

Heather Parrish

From the Editor

The editor of the Montana English Journal introduces the current volume of the journal.

Greetings! What a pleasure it is to welcome you to the second online edition of the *Montana English Journal*, and our 41st volume over the long publication history of the Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts.

When we set out last year to shift from a print-only publication to the online platform you've accessed today, our goals were manifold: to streamline the process of submission, review and publication; to increase *MEJ*'s reach to a nationwide audience; and to continue building and sharing our vibrant, collaborative community of educators in ELA classrooms across Montana. I am excited to share that the first digital edition of *MEJ* reached not only readers across the nation but across the globe: from Colorado to Texas to Pennsylvania, to the Netherlands, Bulgaria, China, and beyond.

The spirit of collaboration unites the diverse pieces gathered in this edition of the journal. In this issue Christy Mock-Stutz of Montana's Office of Public Instruction shares her experiences cultivating an online professional development community that spans the state and brings rural educators together; Jan Clinard of Helena College describes an assessment norming activity that provided room for discussion and collaboration between college faculty and dual enrollment high school teachers. Both of these activities underscore the value of working together for learning, engagement, and student success.

Other contributors in our 41st volume offer their curricular experiences and reflections to readers of *MEJ*, an apt form of collaboration in itself. Dan Li of the University of Houston engaged middle-schoolers in a creative project merging paper art and writing, and provides an overview of that unit here. Donna Lynn Miller explores the healing potential of young adult literature, specifically in Sam J. Miller's *The Art of Starving*. And Catherine Dorian provides an overview of her unit plan on Debra Magpie Earling's *Perma Red* and the intersection of the rural experience and identity. Each of these are practical and thoughtful, and we are grateful for their exceptional classroom work and contributions to the Montana English Language Arts community.

Finally, please enjoy Dan Hoffmann's shape poem in which he probes questions of state and identity, and what it means to be a Montanan today. The value of teacher-as-writer cannot be valued enough, and it is a privilege to share in one another's work.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve the Montana ELA community as editor of *MEJ*, and I look forward to sharing in our future work together.

Heather Parrish is an English teacher at Capital High School in Helena, Montana. She can be reached by email at mrsparriedu@gmail.com.

Social Collaboration in the Workplace

*Copyright © 2017 by the Montana Association of
Teachers of English Language Arts.*