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About the *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*

The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* is published twice a year (Fall and Spring) by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, a nonprofit state affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English and a member of the NCTE Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement. The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* publishes articles which discuss issues, theory, theory-based practice, and research in the teaching and learning of the language arts at all levels, kindergarten through college. It publishes articles, interviews, annotated bibliographies, review-essays, research, poetry, and classroom practices. The *Language Arts Journal of Michigan* invites language arts teachers at all levels—elementary, secondary, college—to submit manuscripts for consideration. Articles from many perspectives on the themes are welcome.

Guidelines for Submitting Manuscripts. Manuscripts should be 4-12 pages in length, double-spaced, and use the new MLA style for parenthetical documentation and the NCTE Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language. Send one original and one copy. If you wish your original returned, include a self-addressed envelope with first-class postage. The deadline for the Spring 1998 issue is May 15, 1998. See the Call for Manuscripts near the end of this issue for further information.

Submit Manuscripts to:

Mary Dekker/Diana Mitchell, Editors
The Language Arts Journal of Michigan
The Writing Center, 300 Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824.
(517)432-3610 or (517)655-3749
e-mail <mitch144@pilot.msu.edu>

Assistant Editors

Jill B. Van Antwerp, Lowell High School
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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Most of us in the field of language arts can remember the special teachers who fostered our love of literature. These teachers were not only responsible for making us lifelong readers, but were also a force in guiding us toward a teaching career. In these classrooms we learned how to engage with the text, the characters, their stories, their conflicts, and their lives. And we learned that our own lives and the experiences we brought to the text were as important as the text itself.

In the articles that follow, the authors demonstrate how they are passing on this love-of-literature legacy. Through strategies that foster engagement, understanding, and personal connections to books, the authors bring literature to life.

As the teachers tell their stories of literature in the classroom, we see students from early elementary school through college being immersed in good literature environments. In these classrooms the students engage in the literature through discussions of many kinds, from informal work in small groups to Literature Circles and Book Clubs. To further the students' comprehension of texts, the teachers use informal talks, speeches, drama, writing, and artistic projects. And the teachers report how all of these strategies lead the students to connect their own personal experiences with the texts they are reading.

In our Teaching Teachers column Pamela Waterbury provides a thorough discussion of one of her courses in which her students discover the “magic of books” through a “Library Fair Night.”

We round out this issue with Peter Butts in *From the Stacks* in which he writes about engaging early adolescents with new classics that will launch them into an aesthetic appreciation of literature and a lifelong love of reading.

Enjoy!

Mary Dekker

Diana Mitchell