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I know I have to give the obligatory “I cannot believe that school is almost over” statement. But, you know, as I look back, I can hardly believe it went so fast. I have some random thoughts rambling around in my mind that I thought I would expound on.

When I was in Anaheim for the national NCTM convention I was reading the daily paper the convention distributes. They had a “Question of the Day” section. The question one day was: “What can be done to encourage more people to become math teachers?” How would you answer that question? I spent some time thinking about my answer(s) to that question, but I decided to paraphrase some of the answers in the paper. The responses were timely and pertinent. Naturally, the money issue was on several people’s minds. Other responses were: 1) Show that math is fun, not just memorizing. Put some fun in the teaching and learning. 2) Relate number sense to the real world. Show that we do not teach concepts in isolation. There really are practical examples for the lessons we teach. 3) Encourage students to help each other. With peer tutoring, we encourage students to become teachers. And 4) Sell your own teaching. Do the students know you love teaching and you really believe that math is a very important part of their future?

Another part of the paper I found interesting was the president’s address by Cathy Seeley, the current NCTM president. She challenged teachers to throw out some old assumptions about teaching math that have been around for much too long. Again I am paraphrasing. Here are a few of the myths and her suggestions to alleviate the situation : 1) *Students will not learn unless the teacher tells them how to work a problem.* Students need to learn to think by themselves and make practical decisions that lead to solutions. 2) *Pushing harder arithmetic down into the lower grades will help students learn higher math.* Students need to know what to do with what they learn. Students will learn what they can when they are ready to learn a concept. And 3) *Don’t do anything new, just try harder.* Teachers need new tools and continued professional development. She goes on to say “The problem with old assumptions is that the world has changed; yesterday’s jobs don’t exist, and today’s and tomorrow’s jobs demand different abilities.”

As I reflect back on that, I remember way back to my college days (yes, I know that was a long time ago). A prof told us there are two ways of thinking about having taught 20 years. Have you taught one year twenty times or have you taught twenty different years? I hope we all are in that last category. We need to change from year to year. I am editorializing here,

but I am a big believer in professional development. I hope that all teachers take advantage of the different opportunities that exist for us in the state of Montana. It is getting so easy to not go to the fall conference. I know our state is large and travel is costly in time and money. Missoula is a long distance from the eastern part of the state. It is so easy to say we want our summers off (remember how upset we get when people say we only work nine months a year). Local districts are making it acceptable to not go to the fall conferences by offering local PIR days. I agree that a few may be acceptable, but how many new math ideas, how many new teaching strategies for math are being encouraged, and how much networking with other great math teachers from around the state is happening? We need to work on this as professionals. What can we do to help ourselves become better teachers and the students of our state to gain the knowledge they need to know? Thank all of you for listening to this rant. I realize that we need to put food on the table and some us need to have summer jobs. A special thanks to the 30 participants of the Professional Development Academy (Number Sense for K-6) and to the 75 participants in the COMET grant. They are taking a chance. I know their time will be well spent. Here is hoping that your summer will be exciting, educational and full of many good times.

Jim Hamling

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SIMMS Integrated Mathematics Dissemination Project

Farewell Message

This is the last of my Dissemination Project messages. By July or so the funding will finally expire. For something that began in Fall 1997 as a 'three-year grant', the ideas seemed to move forward, we found additional funding, and the process of advocating for SIMMS IM continued.

In this note I want to share what I think are the highlights of this nearly eight year journey. Of course I also have many people to thank.

PERSEVERANCE

We spent most of the first year just getting people outside Montana to know we existed, what we were all about, and that it was a quality program.

This would not have happened without the support-and encouragement—of many, many people. I recognize the inherent dangers in 'listing names' so for anyone I neglected to include I apologize in advance and ask your understanding that everyone's contribution is what made all this possible.

I want to give special recognition to several people who believed in what I was doing and supported me in so many ways. Thank you to my wife, Jana, for putting up with me and supporting me on the nearly 130 days on the road each year. Thank you also to Glenn Allinger who often sent a kind word or a thoughtful e-mail and who kept me sane in that first year. Thank you also to Johnny Lott, Maurice Burke, Jim Hirstein, Rick Billstein for their support on so many levels, including gaining continued funding. None of this would have been possible without the support of the many Montana teachers who taught the curriculum, conducted professional development across the country, and were patient with me when I was not so wonderful to be around. You know who you are! Unknown to most readers of this Newsletter will be the people at COMPASS and the other curricula with whom I have formed a long-lasting collegial bond as well as enduring friendships.

EXPANSION OF SITES

From those first sites in Montana to a few schools in inner-city Cincinnati to several schools in El Paso, we have grown to have a presence in at least 15 states. The sites use SIMMS IM in every imaginable permutation and setting one can imagine. We have sites that are best described as 'rural' to those that are 'suburban' and everything in between. We have schools where nearly every student receives free breakfast and lunch to schools where the average home

Continued on page 3

sells for over \$1 million. We have schools where SIMMS IM is the only mathematics program to those where it is used with additional resources. In some schools the curriculum is used for only the 'stronger' students and in others it is used with those who have traditionally underachieved. We have schools where every student speaks and reads English well to schools where at least half the students come from homes where English is not the primary language. In other words-the curriculum has succeeded in every imaginable setting. We just signed two schools whose primary group of students is those with special learning needs. This will be an exciting and interesting new chapter.

None of this would have been possible without a superb product and that started with those with the initial vision—Johnny, Maurice, Rick, Jim, Glenn, Dan Dolan, Larry Kaber, Dick Seitz-and so many more from that first meeting in Spokane. The numerous authors-about 75— not only produced wonderful materials but the group process allowed each of us to grapple with believes, edit and reedit, and most of all to grow professionally. Thank you to each and every one of you. And thank you also to everyone who ever taught this curriculum.

The sheer organizational structure put into place at the onset was critical. Thank you to Johnny and Maurice who were the co-directors of the original writing. Thank you also to Glenn, Mike Lundin, Terry Souhrada, and Dean Preble for their work with the Materials Development Committee and for Peter Fong and his insightful editing. I also greatly appreciate the work of the Assessment Committee and the work of Jim Hirstein, Sharon Whalen, Joe Austin, and Ann Teppo. The work of the Professional Development Committee was critical to changing how we each saw teaching and helping us make what often were very big changes in our own pedagogy and methodology. Thank you for that work Glen, Mike Lundin, Mindy Obert, and Karen Longhart. Thank you also to Larry Kaber and Mignon Waterman for their efforts with the Government and Public Relations Committee. It was their work that procured money for technology to implement the curriculum and their efforts to inform people inside and outside of education know what this was all about.

In those early years when we were really 'on our own', I could not have survived without the unfaltering work, vision, insight, and support of Diana Paterson. For anyone who ever met her they know her as one of untiring effort, keen insight, creative ideas in more areas than I can count, and the quiet, calm persona that was such a refreshing contrast to my own.

In Missoula during the actual writing of the curriculum, Kathy Thompson was indispensable to Johnny, Maurice, the committees, and the 75 writers. Kathy was the same calming affect on Johnny that Diana was on me. How we ever managed to have two such incredibly talented and patient Administrative Assistants I will never know but am certainly glad we did.

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ASK BARNEY

1. **Barney – what is “aibohphobia “ ?**

Hey, I know this one. It is fear of palindromes.

2. **I have another one for you. What do you give a dog with a fever?**

I have no idea.

Mustard. It is the best thing for a hot dog.

3. **I heard that there is some “free money”. What do you know about this?**

As a matter of fact, I do know a little about this. MCTM has budgeted \$2000 per year to help defray some cost for its members to attend conferences. You may apply for \$150 to attend an instate conference and \$250 to help with an out of state conference. The money can be used for travel, lodging and/or food. All you need to do is submit a receipt to Mike Pierre, who is in charge of the applications. The apps are in the first few newsletters of the year. The application process is minimal and would probably take less than 10 minutes to complete. The only requirement for receiving this grant is that you write an article for the newsletter – not much of a task! The problem is this year the MCTM only had one person ask for money. There was \$1750 left in that account. The purpose of the MCTM offering this money is the hope that teachers in Montana are looking for ways to increase their math knowledge and to find new and innovative methods of instruction – see the prez’s message.

4. **Do you know anything about the fall conference for next October?**

As a matter of fact, I do. I have some great informants out there. This comes from my friend Cole Maxwell from Arlee. The MCTM has reserved a block of 20 rooms at the Mountain Valley Inn in Missoula. The address is 420 Broadway, phone 1-800-249-9174. It is located on Broadway just off of Orange. The cost per room is \$65 per night for up to four people. Not too bad a deal at all! The reservations should be attn: Annie Puetz. You do need to mention Cole’s name to get that price. Their website is : www.mountainval-

5. **I remember last year something about a free lunch. I also remember long ago, somebody told me there is no such thing as a free lunch. What’s up?**

Contrary to what people say, there is such a thing as a free lunch. If you are a paid up member of MCTM (please do check when your membership expires), you will get a free lunch at the annual meeting. The bad news is that they are only going to order 100 lunches, so get there early. The board would love to see all members there. Check the location of the meeting in the program. The meeting will be on Thursday at noon.

Deadline for August Newsletter is

August 10,2005

e-mail articles to

kathje_dalton@gfps.k12.mt.us

**MCTM MATH CONTEST
TEST WRITING
GRADUATE CREDIT
OPPORTUNITY**

Once again it is time to ask for your help! We need people to write tests for the 2006 MCTM Math Contest. We also need people to proofread tests after they are written. Writing will take place at the Montana Science Institute at Canyon Ferry Lake. Dates of the writing course are July 24-26, 2005. We will start on Sunday afternoon and finish at noon on Tuesday. One Graduate Credit will be available through U of M- Missoula. MCTM will pay a stipend of \$75 per writer for up to 12 writers. Writers will be chosen so that we have an even number per grade range and a variety of locations. Dinner will be provided on Sunday and Monday. Breakfast and lunch will be provided on Monday and Tuesday. Lodging accommodations at Canyon Ferry will be paid for by MCTM. For more information or to apply return the registration form on the reverse side to:

Satinee Lightbourne
MCTM State Math Contest Director
Great Falls High School
1900 2nd Avenue S.
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406)268-6399

IN CLOSING, I want to thank all those-mentioned and unmentioned-who believed in the product and in this work. That you all for loving me when I was not so lovable and for helping me see new directions when my vision was lost. There are so many names that could be listed so please-please-know that I love and appreciate everyone who has been a part of this journey. Something of this magnitude is never the work of a single person or even a small group of people. It is always the untiring commitment of many, many who share the vision of quality mathematics for each and every student in this country. I applaud you and I thank you deeply.

As of this writing I am negotiating with Kendall/Hunt so I can continue the work in some fashion with them. We will see how that turns out. I know that the work is not done and I am not ready to stop my efforts. With the help of all of you, my goal is to see the work to a point where we can all say with confidence that the curriculum is an integral part of the fabric of mathematics education in this country. Because of the hard work of so many, this dream will become a reality. THANK YOU all for all you have given me.

Sometime this summer-probably about July-I will have a new business e-mail but I don't know what that is right now. If you need to reach me later this summer, try me at my home address at mathbird@yahoo.com and I will get back to you. Until then you can still reach me at gbauer@montana.edu or 1-800-693-4060.

Gary Bauer. Director SIMMS IM Dissemination

Quotes and Jokes from the Classroom Teacher!

If you have a quote or joke to share with our membership, please Email them to scottl@billings.k12.mt.us.

TOP TEN SURE SIGNS OF SPRING

10. Students spot the first robin of spring and chase it off the playground with sticks.
9. The playground is awash in color from the 482 lost mittens now revealed by the melting snow.
8. Your textbooks started disappearing the same day you started opening the windows again.
7. Students return with fabulous vacation stories from warm destinations you can't afford to visit.
6. With the start of baseball and softball practices, your students are much more accurate when they throw things at each other in class.
5. The school graffiti vandals have switched to bright pastel colors.

- 4. Turned-in homework has slowed from a dribble to a drip.
- 3. You have more after-school committee meetings that last until dark than at any other time of the year.
- 2. Your students have switched from being bored and lazy to being distracted and disruptive.
- 1. Everyone in your building knows exactly how many days of school are left.

Submitted by Carrie Schmidt

I have a funny thing that happened to me. You know the old homework excuse, "My dog ate my homework"? Well, my students plan a vacation within the state of Montana each year as part of the 7th grade Montana unit. One year, I took my students' projects home to grade over the weekend. No big deal, right? I graded the projects and gave great reviews to my students for jobs well done and went to bed. The next morning I went into the living room, where I left my work on the floor in a tub, and it looked like a tornado hit. There were projects from one end to the other and, yes, my dog ate some of the students work. Can you imagine having to go to school that morning and explain to your students that your dog ate their homework?

Submitted by Susie Bollinger

MCTM Membership Form

PLEASE FILL IN THIS INFORMATION AND MAIL WITH CORRECT AMOUNT OF MONEY TO:

Deb Wickum, Box 78, Chester, MT 59522 DebWickum@hotmail.com

ANNUAL DUES PERIOD IS:

September 1 through August 31

Name _____

Address change

Address _____

New membership

Renewal

Phone No. _____ e-mail _____

Contribution to MCTM Endowment (Scholarships & Professional Development Academy): \$5 \$10 \$25

- Regular \$15
- 2 years \$25
- Student \$8
- Retired (no charge)
- MCTM/MSTA \$26
- Institutional \$30
- 10 years \$100
- Life \$150

- College
- High School
- Middle School/Jr. High
- Elementary
- Other _____

MCTM NEWSLETTER
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 Great Falls, Montana 59401

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Editors: Mary Aspinwall, Kathje Dalton, Kurt Shepherd

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