

# Southern Discourse

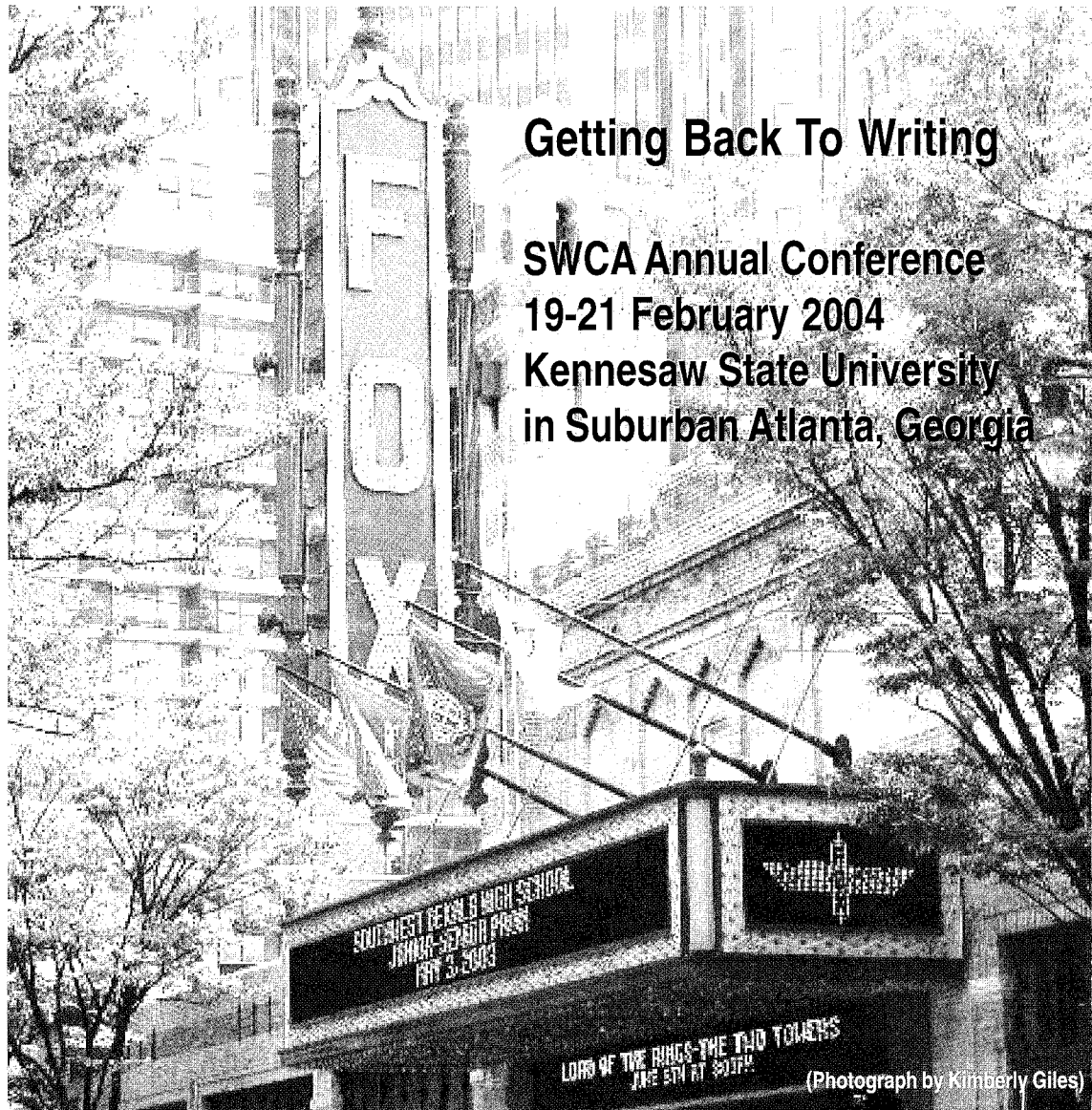
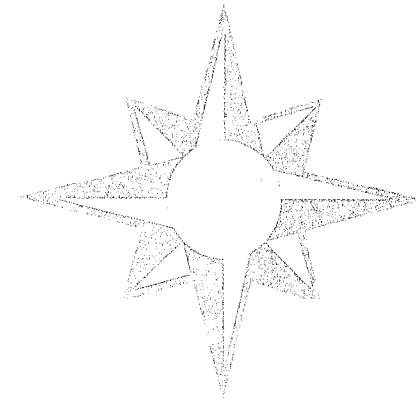
Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association



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## Getting Back To Writing

**SWCA Annual Conference  
19-21 February 2004  
Kennesaw State University  
in Suburban Atlanta, Georgia**

(Photograph by Kimberly Giles)

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# From the Editor

By Christine S. Cozzens  
Agnes Scott College



## Of Shoes—and Ships—and Poultry

Like writing centers all over our region and beyond, *Southern Discourse* is growing and stretching its wings.

In this summer issue, we welcome our first ever international contributor, Nancy Karabeyoglu from Istanbul, who presents an insightful approach to working with ESL writers. Thanks to Nancy, the word “southeastern” in our organization’s title takes on new and expanded meaning.

*Christine*

Another new contributor, Stone Shiflet, writes about collaborations in the Tampa Bay area that show how writing centers can bring institutions together. With SD regular William Sinki, we visit Café South for a story about the writing center growing out of itself and into the community.

From Charleston, Bonnie Devet invites us to tour the Writing Lab at College of Charleston in the latest installment of our new series *Back to the Center*. *Southern Discourse* is looking for centers of all shapes and wingspans to be profiled in the coming academic year’s issues, so please let us know if you would like to tell your story.

It’s not too early to begin planning your trip to the Atlanta area in February 2004 for the SWCA annual conference hosted by Kennesaw State University, and as is our custom, SD offers you travel information about the venue. Kim Giles gives us a glimpse of some of our city’s literary and theatrical highlights. Bob Barrier, conference director, describes the area near the KSU campus and the exciting conference theme, “Getting Back to Writing” that celebrates, among other things, the fortieth anniversary of Stephen North’s famous article “The Idea of a Writing Center.”

You’ll notice in several of these articles and elsewhere in this issue certain references to a rather controversial large white bird. Before you attempt to judge the validity of The Big Chicken as a local landmark or an architectural wonder, why don’t you make plans to come see it for yourself next February?

Please note that with the Fall 2003 issue, we are moving our deadlines to the fifteenth day of the month (September, January, April). So change the date on which that little pop-up box on your calendar screen will appear to remind you that it’s time to send that essay—or poem, or opinion piece, or monologue, or whatever it is you are planning on writing—to *Southern Discourse*.

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## *Southern Discourse* Publication of the Southeastern Writing Center Association

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### Deadlines

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15 April 2004

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AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE  
THE WORLD FOR WOMEN

# Kennesaw State University to Host SWCA Conference:

“Getting Back To Writing,”  
19-21 February 2004

By Bob Barrier, Kennesaw State University

The annual conference of the Southeastern Writing Center Association returns to the Atlanta area next year for the first time in almost a decade. Kennesaw State University, located in the northern suburbs of Atlanta, will host the conference on 19-21 February 2004.

Kennesaw has been for years Georgia's fastest growing regional university (now over 15,000 students), and the whole Northwest Georgia (I-75) corridor continues to hum with the tension and excitement of change. The northern suburbs offer something for every visitor, a mixture of the new and still remaining Old South. From the top of the area's most distinctive landmark, Kennesaw Mountain, one can see the town of Marietta (older than Atlanta), which despite its growth still has something of a small town atmosphere, especially the Square, with its antique stores, weekend arts and music festivals, and eclectic restaurants. Marietta itself has five historic districts and 375 homes on the National Historic Register, as well as both Confederate and Union cemeteries.

Just down Roswell Street is the famous Big Chicken, that 50's icon of rolling eyes and clattering beak that has given directions for thousands of area motorists (“Go to the Big Chicken and turn right”). Just north and only two miles from KSU is the historic town of Kennesaw, scene of the Great Locomotive Chase during the Civil War. The newly-renovated Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History (formerly Big Shanty Museum) exhibits the General, one of the trains, involved in that escapade.

During the 1980's and most of the 90's, Cobb was the fastest growing county in the nation. For that reason the area is crisscrossed with patches of urbanization, hundreds of suburban subdivisions, and still here and there a small farmstead holding on. With so much change, there is much to do in the area. Visitor can combine shopping with dining at three major malls in the area (Town Center—one mile south of campus—Cumberland, and Perimeter). For those who want to hike and picnic, in addition to Kennesaw Mountain National Park, Red Top Mountain State Park is only eleven miles past the campus, and the Silver Comet Trail (cycling and walking) in south Cobb goes for thirty-seven miles. And, of course, Kennesaw is at the foothills of the North Georgia mountains, with the Etowah Indian Mounds and Barnsley Gardens Resort (among many other attractions) less than thirty miles away.

This mixture of suburban and city, rural and trendy, fits the host institution, Kennesaw State University, which next year celebrates its fortieth anniversary. This “looking before and after” also fits the conference theme, “Getting Back to Writing,” which emphasizes our “real” and current interests in writing centers, our communicating with the outside, and the current purposes of a writing center. The theme

continues a discussion of issues raised at this year's conference, especially in the session “Writing Center Theory: What is Our Next Move.” This session stressed writing centers' tendencies to focus “more on difference and resistance than on articulating vital common ground where mainstream education and writing centers can stand together in a shared educative mission” and the idea “of teaching writing while influencing and leading change in the broader educational context.”

Since next year is the twentieth anniversary of the Stephen North article on the idea of a writing center, proposals might play upon those initial aims, his revisiting of the article, and the whole sense of collaboration and intervention implied. Specifically, sessions might explore whether or not our online emphasis fits our “real” purposes; our tutoring of ESL students; the needs of “more

structured” disciplines (if they are indeed more structured); tutor training; teacher-tutor concerns; and administrative issues (numbers vs. improvement in writing). These and other topics about returning (and debating) first principles are possible for the theme of “Getting Back to Writing.”

So begin planning now for February in Kennesaw—and the northern suburbs of Atlanta, where the Bradford pears and jonquils usually bloom in an early spring. ✨



Kennesaw State University

# Shakespeare's Hipper, Culturally and Racially Diverse Younger Sister: Writing Center Tutorials with ESL Students

by Nancy Karabeyoglu, Sabanci University, Istanbul

What if Shakespeare's household didn't have just one anonymous sister, but two? Thanks to Virginia Woolf, we know of that hypothetical, now famous sister, but what if there were another, an exotic one? One that the Shakespeare family had adopted on their travels to the New World to the west or the Old World to the east? This sister, bi- or tri-lingual, would have been at home in all kinds of places—eating fish and chips at the Falcon Tavern with her brother Will, lounging about on settees in salons, sushi parlors, and seraglios. This sister was a citizen of the world, not so provincially bound to the stays, petticoats, and all the fusty trappings of her time. She could talk to anybody about anything, and, more important, she could write and encourage others to write about their lives.

When ESL students and writing center tutors write together, a synergy—much like that possessed by the Shakespearean other sister—develops. Two writers work in a shared space, in what is sometimes a second or third language for both. The original writer of the text searches for “just that right word” to express a yet unvoiced idea while at the same time is concerned with external issues of accommodation. Is my report in the right format? How can I explain this scientific procedure in clear English? How does a conclusion look in an American argumentative essay? Through every step of an internal writing dialogue, this writer desires to articulate ideas while learning the discourse rules of this new society. The sense of being outside is twofold: as writer and as newcomer. The tutor, on the other hand, functions as a sort of representative of this world, the gatekeeper of rules and cultural codes whose possession implies success. Tutors significantly facilitate this process for the ESL student. They humanize all the mysterious prescriptive guidelines and assumptions the writing client brings to the session as well as clarify academic expectations to a reasonable level of understanding and ability, so that ESL writers can enter American academic discourse on their own terms and at their own pace. In many large universities, for ESL writing clients, the tutorial session is their first one-to-one encounter with a university figure during which their concerns can be addressed.

That's the ideal, of course. What happens sometimes is quite the reverse: the tutor talks rapidly and incessantly through the session, marks up all the missing “the's,” “a's,” and “an's” of the paper (identifying them as definite and indefinite articles), smiles, thanks the client for coming and waits for him or her to leave. The client can't talk nearly half as fast as the tutor, perhaps has had very few writing experiences in his or her native language high school education, and has just walked into a writing center for the first time. Perhaps the unasked questions are “What is an argumentative paper?” or “What is a paper?” “My teacher says ‘thesis’ all the time in class—I thought thesis was a book.” The client also isn't sure about what to call the tutor—“Miss, Miss” is the term of last resort—whether to shake hands, when to sit, or when the session is over.

I've experienced both sorts of sessions and been responsible for more of the latter than I'd like to admit. What follows are some suggestions from my experiences to



Nancy Karabeyoglu

make the sessions more productive for both—to achieve the synergy I spoke of earlier. Some are prosaic, some mundane, but my sense is that if tutors can empathize with the frustration that many nonnative writers face, the session is much more positive. If a tutor speaks or writes only in his or her native language, the easiest first step of identification with the struggles of the client is to remember high

school French, Spanish, or German language courses. Then, try to imagine writing a college essay in that language (or worse yet, a research paper) with little or no knowledge of cultural codes and conventions and discussing it with a native speaker in that oddest of all places, a writing tutorial! Enough said.

Here are some strategies for ESL conferencing.

Strive for clarity.

Establish the tone in the client-tutor relationship and the expectation for tutor and client. Introduce yourself as you'd like to be addressed. Say your name clearly

enough so it registers with clients. Be as straightforward as possible—give an overview of what’s going to occur so they feel in control during the session. Even something as small as gesturing for them to sit enables clients to follow cultural codes and focus more readily on the writing. Explain the purposes of any forms they see you fill out and the rights they have as writing center clients.

### Be calm.

To make newcomers feel at ease in a tutorial session, we all sometimes smile and joke a bit, but this friendliness sometimes can be misread and may undermine the session’s output. Many Middle Eastern and Asian students don’t associate smiles and jokes with an academic context, and they can be thrown off by the tutor’s goodwill. Your suggestions as to improving their text will be absorbed more and perhaps resisted less if you “neutralize” your manner. This is true particularly with graduate students in the sciences. Many of these students are extremely pressed for time because of the demands of living, studying, and working within a foreign culture. Quickly getting to the task at hand takes the focus off them and puts it onto their concerns, thus reinforcing the value of the writing tutorial. These clients expect to take you seriously and hear your concrete recommendations—which can be corrections of their language errors. Praise and reassurance are always positive; however, the client knows that his or her writing will be graded along with that of native speakers and wants to learn, for example, the correct preposition with the phrasal verb in the paper.

### Be directive.

Many clients come out of cultures where a certain amount of passivity is a form of respect to the teacher. If the session is too unstructured and the client is unable to assert herself and explain what problems she has with a particular task, frustration ensues. Sometimes I start the session in a directive manner, and then, based on the client’s behavior, I gradually start turning the hour over to her. It is difficult for second language speakers to start talking volumes right away—they need to modulate themselves to your accent, speaking patterns, and behavior. Silences are okay—many times clients need the fifteen to twenty extra seconds to form a question. I also model terms and phrases in my speech that they might use when they get comfortable enough to talk. I ask if they know what a term is before I start using it.

I supply as many words or sentence patterns as I can think of to facilitate the writing. Sometimes writers don’t know the variety of words in English and their context. If a writer uses the word, “area,” for example, I also offer “place,” or “space,” with sentences and explanations of their differences. I then return to the

paper, looking at context, to suggest “neighborhood” or “quarter.” When ESL writers see the range of expression before them, they feel more enabled in word choice. If I know the client’s first language, I also use it or suggest he use a dual language dictionary. I also link the client with tutors fluent in that language. Total mainstreaming or immersion in the second language has been a favored pedagogical approach in ESL classroom teaching; however, the nature of the tutorial session, I believe, favors as much bilingualism as possible to facilitate writing production.

### Delegate.

Encourage a variety of semantic and syntactical production in revision. If I have been working with a client for several sessions on revisions, I ask what are the other ways that the sentence could have been written and, more important, how the meaning of the sentence may change if revisions are put into place. Sometimes I start the discussion by suggesting a few alternatives—typing them on the monitor or saying them aloud. Then, I ask the client to generate some sentences. Issues of coordination or subordination can be presented this way as language choices that the writer owns. With more advanced students, discussions of contrastive rhetoric also call attention to the differences in composition in different cultures. Just asking, “Can you say something like this in Chinese?” attunes writers to looking at their writing in their own language as well as the second one. Pointing out differences in writing in other languages helps the writer to localize sentence patterns. Many languages, for example, encourage the use of the double subject (for Russian writers, double subjects express the universal within the particular) and the passive voice. Some languages have different uses for semi-colons: Turks uses them like commas.

### Imitate.

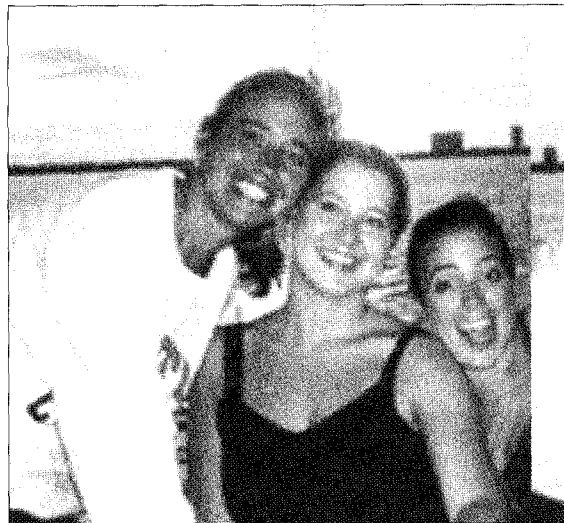
Imitation really is the sincerest form of flattery as well as the fastest form of learning. Expecting clients to know what a science report, a dissertation, or an editorial looks like in another culture is unrealistic. Supply your clients with models of what they are to do. Providing handouts is particularly useful because not only do clients leave with a tangible sense of what their papers should look like, but also they have myriad forms of word choice and context as well as sentence patterns and structures to model. Offering a variety of transitional type expressions provides a confidence-building crutch for beginning writers. Giving out handouts is also the less threatening and face-saving opportunity to discuss plagiarism. Models also supply exercises for vocabulary trees and other kinds of language building experiences.

# Local Collaboration Takes Off in Tampa

By E. Stone Shiflet, University of South Florida

At the recent SWCA conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, I was reminded of just how developed the regional and international writing center communities are. Speaking with practitioners from throughout the Southeast also reinforced my impression that individual centers have extraordinarily well-developed plans for growth on an internal level. But what I also noticed was the lack of a sustained, successful efforts to link writing centers together on a local level within the region. Many large cities have several different learning facilities with writing centers, and several practitioners from these metropolitan areas said that there had been some efforts to form a local alliance, but few of those efforts had been maintained, mainly due to time and funding limitations. While these limitations are unlikely to disappear, innovative ideas that are time and budget friendly may be only a phone call or an email away, as the following on-going experiment in the Tampa Bay area's writing center community demonstrates.

The University of South Florida Writing Center is now completing the third semester of local collaboration with nearby Hillsborough Community College. During the three meetings that we have held over the last three semesters, a number of ideas have been generated that involve the exchange of everything from the informational handouts for writers to ideas for scholarly advancement in the writing center community. How can this be? USF's center serves a large, urban Research One facility, and the Hillsborough Community College writing centers are focused on helping to make the two-year college experience the best possible for all writers attending the two campus locations. And yet we found together that our concerns for the writer and for improving consultations were markedly the same.



Stone Shiflet, enjoys a Tampa Bay sunset with other area writing center consultants. Left to Right: Kathleen Robinson, USF Saint Petersburg, and Liz Petrucho, USF Tampa.

In keeping with Stephen North's notions of writing center pedagogy, as developed in "The Idea of a Writing Center," this similarity can be explained quite simply: improving the writer doesn't change with student population or subject matter or level of education of the consultant or the writer. In our consultations designed to empower the writer, we, as practitioners, don't see any effort on the part of the writer and the consultant as being too small. But, I fear, that when it comes to establishing our own local initiatives for a collaborative writing center community, we often aim too high and end up feeling as if there is not enough time to foster such a community. If we're willing to take baby steps in consultations, shouldn't baby steps also be appealing in forming a collaborative network for communication with our local colleagues?

In fact, the initiative for Tampa's local coalition really started with a simple phone call and is evolving into a series of planned meetings (one per semester) that don't require more than setting aside an hour or so for a group gathering. The Tampa Bay area is home to many institutions of higher learning, including USF Tampa (public university) and the two campuses of Hillsborough Community College that have writing centers. Each semester, several emails serve as negotiations for a meeting time that will be equitable for all consultants. We are careful to leave the door open as to what we will discuss and what we will bring to the meeting, but the time is set aside so the collaboration can continue. This initiative is simple, granted, and small in scale, but it is not time consuming, not dependant upon funding, does not involve extensive research, and does not require extensive amounts of extra work for the consultants who are already playing multiple roles within the writing center community and the academy as a whole.

My purpose for outlining the Tampa area's current initiative is not to pat us on the back or to promise grandiose results. Prior efforts in our area, including a local elist that went silent pretty quickly, have not radically changed the face of our area's writing community, but they have demonstrated that writing center consultants are interested in what's going on not just within one center or on a regional or international level, but on a local level as well. My colleagues and I in Tampa don't know where these initiatives will lead. But one thing we do know is that these initiatives have opened a discourse for

collaboration; in other words, we are talking about ideas for improvement. This nubile dialogue is progress, progress that is important not only to the evolving pedagogies of each center, but also for the professional development of each consultant involved in this effort to link our centers on a local level.

The centers involved in this collaborative gathering focus on improving methods to support the writer. But each of these centers approaches this task through different avenues, not necessarily to accommodate the varying student populations, as writers are writers no matter the subject matter of the level of academic prowess, but to accentuate the strengths of the divergent writing center consultant population found throughout the Tampa Bay area. As Robert A. Moore and Peter Carino have noted, we now have almost a century of scholarship to offer direction and revision of pedagogy in our own individual centers. We also have regional and international writing center organizations through which we can gather and advance existing pedagogies. Now are we—practitioners of a discipline that is located not only within English studies but within every discipline that involves writing—ready to accentuate the “middle man”? We are all familiar with the power of collaboration within a center on a day-to-day basis and without the center at regional and international gatherings. From what we’ve done in Tampa to date, we’ve learned that it’s time to reach out to that middle area that has been left mostly unexplored. Now, it’s time to reach out to our nearby centers. This step need not detract from the learning potential of those gatherings already in place but instead should enhance every facet of writing center scholarship and practice. I am excited to think that someone reading about these developments in *Southern Discourse* might build on Tampa’s initiative and start another local coalition of writing center scholars and practitioners. After all, what better way to meld the inner-center and organizational meeting scholarship than right in our own back yards?

In the hopes of sharing what I have learned from local center collaboration in Tampa, I conclude with some suggestions on how writing centers can begin experimenting with local coalitions without the need for extra funding or increased consultant hours on the clock:

## Reach out

Sometimes a simple phone call or email can open discourse that may, one day, become a genuine coalition.

## Share ideas for scholarship

Simply forwarding an email about a conference may generate ideas within other local centers that could evolve into a panel representing several regional centers.

## Share advancements in your center’s scholarship

Your own ideas can be enhanced greatly by input from other centers working within your local area.

## Set aside time each semester

Sometimes the advancements in an hour-long meeting can inspire changes that will help every center involved and may motivate center improvements that span several semesters.

## Share your local coalition developments in writing center elists

The national and international communities can be advanced by local ideas, and those ideas, in turn, may be advanced by colleagues participating in the list.

It is my hope that when other writing center practitioners follow these steps and work to add to them, the cycle will start all over again with even more ideas for improvement at the local level. ✨

## IWCA-NCPTW 2003 Joint Conference

A Meeting of the International Writing Centers Association  
and the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing

October 23-25, 2003 in Hershey, Pennsylvania

Registration Deadline: 15 July 2003

Register Online: <http://www.wc.iup.edu/2003conference/registration.htm>

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# A Profile of the Writing Lab at the College of Charleston

By Bonnie Devet, College of Charleston

## History

Begun in 1975 as a classic comma clinic for students in a developmental English course, the College of Charleston Writing Lab discarded this image over the last fifteen years in order to become the center for all writing on the campus, serving both undergraduate and graduate students, with thirty percent of the clients seeking assistance with papers written for courses outside the English department. One of the earliest writing labs in South Carolina, the College of Charleston Writing Lab became in 1992 the first certified writing lab in the state, receiving this honor through the national College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), which provides standards for tutor training and lab development.

## Philosophy for Serving Students

All labs are innovative; otherwise, they would not survive and thrive on their campuses. What is unusual about the Writing Lab, however, is its philosophy of being "a lab of scholars for scholars." When peer consultants are well trained, they, in turn, better serve the clients and help increase the retention of students.

## Professional Growth and Development of Peer Consultants

Promoting the professional growth and development of peer consultants helps the Lab better serve its clients. Over the last ten years, the peer consultants have been active undergraduate scholars, presenting papers at state, regional,

national, and international conferences. They have also published in both regional (*Southern Discourse*) and national publications (*The Writing Lab Newsletter*). By acquiring first-hand experience delivering papers and writing for publication, the peer consultants bring their expertise with speaking and writing back into the Writing Lab, so they are more capable of assisting their fellow students.

## Theory into Practice

Operating under the theory of a lab of scholars for scholars also means having consultants convert theoretical works on composition into practice. After consultants have read articles on various aspects of composition or have studied chapters in composition textbooks, they conduct writing lab staff meetings on those topics; then, they also make the articles or chapters into exercises or handouts useful to clients. For instance, an article on the rhetorical function of titles became a highly popular handout "Titles for Papers: A Handout from the Friendly Folks at the Writing Lab"; a textbook chapter on writing conclusions became "Conclusions: How to Wow Your Reader," another often-requested item.

## Three Levels of Certification

No lab of scholars for scholars would be complete without rewarding the professional growth and development of the consultants as they deliver and publish papers as well as turn theory into practice. All this expertise leads to three different levels of certification, as offered by the CRLA: regular certification, advanced, and master. At each

level, consultants learn about being consultants and writers, thus reflecting their growth as tutors and their ability to help students.

## International Contacts

Fostering contacts with writing labs outside the United States reveals the cultural influences guiding all labs. The Writing Lab consultants learned about another country's approach when two British colleagues from the London College of Printing (London Institute) attended one of our staff meetings. The professional tutors from the UK spoke to the peer consultants as if they were their own colleagues; the resulting conversation provided

## By the Numbers

**College of Charleston:** a state-supported, liberal arts institution of approximately 10,000 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students

**Director:** Bonnie Devet (15 years)

**Consultants:** 20 undergraduates with non-English majors in the majority

**Student visits:** 1450 students served; 2500 contacts (all drop-ins)

**Hours open per week:** 163

**Recruitment of consultants:** nominated by faculty



insight into the differences in staffing, tutoring methodology, and clientele for both labs. This cross-the-pond interchange was the first time many of the peer consultants had met visitors from the UK, and it was also the first time the consultants had learned about the different constraints influencing British and American writing labs. Such exchanges help consultants view the culturally situated nature of their own lab. For that reason, the Writing Lab continues to encourage international contacts with the lab at Sabanci University (Istanbul) and the University of Antwerp (Belgium) by exchanging handouts and meeting their representatives at conferences.

### Outreach

Like most writing centers, the Writing Lab wants to serve even more students from courses across the curriculum. But how? Several current opportunities allow the Lab to reach out to students: a fall convocation, the ability to market directly to the disciplines, and the ever-increasing number of students going on to graduate school.

In the fall, the College of Charleston invites a noted author to campus for a convocation on the speaker's publication. In Fall 2003, for instance, the nonfiction National Book Award nominee Steve Olson will speak about his *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes*. All entering freshmen will have already read the speaker's book before coming to campus for the start of fall classes, and they will probably study the work in several of their first-term courses. To help students writing about Olson's book, Writing Lab consultants who are majoring in Biology have prepared a fact sheet which provides background on the work, a list of key scientific terms which readers of Olson's book should know, and a reprint of key book reviews. History, anthropology,

biology, and philosophy professors can send their students to the Lab to obtain this information and to work with the consultants.

The Writing Lab is constantly zeroing in on specific disciplines by, for example, developing handouts for writing papers in religious studies or in history. These handouts are created by the peer consultants who have already taken and excelled in the courses, so the materials are student-centered. Then, the Writing Lab sends copies to the discipline's professors in order to encourage them to refer clients.

Several efforts are directed at students who choose to pursue graduate-level degrees. Consultants learn to help clients with the various kinds of writing required in the application process. And the Lab offers handouts on "Writing a Personal Essay for Graduate School," "Writing an Essay for the MCAT," and "Writing Essays for the GMAT."



Bonnie Devet (left) tutors Diane Turgeon.

The Writing Lab at the College of Charleston provides activities and services by creating a lab of scholars for scholars with the goal of stimulating high proficiency in written communication. With the best students serving as consultants, the consultants and the lab play a vital role in the academic life of the college. Through the consult-

ants, the Writing Lab generates partnerships among faculty and students that enable all to strive for academic achievement. ✨

# Tutoring Lashandra at Café South

By William V. Sinski, Georgia College and State University

I am a man who prefers to spend my money in my hometown. By this I mean that I patronize independently owned businesses whenever possible. I am fortunate to have a locally owned restaurant only a few miles from my home in Milledgeville, Georgia. At “Café South,” Dr. Paula Payne of Georgia Military College, other good friends, and I have wonderful southern style cooking for lunch—well, let us just say, very often. Shoan Morales and his partner John Dennis lost no time becoming acquainted with us when they took possession of the restaurant about a year ago. Among the loyal, hard-working staff is a young lady named Lashandra.

Lashandra finished high school, but she has not yet received her diploma. She had a problem with the graduation exams for history and English. During the last week of October 2002, Shoan approached me on her behalf. Shoan told me, Lashandra finished high school and hopes someday to go to college, but she had failed her English graduation exam every time she had taken it. Shoan said, “Her options are either [take] a high school equivalency diploma or pass her graduation exams. Isn’t that what you do? Can you help her?” he wanted to know.

“Yes,” I responded, “I guess I can be of some help, but how and when?” I asked, “Where would we meet?” At once Shoan said that we could use the café, since even though the restaurant closes after lunch, the staff and owners are there all afternoon.

I agreed to help, but the next move would be up to Lashandra: “Have her provide for me a list of all the possible times that she can be here in the afternoons every day of the week,” I said. Within a few days, I had the list. We met from 3 to 4:30 p.m. six afternoons in November.

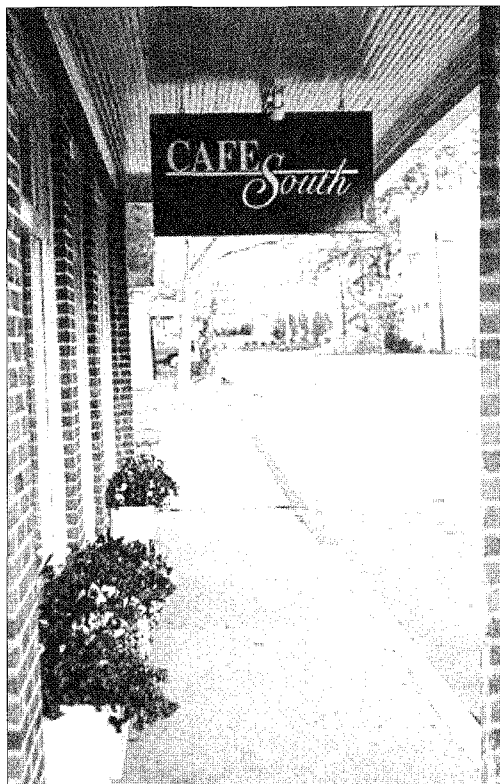
I brought three items to these sessions: a college composition handbook that I had from one of my classes, paper to write and draw on, and an old edition of Richard Wright’s *Native Son*. Lashandra brought with her a guideline printed by the county school system explaining what to expect on the test. As I expected, the test would be part grammar and part reading comprehension. There were examples of writing in the guide, and they were followed by multiple choice questions designed to detect if readers fully understood what they had read.

I did not know when we started that Lashandra was losing hope of ever passing. Although she was determined to take the test again and again until she passed, she was not sure that she ever would.

We started at the very beginning of the handbook’s grammar chapter. For a while, I read the instructions for each part of speech and punctuation mark. If Lashandra had trouble grasping a concept, I would ask her if she knew the meaning of the key words in the instructions. Sometimes the book used words that were not in my student’s vocabulary. Once a key word was explained, the concept of the instructions became clear. We covered almost every part of speech this way.

Although I started off each session reading, I would encourage Lashandra to take over the reading during the session. This made it easier to determine if she was unfamiliar with any of the words. Another thing I had both of us do while reading was to read each punctuation mark aloud as if it was a word. If, for example the sentence was “For a while, I read the instructions.” we would say “For a while comma I read the instructions period.” I find myself watching for stories and books with well-written sentences and well-placed punctuation. *Native Son*, the novel I brought for Lashandra, is an excellent example of fine grammar and also contains African American dialect within quotations. The elegant grammar in the narration and the authentic dialog in the quotations can help any

student understand the difference between the “home” languages we speak and the grammar we use for writing in school.



Café South (Courtesy of [www.cafesouth.com](http://www.cafesouth.com))

First, we would read an exciting paragraph or a long sentence for its content; then we would read it again, speaking the punctuation marks, to observe examples of acceptable writing. Lashandra's exam would also include questions requiring critical analysis of thought pertaining to the context. So we spent some time every day learning how to determine the intended concept of each sentence and how it related to the question or the story. We had time for four of these one and a half-hour long reading and grammar sessions, when, in the middle of November, Lashandra took the English exit exam for the third time. She would not learn her score for almost a month.

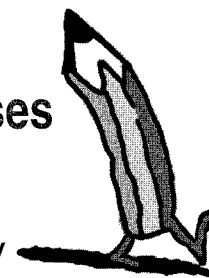
Although Lashandra felt she had done better on this exam than her past ones, we agreed that she and I should continue to meet, but less often, until she found out whether or not she had passed. I told her that it was important that she feel more comfortable and confident each time she took the test. I told her that we would continue to meet and prepare for the next test until she passed and that she would feel more confidence every time she tried no matter how she scored. Before she was notified of the results, we met two more times. Although she was not sure if she passed, Lashandra was now convinced that someday she would.

During all of the sessions, the staff worked quietly in other rooms. Each time Shoan or John would bring me coffee and kindly thank me for helping Lashandra. Just before Christmas, Lashandra was informed that she had passed. She is elated and thankful. As soon as she passes one more exam, she will be enrolling in Georgia Military College.

Preparing Lashandra for her exit exam was like an exit exam of my own. She was not a currently enrolled student under the direction of an instructor with a lesson plan. She was outside the school system with no professional guidance. Here at GMC, I can consult with an instructor to see if I have helped a student that I have tutored. While I was working with Lashandra, my only indication of real progress would be her expressions of growing self-confidence—until she passed. In her high school environment, Lashandra developed skills that she should be able to apply after graduation. During her exit exam, Lashandra applied her skills and passed her test. In doing so, she as well as her high school education have been validated. In my full-time student and English tutor environment, I develop skills that I should be able to apply to things other than term papers. During my sessions with Lashandra, I applied my tutoring skills and the benefits of my ongoing education, preparing her to pass her exam. By doing so outside the college environment—not for a grade or a dollar—I feel that my ongoing education and I are also being validated. ✨

## What's the Point? Toward Promiscuous Exercises

By Peter Carriere,  
Georgia College and State University



In the late 1700s, a printer named H. Rablet offered a style manual to the American public. Entitled *Practical Exercises in grammar, Punctuation and Rhetoric*, the manual contains some exceedingly quaint phrases. It begins with an eight-page section called "Examples of False Grammar and Orthography," followed by "Arrangements," in which rules with examples that break the rules are given, followed by "Promiscuous Exercises." "Redundances" bring up the rear, so to speak.

Some of the false grammar and punctuation entries in Rablet's booklet are truly consistent with current practice. Here are a few.

"Neither wealth nor beauty rescue us from Death."

"Every one of them were detected and suffered the punishment Due to there crimes."

"The man that wast here yesterday and which was very ill is gone into the coun try."

"It was not her who told the news, it was me."

"The king and the queen put on her robes."

Sentence 1 illustrates a subject-verb agreement error, the "neither-nor" construction requiring the singular verb: "rescues" not "rescue." In sentence 2 there are several errors: a subject-verb agreement error, a spelling error, a capitalization error, and a pronoun error. The sentence should read "Every one of them was detected and suffered the punishment due to his crimes." In sentence 3 "that" and "which" should be replaced by "who," and "wast" should be "was." In 4 "her" should be "she" and "me" should be "I." And in sentence 5 "her" should be "their."

But the pamphlet also contains some fairly childish examples of mistakes that few real children would ever make: "I admire she because her sings very well." Not even young children would say something like that! Here's another: "The Obedience of Childs to there parents are the basis of all government."

# Some Literary Highlights of Atlanta for SWCA Conferees in 2004

By Kimberly Giles, Agnes Scott College

She's 56 feet tall, and she nests atop a Kentucky Fried Chicken. Visitors may find a massive hen roosting on a fast food chain odd, but to Atlantans, she is as common to our landscape as Stone Mountain or Civil War sites. Placement inside Marietta is often relative to The Big Chicken; even airline pilots use her as a navigational device. An unintentional landmark, the huge red and white wooden fowl of Marietta will be the place from which all directions will stem on your literary tour of Atlanta, Georgia at next year's SWCA Conference at Kennesaw State University.

Only five mile away from The Big Chicken, Theatre in the Square stands in Marietta Square. Consistently ranked as one of Georgia's top professional venues, twenty-one year old Theatre runs year-round, perfect for an evening excursion. Affordable ticket costs (\$20 to \$32 depending on the show and time of week) merely contribute to technical expenses and salaries for the players and crew for this nonprofit organiza-

tion. You'll be delighted by this community secret, housed in a former cotton warehouse with a garden alley. The two stages—a larger Main Stage and a more intimate Alley Stage—host a five-show regular season and summer shows. Coordinated by civic leaders from the metro Atlanta and Cobb County area, productions generally consist of innovative works and new talent.

Just a short drive from Marietta, Roswell's Hobbit Hall children's

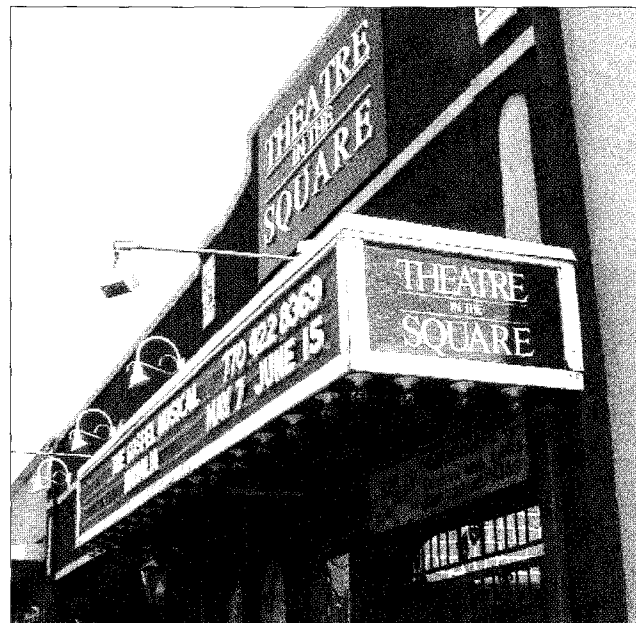
bookstore delights book lovers of all ages. Children run over the moat and cross the bridge on their way into a children's wonderland. But adults can go, too. You'll enter to brightly colored walls, hanging construction paper butterflies, and the store's popular pet, Porkchop the goldfish. Excited kids will dash from their parents' sides to pick up and look through picture books while anticipating story time. Grown-ups enjoy story times, too, at nationally recognized Hobbit Hall. Nestled inside a seventy-five year old house, the twelve-year-old independent bookstore perches amongst a row of small businesses in downtown Roswell. This store is absolutely hands-on; no "please don't touch" signs here. Parents and children can sit at one of three reading tables and enjoy a book together. A world open to the young, the store rambles through five themed rooms of books for every age.

Those longing to tour the big city will enjoy a trip to the New American Shakespeare Tavern, located on Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta. Unique to this city, the Tavern operates as an Elizabethan Theater might: audience members are encouraged to interact with players; the costumes, props, sets, food, drink, tables, and chairs correspond with those of Elizabethan times. Food and beverage services open an hour and fifteen minutes before show time and include beer, wine, coffee, tea, soft drinks, Bass, and Guinness. The audience fills in quickly to chat and enjoy the theatre, constructed with the Globe in mind, so arrive early, lest you be seated in the top tier of high-backed stools. The Tavern puts on plays of other writers, as well, but their specialty lies in their namesake. Performances run Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 6:30 p.m. Regular tickets cost \$19.50 Thursdays and Sundays, \$22.50 Fridays, and \$24.50 Saturdays. Groups of ten or more receive \$3 off the cost of an adult ticket.

Just four blocks north of the Tavern, The Fox Theater—originally planned as a huge Shriners' headquarters in the form of a mosque—has been an Atlanta attraction since



The picture book section of Hobbit Hall. (Photograph by Kimberly Giles)



The Theatre in the Square. (Photograph by Kimberly Giles)

the 1920s. Unable to pay for the building they had designed, the Shriners sold it to William Fox, who made it into a movie palace. By the seventies, the Fox was falling into disrepair. It was named a National Historic Landmark in 1976; restoration began in the late 1980s, and improvements continue today. A the lobby houses a faux

### Directions and Reservations

**Theatre in the Square** is located at 11 Whitlock Avenue in Marietta. Turning left from the parking lot of The Big Chicken onto US 41, make an immediate right onto Roswell Rd. Staying straight, this becomes Whitlock Ave. Theatre will be on your left. Their box office number: 770-422-8369. You can order by phone (Visa/MC/AMEX only) or by fax at 770-422-7436. Their web address: [www.theatreinthesquare.com](http://www.theatreinthesquare.com).

**Hobbit Hall** is in Historic Roswell; turn left from The Big Chicken onto Roswell Road (Hwy 120 or Marietta Hwy) going NE and stay straight. Hobbit Hall's back parking lot will be on your left; look for a big red barn in their backyard. They are online at [www.hobbitHall.com](http://www.hobbitHall.com). You can also reach them by phone at 770-587-0907.

**The Shakespeare Tavern** is at 499 Peachtree Street NE, and **The Fox Theater** is four blocks north. From the Big Chicken, go NE on Hwy 120 until it dead ends into Roswell Rd./Atlanta St. Make a right and continue through Sandy Springs. Make a left onto I-285 East; take I-85 south until you see the exit for Peachtree St. Take it and stay straight. The Fox will be on your right, and the Tavern four blocks later on your left. Parking ranges from \$3 (if you'll walk) to \$15 (at the Fox). Contact The Tavern's box office at 404-874-5299 or online at [www.shakespearetavern.com](http://www.shakespearetavern.com). The Fox books through Ticketmaster at 404-817-8700 or online at [www.foxtheatre.org](http://www.foxtheatre.org).

**Dad's Garage** is located in Inman Park in Atlanta. From The Big Chicken, take the directions to I-85 above. Exit at Freedom Parkway and make a left at the first light onto Boulevard. Make a right at the first light onto Highland Avenue. Continue .8 miles and make a right onto Elizabeth St. The Garage will be the second drive on the right. Their box office number: 404-523-3141. Online: [www.dadsgarage.com](http://www.dadsgarage.com).

Park" creator Trey Parker); *O Happy Day* (the lost play by Graham Chapman of *Monty Python*); and *Carrie White the Musical* (in the ensemble's words, "an unauthorized parody adapted by Dad's Garage.") Hilarious improv shows run year-round

night sky ceiling and lavish architecture. "Mighty Mo," a 4000 pipe theatrical organ accompanies performances, which include the Atlanta Ballet, movies, and plays. Show times and prices vary by program, but the box office opens two hours before show times, and the Fox (and its concession stand) opens one hour before show times. As refreshments run a bit high and aren't allowed in the theater, plan on dinner at one of the restaurants along Peachtree Street.

A hidden treasure in Atlanta's metropolis, Dad's Garage is an entertaining and unique alternative to better known theaters. Opened in 1995, this relatively new mid-size theater produces outlandish original productions and improv shows. The 140 seat Mainstage space and forty seat Top Shelf area compose the Theatre, which packs in long before show time on weekends. Over 150 volunteers and performers work at Dad's Garage, which produces shows such as

*Cannibal: The Musical* (based on the movie by "South

Thursday through Sunday nights. Costs for plays range from \$10 to \$20, and improv shows cost \$12. Arrive early: a line forms in anticipation of performances, and seating is limited.

Mark your calendars for the SWCA conference next year, and enjoy the unusual literary attractions of one of the South's biggest cities. While in Marietta, if you get lost, ask for The Big Chicken, and you'll always find your way. ✨

### WHAT'S THE POINT: Continued from page 11

Included with these are more sophisticated entries whose meanings rely on subtle distinctions: "Gratitude operates forcibly in good and generous minds," where "forcibly" should be "forcefully." Rablet, it seems, wanted to make sure that his pamphlet would be useful to all age groups.

The "Arrangement" section of the pamphlet begins with this observation: "Two great objects to be regarded in composition are perspicuity and ornament. The former is the most important, and should never be sacrificed to the latter." Certainly none of us would sacrifice perspicuity to ornament. I know I wouldn't. The first rule of the "Arrangement" is that "members of a sentence, most intimately connected in sense, should not generally be separated." Here's an example of the "false arrangement" that follows the rule: "This is the reason, that the Asiatics have no Noblesse, in my opinion, and the Europeans no monuments." Perspicuity, let alone ornament, demands that the phrase "in my opinion" follow the word "reason."

Here's a rule that doesn't seem to have made the journey to far beyond Rablet's pamphlet: "That arrangement of a period will always be the most elegant and forcible, where, without obscuring the sense, the most important images, the most sonorous words, and the longest members, bring up the rear."

Ignoring the fact that the rule violates the previous rule about "forcible" vs. "forceful," this rule raises a question. Who would argue with longest members bringing up the rear? Who would consciously be that crude and unperspicacious? Well, perhaps those who can't see how the example violates the rule: "All other arts of perpetuating our ideas continue but a short time, except writing and printing." Maybe the phrase "except writing and printing" is not a long enough member to bring up the rear and should therefore be moved ahead of the other members: "Except writing and printing, all other arts perpetuation our ideas continue but a short time." Hmmmmmm.

Okay. We may be able to make some sense out of these rules, but how about Rule 5: "In the arrangement of a sentence, two or three small circumstances or members should not be placed together, but interspersed among the capital members of a period." With what perspicacious example might we illustrate this rule? If you come up with one you might want to have yourself checked for an ornament infection. And anyway, even if you did, most of us, if you tried to show us, would stare politely but firmly ahead, wonder about your perspicuity, and say to ourselves, "What's the point?" ✨

# 2003 SWCA Achievement Awards Presented to Cozzens and Cassorla

By Jennifer Liethen Kunka, Francis Marion University

During the awards brunch at the 2003 SWCA Conference held February 15 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Jennifer Liethen Kunka of Francis Marion University and Jerry Mwangbe of Kennesaw State University, cochairs of the SWCA Awards Committee, presented Christine Cozzens of Agnes Scott College with the 2003 SWCA Achievement Award and Leah Cassorla of Valdosta State University with the 2003 SWCA Peer Tutor Award.



Christine Cozzens and Leah Cassorla

The SWCA Achievement Award is presented annually to a writing center administrator at an educational institution in the Southeastern region for his or her outstanding contribution to the SWCA and the writing center community. The recipient of the 2003 award, Christine Cozzens, is an associate professor of English and director of the Center for Writing and Speaking at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA. Following an entertaining skit by her tutors, Christine was invited on-stage and was presented with a commemorative plaque and a \$250 cash award. Christine is a past president of SWCA, a current board member and the editor of *Southern Discourse*, the official publication of the SWCA. She has contributed to the scholarship of the writing center community through numerous national conference presentations and publications. In addition to fostering the work of the Center for Writing and Speaking, she has also helped to establish writing centers at other universities in the Southeast. As the award recipient, Christine will present a speech on excellence in writing center administration at the 2004 SWCA Conference hosted by Kennesaw State University.

Conferred for the first time in 2003, the SWCA Peer Tutor Award is presented annually to a peer consultant in the Southeastern region for his or her excellence in tutoring and outstanding contributions to the writing center community. Ms. Leah Cassorla, an undergraduate student and writing center tutor at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, GA, was introduced at the awards brunch by Dr. Donna

Sewell, director of the VSU Writing Center, and was presented with a commemorative plaque and a \$100 cash award. Leah, a graduating senior majoring in journalism, has consulted with a variety of student writers at VSU, including students writing in English as a second language. She has also developed instructional and promotional materials for the VSU Writing Center and has presented at several SWCA conferences. Leah has also served as the editor of *The Spectator*, VSU's student-produced newspaper.

In addition to cochairs Jennifer Liethen Kunka and Jerry Mwangbe, members of the 2003 SWCA Awards Committee included Marcy Trianosky, Michael Pemberton of Georgia Southern University, Bonnie Devet of College of Charleston, Marcella Sherman of Hillsborough Community College, and E. Stone Shiflet of University of South Florida.

The guidelines for the 2004 Achievement Award and Peer Tutor Award competitions will be announced in the next issue of *Southern Discourse* and will be available at the SWCA website ([www.swca.us](http://www.swca.us)). ✨

WRITING CENTER TUTORIALS: Continued from page 6

Be neat.

This advice is particularly prosaic—so much so that I'm almost ashamed to mention it. Watch your handwriting! Try reading handwritten comments in another language, and you will see how difficult it is. Printing or careful script is one way also to decrease frustration when you want a client to respond to your written suggestions on the paper.

Be patient.

It takes a minimum of five years to even begin to achieve fluency in a second language and comfort within its culture. Clients—perhaps because of personality, previous educational experiences, impressions of how Americans perceive their culture, or the dynamics of their current situation—progress at different speeds through the stages of honeymoon, culture shock, frustration, and then adaptation to a new culture. The undergraduate client you have tutored may be very different person in graduate school and thus the relationship bond may change. In either case, your assistance during the either session is invaluable.

As our writing community grows, the parameters of what constitutes American academic English will shift—and for the better. Different voices, different contexts will enrich the academy's identity. Writing centers are one of the most exciting places to be because there, acceptance and articulation begin. If Shakespeare had a younger sister—or brother—she or he would be at the writing center. ✨

## The President's Letter

By James Inman, University of South Florida

Dear SWCA Colleagues:

I hope this correspondence finds you enjoying a peaceful and positive summer.

I'm pleased to report that our organization continues to move ahead with initiatives and changes making a real difference. The five initiative teams—Evaluation, Membership Expansion, Online Program Expansion, Awards Program Expansion, and Organizational Issues—have all been working hard, and we have begun to see the results of their activity. The Evaluation Team, for instance, has completed a comprehensive review of data from the Charlotte conference and learned a great deal. They'll be sharing that information soon and helping us make future conferences the very best they can be. The Online Program Expansion Team has been equally busy, and if you haven't yet had a chance to check out our new SWCA website, I invite you to do so: <http://www.swca.us>.

As you see discussed elsewhere in this issue, plans for the 2004 conference at Kennesaw State University are proceeding well. Robert Barrier, Jerry Mwangbe, and their team are working hard to host an exciting conference for us. The board will meet this summer to join in the planning and support the Kennesaw team in whatever ways we can.

As you look to the 2003-2004 academic year, I'd like to invite you to think about ways to get active in our organization. This fall, we'll be calling for nominations for open officer and board member positions and sharing details about how the elections will be conducted. The new positions will take effect at the Kennesaw conference. Please consider serving the organization in this way. Also, the Membership Expansion Initiative Team needs members interested in reaching out to secondary and postsecondary schools in our region; if you're interested, please contact team chair Jennifer Ahern-Dodson at [jahern@duke.edu](mailto:jahern@duke.edu).

Best wishes to everyone,



## Join SWCA Now and Save Money!

As of **1 July 2003**, SWCA membership dues will be increased from \$15 (individual) and \$25 (institutional) to \$25 and \$40. Membership includes voting privileges, discounted conference registration fees (discounts for an unlimited number of registrants when you have an institutional membership), and three issues of *Southern Discourse* per year (with two additional copies of each issue for institutional members).

If you did not renew your membership right before or during the conference in Charlotte, you still have time to join at the old rates—\$15 (individual) and \$25 (institutional)—and your membership will last until **30 June 2004**. In other words, you get a year and a half of membership privileges at the old yearly rate!

But you must join before **1 July 2003** to take advantage of this offer. Don't delay! ✨

### SWCA Membership Application 2003-2004

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Center or Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address for copies of Southern Discourse: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Writing Center Web URL: \_\_\_\_\_

2003-2004 Membership

Individual \$15

Institutional \$25

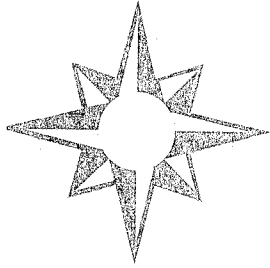
The membership period extends from **1 July 2002** to **20 June 2003**

Mail application with check to:

Christina Bourgeois, SWCA Secretary, Georgia Institute of Technology, School of Electrical & Computer Engr., 777 Atlantic Drive, Van Leer Building, Atlanta, GA 30332-0250

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“An unintentional landmark, the huge red and white wooden fowl of Marietta will be the place from which all directions will stem on your literary tour of Atlanta, Georgia at next year’s SWCA Conference at Kennesaw State University.”

—Kimberly Giles  
(see LITERARY HIGHLIGHTS  
OF ATLANTA, page 12)



**Kentucky  
Fried  
Chicken**