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Editorial: Is Every TME Issue Special?

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I am pleased to present the third issue of volume 11, which brings the 11th year of *The Mathematics Enthusiast* to a culmination. This issue is (mis)labeled as a special issue on the topic “Is every TME issue special?” The reader is undoubtedly curious as to the purposeful mischief indulged in by the journal. About 15 months ago, I started receiving e-mails from various members from the mathematics education community, as to whether the journal now only publishes special issues in *mathematics education*? In addition I started receiving e-mails from members in the mathematics community asking whether the journal is no longer interested in receiving math-oriented manuscripts.

These e-mails were provoked by the fact that the last four issues going back to vol.10,nos.1 and 2 (January 2013) were on special topics such as international perspectives on problem solving; a survey of NSF MSP projects; the 2010 BIRS workshop on Teachers as Stakeholders in MeR; and Mck of Elementary School Teachers from a PMENA focus group. Notice that the last sentence is heavy on the use of acronyms borrowed from the mathematics education community barring “BIRS” which is well known to the mathematics community. This does suggest that the journal has focused heavily on mathematics education issues for the last two years. However this does not mean that this pattern will continue indefinitely. The current issue breaks the pattern despite the mischievous (mis)labeling in that the focus is back on topics in mathematics.

The current issue also highlights the roots of the journal, namely in Montana- in that many of the articles have been authored by faculty and students in the mathematical sciences department of the University of Montana. The math pieces examine myriad and provocative issues such as the beauty of applied mathematics; integrating irregularly spaced (x,y) data; the historical and mathematical significance of the development of trigonometric “functions” in India and its connection to the progress of Calculus; the counterexamples that result from trying to generalize the Cantor-Schröder-Bernstein theorem; and the mis(use) of mathematical problems as a tool for anti-Semitism!. The mathematically astute reader will find the more math oriented pieces interesting and easy to read. There is also a sampling of mathematics education oriented papers in contributions that address conceptions/misconceptions in the idea of angles and proportionality, in addition to context based problems in the PISA examinations. These articles come from an international cast of mathematics educators. Two other articles address reform in mathematics education and beliefs of mathematicians in Ireland and Malaysia respectively.

Lastly the Common Core Standards have become a major point of discussion in the U.S, and spreading to other countries which have a federal governance structure (such as Germany). Two prominent mathematics “educators” Alan Schoenfeld (from Berkeley) and Günter Törner (from Duisburg-Essen) discuss the purpose and ramifications of these new Standards. The discussion forum is interesting for this particular journal because it is written by two mathematicians trained in pure mathematics, who

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have pursued mathematics education as a domain of research. The issue also includes a review of a delightful Birkhäuser book on the Tower of Hanoi.

Taken as a whole, it is hoped that the mathematical (and the Montana) roots of the journal become evident. To those that insist on hyphenating mathematics-education, there are mutually exclusive sections that cater to mathematics, and to education respectively. For those that view mathematics education as an unhyphenated whole, there is a critical mass of articles which reveal the content of mathematics as the driving force of the educational issues that arise from it. I will let the reader decide for themselves.

As a reminder to the community, this journal exists as an independent entity. It is published on a print-on-demand basis by Information Age Publishing and the electronic version is hosted by the Department of Mathematical Sciences- University of Montana. Authors retain full copyright of their work! The journal is not affiliated to nor subsidized by any professional organizations but supports PMENA [Psychology of Mathematics Education- North America] through special issues on various research topics.

As a parting salvo, and speaking of patterns- the next two issues of the journal (all of 2015) are focused on special topics. I will not reveal what is coming in the first two issues of 2016- and if one assumes that they are also focused on special topics, then does the developing pattern make the current issue special?