

Update

Director's



Executive Director Richard Sterling

### Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Welcome to the new academic year! I hope the summer gave all of you time for authentic recreation and energy for the intense summer work that is so central to writing projects.

This summer marked a new high point for National Writing Project activities. Writing retreats, a directors retreat, meetings of our networks, and teacher-consultant exchanges gave members of writing projects new opportunities to go "on the road" in the summer, to try out their ideas and explore their issues in new contexts. In this issue of *The Voice*, teacher-consultants and directors alike reflect on their recent writing project experiences.

This summer, I attended the directors retreat in Florissant, Colorado, which was led by Sherry Swain, director of the Mississippi Writing/Thinking Project, the statewide network of Mississippi writing projects; Jim Davis, director of the Iowa Writing Project; and Joan Taylor, state director of the writing projects in Nevada. Thirty people from eighteen sites met in the mountains to write and talk about the future of local sites and the thorny issues that confront them. In one session, participants identified and posted specific problems, wrote comments and suggestions on each one, and developed strategies to solve them. For instance, one site director was having trouble justifying to her new dean the released time she was receiving for her writing project work. Members of the retreat helped her plan a series of meetings with key faculty and administrators. The sophistication of both the plan and its contents made the point once again of the deep knowledge that writing project people bring to this work.

NWP finance manager Mike Mathis was also a big hit with his workshop on "strategic budgets." Taking a budget from a writing project site, Mike asked the directors to identify where the three components of the writing project model were to be found in the budget. This analysis allowed everyone to see how the budget drives the activities. Directors then met with Mike for individual budgeting strategies.

This annual event helps build local sites and the network, offering the kind of renewal that

writing project directors should treat themselves to. Here is where the writing project model can be used for your own professional development and leadership. Directors, if you haven't yet attended an annual retreat, I urge you to reserve a place for yourself at next year's event.

This fall you may hear voices of the NWP on your local radio station. More than 160 radio stations across the country have requested a copy of our first CD release, *Rural Voices Radio*. For a sample of these engaging programs, go to our Web site, click on the Rural Voices Radio link, and listen!

When I first came to Berkeley in 1994, the NWP office occupied about two and a half rooms. We grew into a dozen rooms in two buildings, and quickly outgrew them. This fall, we are moving to new offices one block from the main university campus and will occupy a floor and a half. The entire NWP staff and the California Writing Project staff will be together in one office for the first time. We can't wait!

When you are in California, please stop by to see us. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you in Milwaukee where, this year, the NWP Annual Meeting will take place in the landmark Pfister Hotel, the most elegant hotel in town.

See you in November!

# NWP

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## Write for *The Voice*!

The National Writing Project wants you to project your voice—by writing for *The Voice*!

We welcome stories about classroom practice, students' work, and activities at writing project sites, as well as opinion pieces and essays. Submissions run 600–1000 words in length. Photos are also welcome.

For more information, email [editors@nationalwritingproject.org](mailto:editors@nationalwritingproject.org) or call (510) 642-0976. We prefer electronic copy (email or diskette), but hard copies are also accepted. Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, email address, and writing project site affiliation.

