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From the Editors' Desks

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From the Editors' Desks

BY MARY JO FINNEY & PAT GALLANT

Dear Readers,

If you were up at 11:59 p.m. on December 31st, chances are you were counting backwards with millions of others around the world. 10...9...8...7...6...5... until you could flip a page in the calendar to a new year. Counting seconds of the final minute in a year is quite striking. Unless you are an athlete trying to beat the clock or an astronaut awaiting take-off, seconds tick away with an invariable, incessant, uninterrupted beat without many of us thinking about how we are spending them. But when we stop to count the seconds as they pass, suddenly each one becomes invaluable.

In this 40th anniversary issue of the *Michigan Reading Journal*, we pause to appreciate its impressive history since its first publication in 1967. Over the last 40 years, the MRJ has evolved from a 4" x 5 1/2", 16-page publication with hundreds of readers to an 8 1/2" x 11" 60-plus page juried journal that is indexed in electronic databases nationally with a readership that exceeds 6,000. Over 120 issues have featured close to 1,000 authors sharing views on comprehension, phonics, word study, children's books, testing, parent involvement, emergent literacy, reading problems, classroom environment, literature discussion, content area reading, vocabulary, writing, spelling, and more—all focused on readers ranging from preschool through adolescence and adulthood. The range of topics, authors, and perspectives shared in nearly 5,000 pages of print (roughly 1,500,000 words) has generated countless ideas, shaped innumerable viewpoints, and influenced the teaching of reading over the last 4 decades.

In this issue, we include two Vintage Visions. Ron Cramer, a frequent contributor to the *Michigan Reading Journal*, was an assistant professor at Oakland University when he wrote his 1968 article about the connection between reading and spelling achievement. Now a distinguished professor of education, he revisits the topic of spelling and shares his thoughts. Mark Conley, past editor of the *Journal*, reminisces about an article he wrote in the 1990s. Their contemporary perspectives underscore the value of looking back as each inspires readers to pause, reflect, and move forward.

Moving forward, we feature two generations of writers as Jenn Cramer (Ron's daughter) is our guest editor of the adolescent and young adult literature column. She and her colleagues at Avondale High



PAT

MARY JO

School integrate teachers' perspectives and ideas within their reviews. Elizabeth Petrides shares her unique experience writing and performing two operas with her eighth graders, Jen Potteiger moves her students beyond "pseudo-notebooks," and Jennifer Van Eyck contemplates the value of doodling. Speaking of doodling, check out David Spiller's "doodlidge" in the cartoon feature. While the topics of emergent literacy and parental involvement are not new, Peggy Thelen offers her perspective on this timeless issue. Katrin Blamey and Sharon Walpole share experiences and insights about the new and evolving roles of literacy coaches in our schools.

As the *MRJ's* first editor Charles F. Sherwood wrote: *Like its parent, the Michigan Reading Association, the Journal is the visible expression for the interest of hundred of educators in promoting better reading.* As current editors, we embrace Sherwood's vision for the *Journal* of sharing, learning, and *promoting better reading.* By taking the time to read and write for the *Michigan Reading Journal* you will be actively contributing to the literacy education of our youth. You can count on it.

Pat

Mary Jo

p.s. If you have not yet registered to attend the MRA conference in March, there is still time (see p. 46).