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## From the Editors

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## From The Editors

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This year *The Writing Center Journal* moved West, from its original site in New York to Texas—where manuscripts are received, sent out for review, and edited—and Utah—where the journal is printed and mailed to subscribers. The original editors, Lil Brannon and Stephen North, were short-distance collaborators; we are long-distant collaborators. But the journal continues to be a collaborative effort.

As we sat in the lobby of the Philadelphia Hilton at the recent NCTE meeting, conferring hurriedly on this issue of the journal, we were struck with the appropriateness of the journal's being a collaborative venture. By phone, by long letters or rapidly scrawled notes, or at moments snatched from conferences, our collaboration as editors reinforces our belief in the importance of collaboration in the process of writing.

Although some early writing centers were designed for individual study, complete with carrels to isolate students physically from each other and ear phones to prevent verbal communication, most writing centers at this time are collaborative learning centers—places where writers come to talk about their writing with another person. This other person may be a teacher, a fellow writer, a peer tutor, or a graduate student. But, ideally, this person is above all a reader, one who interacts with the writer's text and provides the writer with responses and reactions to that text. As Nancy J. Allen points out in her article "Who Owns the Truth in the Writing Lab?", which appears in this issue of the journal, the paper that results from this type of collaboration should remain the writer's paper, but it is a different paper than it would have been had the collaboration not taken place.

There are, of course, other types of collaboration in which two writers work together to produce a text. For example, another article appearing in this issue of the journal is written by two writers—one a teacher of literature, the other a writing center supervisor. In this type of collaboration, two writers assume the roles of the writer and tutor in a tutorial. They talk together about their writing; they read each other's writing; they talk again; they write and rewrite, read and reread. Of course, infinite variations of this process are possible. Just as no individual writes exactly like another, so no two collaborative writers produce a text in exactly the same way.

Recently, a number of researchers, most notably Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, have begun to explore the process of collaboration in producing a text. Since writing centers are the ideal context for studying collaboration, it seems particularly appropriate for those who work in writing centers to contribute to this research effort. Tutors who "collaborate" with literally hundreds of writers each semester would seem to be the ones most ideally suited to explore this writing phenomenon—to discover how collaboration

works or why it sometimes works less well than at other times and thus to expand our knowledge of writing as a social as well as a private process.

As you read this issue of the journal, we are collaborating on the next issue—talking on the phone, sending letters, manuscripts, and computer disks back and forth across the western plains and mountains that separate us. And we will spend a few hours together for a work session at the rapidly approaching 4C's. Thus, born of collaboration, *The Writing Center Journal* continues to be the product of collaboration. We wouldn't have it any other way.