked everybody what they were worried about for finals. And I asked if anybody could help. Then I sat back and listened. I think it was our best meeting ever. You should have heard the ideas!" On our listserv he added, "It amazes me the amount of learning that occurs when the standard power positions are broken down. The comfort level increases as the learning excels."

Well, I know that. Sometimes. I see it all around me. After all, I inhabit the center of the universe. I work in a Writing Center, where the comfort level is maximized as the power positions break down. Of course, I didn't always feel so sanguine. I remember the terror I felt as a graduate student in 1972, when I helped staff a new writing center. The composition director's only advice was, "It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it." Asked about hiring undergraduates, he added, "Well, not that dirty!"

At Rollins in 1985 I was less than sanguine too. By then I wanted to build the world's best writing center, but I was stymied. There I was teaching, directing WAC, struggling for tenure, commuting with my husband in New Jersey. And I just couldn't do it all — staff the Center, make appointments, design materials, run staff meetings, talk with faculty, design brochures. So in desperation I turned to the peer writing consultants, begging them to take on one thing after another. That was the beginning of the surprises. Year after year,

Annual Conference of
the Southeastern Writing Center Association
Hosted by Wesleyan College
April 23-25, 1998

"We are the Stories We Tell: The Significance of Lore in the Writing Center"
Keynote Address

Speakers: Al Deciccio and Kathleen Shine Cain co-authors (with Michael J. Rossi) of
Walking the Tightrope: Negotiating Between the Ideal and the Practical in the Writing Center
and Exploring Literature: A Collaborative Approach

Registration Form

Name: _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

Institution: _____ Position: _____

I will bring materials for display from my writing center: _____

Please specify: _____

Presenters Only: I will need the following special equipment (circle):

overhead projector, projection screen, VCR, easel, other _____

Conference Fees: Include meetings and session, reception, breakfast, breaks, Saturday lunch. Membership includes a subscription to *Focuses* (journal) and to *Southern Discourse* (newsletter) student membership includes newsletter only.

Registration Fees (Pre-registration by April 1, 1998)

Faculty, Administrators, Non-Student Tutors	\$ 85.00
including membership	\$115.00
Late and On-Site Registration	\$95.00
including membership	\$125.00
Students and Student Tutors	\$35.00
including membership	\$50.00
Late and On-Site Registration	\$45.00
including membership	\$60.00
INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP IN SWCA	\$50.00

Jameson Inn

Room Rate: \$50.00 Double-Quad occupancy (includes continental breakfast) limited space available
Reserve room by April 1, 1998, by calling 1-800-Jameson or 1-912-474-8004

For further information, please contact

Peggy Ellington, Director of Writing

Wesleyan College

4760 Forsyth Road

Macon, GA 31210-4461

e-mail: peggy_ellington@post.wesleyan-college.edu

phone: (912) 757-3904 or (912) 888-6775 fax: (912) 757-4027

NOTE: In addition to formal papers and panel presentations, we seek a variety of interactive workshops designed to involve the audience in the "stories" you tell.

term after term, they've taken on more than I asked, proposing new innovations, gradually teaching me the meaning of collaborating with them.

Now it's December again, and I prepare for their well-entrenched creation: our end-of-term all-nighter. A week ago the schedule was empty. Tomorrow morning we'll go through it, whiting out second half-hours of appointments to make room for clients demanding space. Of course, I suspected that would happen.

Yet just this past September I was terrified. Over the years peer consultants have taken over — adopting faculty, working with new trainees, offering classroom workshops. But now we were to join a larger Student Resource Center; our future was not assured. In trepidation I added new training in writing-from-reading, combined peer language and writing consultants, shifted instructional models, accepted the loss of budget for advertising and materials-design. Now my loose ends are sprouting loose ends.

Nevertheless, tonight I am sanguine. It is not just that Leo has carried collaboration beyond the center, or that three peer consultants sit on the floor outside my office preparing their science lab reports. It's a matter of trusting the peer consultants, of realizing that they, at least, know what to value. And they do not fear change. ("Change is good," Carlos once told me simply, when I was hesitant to expand our staff size and redefine community-building.)

The writing center is a nexus of potential, resting in uncertainty, suspended in transition, spiraling forward on student discoveries. All we directors can count on is a cycle of success stories, a forward progression despite setbacks, take-overs, new expectations or old dreams. After all, we know the power of students, their will to create the comfort zone to learn. Of course we should be sanguine in December — as long as we remember the uncertainties ahead!

Twila Yates Papay, Director
Writing across the Curriculum
Professor of English and Writing
Rollins College, Winter Park, FL

SWCA Treasurer Reports Bullish Bank Balance

The SWCA bank balance is currently \$6,520.90, a figure that includes some of the expenses of the upcoming conference in Macon. A separate account of SWCA funds (\$2,000) is being maintained by Agnes Scott College for the publication of the Association's newsletter, *Southern Discourse*.

The organization is in the best financial shape it has ever been in, largely thanks to the last two well-managed conferences — Myrtle Beach in 1996 and Augusta in 1997. Many thanks to those responsible at both locations!

SWCA members sometimes need the organization's tax exempt number for business purposes. We are currently on file with the IRS as being tax exempt since our income does not exceed \$25,000. The SWCA tax exempt number is 63-0976928. Please make a note of this, as you never know when you may need it.

Tom MacLennan, SWCA Treasurer
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

The SWCA Tax Exempt
Number is 63-0976928.

SWCA Convenes in Historic Macon April 23-25, 1998

One of Georgia's most elegant and historically interesting cities, Macon will be the site of the 1998 Southeastern Writing Center Association conference this spring. Here at Wesleyan College—the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women—we intend to Make Macon Memorable for each conference participant at the SWCA Meeting, Thursday through Saturday, April 23-25, 1998.

The conference will begin Thursday evening with registration from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the Wesleyan College Campus. The welcome reception will be a good time to meet old friends and make new ones, with light refreshments and entertainment by our own "Washboard Band."

Friday morning registration continues from 7:30-8:30. At 9:00 am, there will be a brief SWCA business meeting for all conference attendees. The SWCA board will present a slate of nominees for open offices including president, vice-president, and treasurer, and nominations from the floor will be accepted. Voting will take place during the day.

We will have an exciting array of talks and workshops in sessions from 9:30 a.m. through 12:30 p.m.

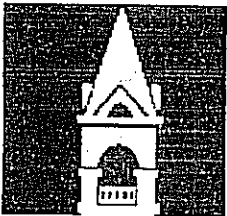
At 12:30, lunch will be served followed by the presentation of our keynote speakers, Al Deciccio (president

of NWCA, member of the editorial board of NWCA Press, and coeditor with Joan Mullin of *The Writing Center Journal*) and Kathleen Shine-Cain (professor of English at Merrimack College, currently director of the Women's Studies Program, author of several articles on writing centers, detective novelists, and contemporary American writers, as well as several textbooks). Deciccio and Cain will speak on the conference theme: "We are the Stories We Tell: The Significance of Lore in the Writing Center."

Afternoon sessions resume at 2:30 and run through 4:30. Dinner is on your own at one of Macon's many fine restaurants; the conference coordinators will provide a list of recommendations for every budget. For Friday evening, we've scheduled tours to the historic Hay House (an Italian Renaissance style mansion built in 1855), a brief tour of the Macon Music Hall of Fame, and a program at Macon's Museum of Arts and Sciences. There will be plenty to do!

Saturday morning, the sessions begin at 9:00 and end at 12:00. Saturday lunch is "sacks full of grub" for those homeward bound travelers. For those staying over Saturday evening, we can provide suggestions for a variety of things to see and do in Macon.

Peggy Ellington
SWCA Conference Coordinator



Southern Discourse

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