



Newsletter

No. 3
July 2007

As I end my term as President I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the past 20 months. MAWA has faced some interesting challenges as aspects of our profession have come under review. Our members present a wide variety of views and over this time one thing has become clear: Members of MAWA are dedicated to their craft and committed to providing the best for their students. This is the best aspect of leading the Association representing such a high quality group of professionals. Thank you all for the privilege of doing so. Congratulations to Michelle Östberg, a brilliant and committed member of MAWA, who will provide a new focus for us. All the best for your term as President, Michelle.



Noemi Reynolds

From the new President...

Michelle Östberg

Welcome back to Term 3 – the holidays are never long enough, are they? I hope everyone took a moment to acknowledge the passing of **Pi Approximation Day** on the last Sunday of the school holidays (22/7).

In recent weeks I have read a number of reports and media articles regarding the teaching profession and the status of Mathematics teaching in schools, all of which seem to paint a fairly dire picture for the future of Mathematics education. It is easy in a time of significant negative media coverage and increasing pressure and change at work to lose sight of why we each made the choice to become a teacher. It is also important to realise that **media coverage focuses on the negative and controversial**, because that is what sells papers, and reports are generally commissioned to analyse or address a recognised problem.

Keep in mind that this coverage in no way reflects the excellent work being done by teachers of Mathematics, regardless of their qualifications, experience, pedagogical beliefs or cultural background. **A good teacher is a good teacher** and I would argue that any teacher who looks for effective ways to improve their knowledge, their practice and the learning of their students is a good teacher.

As the holidays are normally a time to recharge our batteries and let go of the stress of the last term, particularly now that Term 2 reporting is out of the way, I would like to take the opportunity to remind you of a few of the reasons why so many of us are so dedicated to our chosen profession.

The University of Melbourne has recently released a report on *The Preparation of Mathematics Teachers in Australia*. In this report it states

Coming Events 2007

TERM 3

- Week 1 - Thu 26 July 9am - 5pm**
Maths Talent Quest
DELIVER PROJECTS MAWA
- Week 2 - Fri 3 August**
Awards Night
7:30-9:00pm, ECU Mt Lawley
- Week 4 - Fri 17 - Sun 19 August**
State Conference
BUNBURY
To register call MAWA office
- Week 5 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 21 August - Year 5
Wed 22 August - Year 6
Thu 23 August - Year 7
- Week 6 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 28 August - Year 5
Wed 29 August - Year 6
Thu 30 August - Year 7
- Week 7 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 4 September - Year 5
Wed 5 September - Year 6
Thu 6 September - Year 7
- Week 7 - Sat 8 September P-7**
Maths Activity Day
9am-12 noon or 2pm-5pm
- Week 9 - Tue 18 September 4:30-7:30pm**
Sec PM workshop
Scaffolding with a Spring in your Step (*Susan Butler*)

TERM 4

- Week 7 - Sun 25 - Tue 27 November**
Secondary Convention
Esplanade Hotel Fremantle
- Week 7 - Wed 28 November**
HOLA Esplanade Hotel

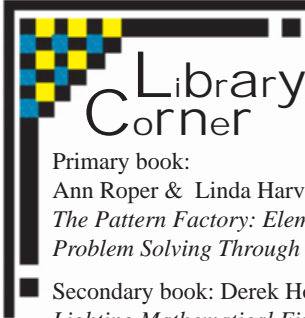
3-9 September 2007
National Literacy and Numeracy Week

2008
LOOK OUT FOR
MAWA GOES COUNTRY



Term 3: Years 5-7 **Term 4:** Years 8-10

For full details check
www.havesumfunonline.com



Primary book:
Ann Roper & Linda Harvey
The Pattern Factory: Elementary Problem Solving Through Patterning

Secondary book: Derek Holten
Lighting Mathematical Fires



The Mathematical Association of Western Australia (Inc.)

(Member of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers Inc.)

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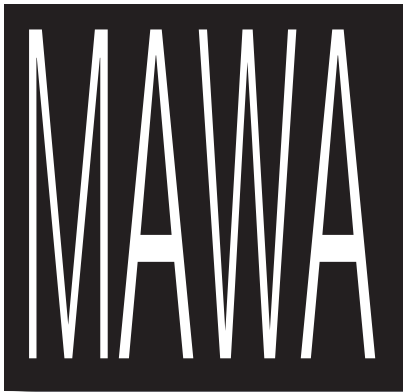
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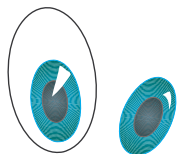


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that “Three in five teachers gave the ‘rewarding nature of the profession’ as motivation for choosing a teaching career” and that almost half of the teachers interviewed cited their ‘love of mathematics’, while salary was very low on the list of reasons given. (This is probably not surprising as if salary was a significant issue for these people, then they would have chosen an alternative career! I would suggest that asking people who had the option of becoming teachers and chose not to, or teachers who left the profession, about their reasons and, under what circumstances they might return, would give a better idea as to why more people are leaving or not even considering teaching as a career.)

One key finding has been ‘raising the profile and status of mathematics teaching’, which I am sure is obvious to everyone. Unfortunately I am yet to see a valid and effective method of achieving this as is it about societal beliefs. I have never seen teachers and the teaching profession come under so much public criticism before, and some of the criticisms that are being levelled are unfortunately coming from within our own ranks. In a time of decreasing morale and increasing change it is important that we do what we can to support each other rather than



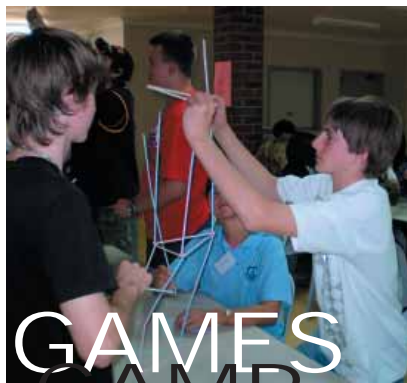
COOL SITE

<http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/vlibrary.html>
Utah State University

buy into the negativity that is easy to get caught up in. This is where MAWA’s role is so important. As a professional association we must continue to support teachers. While there are recognised issues, we face them with a view of “how can we support teachers with this?” rather “there’s nothing we can do”. To that end, I would encourage all teachers to take this approach.

Do you know another teacher who has something to offer that we can all learn from? First, let them know that you think they do a good job and then let us know so that we can ask them to share their expertise.

Are you interested in getting involved with writing resources? Or do you know someone else who always puts together good worksheets for their students? Again, let us know as we are always looking for resource



GAMES CAMP

Twenty-three teams of four Yr 9/Yr10 students competed enthusiastically over the weekend of Friday 8 to Sunday 10 June on a variety of games and activities with a social on Saturday evening. All held at the Ern Halliday Recreation Camp in Hillarys. Many thanks to Geoff Jamieson (Trinity College), the MAWA Convenor, and to all his willing helpers, especially those who stayed overnight.

Congratulations to:

- 1st** Christ Church Grammar
- Eq 2nd** Hale School
- Eq 2nd** Methodist Ladies’ College



Christ Church Grammar winning team with the Games Camp Honour Board

writers, particularly with the development of resources for the new **Senior School Mathematics Courses**.

Have you ever thought ‘I could do with one of those’ about an idea for a resource that may not exist yet? Tell us and we’ll see what we can do about getting it done.

Can you see in the staff you work with, or even in your own practice, a clear Professional Development need? Again, let us know – all it takes is a quick email or phone call to the MAWA Office and we’ll see what we can do.

To finish, I want to share with you a quick story about why I stay in teaching. A couple of years ago I was lucky enough to have a student write me a 2-page letter when she completed Year 12 in which she explained just how much of a difference I had made to her. I certainly made no greater efforts to support her than I did for any of my other students, but the simple fact that she took the time to thank me and to explain just how much of an impact I had had absolutely surprised me, particularly when I had only taught her for one year of her high schooling! I have also had parents approach me in the supermarket to thank me for the efforts I have made in helping their children. Please remember, there are many students who are grateful for the work we do and the efforts we put in, but unfortunately few voice their appreciation. They often don’t realise how grateful they are for our work until after leaving school, but **there is no other career where people will go out of their way to thank you for just doing your job**. Thank you for doing yours.

Michelle



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