

# Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER

The Alberta Teachers' Association

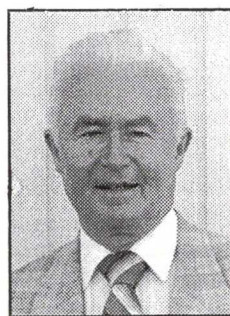
*Providing leadership to encourage the continuing enhancement of teaching, learning and understanding mathematics.*

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## From the Editor



The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things—so pardon me if I do a little rambling.

After serving as MCATA's newsletter editor for nearly 20 years and after being involved with MCATA in various other capacities for several years—for a total of more than 30 years on the executive—I believe that it is time to retire and let someone with

vigor and fresh ideas take over.

One thing that will have to be seriously considered is the future viability of a printed newsletter. Would having the information on our council's website be adequate? Please let the MCATA executive know your feelings and opinions on this matter.

Once again, the Council seeks nominations for the Outstanding Mathematics Educator of the Year Award. If you know someone who has made a significant contribution to education in Alberta, please nominate that outstanding teacher. A nomination form accompanies this issue of the newsletter.

My years with MCATA have provided many, many fond memories. Through my involvement I have developed many lifelong friendships, and I have had many great experiences which I shall forever cherish.

I encourage each of you to become involved, whether it be to serve on the executive; organize, assist or present at a conference; or submit an article, an interesting question, a challenging lesson or even a good joke to our publications or website. Your contribution is necessary and will be appreciated.

Bon voyage. ▲

—Art Jorgensen

## NCTM Report

NCTM's 78th annual conference was held in Chicago April 12–15, 2000. The conference opened Wednesday night with a spectacular multimedia presentation by outgoing president Glenda Lappen and the release of NCTM's *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics 2000*. The Hyatt ballroom was filled to capacity an hour before the presentation, which left many delegates standing in hallways outside to hear about the new standards.

Several Alberta delegates attended the conference, including presenters such as Cynthia Ballheim, "Mathematics and Technology: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"; Paul Williams, "Try Some Applied Mathematics: A New Direction"; and Marion Florence, "What Does Mathematics Integration Mean at the High School Level," among others.

I heard keynote speaker Zalman Usiskin present his "Sum of the Powers of Mathematics" address, whose highlights included Usiskin playing the piano and singing. He is an amazingly talented mathematician and musician. You will not want to miss his sessions at the MCATA conference in October in Red Deer!

After three days of exciting sessions, workshops, minisessions and a major display area, the conference concluded with a session and banquet at Navy Pier. The entertainment was provided by Chicago's Second City comedy troupe. An outgoing NCTM director who was recognized at this closing session was Richard Kopan from Alberta. Thanks, Richard, for a job well done over the last three years and for promoting Alberta at the NCTM level.

Mark your calendars now for NCTM's upcoming conferences:

- ✓ Orlando, Florida, April 4–7, 2001
- ✓ Las Vegas, Nevada, April 22–24, 2002. ▲

—Graham Keogh



## From the President's Pen



One highlight this spring was the Mathematics Leaders semiannual symposium Friday, May 5, in Edmonton. Kudos to Debbie Duvall for putting together an excellent program. Highlights of the day included a presentation on the World Math Year 2000 by our own Klaus Pulhmann, math projects from around Alberta, success stories in high school

mathematics, and updates from Alberta Learning on learner assessment and curriculum. With record attendance, many felt that this was one of the best symposia ever. Attend the next symposium preceding our 2000 conference in Red Deer, and exercise your opportunities to dialogue and to be informed. ▲

—Cynthia Ballhiem

## A Place Called High School

April 14, Elaine Manzer and Donna Chanasyk represented MCATA at the ATA's invitational symposium, "A Place Called High School." See the full-page article in the May 2 issue of *ATA News* for full details. The ATA's professional development staff are now preparing a position paper. ▲

—Donna Chanasyk

## The Power<sup>😊</sup> of Optimism

In the 2Ks, winners in the game of life will be known for flexible optimism and resourcefulness in the face of adversity and constant change. Unfortunately, too many are falling victim to the depression of our age, learned helplessness—"Nothing I can do is going to make any difference in what happens to me, so why try?" Here are seven practical tips to help you claim your own optimism advantage:

❶ *Cultivate a sense of adventure that takes advantage of opportunities.* Victors make the best of opportunities while victims whine about how few they have. Failure to make choices doesn't prevent failure, it just turns life into slow death. Never be paralyzed by limitless choices; do something one choice at a time! As Yogi Berra said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

❷ *Build a history of lifelong learning instead of settling for obsolescence.* You become an old dog when you stop

doing new and improved tricks. Invest 5 percent of your time in education to stay a recyclable asset. Hate your job? Invest 10 percent. Search for what you enjoy and have the gifts to do. Optimism is easier when you have a job that gives you passion, fulfillment and energy.

❸ *Manage your motivation by catching yourself being effective.* You are likely tougher on yourself than on any other person. Instead of taking yourself for granted, love yourself the way you love others you care about. If you are not catching yourself being effective, you may be winning and not know it because you're not keeping score. Ask yourself daily, "What did I do today that made a difference?" Use your calendar to write down one success every day.

❹ *See mistakes as valued lessons on the way to success.* Life is like a vehicle with no brakes; if you spend too much time in the rearview mirror, you may hit a tree out the front window. Keep your rearview mirror smaller than your front window by using self-criticism as course correction feedback on the road to success. Victims say, "I'll never succeed." Optimists perceive failures as temporary setbacks, not final verdicts. Build an expectation of success through hard work.

❺ *Spend time with optimistic friends.* Mark Twain said it well: "Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great." The company you keep can bring you up or bring you down. Pick your friends and associates wisely.

❻ *Work your sense of humor.* Don't go through life with your face in "park." Humor provides perspective that breaks the stress cycle and invites a more positive attitude. If you know that some day you will laugh at a problem, don't wait—laugh as quickly as you can! Take your job and life seriously, but yourself lightly. Never forget that some days you're the bug, and some days you're the windshield. That's a perspective worth remembering in these challenging times.

❼ *Finally, experience the power of gratitude.* Unrealistic expectations are a sure road to disappointment. Optimists hope for more, but are not thrown by less. Start counting your blessings instead of your problems. Choose to be happy unless something happens to change that, instead of being unhappy until something makes you happy. Appreciate the words of Reinhold Niebuhr: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference."

—Terry Paulson

Used with permission from the author. This article previously appeared in *Kin Magazine*, vol. 79, no. 2. ▲



## Membership Report

Every quarter, MCATA awards three levels of prizes to people renewing memberships: *First*—payment of registration for the annual conference; *Second*—payment of annual membership fee; and *Third*—\$25 NCTM gift certificate to be redeemed through MCATA. From July 1999 to March 2000, Louise Donnelly, Fort Saskatchewan; Ayi Tsui, Calgary; and Shirley Knoll, Edmonton, won the annual conference fee. Annual memberships went to Neil Hamel, Didsbury; Ken Ference, Ardrossan; and Hendrika MacLean, Red Deer. James Grossman, Medicine Hat; Shari Demale, Red Deer; and Jana Hopper, Calgary, may choose what to purchase with their gift certificates.

At the beginning of June, our membership was 703.

—Daryl M. J. Chichak

## Math Competition

Congratulations to students at Parkview Elementary-Junior High School in Edmonton for their achievement in the Canadian National Math League Competition.

☆ **Grade 7: 1st in Alberta, 2nd in Canada**

Eric Gaudette, Daniel Charchuk, Eve Coppinger, Haley Chau, Jason Lee

☆ **American Mathematics Competition**

Fraser Olsen, 3rd highest score internationally

☆ **Atlantic Pacific: 1st Alberta, 2nd Canada, 2nd North America**

The top 10 students are Donell Laughton, Joanne Baergen, Stephen Beckman, Megan Howery, Geoff Lywood, Paul Atkins, Joshua Baergen, Abraam Isaac, David Mahood, Fahim Rajabali

☆ **PASCAL**

The team of Geoff Lywood, Jonathan Kwan and Brandon Wong won 1st in Alberta, 1st in our zone and 4th in Canada. Geoff Lywood made the honor roll of the top 10 in Canada. Fifty-two of 55 students who wrote at Parkview received the Certificate of Distinction.

☆ **Edmonton Math Local**

Twelve Parkview students placed in the top 50 in Edmonton: Jonathan Kwan, Rachel Woynorowski, Fahim Rajabali, Brandon Mewhort, David Mahood, Courtney Flett, Joanne Baergen, Ashley Spitz, Theo Cole, Geoff Lywood, Josh Baergen and Michael Schutz. ♣

—Diana Davidiuk

## MCATA Annual Conference

"Mathematics Through the Millennium"

October 26–28, 2000

Capri Lodge, Red Deer

Planning is well in hand for October's annual conference. However, there is still time to suggest speakers to our program coordinators. Updates on the conference are being posted on MCATA's website: [www.mathteachers.ab.ca](http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca). Information and registration forms were in the late May ATA School Representative mailing and are on our website.

Celebrate the turn of the century with other math educators. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Zalman Usiskin, a pianist and professor of mathematics education at the University of Chicago. Session speakers include Shauna Boyce and Evan Fleetwork—Applied Math 30 Diploma Exam Standards; Ian Arden and Holt Zaugg—Portfolios for Senior High Math; Phil Radomsky—That's Probably Impossible; Indy Lagu and Scott Carlson—Normal Is the Die of the Beholder; Charles Ames—Math Magic; Martina Schmidt and Darrell Lonsberry—Baking Chemistry; Marilyn Reid—Involving Parents in Math Education; Jack Lasage—Manipulative Workshops; Joanne Currah—"Beyond" Box Cars and One-Eyed Jacks; Sandra Unrau—Assessing Problem Solving and Mathematical Thinking; Charles Ames—Parametric and Polar Equations; Marcel E'Eon—Helping Low Achieving Students; Doug Knight—Classroom Assessment Tool Kit For ICT; Craig Lowen—Math Games for the Middle Grades; Literature in the Primary Classrooms; Edna Dach—Computer Sessions; Carol Henderson—ATA Perspective on the Alberta Achievement Testing Program; Daryl Chichak—Manipulative Madness; Statistics Made Easy; Problem Solving Made Easy. More sessions will be added.

Ⓢ **Registration:** Pat Chichak, (780) 450-1813, e-mail [mathguy@telusplanet.net](mailto:mathguy@telusplanet.net)

Ⓢ **Speaker Proposals:** Sandra Unrau, (403) 777-6390, e-mail [sunrau@cbe.ab.ca](mailto:sunrau@cbe.ab.ca); or Rick Johnson, (780) 492-4273, ext. 293, e-mail [rjohnson@edmc.net](mailto:rjohnson@edmc.net)

Ⓢ **General Program Information:** Graham Keogh, (403) 342-4800, e-mail [gkeogh@rdcrd.ab.ca](mailto:gkeogh@rdcrd.ab.ca); or Cynthia Ballheim, (403) 228-5810, e-mail [BallheimCJ@aol.com](mailto:BallheimCJ@aol.com)

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—Elaine Manzer

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# **Mathematics Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association Alberta Mathematics Educator Awards**

A maximum of three mathematics educator awards may be conferred annually in recognition of demonstrated leadership in mathematics education in Alberta. These awards will be presented to the recipients at the MCATA annual conference to be held in Red Deer October 26–28, 2000.

## **Selection Criteria**

Awards may be conferred upon individuals in each of the following categories:

- K–6 classroom teachers
- Grades 7–12 classroom teachers
- Those who have made exceptional contributions to professional development of teachers at the school, local, provincial or national levels
- Those who have demonstrated leadership in encouraging the continuing enhancement of teaching, learning and understanding of mathematics in Alberta

No more than one award will be conferred in each category in any one year, and the conferring of awards will be contingent upon there being deserving recipients in each category.

## **Nomination Procedure**

Nominations for the award must be forwarded to the selection committee. A complete nomination application includes the following:

- Information about nominee (Part 1 on reverse side)
- Information about nominator (Part 2 on reverse side)
- Three letters of support that reflect the criteria listed above

For more information, contact

George Ditto, Chairperson  
Alberta Mathematics Educator Selection Committee  
610 18 Avenue NW  
Calgary AB T2M 0T8  
Fax (403) 777-7229

**Deadline for receipt of applications: June 30, 2000**

# Alberta Mathematics Educator Award Nomination

## Part 1

Nominee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2

Nominator's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_

City and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

MCATA Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_ Member Since \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 3

A minimum of three letters of support.