

# Wahpe Woyaka pi

(TALKING LEAF)

## SDCTM FALL 2003 NEWSLETTER

### Message from the President

Jean Gomer

Greetings! This fall has been exceptionally busy. I have been getting new classes started, redoing my yard, and working on the revision of the SD Math Standards. In this day of NCLB and Dakota Step Testing, the standards have become as important as they should have been all along. So let's take a quick look at the five major content areas in the SD Math Standards from another perspective.

1. Measurement—Much of the focus this past year has been on measurement, primarily, the implementation of Dakota Step statewide and the determination of cut scores. This is not all bad. Being accountable for what we do is only fair. What we need to do is figure out how to make our students realize that all of this testing is really about making them accountable.
2. Number Sense—Sensible is not always a word that can be applied to our reaction to this increased emphasis on test scores. To pin so much on so few numbers does not always make sense, but it is the way things are. So the sensible thing for us to do as professionals is to do what we do best, make sure that our students learn good mathematics to meet the standards at each grade level. This should enable them to do well on the test.
3. Geometry—The geometry of the situation tells us that given a container with a fixed volume, there is only so much you can put in it. Our container is the minds of our students and I don't believe it has a fixed capacity. Often we do not stretch their abilities to achieve their greatest potential. We are content to do what we have

always done, and they are willing to take the path of least effort. The standards should force us to look at what we do and prioritize the content that we teach.

4. Algebra—So much is unknown about the future of schools in South Dakota. All over the state, declining numbers are creating financial decisions that often have nothing to do with what is best academically. Within this structure, we must continue to expect our students to do the best that they can do. It is also important to work with and prepare the next generation of math teachers.
5. Probability and Statistics—If any statistician is keeping track of what is going on in today's South Dakota math classroom, the probability is very great that he/she will see good mathematics being taught by a dedicated professional to students who are capable of reaching the high goals that are set for them.

Keeping these five areas in mind, I am sure that you will continue to solve the problems sent your way as you connect mathematics to everything in your lives and communicate its importance to another generation of students.

Have a great year.

### Revision of the South Dakota Mathematics Content Standards

The mathematics content standards are in the process of revision under the auspices of the South Dakota Department of Education. Shannon Amiotte, mathematics coordinator for DOE, is leading the committee. The SDCTM executive committee is well represented on the Standards Review Committee. Membership on

the committee includes President Jean Gomer, President-Elect Chuck Holmstrom, Secretary Cindy Kroon, Treasurer Diana McCann, and Vice President Steve Caron, as well as the newsletter editor and other SDCTM members. The work on the revised standards is intense. Discussions have been lively and productive. Your leadership is serving you and the mathematics education community well with their dedicated participation in the review process. The work started in August, and it has continued with two-day work sessions in Pierre each month since then.

On November 6 and 7, completion of a draft of the standards is on the agenda for the committee. When the initial draft is completed, the scheduled plan calls for open hearings seeking input on the proposed state mathematics standards to be conducted around the state by the Department of Education. Watch for the announcement of the open hearing schedule and attend the hearings in your area. Information sessions about the progress of the revision of the mathematics standards will be on the program of the SDCTM/SDSTA conference in February.

### **SDCTM/SDSTA Joint Conference**

Make plans now to attend the SDCTM/SDSTA Joint Conference at the Crossroads Convention Center in Huron February 5-7. Speakers are needed for the conference. Go to [www.sdctm.org](http://www.sdctm.org) to locate a speaker form for the conference. Although the deadline has passed, you may be able to fill open slots in the program by returning the speaker form immediately.

### **MET Awards, Scholarships, and Grants Available**

(taken from NCTM News Bulletin,  
October 2003)

Are you hoping to try an innovative project for teaching mathematics or improving your mathematics teaching? Do you know of a colleague whose lifetime achievement in mathematics education deserves recognition? NCTM's Mathematics Education Trust (MET) might be able to help.

MET was established by NCTM to provide funds to support classroom teachers in the areas of improving classroom practices and increasing teachers' mathematical knowledge. MET also sponsors activities for prospective teachers and NCTM's Affiliates, as well as recognizing the lifetime achievement of leaders in mathematics education.

MET is currently accepting applications for its 2004-05 grants as well as nominations for the NCTM Lifetime Achievement Awards. All applications (except the Toyota TIME and Texas Instruments Demana-Waits Scholarship) must be postmarked by December 5, 2003. The deadline for the Toyota TIME is January 7, 2004, and the deadline for the Texas Instruments Demana-Waits Scholarship is May 16, 2004.

### **For More Information about MET**

To learn more about MET grants and awards, visit NCTM's Web site, [www.nctm.org/about/met](http://www.nctm.org/about/met) (click on the grant or award name to see the guidelines); call (703) 620-9840, ext. 2112, e-mail [exec@nctm.org](mailto:exec@nctm.org); or write to NCTM's Mathematics Education Trust, 1906 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1502.

### **Minutes of SDCTM Meetings**

The minutes of SDCTM general meetings and the executive committee are posted on the SDCTM website. Visit the website to view the minutes of the meetings.

### **SDCTM Friend of Mathematics Education Awarded to Midcontinent Communications**

At the February, 2003 SDCTM/SDSTA Joint Conference, SDCTM recognized Midcontinent Communications as the 2003 Friend of Mathematics Education. W. Tom Simmons, Vice President, was in attendance at the conference banquet to accept the award. Midcontinent Communications supports mathematics education by hosting the SDCTM website.

## Diana McCann Receives SDCTM Distinguished Service Award

The 2003 SDCTM Distinguished Service Award was given to Diana McCann at the 2003 SDCTM/SDSTA Joint Conference banquet in Huron. Diana McCann has been a mathematics teacher in the Bon Homme school district for many years (an exact number will not be given, OK?) and is currently teaching high school mathematics. Ms. McCann has received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics Teaching for the state of South Dakota and is currently the state director for the award program. She was SDCTM president from 1992 to 1994, and she is now the SDCTM treasurer, taking over the treasurer's duties at the time of Jim Goehring's death. She has consistently been a strong advocate for mathematics and the improvement of mathematics education in the state.

## Web Bytes

(taken from NCTM News Bulletin, October 2003)

- Education World's **Math Center** offers lesson plans, articles about exceptional classroom teachers, and professional development resources for mathematics educators.

[education-world.com/math](http://education-world.com/math)

- Enrich children's mathematical understanding with **Math Cats**, an interactive Web site that provides math explorations, trivia, and classroom activities for all ages.

[mathcats.com](http://mathcats.com)

- Math Playground features mathematics facts, creative games, worksheets, and quizzes for students in pre-K-6.

[www.mathplayground.com](http://www.mathplayground.com)

### SDCTM MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION South Dakota Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Subject(s) Taught \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (School) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check your teaching level, and enclose a check for the appropriate dues. Check should be made payable to SDCTM.

_____ K-6	\$ 5.00
_____ 7-12	10.00
_____ Departmentalized Middle School	10.00
_____ Post secondary	10.00
_____ Full-time student	3.00
_____ Retired	5.00

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