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# Fall Brings Changes: A Letter from the Editors

BY MARY JO FINNEY & PATRICIA GALLANT

Dear Readers,

There *are* a few things we can all count on. The sun will rise. The sun will set. The seasons will change. Predictable events help us remain steady day in and day out, offering routine that helps us set our clocks, plan our day, and live our lives. Like clockwork, every 3 years the *Michigan Reading Journal* receives new editors and this, the 2005 fall issue, marks the beginning of our editorship. We are honored to begin this significant role during the Michigan Reading Association's 50<sup>th</sup> year.

We accepted the invitation to serve as editors because of the mentoring and support that Linda Pavonetti provided us in serving, first, as editors of the "Professional Books of Interest" and, later, as guest editors of the winter 2005 issue. Linda provided her encouragement and expertise that, ultimately, helped us to feel capable of assuming the editorship she so deftly managed. In transitioning the editorship, she invited us behind the scenes of the production of the *Michigan Reading Journal*. We marveled at Linda's creativity and organizational skills.

When the *Journal* changed editors in the summer of 2002, Linda Pavonetti, Jennifer Berne, and Kathleen Clark formed a trio who presented nine issues that offered a range of timely, thoughtful, and inspiring articles, book reviews, and features critical to instruction in reading and language arts throughout our state. At that time, they commended the previous editors when they wrote: *It is our ambition to continue their fine work, offering the readers of MRJ a publication that is research-based, practically situated, and enjoyable to read.* (p. 4) We thank Linda, Jennifer, and Kathleen for not only achieving but surpassing their goal.

As your new editors, we approach our term of service with great excitement. We expect our role to be both challenging and invigorating. We pledge to preserve the quality and integrity of our statewide publication while enjoying the privilege of putting our editorial signature on each issue before passing the editorship on to those who will follow us.

Each issue will continue to include research-based articles, feature articles representing the many voices



Gallant



Finney

from classrooms around the state, reviews of books for professionals, and book reviews of quality children's and young adult literature. In service to you, our readers, we offer our assistance in your efforts to write for publication.

As a peer-reviewed journal, there is a measure of accountability to be upheld in all that is accepted for publication. The work of our reviewers is to ensure the quality and relevance of manuscripts as they go through the review process. We would like to draw your attention to a question of current interest, if not controversy, regarding that which is published in a peer-reviewed journal. What constitutes a "research" article for the *Michigan Reading Journal*?

A research article reports a study designed or replicated by the author(s) including references to professional journals and books cited within the body of the article. Research articles may report on classroom practice but *they link the content of the article to previously published research while contributing to the existing body of research*. These two aspects distinguish the article from a story about a classroom experience or event.

Regarding those important events within your classroom practice that you can't wait to share with other teachers, the *Michigan Reading Journal* is home to those articles, as well. Your readers are eager to learn what worked in your classroom, but they also expect you to share who influenced your teaching practice. By referencing books, articles, monographs, and other works that link your classroom practice to particular authors and outside resources, you offer a perspective to your experience that helps your reader understand how your experience relates to other practices. Linking your article content to previously published works is a duty to your reader.

Another of our goals, as editors, is to increase the geographic range of contributing authors to include voices from every corner of the state. We welcome new articles from authors who are previously published in the *Michigan Reading Journal*. Of particular interest to us is hearing from you never-before-published writers who have much to say but teeter on the edge of submitting an article for publication. To you we say, "We are here to support your first time efforts!" Your venue, your view, your voice are unique. It is your fresh perspective that invigorates others who will read and wonder how their classrooms might be changed.

So what's new in the *Michigan Reading Journal*? We introduce the following features with the hope that you are inspired to contribute!

### **Quips, Quotes, Cartoons**

Teaching is full of joy, humor, quotable moments, and quips. Share those quotes (from your students, your

colleagues) that have stayed with you. Pass around those sound bites you have been chewing on! Render a humorous moment in cartoon form (no expert artwork needed, originals only). Quips from the classroom have potency that can sweeten a teacher's day.

### **Teachers as Writers**

This section sets aside a place for teachers to publish original poetry, short stories, or snapshot memoirs related to teaching (500 words or less). Reading other teacher's writing can be most inspiring.

### **Vintage Visions**

What's on the horizon can be richly illuminated by that which shines from the past. This section will feature an article previously published in the *Journal* that is poignant in its relevance to today's classroom. If you have a favorite article from past issues, please let us know.

### **Letters to the Editor**

We would like to open up the *Journal* to two-way communication by inviting you to respond to what you have read in the latest issue that crossed your desk. Were you inspired to try a teaching strategy? Are you fuming over an essay you just read? Readers love to listen to other readers' responses so let us hear from you, please.

Finally, you may notice artwork peeking around the pages, and we invite submissions of original art.

With great anticipation,

*Mary Jo & Pat*

## **Michigan Reading Association Golden Anniversary Special Call for Submissions**

In this our 50<sup>th</sup> year as the Michigan Reading Association, we look back to appreciate how far we've come. Please join us! Use 350 words or less to tell about your most memorable moment from your first day of teaching. Include the year you first taught, your age at the time, the grade level, and the type of setting (rural, urban, suburban). Describe the setting and the event as vividly as possible. Consider feelings, senses, language, and any idiosyncrasies of the context and times. We hope to hear from teachers with experiences throughout the past fifty years, including retired teachers, practicing experienced teachers, and those newest to our profession.

Please send your story by e-mail or hard copy by December 10, 2005, to

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