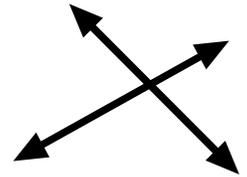




# Intersection Points

“where research and practice meet”



*The Newsletter of the Research Council on Mathematics Learning*

Visit us on the Web at: <<http://www.unlv.edu/RCML/>>

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The Research Council on Mathematics Learning seeks to stimulate, generate, coordinate, and disseminate research efforts designed to understand and/or influence factors that affect mathematics learning.

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## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Sheryl Maxwell, President

### BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Last fall, I smiled as I read "Birds of a Feather," one of the session titles of the up-coming RCML Conference. How many times had I longed to group together with others of like mind, to honestly discuss my joys and concerns about my chosen career area? Frequently, I'd seen flocks of birds gather together around my neighbor's bird feeder, feasting on a recently seeded lawn, or chirping melodiously in a budding tree. Consequently, as February approached I looked forward to the beginning session of the RCML Conference. This would be a time where I could gather with other math educators, listen to their concerns and ideas, chat about math education issues, and not have eyes roll where conversations abruptly change. In fact, we could even begin to make plans to start some action. Yes, this would be the beginning of sharing our common selected interests. I was pleased to attend the session, finally stopping amid the hectic preparations to think about my career choice including the successes and concerns inherent in this field. In fact to me, this creative beginning was the highlight of the recent RCML Conference. I hope that like me, you were stimulated by the more than 60 sessions, with over 100 presenters and left energized to refocus on math education issues.

Early this month I noticed two birds furiously building their nest in an artificial wreath hung near the front door of our home. After I spied two tiny blue eggs in the carefully built nest, I inwardly wished them luck in raising their family. You see, last year another pair of birds built a nest in that same wreath and withstood the periodic disruption from us using our front door. Although this annoyance didn't seem to deter them from their parenthood duties, they unfortunately lost their fledglings to a curious cat. What happens to us as we return to our higher educational settings? Are we disrupted by the incessant activities? Or, does another whimsical adventure gobble us up? In February, we shared our interests and concerns and even entertained plans to work toward action-oriented ways, but . . . What has occurred since then?

I am reminded of an absorbing account of a "goodbye scene" that a friend sent to me, via e-mail. It was one of those stories that initially brings a person to tears, but its lasting message subdues you. It seems that an elderly individual, who is seeing a relative off at an airport gate, is overheard saying among other endearments, "I wish you enough . . ." (continued on page 3)



From March 22 to 24, 2004, I attended the 9th TechEd conference in Ontario, California. It was a very educational experience, and I believe it is well worth sharing, especially as many of the sessions gave perspectives on the needs of the Y generation (those born after 1979, according to one of the speakers). Among the featured speakers were Dr. Ariella Lehrer, (President & CEO of Legacy Interactive), William Raduchel, (former Chief Technology Officer, AOL/Times Warner), and Dr. Jennifer James (Urban Cultural Anthropologist).

Dr. Lehrer's talk was entitled, "The 'Just Do It' Generation." She provided some thought provoking statistics: 90% of kids aged 5 to 17 play video games; and video games generated more money than movies at the box office this year. She went on to ask whether teachers are aware of these children's experiences, whether these experiences change the way they process information, and, if so, are they less able to reflect, use their imagination, or pay attention in class? Finally, what can educators do about this group of students, so different from the students of their (the educators') own time—what sort of education, and delivery mechanism seem to be called for?

Mr. Raduchel talked about "Technology and Education in the Next Decade." He emphasized the need for more software engineers, and that the United States is having great difficulty in getting such professionals. He stated that both India and China have seen a tremendous growth in such professionals, both in terms of quality, and quantity. He felt that the burgeoning technology in these countries could adversely affect the economy of the United States, if education does not pay heed to the changing needs of our society and economy, and that educators need to

encourage students to study mathematics, science, and technology.

Dr. James gave an overview of cultural intelligence, and how a lack of cultural intelligence can become a tremendous hurdle to progress. She gave examples of how humans have changed their belief systems over the years (e.g. woman could vote, Blacks should be given the same rights as Whites, equal pay for both genders, Americans with Disabilities Act, etc). She believed that holding on to certain beliefs (such as the way children should be taught, the way research should be conducted, etc) would prove unproductive at best, and harmful, at worst. She believed that with easy global accessibility, information, and knowledge would be shared, and lead to a more democratic world, with little possibility of leaders trying to keep people subservient or ignorant.

She also believed that the Y generation has an entirely different set of perspectives, and values, and that educators would do well not to ignore these. As an example, many of today's students are capable of multitasking (e. g. watching TV, listening to music over their headphones, and doing their homework, simultaneously); want frequent, and usually almost immediate, feedback (similar to their experience in playing video games); like tasks that are broken up into small chunks; and seldom need to refer to manuals for operating on new technological devices, preferring to "problem-solve" to master the workings of the device.

Many advances in technology were also shared at this conference. For example, there is a wide range of technology available to enhance teaching and learning. Among these are: interactive PowerPoint; technology that can be used in lecture halls of 200 to 300 students, to promote active learning, immediate feedback to the instructor on what has been understood or not; technology that captures the instructor's notes on the board (as the instructor writes them) so that each student has a set of these notes, without their having to copy the notes, enabling students to listen closely to lectures, without fear of having lost some of the lecture notes, and being able to play back the sequence of notes (e. g. if a cube were drawn, the technology will help see the sequence of lines that were drawn, which line was first, which

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## See You in Little Rock

Carolyn Pinchback

Make plans now to attend the 2005 RCML Annual Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, on 24-26 February. The Little Rock/ North Little Rock Metropolitan area is home to Arkansas' state capital, the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library (will be open by the conference date), the Heifer Project, Quapaw Quarters Historic Area and many other areas of interest. This area is easily accessible by air. Several airlines service the Little Rock National Airport, including American, Southwest, Delta, Northwest, Continental and US Air. Arkansas is a sunbelt state. The temperatures in Little Rock range from the 30's to the 50's during February. A Speaker Proposal Form is included in this newsletter. Additional information can be found at the RCML Web site. We hope to see YOU in Little Rock next February!

### RCML Quiz Sampler

Those who attended the RCML conference in Oklahoma City were treated to Bill Speer's "quiz" of our knowledge of the organization. A prize was offered to the person who could answer the highest number of questions correctly. Here are a couple of questions from the "quiz", along with their answers!

Why was the first RCDPM meeting labeled as the "Fourth?" THE FIRST THREE MEETINGS WERE NATIONAL CONFERENCES ON REMEDIAL MATHEMATICS AT KENT STATE WHICH LED TO THE FORMATION OF RCDPM AT COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND IN 1977.

Who was the 1st president of RCDPM?  
JIM HEDDENS

Who was the first female president of RCML/RCDPM? MARTY HOPKINS

Who was the first RCDPM Vice President for Research? TOM ROMBERG

Who gave the first John Wilson Memorial Lecture? When? Where?  
VINCENT GLENNON; 1980; Vancouver, B.C.;

Which state has hosted the most RCML/RCDPM conferences? TX 4 (and OHIO 4, if you count the first three National Conferences at Kent)

## 'Musings,' continued

second, and so on); software that can read aloud a set of word-processed notes *ala* Karaoke, and so on. In addition to the tremendous variety of superb speakers, there were presentations by vendors (many in the form of hands-on labs and workshops), showing how their products could help educators.

What was being emphasized throughout the conference was that the Y generation students have different needs and skills, and that technology is an integral part of their lives. Therefore, we, as educators, need to be not only cognizant of these students' experiences, perspectives, needs, and skills, but be able to harness these, using whatever means we have at our disposal, especially the new technologies that seem to facilitate the teaching and learning of the Y generation. Finally, I would urge you to try and attend the 10th EdTech International Conference & Exposition, most probably to be held 2-4 May 2005, also in Ontario, California.

## 'President's Message' continued

The bystander questions the woman as to the meaning of this phrase and learns of its importance. Here is a restated and modified "math educationese" version.

I wish you enough sun shining through your classroom and/or office window to keep your attitude toward teaching and researching bright. I wish you enough rainy days of disappointment to appreciate those sunny days more. I wish you enough joy in teaching and researching math topics to keep your spirit alive. I wish you enough pain of disappointment so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger. I wish you enough gain in achieving your teaching and learning goals to satisfy your wanting. I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess. I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye. So, my Spring 2004 aspiration to you from the RCML President's Corner is Friends and colleagues "I wish you enough . . . "

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**Presenter's Proposal Form  
RCML 32nd Annual Conference  
Little Rock, AK  
24-26 February 2005**

**Proposal deadline: June 24, 2004**

**Please mail, fax or e-mail the completed proposal form to:**

Linda Griffith  
Arkansas Center for Mathematics and Science Education  
University of Central Arkansas  
201 Donaghey Ave., Main 212, Box 5103  
Conway, Arkansas 72035  
Fax : (501) 450-5009  
E-mail: lindag@uca.edu

**Name(s):**

**Current Positions or Title:**

**Preferred Mailing Address:**

**City, State, Zip Code:**

**Preferred Telephone Number:**

**E-Mail:**

**Preferred length of session:**

**Topic Area:**

**Proposed Title:**

**Presentation Abstract:**

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# OKLAHOMA CITY -- THE AFTERMATH

## Conference 2004 Report

For those of who lived around the Oklahoma City area in 1995, the title of this article might bring back feelings of fear and anger. This article is not about a catastrophe, however, but about a wonderful gathering of highly accomplished and committed mathematics education researchers who came to share with and learn from each other. The 2004 RCML conference was a huge success.

To get conversations started, we began on Thursday at 3:00 with three birds-of-a-feather discussion groups. Topics of the "BOFs" were: technology and mathematics education, teacher education issues and concerns, and mathematics learning assessment. After the BOFs we had four thematic roundtables that extended these conversations. During the reception, Cherokee Story Teller Rocky Robbins engaged participants in the native tradition of storytelling. After the reception of light hors d'oeuvres, groups met to go to dinner at Brick Town within walking distance of the hotel.

On Friday, there were 39 individual paper sessions. Friday lunch was the business meeting. Keeping within our theme of M(athematics) E(ducation): Then, Now and the Future, Bill Speer brought a fun "History of RCML" quiz that was distributed at lunch. The answers were read on Saturday during the Wilson Lecture. The winning team received an RCML 2004 conference paper weight.

In addition to the many excellent sessions on Friday, we had a special afternoon symposium session coordinated by Anne Reynolds that included many of Grayson Wheatley's former doctoral students. They provided a retrospective of problem centered learning, a perspective on Dr. Wheatley's impact on mathematics education research, and an articulation of their own research. Also on Friday, prior to the symposium, was a special demonstration session by the Santa Fe South High School Robotics Club. The students were participating in this year's Botball competition, to be held the following day. They brought autonomous robots they had build and described the mathematics and team activities they were using. This session was also in anticipation of the Wilson Lecture on Saturday.

Friday evening dinner included Dr. Wheatley's keynote address. Then approximately 40 individuals traveled by van and car to Guthrie, OK to the "Doublestop Fiddle Shop and Music Hall" to hear the Byron Berline bluegrass band.

On Saturday, we had twenty-one individual paper presentations in three different session time slots starting at 8:30 a.m. At 11:30 was the Wilson Lecture given by Cathryne Stein, the Executive Director of the KISS Institute for Practical Robotics. She presented the history of the KISS Institute and the Botball competition, then demonstrated some of the robots.

Overall, we had 103 speakers (13 who did not attend) in 69 sessions in addition to the keynote address and Wilson Lecture. Seventy-seven full registrations, 12 graduate student registrations, and eight one-day registrations reflect the success of all of you to get the word out and recruit some outstanding participants for the conference. Expenses for the conference were: \$11,783.51. Income for the conference, including for the Byron Berline event, was \$12,080.00 for a net profit of \$296.49.

My thanks to everyone involved in making this conference a success. My special thanks go to the behind-the-scenes graduate students who worked so hard for many months to make this event happen: Kerri Richardson, Lianfang Lu, Sam Mrayyan, and Vicki Flournoy. They represent for all of us the future of this organization.

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## RCML ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

President Sheryl Maxwell called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. The meeting was held in the Grand Pavilion at the Westin Hotel in Oklahoma City. Sheryl Maxwell welcomed both old and new members.

### Item 1: Approval of minutes for last year's meeting

Secretary Sue Brown announced that RCML informed members of the minutes in three ways. First, they are published in *Intersection Points* in the April issue, second they are included on the RCML Web site. And finally, they are posted at the Annual Conference in the registration area. She asked if there were any questions on the minutes. There were none. Jayne Fleener called for approval of the minutes. Azita Manouchehri seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Item 2: Treasurer's Report

Jayne Fleener presented the Profit and Loss report for January through December 2003. RCML had approximately \$3,500 in income generated by membership and approximately \$10,000 in income generated by conference registration. Expenses incurred during the calendar year 2003 for the 2003 conference, *Focus*, office supplies, plaques, postage, printing, and web master honorarium totaled approximately \$8,000. When income generated by interest and back service charges were included, the net result was approximately \$14,000 of income during calendar year 2003. Dixie Metheny moved that the treasurer's report be accepted and David Davison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### Item 3: Past President's Report

Past President Ginny Usnick introduced the officers elected for 2004-2006: Vice President for Conferences - David Davison, Treasurer - Winifred Mallalm, Conference Committee - Robert Mann and Sally Robison, President Elect - Bea Babbitt.

### Item 4: President's Report

Sheryl Maxwell announced that at future conferences, speakers would be expected to register for the conference. If they do not register, they will be dropped from the program. She also announced that the board was in the process of revising the duties of the officers with by-laws being assessed.

### Item 5: Vice President for Conferences Report

Kay Wohlhuter reported the following: Kay thanked Jayne Fleener and Anne Reynolds for organizing the 2004 Conference. Jayne asked the members to complete the conference evaluation report. Jayne thanked the following OU graduate students for their work with the conference: Lianfang Lu, Vicki Flournoy, Kerri Richardson, and Sam Mrryan. She also recognized van drivers Carlos Rodriguez and Marco Columbus. She reminded members to attend the Botball exhibition and the dinner Friday night.

Jayne also announced awards that were initiated at this years meeting: Most Outstanding Young Career Research, Most Outstanding Empirical Research, and Most Outstanding Historical/Theoretical Research. She recognized the following: Outstanding Young Career Research - George Abshire, Outstanding Empirical Research - Kristine Montis.

(continued on page 7)

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RCML 2004 Annual Meeting Minutes (continued from page 6)

Kay introduced the members of the Conference Committee: Mary Enderson, Sandy Johnson, Robert Mann, Michael Naylor, Carolyn Pinchback, and Sally Robison. She also announced that the 2005 RCML Conference would be held in Little Rock Arkansas and introduced Carolyn Pinchback and Donna Foss. They reported they were happy to host the conference in Little Rock and a shuttle would be available from the airport to the hotel. Kay asked anyone interested in hosting a future conference to contact David Davison. She also announced Winifred Mallam and Roland Pourdavood were going off the Conference Committee; she presented a certificate of appreciation to Winifred.

Item 6: Vice President for Publications

Alan Zollman announced members should have received the summer 2003 *Focus* within the last two weeks. RCML has had problems with the publisher of *Focus* (over many years), which resulted in the publication delay. *Focus* is three issues behind currently. The executive board will look into ways to get caught up. The description on the inside cover of *Focus* has been changed to indicate the correct editor, Jean Schmittau. If anyone is having problems with *Focus*, they were asked to contact Alan. Also, the RCML Web site is updated on a frequent basis and members were asked to contact Alan if they have ideas for the web site.

Dan Brahier announced that three issues of the newsletter *Intersection Points* were mailed in 2003. This was accomplished at a lower cost than in the past since more information is published on the web site. Dan thanked: Roland Pourdavood for his work with membership, Rama Menon for writing "Musings", his office staff for their assistance, and Ryan Speer for maintaining the Web site. Dan announced that currently the newsletter is available both electronically and as a hard copy via US mail. He also announced that as of December 2003, RCML had 174 members, 22 do not have email addresses, and 14 newsletters were undeliverable to the email address in the database. He also reported that some organizations, such as SSMA, were distributing newsletters in electronic form only.

Item 7: Old Business

Sheryl asked the members of the 2003-2004 board to stand. She then asked the members of the 2004-2005 board to stand. She presented gifts to the following outgoing officers: Ginny Usnick - Outgoing President, Kay Wohlhuter - President for Conferences, Jayne Fleener - Treasurer.

Item 8: New Business

Bea Babbitt announced RCML is looking for officers for 2005-2006 and nomination forms are available on each table. The following are the positions available: Vice President for Publications, Secretary, Conference Committee - two positions.

There was no further new business and President Sheryl Maxwell closed the meeting at 1:10 p.m. Submitted 1 March 2004 by Sue Brown.

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PERSONNEL, 2003-2004**

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**Intersection Points -- RCML Newsletter**

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