Looking Back, Looking Forward: Celebrating Two Decades of the Language Arts Journal of Michigan

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Editor

The Language Arts Journal of Michigan ... grew out of a need to publish a number of outstanding articles ... to complement the Michigan English Teacher ... the desire to print articles by Michigan educators involved in English language arts ... and to strengthen the relationship between different levels of English and Language Arts instruction: elementary, middle school, junior high, secondary, and college. “Breaking Into Print: LAJM” Language Arts Journal of Michigan (1:1, 1985).

In the twenty-some years since founding editor John VanAntwerp, wrote this introduction and published the first-ever LAJM, the journal, like MCTE itself, has grown, expanded, and improved. Print styles have changes and articles have come and gone; physically, the journal has become smaller in size and then large again. Editors have rotated through, each putting their own unique spin on the direction of the journal. Issues of diversity, teacher-research, language, writing, history, professional development, literature, and assessment have been addressed, among many others. Topics of ‘best practice’ have always been present, explicitly, in terms of special issues, and implicitly within teacher narratives describing and explaining teaching practices.

The LAJM has remained committed to its original vision: to provide a forum for the best ideas, theories, and practices of teaching English language arts. -- they also provide a history of the issues of English language arts and teaching during the past twenty years.

Through their reviews and the articles we reprint, in this issue, readers can see how our profession has evolved -- and how the Language Arts Journal of Michigan has remained true to its guiding principle -- to serve the teachers of Michigan by providing an outlet and a forum for the best that the teachers of Michigan have to offer. In this issue, we also honor the indefatigable Ray Lawson, a teacher whose influence on MCTE and the profession of teaching English language arts in Michigan is nearly immeasurable.

We can only imagine what will be in the “Celebrating Fifty Years of LAJM” issue. That one will come out around 2036 or so. Be sure to mark your calendars.

And finally, as my last act as editor, I want to congratulate our new co-editors: Kia Jane Richmond and Doug Baker. I can’t think of no one better to guide the LAJM into a new era. Readers will see a new energy and excitement from the ideas and voices of two of the best teachers and scholars around. We are privileged to have such a tremendous team at the helm of our journal.