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Whatever happened to...Dave Healy?

In the last issue of *Writing Center Journal* (25.2), we inaugurated a Special Feature column called "Whatever Happened to...?" that we continue here. Given the location of the most recent IWCA/NCPTW conference in Minneapolis/St. Paul, it only seemed fitting that we should turn our sleuthing powers toward uncovering the whereabouts of Dave Healy, former WCJ editor and former director of the Writing Center at the University of Minnesota General College. Dave seemingly dropped from the grid once he left his position at Minnesota. Well, we thought it was high time for him to surface. We asked Dave to respond to the following questions: What are you doing now? What have you been doing since you were last on the WCJ scene? How does writing center work influence the kind of work you're doing now?

Blame *The Writing Center Journal* for my disappearance from the writing center. I edited *WCJ* from 1994-1997, an experience that emboldened me to strike out on my own as a freelance editor in 1997. Currently I edit two publications: the *Park Bugle*, a monthly community newspaper, and *Public Art Review*, a journal that comes out twice a year. When I'm not working on either of those, I do freelance dissertation editing.

WCJ's profile of Jeff Brooks quoted an excerpt from his "Minimalist Tutoring": "Fixing flawed papers is easy; showing the students how to fix their own papers is complex and difficult." I agree with the second of those assertions, but I take issue with the first. Fixing flawed writing poses its own difficulties and complexities. To improve a written product while preserving the integrity and originality of the producer is a task that's different from tutoring but is by no means easy. It's a task that engages and challenges me every day.

I ended my writing center career at the University of Minnesota's General College. By next July, that institution, which was the open admissions unit of the U of M, will no longer exist. The University's Board of Regents voted to close GC; supposedly, its services will be absorbed into other colleges. It is difficult not to be cynical about this decision. It is easy to see GC's demise as another indication of how business interests drive the modern university.

For me, the writing center was a place that was in but not of the academic world. It occupied what Harvey Kail and John Trimbur called "semi-autonomous space." Though I am no longer part of that space, I continue to believe that writing centers can serve the academy by representing something different from business as usual, and I am proud to have spent a good chunk of my life in that enterprise.