

Editorial

The official mathematical story about numbers doesn't catalogue all the uses to which numbers may be put, and doesn't sanction all of them. Mathematics tends to frown on numerological predictions of one's personal destiny, for example. I have a shelf full of books on the mathematics of numbers and not one of them mentions *round numbers*, like the one on the front of this issue. But when it comes to occasions for celebration, like the celebration of longevity, round numbers have it over all other types. Mathematics may refuse to privilege 50 over 47 or 61, say, but our customs insist on such discriminations.

FLM bows to social convention and celebrates its fiftieth issue.

Some of the pieces in this issue have been specially written for it. Two of the authors, Pearla Nesher and Dick Tahta, wrote for the first issue of the journal, and all the writers have been published in previous issues. Perhaps in this sense this 50th issue can be taken to stand for the history of the journal so far.

About two years ago I decided that I had had very nearly enough of editing this journal, which I edged into existence in 1980 and have edited ever since. That's a long stretch, a longer sentence than most editors have to serve, and no less of a servitude for being self-inflicted. I was getting tired of the chores, which included not only all the

copyediting and proofreading but also looking after the details of the business side of the publication, like signing the backs of cheques and arguing claims for missing issues with subscription agencies. Fun for a while. But. Increasing age, too, was bringing its usual gifts of diminishing energy and decreasing acuity, more noticeably than any access of promised wisdom. Moreover—to take a slightly less self-centred view for a moment—the child was no longer an infant and was undoubtedly ready to assume some independence. The time was ripe for the journal to continue its education elsewhere.

I informed the members of the FLM Advisory Board, and the Executive Committee of the Canadian Mathematics Education Study Group (*Groupe canadien d'étude en didactique des mathématiques*), of my intention to give up the journal. At that point, there seemed to be three options: to close the operation down completely; to transfer the journal to some reputable organisation or publisher if one could be found (I mean found to want it, of course); or to continue to make *ad hoc* arrangements with someone else in charge. After some intensive discussions, which I won't bore you by recounting, it was agreed that effective parenting of the journal would be transferred to CMESG (*GCEDM*) "For the Learning of Mathematics" will *not* however become the official organ of the Study Group, filled with Canadian news and views. Everyone involved in the discussions was determined that the present international character of the journal would be preserved.

I owe much to very many people. Without the support provided in the first place by the administration of Concordia University, Montreal, and later by Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, the journal would not have been produced at all. Hignell Printing Limited, Winnipeg, has handled much of the setting and all of the printing for most of the issues, turning out a good-looking magazine at relatively low cost. Members of the Advisory Board have recommended, referred, and reviewed authors and articles, and answered my questions when I asked. Without readers the journal wouldn't have made a mark, and without writers it would have had nothing to make a mark with. Thanks to you all.

Authors with something germane, intriguing, and substantive to say—something that provokes thought and brings a fresh point of view—and who write in ways that take account of their readers, speaking plainly and putting their cards on the table, deserve and receive my very special gratitude. I am astonished how many articles of quality FLM has managed to attract and publish. To them and their authors is entirely due whatever reputation the journal has acquired.

Finally, I am pleased to be handing over the editorship to David Pimm, who brings an understanding of and sympathy with the general aims of the journal, editorial skill of a very high order, and enough energy to send FLM on its way for the next fifty issues. I wish him and all our readers a good journey.