

EDITORIAL

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The pages of FLM are, on the whole, better left to others to fill. Nevertheless, I feel a duty to introduce myself as the new editor. I have been involved with FLM for several years, as a reader, contributor, reviewer, Advisory Board member and more recently as Associate Editor. I feel well socialized into the culture of FLM and see the task of my editorship as maintaining and enriching that culture. Thanks are due to Brent Davis for his dedication to these same values in editing FLM for the past three years.

Unsure what to write in this editorial (one reason not to write too many of them), I have been perusing my predecessors' editorials, particularly those of David Wheeler during the first few years when FLM was establishing itself. These editorials contain many wise words and a good deal of wit but one recurring issue stands out: a strong desire that FLM provide a place for the *exchange* of ideas, for dialogue, for discussion, for interaction.

To some extent this culture of exchange has always been present, through, for example, the publication of occasional comments on previously or concurrently published articles and the inclusion of articles in the form of conversations. Wheeler, however, hoped that as much as *one fourth* of each issue might be devoted to such material. I should certainly like to see more of such writing included in FLM. Comments need not be long, nor do they need to be accompanied by extensive references. I am interested in *responses* – the unpolished train of thought prompted by a reading (or readings), conveyed in a paragraph or two, perhaps up to a few hundred words. Of course submitting a “comment on” may be easier said than done: Dick Tahta prefaced a comment of his own by (characteristically) wondering “Why expose my puny thoughts about things that wise and experienced people have written about?” (*FLM* 4(2), p. 32). But he then offered robust comments on three articles found in the previous issue. I encourage others to do the same.

This issue includes much material that may stimulate responses in (and, I hope, from) readers. In 1984, David Tall submitted his response to David Wheeler's request for

suggestions for key Research Problems in Mathematics Education (*FLM* 4(3), p. 25). He proposed two:

- How do we do mathematics?
- How do we develop new mathematical ideas?

The article that begins on the page facing this one sets out what might be seen as his latest thinking in relation to these two questions, using the metaphor of the structure of a crystal. I would be interested to know readers' thoughts on this idea.

Moshe Renert, meanwhile, writes about an issue that has been little discussed by mathematics educators, at least, not in print: the role of mathematics teaching in addressing the environmental dangers that face us and the ecosystem of which we are but one rather unbalanced part. I hope that his article will initiate a continuing strand of writing on this general topic, since it will be of increasing concern in the decades to come.

All the contributions to this issue are provocative in their different ways, but I will comment on only one more – Gerofsky's discussion of the nature of graphs and the remarkable and rather beautiful connections she makes between Norse mythology, Renaissance art and our own bodies. That the y-axis might descend to the underworld and rise to paradise brings a whole new way of looking at a graph – or perhaps merely reinstates an old way. Again, I am interested in readers' thoughts about this work.

Finally, I am very grateful to Tom Kieran for providing a selection of quotations from the work of Ernst von Glasersfeld, who died during the preparation of this issue.

If any of the articles in this issue prompts a strong inner response, whether of recognition, relief, fury or utter perplexity, do consider sharing a little of that response. As it says inside the front cover: “the journal aims to stimulate reflection [. . .]; to generate productive discussion; to encourage enquiry and research; to promote criticism and evaluation.” These are aims I very much hope we can fulfill.