

NCMATYC NEWS

SPRING 2009

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The President's Message

Suzanne T. Williams

Central Piedmont Community College



Greetings to all. By the time this newsletter arrives, spring should have really sprung, and I know we are all hoping for new beginnings... especially as our budgets are concerned! We were all so disappointed to have to cancel our 2009 conference at Wilmington. Kenneth Hufham and Valerie Melvin and other faculty had already begun planning, and we all appreciate their efforts. We hope to return to Wilmington next time the East comes up. In the meantime, we are making plans for two additional conference events.

The North Carolina Community College Faculty Association (NCCCFA) is holding their conference in Greensboro on October 11 and 12 at the Embassy Suites. Since so many of the discipline-specific conferences were cancelled, they have offered us an opportunity to have an NCMATYC track at their conference. Randy will be soliciting presentations, and we are also planning to have a business meeting. Dr Ralls is supporting the NCCCFA's efforts, and he will be the lunch speaker. Please look for more to follow about this, on the listserv as well as at the website. We are planning all of our events for Monday, October 12. We hope that you will be able to budget to attend. We promise to make it worthwhile from the mathematics point of view, and it is always good to support NCCCFA.

Our spring conference will be at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory on March 4-5. Ann DeBoever and her faculty are already making arrangements. We are planning to hold this conference by hook or by crook... we cannot afford to miss two years. Please plan as early as possible to attend both conferences.

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The NCMATYC NEWS is an official publication of the North Carolina Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges. Articles for publication and comments should be submitted electronically to dzemanek@email.pittcc.edu. The deadline for the Fall 2009 issue is October 27, 2009.

The President's Message

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As most of you know, Rob Kimball received our first Mathematics Excellence Award. We hope to formally recognize him at our business meeting in Greensboro. We are currently looking for nominees for Teaching Excellence, to be awarded at our meeting in Hickory. Your board believes that NCMATYC represents the most talented community college faculty in the State. These awards are part of our effort to recognize you. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter, and also at the website.

Two of our goals are always to strengthen NCMATYC and to foster new leaders for our organization. In order to accomplish this, the board has decided to give two types of scholarships to our members. The first will be one scholarship of up to \$1250 to attend the AMATYC conference, which is November 12-15 in Las Vegas. This is designated for a current member who has never attended AMATYC. It is to promote and support faculty involvement and leadership in NCMATYC. The second will be three scholarships of up to \$250 each to attend our NCMATYC conference. In an effort to increase participation and membership across our state, these funds will be awarded to faculty who have not previously attended NCMATYC.

The board and I welcome any ideas you have to strengthen our organization. You will read in this newsletter of several efforts being made to maintain our connections and provide additional resources for use in our classrooms. We know that times are difficult now, given the budget crunch, and we believe it is especially important to continue to build on our past successes. As always, our strength is in our collective striving.

Save the Date by Ann DeBoever and Luke Walsh, Catawba Valley Community College

The Mathematics Department at Catawba Valley Community College would like to invite all NCMATYC members to the Spring 2010 Conference in Hickory, NC. Mark your calendars for March 4 and 5, 2010!

We were all disappointed that we were unable to hold our annual conference this year. However, we can still honor the missed event by examining a specific math exercise that could range from developmental to pre-calculus ability. Perhaps you can find a way to fit this into your curriculum or into your "free" time. Nonetheless, we eagerly await your arrival!

Let a polynomial of degree 2 be formed by using the date as positive coefficients, where the year is the last two digits.

$$\text{month}(x^2) + \text{day}(x) + \text{year}$$

1. For example, the saved date 3/4/10 would turn into the following quadratic $3x^2 + 4x + 10$. Can either of the saved dates be factored over the integers?
2. Which month or months in 2010 has or have the most dates that can be factored over the integers?
3. What is the probability that a date in 2010 will factor over the integers?

See you next year!

An Interview with Rob Kimball, the Recipient of the NCMATYC Mathematics Excellence Award by Daniela Zemanek, Pitt Community College

Last year, NCMATYC initiated the Mathematics Excellence Award, intended for educators who have made outstanding contributions to mathematics or mathematics education at the two-year college.

Rob Kimball of Wake Technical Community College has been named the first recipient of the NCMATYC Mathematics Excellence Award

The Award Committee used the following criteria from AMATYC's Mathematics Excellence Award in choosing Rob: national reputation, leadership and activities in professional organizations, professional talks and presentations, awards and grants received, publications, professional activities on a regional, state, and national scale, teaching expertise, and other contributions to mathematics and/or mathematics education.



As one of the founding members of NCMATYC, being the first president of our organization, and a passionate leader for math education in NCMATYC, AMATYC, and numerous state and national committees, Rob exemplifies all of the qualities listed.

NCMATYC wishes to offer congratulations and thanks to Rob for his many years of service to the organization. The presentation of this award will be made at the next NCMATYC business meeting.

DZ: The committee and the NCMATYC board are pleased to honor you with this award, Mr. Kimball. Thank you for giving us the chance to learn more about you by agreeing to participate in this interview for the NCMATYC newsletter. What special significance does this award have for you?

Rob: The award means a great deal to me. I am very appreciative of those who wrote letters of support, of the committee, and of NCMATYC for bestowing the award. I am most appreciative of the colleagues with whom I have worked – those who share a common goal of improving mathematics education in North Carolina. My colleagues in the Math and Physics Department share in this recognition. They have worked with me to implement new ideas and then make the ideas even better.

It is important for NCMATYC to bestow awards of this nature in order to define and recognize the dedication of members who work hard to help it achieve its goals. I have been fortunate to have been able to contribute to the growth and strength of NCMATYC and am honored to receive the first Mathematical Excellence Award. I am proud of the organization and what it means to faculty in this state. The award underscores the efforts I've undertaken to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Part of the significance of this award is that it provides me this opportunity to thank you – my colleagues and friends in NCMATYC. Thank you for what you have done, for what you do, and for what you will do.

DZ: You were the first president of NCMATYC from 1988 to 1990. How do you see our organization now, 20 years later? Do you think that we have achieved the initial goals for this organization?

Rob: It can't be twenty years! Oh my. When several of us sat down to formulate a plan to get this organization started, I think we wanted to give the Community College faculty in North Carolina the same opportunities we saw AMATYC and its

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affiliates giving others: an opportunity to grow professionally, an avenue for sharing and debate, and an association for support and encouragement. We have done that.

However, these were a means to an end, and that end has not been achieved.

NCMATYC has the potential to do so much more. The System Office does not provide the vision and guidance that math faculty need. The staff wears too many hats and deals with too many issues. It would be logical for the System Office to promote NCMATYC – to ask for assistance to help make decisions and improvements. It would be reasonable for System Office staff to support and encourage our efforts to improve the teaching and learning of mathematics at the CC level. We should continue to work on gaining their confidence.

Meanwhile, the curriculum must be updated to reflect the opportunities that exist for students. Courses must be revised to reflect the new applications and new content that our students need to know. Our methods must also continue to reflect what we learn about learning and how technology can help us achieve our goals. NCMATYC is the organization that needs to take the lead on both accounts. In order for NCMATYC to succeed, if given that chance, it needs to have more faculty involved and ready to take on responsibility. An annual conference is a necessary component of NCMATYC, but, in my opinion, it is not sufficient.

DZ: How do you see NCMATYC in the future?

Rob: I want to see NCMATYC grow in numbers and in strength. We have to have members who support the organization but we must also have members who bring to the organization their talents and time. There are several ways NCMATYC can grow in strength.

- 1) Establish stronger partnerships with other professional organizations in N C.
- 2) Do a better job at what we do already: conference, newsletter, web site.
- 3) Take the responsibility of updating the CCL seriously – this would be an ongoing effort.
- 4) Use the resources it has to promote faculty growth and professional development.

DZ: Who influenced you to pursue a career in math?

Rob: In the tenth grade, we had several math teachers; they would come and go, and I guess I might have contributed to the decisions of some to go. 😊

The choir director would often take the class when we were between teachers. She would call on me to explain the concepts to the class – so I actually provided the instruction. It was natural. I made the decision to become a math teacher and coach while in high school. After obtaining my BS, I went back to the high school in my local area and was hired immediately. I enjoyed coaching baseball and football, and I enjoyed teaching math. Back then, the algebra courses were so heavily algorithmic – hardly any applications anywhere – well, except at the end of the chapter which nobody ever seemed to do. (They were mostly contrived anyway.)

While at NCSU, I was enrolled in two calculus courses taught by Howard Petrea. He made us sit in the same seat each day so he could call on each one of us by name. He used questions to keep us alive and alert and prepared! We could tell he loved what he did, loved mathematics, and cared that we succeeded. Since then, I've been influenced by so many good people – it would be difficult to name them all.

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DZ: While being AMATYC Southeast Vice President, you served on the Project Planning Team and assisted in the development of the revised national mathematics standards for two-year colleges. What can you tell us about the final product of the *Beyond Crossroads* project?

Rob: The process used to create *Beyond Crossroads* was so much more organized than was the process for CROSSROADS. The planning team for BC was able to get many people involved as writers, as reviewers, and as editors. This made the document more important to the organization and more accepted by all.

In 1992, I was Chair of the Technical Math Committee of AMATYC. Marilyn Mays and Dale Ewen asked me to take part in the writing of CROSSROADS. Communication was tougher back then, and, even after a meeting in Memphis with about 60 people, the document just wasn't coming together. A small group of us met at Marilyn's college in Dallas and wrote most of what is in the document – using material that had been put together to that point. It was truly an accomplishment for a fledgling organization.

There was a well-planned process for BC. Chapter Heads put most of the words together from the substantial input of many contributors. Rikki Blair then did most of the rest, relying on help from the Planning Team, when needed. The Planning Team met regularly to assess the progress of the document and plan for the roll out and implementation phase. There were so many moments in that experience that were memorable: those “ah ha” moments where the idea finally came together in words, the “oh no” moments where something had not been done, and the “whew” moments where you sit back and look at what has been done in amazement.

It was gratifying to be a part of both documents. They have meant a great deal to AMATYC and hopefully to each member as well.

Most people are not aware of the time, energy, dedication, and commitment it took from people like Dale, Marilyn, Don Cohen, Susan Wood, Phil Mahler, Sadie Bragg, Rikki, and a host of others to make all this come about. When you look at those two books, please think of the effort it took to put them in front of you. Then think, “What can I do to promote the vision those documents outline?”

DZ: Which of your publications do you think have had the biggest impact on readers?

Rob: Of course I hope the standards documents have had a big impact. However, I hope “The Vision” document we produced in conjunction with the MAA's “Voices of the Partner Disciplines” was read as well. We, as math teachers, need to know about how math is used outside the classroom.

DZ: What is your favorite course of study in math? Why?

Rob: During my first semester (F1981) I taught Differential Equations (201), Practical Geometry (1103), and Compound Angles (1203). I learned most all of that content with the students. I still like to learn new content. What we do with modeling and with the aid of technology is nothing like what I learned in college – we all continue to learn new things. So, what I like best is learning new ways to demonstrate concepts – mostly with technology. I know many of you who go back a few years know I've promoted the use of spreadsheets in math classes; as a tool for the teacher, and a tool for the student. You can't escape spreadsheets now. I enjoy finding ways to use technology to create interactive tools to achieve our goals. I enjoy the modeling and data analysis that can now be done so easily. These were topics I did not see in college.

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Advancements in technology allowed us to include more engaging mathematics – some may say it even required us to examine our curriculum and to make changes in what we emphasize. We can now do problems in courses below calculus that were once only taught in calculus courses. Technology will continue to change and grow even more powerful and natural to students. It is only logical that we continue to evaluate our curriculum and make changes regularly.

DZ: What advice would you give a student who has a math phobia?

Rob: I teach a great many students who have a math phobia. Those students can't be cured with advice; it takes nurturing and time. In the semester that I have them, I believe I have helped many students overcome their phobia by showing them (1) that math is useful, (2) that we all use math, and (3) that they can do math. Technology can be a tool to help students overcome their anxiety as well.

Until the curriculum is updated to reflect the needs of all students (not just those who might take calculus), students are going to develop fears and anxiety about the abstract ideas that are presented with a cold indifference to the needs of the student.

My advice then, is not to the student, but to us. Preventing anxiety is easier than overcoming it.

DZ: As a past editor of the NCMATYC newsletter, what special rewards did this position give you?

Rob: The newsletter is a tool to keep the members of NCMATYC engaged and interested in the organization. It should (a) keep members informed by including articles about what has been done and what events are planned; (b) allow members a chance to share ideas, opinions, and recognition; and (c) include information that members may not know about such as publications, opinions from others, special events, etc. While editor, I tried to engage the reader with articles that most faculty might not ever see or that were even contrary to the status quo. I think that is important – to include information that requires careful consideration and reflection – that may lead the reader to more research and even serious self reflection.

Travel Assistance for AMATYC Conference by Jan Mays, Past-President, Elon University

Thousands of mathematics instructors come together to share ideas and network at AMATYC each fall. Are you feeling lucky? Then why not apply for the NCMATYC grant to attend the 2009 AMATYC conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, November 12 – 15. NCMATYC will offer travel assistance of up to \$1250 for one North Carolina community college instructor to attend this national conference. The grant is intended to support and promote faculty involvement and leadership in NCMATYC. Criteria for selection include NCMATYC membership of at least two years, previous attendance at an NCMATYC conference, and an appropriate letter of support from an NCMATYC member. Those who receive the award are expected to share ideas gained at AMATYC by leading a session at the spring NCMATYC conference.

The board of NCMATYC understands the importance of developing the leaders of tomorrow today. If you want to get more involved in shaping math education for the future, check out the application form enclosed in this newsletter. The form must be postmarked by August 31st, 2008. What do you have to lose?

AMATYC 2008 by Jack Flaherty, Brunswick County Community College



First, I want to thank all the members of NCMATYC for the travel grant and the opportunity to attend the 2008 AMATYC Annual Conference in Washington, DC this past November. My name is Jack Flaherty. I am a full-time math instructor at Brunswick Community College in Supply, NC. This semester, I teach one section of MAT 121, two sections of MAT 171 and one section of MAT 172. Below, I will share my thoughts and experiences with you.

In March 2008, I attended the NCMATYC Conference in Winston-Salem. Attending that conference was a very worthwhile experience for me. During the state gathering, I heard good things about the AMATYC Conferences from people who had attended in the past. After hearing their comments, I thought that I might enjoy attending the national conference. A short time later, I read that NCMATYC was offering two \$1,000 travel grants for two North Carolina community college instructors to attend the AMATYC Annual Conference in Washington, DC in November 2008. The criteria for selection was that preference would be given to instructors who had never attended the national conference and came from schools that have not been represented at AMATYC in the past. I had never attended, and as far as I knew, no one from Brunswick Community College had ever attended the national conference. There are only two full-time math instructors, Dustin Kapraun, the chair of the department, and myself. Speaking with Dustin, I knew that he had never attended the national conference. This encouraged me to apply.

One of the disadvantages of being a member of a small department is that you are usually the only instructor teaching a particular course. As a result, there is limited opportunity to learn and share ideas about the courses you are teaching. Attending the national conference would give me opportunities that I do not always have at BCC. I applied for the grant and was chosen as one of the recipients.

After receiving notification that I was chosen as a recipient, there were the logistics of filling out the registration form, arranging for the hotel, making travel plans and letting the appropriate people at BCC know that I had received the grant and would need to miss two days of school to attend the conference. Taking care of the registration and hotel was easy as it was done online. The people at school were very supportive so that was not a problem. One thing that I did find out was that if you do not want to drive to Washington, DC from Supply, NC there is no easy way of taking public transportation. Ultimately, I drove from Supply to Rocky Mount and took AMTRAK to DC. This turned out to be a great way of traveling. It eliminated a number of hours of driving and avoided all the traffic congestion in the metro DC area.

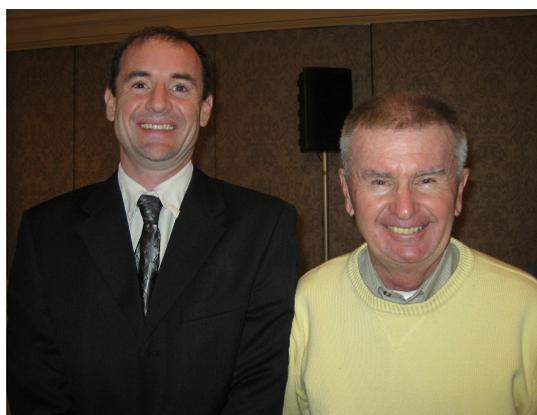
I arrived in DC on Wednesday evening, and the conference began on Thursday morning. The first session that I attended was entitled "Enhancing Your First Conference Experience". The session was intended for those attending AMATYC for the first time. It introduced me to members of the national board of AMATYC, provided suggestions to help me make the most of the conference experience and gave me the opportunity to meet other first-time participants. I found it to be a great way to start. Sessions at the conference are broken up into fourteen different areas. The areas cover topics such as assessment, instructional strategies (learning styles, teaching methodologies etc.), student support (math labs, study skills, tutoring, learning communities and addressing math anxiety) and teaching with technology (distance learning, computer software, Internet resources, graphing calculators, etc.). The length of a session can vary from 50 minutes to three hours, depending upon the topic that is covered. Sessions can be interactive, lecture, or a combination of styles, and the number of attendees can vary from the single digits to the hundreds. The conference program gives a brief description of each session to help plan your time at the conference.

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Since there is so much offered at the conference, I believe there are two ways of choosing the sessions that you are going to attend. One is to focus on one or two areas that are of interest to you. For example, if you are interested in teaching with technology, you might want to spend most of your time attending the sessions that cover that area. The other way of choosing sessions is to pick those that catch your attention as you read through the program. Using this method, you may select one session on assessment, one on instructional strategies, one on teaching with technology, etc. The sessions you decide to attend will depend upon your personality, your needs and what you want to gain from your conference experience. The conference also provides larger sessions and a breakfast meeting with featured and keynote speakers. Personally, I found the smaller sessions to be more beneficial than the larger ones. I focused on sessions that dealt with teaching with technology, instructional strategies and assessment. After attending a session, I usually came away with one of three reactions: It was worthwhile and I picked up ideas that I could bring back to try with my classes; I am already doing that in my classes, so I must be on the right track; or I did not find it worthwhile. With the exception of one, the sessions that I attended fell into either the first or second categories. Finally, there was also the opportunity to visit the exhibits and meet with the vendors. It was an opportunity to pick up free and new material, which I always find worthwhile.

There are several things to be aware of if you are planning to apply for the grant. The conference is expensive. Taking into account registration fees, hotel, travel and meals, the cost of the conference was close to \$1,300 for the four days. If it were not for the grant and the fact that BCC made up the difference between the grant and the total cost, I would not have been able to afford the conference. Another consideration is that many of the attendees come in groups or have been past participants so they know each other. They use the conference as an opportunity to get together for dinner, to sightsee etc. Attending as an individual and not knowing others at the conference was at times difficult for me. A final thought is that you need to pace yourself. The days can be very long. Sitting through 6 to 8 hours of conferences can be draining, so you need to know when to step back and take a break. Preparation and balance are the keys to a successful conference.

No matter how much I write or say about the AMATYC conference, it is one of those things that you have to experience in order to appreciate all that it has to offer. If you think that you might want to be part of the national conference, I encourage you to apply for the grant. It was a rewarding and worthwhile experience. I believe that it would benefit any math instructor from a two-year college. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me either at 910-755-7512 or at flahertyj@brunswickcc.edu.



Chris Mansfield and Jack Flaherty were the winners of the first NCMATYC travel grant.

Notes from Washington: A First-Time Attendee's View of the AMATYC Conference by Chris Mansfield, Durham Technical Community College

This fall, I was fortunate enough to be able to attend the AMATYC conference in Washington, D.C. courtesy of NCMATYC, which was kind enough to award two \$1000 stipends to North Carolina community college instructors who had never been to the national conference.



I had been to six NCMATYC conferences, but I knew this experience would be quite different. Being much larger, AMATYC attracts many big names (at least big in math circles) to speak/present at the national conference. The prospect of seeing many of these speakers, particularly physics professor David Wright (more on him later), excited me, but one of the byproducts of going to such a large gathering is that I would know approximately 1% of the attendees as opposed to knowing maybe half of the folks at NCMATYC. Additionally, I was to be going up as the lone representative of Durham Tech, which is to say I would not have the advantage of tagging along with Lee Ann Spahr, who seems to know everybody everywhere we go (and if she doesn't know someone, she quickly rectifies that situation). Fortunately, other NC'ers were there who made me feel quite welcome, particularly Suzanne Williams, who deserves a heartfelt thank you.

Apparently, the weather in Minneapolis in 2007 was unseasonably warm; Mother Nature got us back this year with temperatures never topping 40 degrees the whole weekend, making the mercifully short walks down the hill to the restaurants in DuPont Circle tooth-chatteringly frigid. Still, when John Hornsby and company offer up a free meal at Ruth's Chris Steak House you don't think twice about braving the elements. Speaking of publishers' receptions, McGraw-Hill hosted a cocktail party Friday night that was...well, it was free wine and food and the opportunity to talk to a whole bunch of math people—who could argue with that?

The presentations, of course, are the conference's *raison d'être*, and they proved as edifying as the receptions did enjoyable. The highlight was the aforementioned David Wright's spectacular physics demonstrations. While only tangentially related to the math I use in my classes, they nevertheless were very entertaining. One of the funniest demonstrations involved an electric leaf blower, a paint roller, and a roll of toilet paper. I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

Also highly entertaining was University of Guelph Professor Jack Weiner's "Friday Specials" which generally have the students look at an actual advertisement, article, etc. in a newspaper or magazine and have them pick out the usually humorous mathematical or logical mistake. E.g.: the toilet that promises to "exceed maximum performance" or the offer to get \$7 off a \$6 pizza. Some, too intricate to get into here, are more meaty and would be quite useful exercises; a weekly dose would surely increase students' math literacy, at least to some small degree.

On a more serious—and useful—note, the University of Maryland's Amber Rust presented on how important reading is to mathematics and how *different* reading is *in* mathematics. For instance, when people come across an unfamiliar word they generally infer its meaning from context or just gloss over it rather than look it up. This simply doesn't work with the dense, compact, technical language of mathematics and math textbooks. Students need to be told this explicitly. Dr. Rust then had us read a standard textbook explanation of slope and try to figure out where students conceivably could have misconceptions. There were literally more than a dozen ways in which a student could reasonably misunderstand the one page of text we looked at. I'm certainly going to think about how to use this information to better prepare my students.

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Notes from Washington: A First-Time Attendee's View of the AMATYC Conference

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Other highlights of the trip included the Faculty Math Competition (actually, that was more like a lowlight for me personally), a presentation on gambling (in preparation for 2009's AMATYC conference in Las Vegas), receiving on Durham Tech's behalf, the plaque for Southeast Region Student Math League championship (couldn't resist mentioning it), and of course getting a chance to meet and exchange ideas with people from all over the country, as well as get to see some of my fellow North Carolinians again. I'd like to again thank NCMATYC for giving me the opportunity to go to the conference—I had a great time.

Technology Tips... by Randy Ledford, President-Elect, Davidson County Community College

Math classrooms are filled with a diverse group of students, and each student has a different type of learning style. The traditional age group of students is technologically savvy and need to be engaged using media in which they interact. Emails, instant messaging, blogging, and text messages have replaced a simple phone call. Facebook and MySpace are center stage in social networking, and video media sites YouTube, Flickr, Skype, and Vimeo have taken this generation by storm. So, the question is... how can instructors engage this type of student?

One solution is using the most up to date technology. An example of this type of technology is Jing by Tech Smith, the makers of Snagit and Camtasia Studio. Jing is a new video conversation software. This software can be downloaded from TechSmith for free at <http://www.jingproject.com>.

Jing allows you to snap a picture of your screen or make a quick video of what you are doing on your computer screen with ease. Once you have created your project, you can send it to students via email, Instant Messaging, or post it to a website or blog. Jing can be used on both a Mac and a PC because the software saves screen captures in a PNG format, while a video recording is saved in a SWF format. When you download Jing you are allowed 2GB of free space and 2GB of free monthly bandwidth on Screencast.com to post your screen captures or videos. Each Jing recording is limited to 5 minutes which keeps the file size small; therefore, the students have faster downloads.

You can upgrade to Jing Pro for \$14.95 per year. Jing Pro has more video capturing and editing features. The file sizes are also smaller for a faster a download. One feature, in particular, allows you to save recordings in SWF formats or MPEG4-AVC. You can upload videos directly to video sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo, Viddler, and Facebook. Jing also has a help center if you need a hand to get started creating your screen captures and videos.

If you decide to try Jing, please share your experiences with other NCMATYC members by Jing to us on the NCMATYC listserv. You should be able to post the Jing link of the recording in your message to the listserv.

I hope the semester finishes well for you, and that you have a great summer! See you in the fall.

Please consider submitting articles for the next edition of NCMATYC Newsletter. Articles for publication and comments should be submitted electronically to Daniela Zemanek at dzemanek@email.pittcc.edu

Thinking Globally and Acting Locally – a Membership Update by Tina T. Starling, Secretary NCMATYC



The catchy phrase, “thinking globally and acting locally,” has been around in the business world for some time. Companies who have found a way to manifest it, such as Starbucks and McDonald’s, have undoubtedly reaped much reward. They were able to capitalize on opportunities presented at the store level in order to achieve the greater goal at their corporate level.

I’ve been thinking about how this phrase perfectly applies to our membership goals of NCMATYC. Admittedly, the objectives of NCMATYC do not include a desired membership capacity. But, the objectives do include the encouragement and promotion of communication, collaboration, and professional development among mathematics instructors and educators. Your NCMATYC board of officers agreed that in order to grow membership and meet our objectives, we would need to have contacts at the school level.

So we put before you, in the Fall 2008 newsletter, our “local” goal. We set out to gain 100% campus representation by February 14, 2009. This meant that NCMATYC had a strong contact at each campus that could serve as a messenger, if necessary, between NCMATYC and members, both current and prospective. I am happy to report that we are closer than ever to having 100% campus representation. Thanks to all of you, across the state, who have been willing to be that contact person.

Currently, the board sees several opportunities presenting themselves at the “store” level and we need your help in two ways. First, we need your help in renewing your membership this year – especially since the spring conference was cancelled and that is the time many of you renew. Please be diligent in sending in your membership renewals and encouraging those at your school to do the same. Second, we need your help with inviting other mathematics instructors and educators to join our organization. Certainly, we will be relying on the campus contact persons to help us update our records and to promote membership at their schools, with an increased emphasis on recruiting membership among new instructors. But, if you know someone who would be a great member and leader for NCMATYC, give them a gentle nudge toward the membership application: <http://ncmatyc.matyc.org/about/memberapp.pdf>.

Now that we have contacts at every school, the next step is to have members at each campus. With your help, that can happen.

Acting locally will enable us to meet our goals in membership and our goals/objectives in the organization. Thanks for your continued support of and involvement with NCMATYC. If you have questions regarding your membership, please send me an email at ttstarli@ncsu.edu. Act locally and think globally...

*Articles for publication and comments should be submitted electronically to Daniela Zemanek at dzemanek@email.pittcc.edu
The deadline for the Fall 2009 issue is October 27, 2009.*

Teaching Excellence Award

by Sharon Welker, Eastern Regional VP, Wake Technical Community College

The North Carolina Community College System is very fortunate to have such a large number of outstanding mathematics educators across the state, and NCMATYC wishes to recognize the contributions of those instructors. We are seeking nominations for the first Teaching Excellence Award to be awarded at the 2010 conference and on alternating years thereafter. This award is intended for educators who have made outstanding contributions to mathematics or mathematics education at a two-year college. Teaching excellence is the main focus of the award.

Nominees must be NCMATYC members whose primary assigned duties are delivering instruction in an associate degree-granting program, and each nominee must have a minimum of 5 years of full-time teaching experience. Individuals can be selected for the award only once.

Criteria for selection are:

- Instructional Effectiveness and Support of Students
innovative teaching strategies, alternative assessment methods, curriculum development, creating a learning environment for all students, accessible to students in and out of the classroom, etc
- Professional Involvement and Professional Development/Renewal Activities
active participation in professional organizations, speeches, articles, conferences, etc.
- Interaction with Colleagues
sharing and discussing ideas with other colleagues
- Service to Departments/Division/College
active contributor to college community such as serving on committees, advising student clubs, etc.

Nominations are invited from NCMATYC individual members. A non-member, such as a supervisor, may nominate a member. A completed nomination packet addresses the above criteria and consists of the following items:

- (1) A resume or vitae of the nominee (not to exceed 3 pages)
- (2) Three letters in support of the nomination, one of which is a letter of nomination. The three letters should be from a student, a colleague, and a supervisor (letters are not to exceed 1 page)

In an effort to compare all candidates on the same basis, any additional materials submitted will not be considered. Incomplete nominations will not be considered. Nominations must be received by January 15, 2010. The recipient will be chosen by a subcommittee of the NCMATYC Board.

Submit nomination materials to: Sharon Welker
Wake Technical Community College
6600 Louisburg Road
Raleigh, NC 27616-6328
sfwelker@waketech.edu

An AMATYC Report - You Too Can YouTube

by Helen Kolman, Western Vice-President, Central Piedmont Community College



Last November I was fortunate to attend the AMATYC Annual Conference in Washington DC.

I experienced a number of exciting and informative sessions, but one that I would like to share with you was titled *You Too Can YouTube*, presented by Denise Robichaud from Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, MA. Denise explained her goal of creating videos to answer online student questions in a quick and easy way. She was not suggesting evolving major content, but rather clarifying one specific idea or solving one problem. Using a webcam propped on a small tripod, a headset, Windows Live Messenger and a YouTube account, Denise demonstrated her method. Responding as one would to a classroom question, Denise used a headset to talk through the solution of an algebraic equation while filming her hand working the problem on a piece of paper. Since the result is intended as a “single use video”, directed at one student, Denise noted that multiple retakes are not necessary. In fact, you might feel that a “cross out” is ok. The result was exciting and, as you might expect, student feedback was extremely positive.

A few logistical comments from Denise:

- Label the postings using content descriptors. (Students will search before asking a question on the same problem type.)
- If you do not restrict access to the site, be sure to retain the right to review any responses before allowing these to be posted.

Overall, the presentation was A+. I must give this a try.

Durham Tech Paces North Carolina Schools in Student Math League Competition

by Chris Mansfield, Durham Technical Community College

Durham Tech shined again in the Student Math League competition, with their score of 213.5 giving them a first-place finish in both North Carolina and the Southeast Region for a second consecutive year. This win gives them their third Southeast Region championship in four years. Congratulations! Wake Tech and Forsyth Tech cracked the Southeast Region top five as well, finishing fourth and fifth respectively. This marks the second year in a row that Forsyth and Catawba Valley, who finished tenth, made it into the top ten.

With teams from the state being so successful this year, it comes as no surprise that many North Carolina students fared exceedingly well in the individual standings. The list of the top ten scorers in the Southeast Region contains no fewer than six North Carolinians, led by the second-place finish of Arun Sivasankaran of Durham Tech with a score of 54.5. Following closely behind him were last year’s top NC scorer Jared Honeycutt of Surry CC, David Woodley of Forsyth Tech, Durham Tech students Tim Pluta and Xiaotong Li, and Nicolas Kiely of Nash CC.



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NCMATYC awards cash prizes to the top three scorers in the state, so Sivasankaran will receive \$300, Honeycutt \$200, and Woodley and Pluta will split the \$100 third-place money since they finished in a tie for that spot.

Disclaimer: It must be noted that scores will not be official until sometime in May, and so please understand that these results are subject to change in the unlikely event of a scoring error or a particularly outstanding score by one of the few schools who have not yet reported their spring semester results.

Thanks to the eleven North Carolina schools that participated in the Student Math League this year. I'm sure your students appreciate the work you do to give them the opportunity to compete against their peers from around the country. If your school is not involved in the competition, please consider joining—it's easy to administrate and helps foster community in the math discipline. Simply send me an email at mansfieldc@durhamtech.edu for information.

Let's Get Committed and Creative! by Tina T. Starling, Secretary NCMATYC

Like many of you, I was disappointed that the spring conference had to be cancelled. I enjoy learning “what works” in the classroom and just having time to share ideas and activities. But the conference isn't the only way we can share ideas. Even though we may not be able to share professionally in the usual and comfortable way, we are still able to share. And, in these times, we are going to need to get **committed** and **creative** about our professional development.

Try This:

- Go to <http://ncmatyc.matyc.org/>.
- Click on the “Instructional Resources” tab.
- Take a look at the “Activities by Course” or the “Activities by Topic.”
- Find an activity that you are already doing that needs to be included for the course(s) you are teaching.
- Send an email to tstarli@ncsu.edu with NCMATYC Activity in the subject line. In the email, tell me four things:

- 1) Course number (and name preferably)
- 2) Title of the activity
- 3) Topics included in the activity
- 4) Your first and last name, and school

Hopefully in this process, several things will happen. First, you'll see parts of the website that need some dusting off – there are some great activities already there! Second, you'll be able to share something without really doing much work at all because you are already doing the activity. And third, in return you'll get a number of activities that are ready-to-use in your own classrooms.

Thank you for staying **committed** to growing professionally. I look forward to forwarding your **creative** ideas to our webmaster. Let's keep him hopping! ☺

Application for NCMATYC Travel Assistance Award
to attend the
2009 AMATYC Conference



NCMATYC will offer travel assistance of up to \$1250 for a North Carolina community college instructor to attend the AMATYC conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, November 12 - 15, 2009. The travel assistance is intended to support and promote faculty involvement and leadership in NCMATYC. Criteria include NCMATYC membership of at least two years, previous attendance at an NCMATYC conference, and an appropriate letter of support from an NCMATYC member. Those who receive the award are expected to share ideas gained at AMATYC by leading a session at the spring NCMATYC conference.

Form must be POSTMARKED by August 31st, 2009.

[A] Print or type the following information.

Name: _____

School: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Preferred mailing address:

[B] Are you an AMATYC member? ___ Yes ___ No

[C] Please attach a letter of support from an NCMATYC member.

[D] Please write a brief statement (50 words or less) explaining ways you have supported NCMATYC.

Mail form to:

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What Does the NCMATYC Board Do Anyway? by Jan Mays, Past-President, Elon University

The spring of 2010 is election time for NCMATYC. Have you ever considered being an officer of NCMATYC? Speaking from personal experience, this is a great group of people with which to work. The work comes in spurts (most active around conference time), but the rewards are great. If you've ever wondered what the officers do, here's (almost) everything you need to know.

Regional Vice Presidents are primarily responsible for facilitating communication among the schools in his/her region and attending board meetings. Other responsibilities include coordinating the vendor exhibits when the annual conference falls in his/her region, soliciting newsletter articles, and coordinating the one-day fall workshops.

The **Treasurer** is responsible for keeping the financial records (deposits, reimbursements, etc.) and preparing financial reports for the board meetings and business meetings.

The **Secretary** works closely with the Treasurer to keep the membership roles accurate and send reminders to members of renewal dates. The Secretary also handles official correspondences of NCMATYC.

Running for **President-Elect** indicates a six year commitment to NCMATYC. As President-Elect, the primary duty is to chair the program for the annual conference. After two years in the office the President-Elect becomes President and presides over all the board meetings and conferences for another two years. Then comes a two-year stint as the Past-President where your main duties are to advise the President and chair the nominating committee.

Being an NCMATYC officer is a great way to serve the mathematics education community. An organization is only as good as its leaders. If you have questions about being an officer, contact Jan Mays (jmays@elon.edu or 336-278-6297). Won't you consider making the commitment?



Mail to: