

Letter from the Editor

Muriel Harris

We happily introduce you to the first issue of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*. Even though this issue is Vol. 40.1-2, it launches our new name, new format, and new direction in the history of this publication—and perhaps in writing center history as well. *The Writing Lab Newsletter* started out as a few sheets of paper sent to a small group—indicative of writing centers at that time—no organizational structure, no publications dedicated to writing center scholarship, no SIGs at conferences, no writing center conferences, no internet to use for staying connected. At a session of the April 1977 College Composition and Communication Conference, a group of us, in a session on writing center work, were all amazed to find that there were others out there also starting writing centers. We needed a way to find each other after the conference was over, to stay connected, and share what we were learning. That was the spark that led to *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, a few stapled sheets I mailed to everyone who listed their names and mailing addresses on a lined notepad I sent around as we were being pushed out of the conference room by people gathering for the next session. Slowly, snippets of information that were sent to me began to grow into short essays and then longer essays. Somewhere along the way, reviewers were called upon to read and review the contents. For all the decades since then, *WLN* continued to develop and expand its reach as well as its content.



Now, the editorial staff realizes that this publication has been something larger than a newsletter for a long time. What began as a pre-internet attempt to keep an otherwise isolated group in touch now has a global reach with readers on all continents except Antarctica (we'll work on making contact with any writing

centers there). Today, it's a peer-reviewed journal with articles reprinted in tutor-training packets and cited in other scholarly journals. *WLN* has been used as a resource for research, is the subject of several articles on its history and growth, and has and has had articles reprinted in books, including *The Best of Independent Rhetoric and Composition Journals 2013* and the 2014 collection. *WLN's* history matches the growth trajectory of writing centers. Indeed, writing centers have become an integral part of most institutions of higher learning in the United States as well as in numerous secondary schools, and are increasingly opening in institutions in other countries as well. After much discussion, plus conversations with many of you, the *WLN* editorial group decided on a new name for this publication that celebrates its history by keeping *WLN* in the name and acknowledges its status as a journal: *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*.

In addition to a new name, we have a new URL for the website: <wlnjournal.org>. The website has also grown with links now to our Facebook page; Twitter feed; international blog, *Connecting Writing Centers Across Borders (CWCAB)*; open access archives (including pdfs of the beginnings of *WLN*); and *WcORD*, the new database for online resources. We invite staffs of other writing center publications to upload links to online articles in their publications to *WcORD*, and we invite writing center staffs to add links to resources on their websites—blogs, instructional resources, podcasts, videos, social media pages, etc. There are instructions on our website about how to do all this. We also acknowledge our deep gratitude and appreciation for the work of our reviewers, and list their names on the website too: <wlnjournal.org/submit.php>.

A further reorganization has happened within our editorial staff. We each have a multitude of different responsibilities, but it's also an appropriate time to recognize that we work as a group, endlessly e-mailing, chatting, even Skyping when we have time. I kept the title of Editor for too long, given that Lee Ann Glowzenski and Kim Ballard and I work as a team, and they do more of the heavy lifting than I do. They contribute long hours of careful scholarly thought as they work through all our complex matters of editing a journal, especially the work of coordinating with authors and reviewers. Lee Ann also heads the *WcORD* project, and Kim also oversees book reviewing. The real situation is that all three of us are Editors. Alan Benson, in his usual unassuming

way, prefers to hide the importance and extensiveness of his work under his current title as Development Editor, developing our social media sites (Twitter and Facebook) and keeping them filled with interesting content. Moreover, he set up *CWCAB* and database for *WcORD*, and handles all the work of overseeing the review process for essays sent to the Tutor's Column. Josh Ambrose, our Blog Editor, has breathed incredible vitality into *CWCAB*, the international blog, with content that gives us entry into what's going on in writing centers around the globe. Josh is assisted by his Associate Blog Editor, Steffen Guenzel. These changes are properly noted in the masthead section.

We hope to continue publishing articles that expand writing center knowledge, experience, and practice. And that will depend on you. Share what you've learned, what programs you are structuring, what research you've done, what best practices you engage in, what theoretical frameworks you overlay on your work, how you engage with current scholarship. Make connections between the theoretical and practical and set your work within the context of other scholarship in that area. All of this is relevant, valuable, and worth sharing. And as you write for *WLN*, *WcORD* will help you find links to scholarship and other resources for your writing center. Let's continue to learn from each other—to collaborate and share—as we all continue to engage in the superb world of writing centers. We await your essays, to publish under the banner of *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*.