

From the Editor's Desk

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Most of us complain that the summer was too short, and we drag out all the old clichés which we pass on to each other this time of the year. However, I suspect that most of us are glad to get back into the classroom. We have hopes and aspirations for the coming school year which will eliminate those mistakes and failures of last year.

It seems to us that this is one of the important reasons for the existence of MCATA: it provides us with a vehicle whereby we can keep fresh in our thinking; it helps us to come together and get those ideas that others have, which we can use to the advantage of our own students.

Naturally, everything we encounter is not for us. Many of these things are very idealistic and without much practical application at the moment. But we need to keep ideals ahead of us so that we are always reaching and striving to improve mathematics education. We need to be thankful for those few who are able to take the idealists' concepts and put them to practical use. That is what helps us advance. That is how we grow professionally.

We take this opportunity to wish our colleagues the best year ever.

A little problem . . .

Ask students who know how to use variables to evaluate this expression in less than three minutes:

$$\frac{987654321}{987654322^2 - 987654321 \times 987654323}$$

Answer: 987654321

Hint: Let $X = 987654321$.