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## From the Editor

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## From the Editor

Change, as we all know, is inevitable. Certainty is a concept that often remains in works of fiction but is rarely experienced in life as each day brings something new and different and many times those days can be challenging. Years ago when working on my undergraduate degree at Kent State University, I wrote an essay titled “And Then the Phone Rang” in which I talked about how a single phone call, in my case one that told me my uncle had died, can cause unexpected and often unwanted change. But as one crooner once said, that’s life.

In the 51 years of the life of *Reading Horizons*, there have been many changes. We started out as a newsletter and quickly evolved into a journal of literacy research and practice. While each editor brought his or her personality and goals to the journal, the focus has remained the same – literacy in its many forms. The time has come for *Reading Horizons* to evolve.

First, this is my last issue as the editor of *Reading Horizons*. I have accepted a position at the University of Findlay in Findlay, OH and will begin in January, 2012. My four years as the editor have been, as I would tell my students, most excellent. I have had the privilege of working with researchers around the world as I have read hundreds of manuscript submissions. The hardest part of this job sending out those ever dreaded rejection emails. I’ve received many in my professional life so each one is difficult but, in keeping with the spirit and requirements of peer-reviewed publications, quite necessary. I’ve also been honored to work with many authors as we revised and edited their scholarly work and ultimately published them in the journal. The writing has been exemplary and the reading and editing is personally and professionally fulfilling. Thank you for all I have learned through what you have researched and written.

In addition, I have worked with some of the most talented and respected professionals in the field of literacy research and practice as they are members of the Editorial Review Board for *Reading Horizons*. These people have served well in this capacity and have consistently given substantive feedback on each manuscript. Their time and commitment to this job is outstanding and I have enjoyed working with each of them. And then there are my two book reviewers, Barbara Ward and Terrell Young. I envy their job as they are constantly reading and reviewing the best



in children's and young adult literature. What a job! In another life, I fancy myself as a librarian or owning a local book store or maybe just reading and reviewing all of those wonderful books. Thanks to Barb and Terry for their unfailing commitment to *Reading Horizons* and literature.

The second big change coming to *Reading Horizons* is that beginning with volume 52, the journal will become completely digital through a collaboration with the Waldo Library here at Western Michigan University and Digital Commons. This means that hard copies of the journal will no longer be shipped as they will be accessed through subscribing libraries and individual subscriptions. All submissions, too, will be completed through a central website which will make the process of creating an issue more streamlined. The quality of the journal will only improve as these changes are made. Information will be sent to each subscriber with instructions on how to access the journal.

With all of those announcements out of the way, let's talk about what is included in this issue of *Reading Horizons*. Linda Smetana and Dana Grisham decided to do a bit of changing in a Response to Intervention (RTI) program by introducing their students to graphic novels. Working with five elementary students, the researchers found that the students' word recognition and fluency increased when they were reading books that they found more interesting and compelling. Lea McGee and Alanna Rochelle Dail studied an Early Reading First (ERF) program as they developed a series of benchmarks in alphabetic recognition, concepts about print, phonemic awareness and alphabetic principle, and vocabulary development. The authors found that this ERF program was effective in raising the literacy performance of low SES children.

SuHua Huang chose to study the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and how effective it is at increasing middle school students' motivation and achievement in reading. Her research is fascinating as the interviews revealed how this age group manages the AR program as well as how they felt about reading the books and taking the computerized tests. Barbara Ward and Terrell Young once again introduce us to some interesting books about animals. From the non-fiction books describing gorillas signing to small kittens to fiction about lonely, blue chameleons, these books are sure to appeal to a wide audience.



One last word about change. Editing a journal is all about change as I've been privy to some of the literacy research that is going on around the world. That kind of research often brings change to our field and it's been great to be part of that change process. The research contained in the pages of this and other journals is what can ultimately affect classroom practice and help students of all ages become more skillful readers. And isn't that what this is all about? When we keep the focus on the reader, the student, the person, change can be a good, positive thing. So let's just move on forward and meet those changes with a smile on our face, a song in our heart, and a good audio book on our iPod.

It's been a pleasure.

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**There is no more crucial or basic skill  
in all of education than reading.**

