11-2016

From the Editors' Desks

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Recommended Citation

Holmes, Sierra; Shafer, Greg; and Stearns-Pfeiffer, Amanda (2016) "From the Editors' Desks," Language Arts Journal of Michigan: Vol. 32: Iss. 1, Article 3.
Available at: https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.2144

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Dear LAJM readers,

It is our distinct pleasure to put forth our first issue as LAJM’s new co-editors. Our experience spans all levels of education: Sierra is a secondary teacher, Greg is an instructor at a two-year college, and Amanda is a professor at a four-year university. We believe our diverse backgrounds can help bring a unique perspective to LAJM, and we are honored to have been chosen to continue the distinguished tradition of this journal.

We are excited to share this issue’s contributions with you - and it is a rich set of contributions. The topics within this edition include: teacher education and first-year writing program development, concerns of first-year writing/composition instructors, ways of including marginalized students’ voices in the study of literature, reviews of young adult novels, poetry by the MCTE 2016 conference lunch speaker Casey Rocheteau, and much more.

If you were in the audience this October at the MCTE conference in Lansing, then you had the amazing opportunity to hear Nancie Atwell speak. During her inspirational, insightful keynote address, she cited the following poem by William Stafford. She related the “thread” to how teachers hold tight to practices in the classroom that they know work – like reading and writing workshops. The thread is what keeps teachers going, she said, even when those around ask “what are you doing?” or “why are you doing that?” The thread is also what binds educators together – a sense that we are in this together.

We hope that within this issue, and all issues of LAJM to come, you find pieces of the thread that keep you moving forward.

Sincerely,

Sierra Holmes
Greg Shafer
Amanda Stearns-Pfeiffer

The Way It Is

There’s a thread you follow. It goes among things that change. But it doesn’t change.

People wonder about what you are pursuing.

You have to explain about the thread.

But it is hard for others to see.

While you hold it you can’t get lost

Tragedies happen; people get hurt or die; and you suffer and get old.

Nothing you do can stop time’s unfolding.

You don’t ever let go of the thread.

- William Stafford, 1998