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From the Editors' Desks

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From the Editors' Desks

BY PAT GALLANT & MARY JO FINNEY

Dear Readers,

Think about it. When you were a student in the same grade as the people you teach now, did you enjoy learning? Which memories stand out? Chances are that you remember meaningful learning experiences—activities, projects, trips, literature, speakers, events—that brought what you were learning to life or sparked your imagination.

And chances are that you remember the person who guided you through that memorable learning situation ... who *inspired* your learning. You remember that person because inspired teaching involves both the head and the heart. Information alone is not likely to inspire. The giver of the information or experience—whether a person, a book, a presentation or a piece of art—inspires. Inspired teaching comes from inspired teachers who truly care and have a passion for teaching that fuels students' dreams, passions, and creativity.

Over time, however, most fuel burns out. Keeping the flame of inspiration alive in our classrooms is a tall order. Active learning experiences require more of a teacher's energy to plan and prepare than do routine, passive assignments. Only by renewing the sources of our own inspiration can we keep the fire burning in our students.

For 51 years now, the Michigan Reading Association has inspired teachers who attend our annual conference. This year was no exception. Were you there when three thousand educators flocked to Grand Rapids in mid-March? Many of you found inspiration from renowned literacy experts, exhibitors, authors, and—especially—from each other. Many returned to classrooms with fresh ideas, validation for your teaching, and a renewed sense of awe for all that is possible for educators.

When you receive this issue of *The Michigan Reading Journal*, the school year will be at its end. In fact, you may decide to put this issue aside in favor of that novel you've longed to find time to read or that story you want to capture in your writing notebook. You may put thoughts of school behind you



PAT

MARY JO

as you enjoy the sunshine and your time with the dearest people in your life. Yes, summer is an excellent time for self-renewal.

But inspired teachers simply can't help themselves! Thoughts of your students are never far away. A walk through a bookstore to browse for a novel finds you wandering into the children's and young adult literature sections. During a family trip, you snap photos of interesting landmarks or historical places to show to your students and you bring shells and interesting rocks from the beach or a hike to spark a science inquiry. And this issue of *The Michigan Reading Journal*, with feature articles about classroom teaching, literacy teaching tips, stories and poems written by teachers, author interviews, and reviews of professional books and children's literature finds its way into your suitcase or beach bag.

Enjoy!

Pat

Mary Jo