



# TexMATYC News

Texas Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges  
Affiliate to the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges

Spring 2006

[www.texmatyc.org](http://www.texmatyc.org)

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## TCCTA/TexMATYC Conference — Success Again!

Once again, the TexMATYC conference was held in conjunction with the TCCTA convention in Houston on Feb. 24 and 25. With more sessions offered on a wide variety of topics, attendees had plenty to choose from. Handouts for many of the presentations are available at the TexMATYC website, <http://www.texmatyc.org>, courtesy of the presenters.

The weekend started off with an exceptional workshop on Visual Algebra by Don Allen. See page 4 for a write-up of this workshop, and make plans now to attend the pre-conference workshops in Austin next year!



On Friday, the conference started off with an entertaining and humorous talk by John Coburn, St. Louis CC, appropriately titled "Humor in Mathematics: An Effective Teaching Tool". John kept us in stitches with his hilarious accounts of student experiences as well as light-hearted teaching aids. I especially enjoyed his accounts of his "favorite" student, Smart Alec!

Continuing on that morning, Dr. George "Pinky" Nelson, Western Washington U, expounded on the critical need for Quantitative Literacy. Dr. Nelson's experience as a former space shuttle astronaut, scientist, and education reformer gave him a unique perspective into this issue. He outlined two goals for us: sophisticated use of elementary mathematics by all students (including well-developed thinking skills), and student with potential supported in using advanced mathematics.

The Friday afternoon sessions were filled with sessions from algebra through calculus, with stops along the way for statistics, distance learning, and general teaching ideas. Shirley Thompson (right), North Lake College, and winner of the 2004 TexMATYC Teaching Excellence Award, started off by introducing us to active learning and how this can be used in the mathematics classroom. Kristen Stoley, Blinn College, Steve Krevisky, Middlesex CC, and Michael Holtfrerich, Glendale CC, shared the next time slot with sessions on a "Quadratic Project for all Levels", the Houston Astros, and "Bright Ideas to Retain Math Students". One of these ideas was to offer a tutoring "course" and center titled "The Math Solution" (left). It was difficult to choose a session to attend, as they were all engaging and interesting! Steve is a "regular" presenter at TexMATYC, and sports fans always enjoy his accounts of the famous players and teams. Steve's depth and breadth of knowledge never fails to amaze everyone!



### The Math Solution



The next set of breakout sessions featured Sandra Villas, South Texas College, John Edgell, Texas State U, and a group from Coastal Bend College. Sandra took attendees on a journey towards a personal mission statement, which can provide a focus for effective decision making. Another

(Continued on page 5)

## President's Message

Linda Zientek, Blinn College



Greetings,

Thank you for allowing me to serve as a President of TexMATYC for the past two years and for your continued support of the organization. I look forward to serving on the board in the role as Past-President.

The board is very pleased with the growth and interest and for your input in the organization. On February 23 – 25, the TexMATYC/TCCTA conference was held in Houston. A variety of sessions were offered. Dr. **George Nelson**, former NASA astronaut and current director of Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education at Western Washington University, spoke on quantitative literacy from a scientific perspective. In addition, a pre-conference workshop was conducted by Dr. **Don Allen** of Texas A&M University. For his services to TexMATYC, Don Allen received a plaque of appreciation. Each spring and fall, Don has offered online professional development as a service to TexMATYC members. Congratulations to Dr. **Joanne Peebles** from El Paso Community College. Joanne was the recipient of the TexMATYC Teaching Excellence Award.

The Southwest Region is currently planning the 2007 Southwest Regional Conference to be held Friday and Saturday June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> in San Antonio, Texas. Invited speakers include Dr. Joseph Gallian from the University of Minnesota Duluth and Dr. Gloria White from the Charles A. Dana Center. Hotel accommodations will be available at St. Anthony's Hotel. The conference committee is comprised of the current presidents of the four state affiliates in the Southwest Region. If you are interested in assisting with the conference, please e-mail me at [lzientek@blinn.edu](mailto:lzientek@blinn.edu). If you are interested in serving or helping with the organization, please feel free to contact a board member.



Hope you have an enjoyable summer.

Linda Zientek

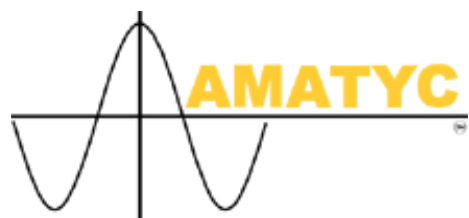


**Join us at next year's TCCTA/  
TexMATYC conference  
Renaissance Austin Hotel  
February 22-23, 2007**

**Deadline for proposals is  
October 1, 2006**



Joanne Peebles (right), El Paso Community College, receiving the TexMATYC Teaching Excellence Award from Linda Zientek, TexMATYC President.



## From the Desk of Mary Robinson AMATYC Southwest Regional Vice- President

It was great to see many of you at the 31<sup>st</sup> AMATYC Annual Conference in San Diego last November. The conference was excellent with so many great sessions; it was easy to find something useful to everyone during each time slot. Thanks to all of you who presented and/or presided. It is through the efforts of our members that AMATYC's conferences are as useful and successful as they are. And although it seems like we just finished with last year's conference, it is already time to prepare for next year's. Next November we will be in Cincinnati, Ohio and are looking forward to another great conference. Check the AMATYC website at [www.amatyc.org](http://www.amatyc.org) for details.



One of the great things to come out of the Executive Board Meeting held in San Diego before the conference was the final and official approval of the Southwest Regional Conference planned for June, 2007 in San Antonio, Texas. The TexMATYC president, Linda Zientek, and the rest of the TexMATYC Executive Board, as well as the Executive Boards of NMMATYC, ArizMATYC and OKMATYC are working together to host the conference in the Southwest Region for AMATYC members. This format for hosting an AMATYC Regional conference is unprecedented. There have been very few AMATYC Regional conferences (interestingly enough, the majority of them have been held in the Southwest Region, first by NMMATYC in 1992 and the second by ArizMATYC), and until now, none of them have been a truly joint effort by all the affiliates in the region. TexMATYC is in charge of the local arrangements for the conference and your Executive Board will be looking for volunteers to help fulfill the affiliate's part in this joint conference effort. If you would like to be a part of this effort, please contact TexMATYC president, Linda Zientek, and let her know that you are willing to help.

It is also time to start thinking about the 2007-2009 slate of candidates for the AMATYC Executive Board. If you are interested in serving AMATYC in this capacity, please go to the AMATYC Website and get information on the job descriptions for the offices. Members of the Southwest Region should consider submitting their names in nomination for one of the national positions, President-Elect, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as for the Southwest Vice-President. Please review the nomination procedures on the AMATYC Website and contact the Nominating Committee to make a nomination.



**Visit the AMATYC website for  
more information:**

**<http://www.amatyc.org>**

Join your fellow educators from colleges around the country at AMATYC's 32nd Annual Conference in Cincinnati November 2-5, 2006. The conference's theme, "Keeping Current with the Standards," celebrates AMATYC's updated standards document, *Beyond Crossroads*.

Cincinnati has attractions that range from world-class museums to the world's sexiest zoo, from symphonies and touring Broadway productions to riverfront festivals. A great place for a convention, the Cinergy Center and the Hyatt and Millennium Hotels are within walking distance of numerous museums, the Aronoff Center for the Arts and more than 50 restaurants. Plan to attend this November.

## 2004-2006 Financial Report

Habib Far, Treasurer



Description	Income	Expenses
Balance forwarded from previous treasurer on 6/12/04	\$2,584.35	
Total collected membership	\$1,790.00	
AMATYC annual dues		\$100.00
2005 Texas winners of SML prizes		\$170.00
2004 McGraw Publishing gift sponsoring Drs. Capraro	\$250.00	
Web-site domain (2 years)		\$40.00
2005 TCCTA pre conference workshop (11 attended)	\$385.00	
Drs. Capraro Workshop Fee		\$500.00
2005 Plaques		\$87.35
2005 Teaching Excellence Award (Shirley Thompson)		\$100.00
2005 AWL Publishing sponsorship gift	\$200.00	
2005 McGraw Publishing gift sponsoring Dr. Nelson	\$200.00	
Dr. Nelson Airfare to present at conference		\$322.90
2006 TCCTA Conference Equipment		\$387.90
2006 Plaques		\$69.60
2006 Teaching Excellence Award (Joanne Peebles)		\$100.00
2006 Texas winners of SML prizes		\$170.00
Online Maple workshop (20 attended)	\$400.00	
2006 TCCTA pre conference workshop (19 attended)	\$665.00	
Interest	\$16.98	
Total	\$6,491.33	\$2,047.75
Balance	\$4,443.58	



## TexMATYC Business Meeting

Mel Griffin, Secretary



The 2006 TexMATYC business meeting was held on February 24 during the annual TCCTA conference in Houston, TX. President Linda Zientek called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.

The TexMATYC Teaching Excellence award was presented to Joanne Peebles of El Paso Community College. Dr. Peebles will give a presentation at the 2007 TexMATYC conference to be held in Austin next February.

The Southwest Regional Conference to be held in San Antonio was discussed. The Southwest Region of AMATYC includes New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas. The 2007 conference will be held the third weekend in June and will be hosted by San Antonio College. The conference hotel will be Saint Anthony's Hotel. Duties and responsibilities will be divided among the affiliates in the four states. Only four AMATYC Regional Conferences have been held previously with three being held in the Southwest Region.

Project ACCCESS, which is a professional development program sponsored by AMATYC for new community college mathematics instructors, will begin another round for next year. The deadline for applications is July 1, 2006. Any community college mathematics instructor in the first-to-third year of full-time teaching is eligible to participate.

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## Wanted for 2006 – 2007: 50+ Campus Representatives

Paula Wilhite, Vice President



At the end of the 2005 – 2006 year, our membership count of 193 represents a 250% increase over the membership enrollment during the fall of 2004. Without doubt, this is due largely to the work of the current 34 campus representatives.

Campus representatives disperse information to local members about conference workshops and online professional development opportunities. They also distribute membership forms during fall and spring in-service weeks.

We sincerely thank each campus representative for their work this year. Their commitment and support to math education in Texas is evident in our numbers!

Becoming a campus representative is a great way to get involved with mathematics education at the state level. If you are interested in becoming a campus representative, please contact Paula Wilhite at [pwilhite@ntcc.edu](mailto:pwilhite@ntcc.edu). For a list of campus representatives, please go to the [www.texmatyc.org](http://www.texmatyc.org). We currently need over **50 campus representatives**.

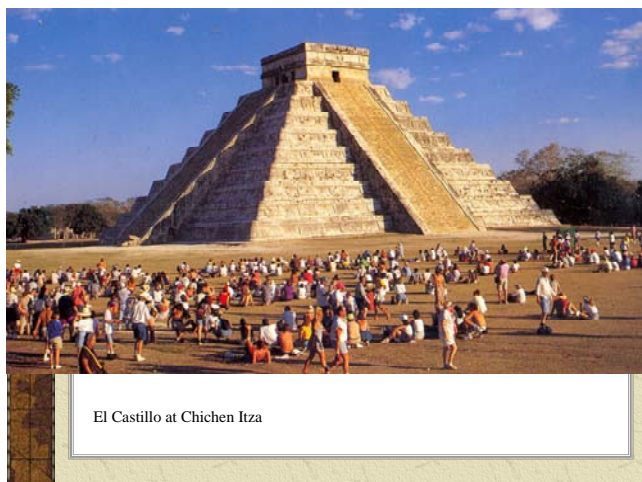


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regular presenter, John Edgell, amazed his audience with his experiences with second-grade kids and their ability to demonstrate with color coded cubes the array of events and total number of events of a sequence of spaces. He introduced us to Emily the spider, and her web spun by connecting nodes in a symmetrical trigonally arranged array (right). We also learned about Freddy, a pesky fly, that alights on the web at various nodes. By counting the number of ways Emily can get to the node where Freddy is, the students were able to determine the probability that Emily would be at each node. Download John's paper from the TexMATYC website to learn the full details of Emily's adventures!

The group from Coastal Bend College gave everyone a report of their Achieving the Dream grant, which is being used to implement the SACS mandated Quality Enhancement Plan.

On Saturday, Andra Buxkemper, Blinn College, delighted the audience with her presentation on Mayan mathematics. Andra attended a Chautauqua Institute in the Yucatan, and her presentation provided highlights of the experience (left). We

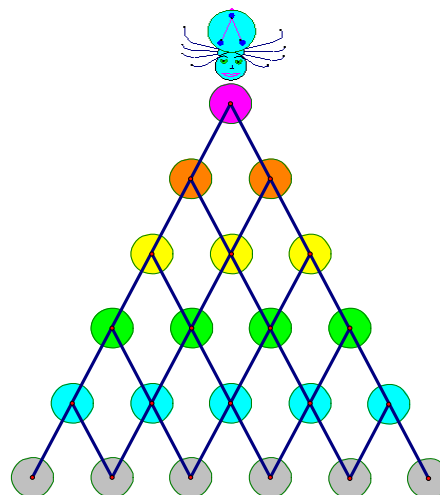


El Castillo at Chichen Itza

were treated to an engaging slide show of the history of the Maya civilization, the number system of ancient Mesoamerica, Maya sacred geometry, Maya calendar, Maya archaeoastronomy, and Maya mathematical calculations. Some attendees were lucky to obtain a model of the Mayan calculator, which Andra and her colleagues distributed during the session.

Ron Larson, Penn State U at Erie, closed out the conference with his presentation on slope fields and calculus. He provided examples about slope fields, including exact solutions and approximations by Euler's Method.

Remember to visit <http://www.texmatyc.org> to download some of these presentations.

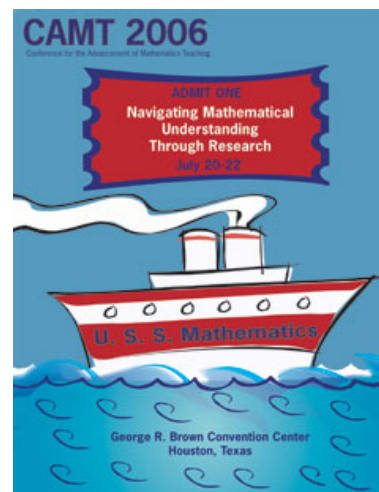




# CAMT 2006

## Navigating Mathematical Understanding Through Research July 20 - 22, 2006

We know that this year's Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching (CAMT) is going to be an outstanding experience for everyone who attends. We hope that you will mark July 20-22, 2006 on your calendar and make plans to join us at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston. You won't want to miss it!



CAMT begins with a two-day pre-conference on July 18-19, 2006. The focus of the pre-conference will be Making Mathematics Accessible for ALL Students, developed by the Region 4 Education Service Center. The pre-conference sessions will emphasize instructional strategies that best meet the needs of English language learners and students with special needs.

This year's conference theme, Navigating Mathematical Understanding Through Research, will encourage each one of us to strengthen our instructional strategies based on the best practices revealed through research in mathematics education. We have a program filled with more than 60 international and national leaders in mathematics education, as well as over 625 outstanding teacher leaders from districts all over the state of Texas.

Please consider registering for the ticketed session on Friday, July 21. This session, Leading Texas Schools to Success in Teaching Underachieving Students of Poverty, by William Parrett and Robert Parr will also include lunch. Remember, this year registration is available online. Please follow the links from our CAMT website at <http://www.tenet.edu/camt/>

## Campus News

The Mathematics Department of **Laredo Community College (LCC)** will be hosting both high school and college students during its annual Mathematics Awareness Month celebration on Wednesday, April 26. **Mr. Humberto Laurel** and **Mr. Juan Saucedo**, math instructors, are organizing this year's event, which traditionally is spearheaded by the newest members of the department. This allows new instructors to interact with the mathematics community at all levels, the school districts and the college, as well as the business community. The event this year promotes student recruitment to LCC and rewards students who have been diligently preparing for TAKS. For example, at United Independent School District, students who excelled in TAKS benchmark tests will be attending as a reward for their efforts.



**Send campus  
news to the  
Newsletter  
Editor for  
inclusion in the  
next newsletter.**

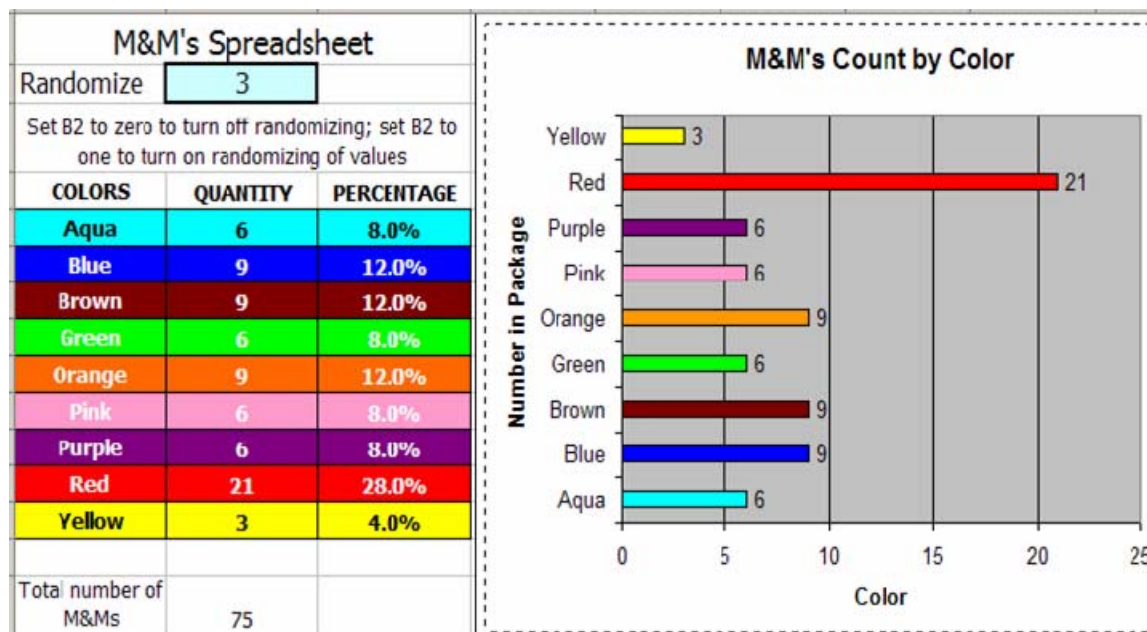
## Visual Algebra workshop

For the second year in a row, the TexMATYC pre-conference workshop was a success! 19 instructors attended the workshop hosted by Don Allen, professor of mathematics at Texas A&M University. Don has been the presenter for the online workshops sponsored by TexMATYC, and he continues to amaze us with his depth of knowledge. This time, participants were introduced to visual methods for teaching algebraic ideas. Participants all received a CD loaded with tons of examples, demos, and projects that are ready to use in our classes! We were also treated to an entertaining look at "Math at the Movies", with examples of how math is used (or misused) by Hollywood. An example of

the innovative use of Excel is shown below.

If you missed the workshop, you can download Don's handout from the TexMATYC website. And, be sure to mark your calendars for next year's workshop to be held on Thursday February 21, 2007 prior to the TCCTA/TexMATYC conference in Austin. The topic is still to be decided, and suggestions can be forwarded to Linda Zientek, TexMATYC President.

At the end of the workshop, Linda presented an appreciation plaque to Don for all his work on behalf of TexMATYC.



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President Zientek called for nominations for the TexMATYC board. The positions are for two years effective June 1, 2006. The nominating committee is composed of two current TexMATYC board members not running for reelection and two members at-large. The proposal was made to change the position of Vice President to President-Elect.

Southwest Regional Vice-President, Dr. Mary Robinson, announced that the 2011 AMATYC conference will be held in Austin at the Hilton Hotel downtown.

The TexMATYC organization is growing with approximately 200 members. As the membership increases, TexMATYC will become eligible for another delegate to the AMATYC Delegate Assembly. Membership forms may be printed from the TexMATYC website. Lifetime memberships are available for \$100. As the membership and treasury grow, TexMATYC will have the capacity to award a scholarship to a promising mathematics student at a community college.



## **TexMATYC Executive Board**

**Linda Zientek**  
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**Mel Griffin**  
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**Mary Robinson**  
AMATYC Southwest VP  
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Check us out at  
[www.texmatyc.org](http://www.texmatyc.org)

## *Dates to Remember!*

**Proposals for 2007 TexMATYC conference  
October 1, 2006**

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**32nd AMATYC Annual Conference  
November 2-5, 2006  
Cincinnati, OH**

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**Nominations for  
TexMATYC Teaching Excellence Award  
December 15, 2006**

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**TCCTA/TexMATYC Conference  
February 22-24, 2007  
Austin, TX**

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**AMATYC Southwest Regional Conference  
June 15-16, 2007  
San Antonio, TX**

## **Note from the Editor**

It has been a pleasure serving TexMATYC for many years, initially as Newsletter Editor, then President, then again as Webmaster/Newsletter Editor. When I first got involved in the organization in 1992, I had no idea where the journey would take me! I have seen TexMATYC grow from a small organization to its current membership almost reaching 200, and the future continues to be bright.

The time has come for me to leave the leadership of TexMATYC, and pursue other opportunities. As some of you may know, I am currently serving on the AMATYC Executive Board, and plan to continue giving my time and energy to our national organization. It was a bittersweet moment for me when I made the decision to step down as Webmaster/Newsletter Editor for TexMATYC, as our state affiliate is close to my heart. But, I will continue to be involved in the organization, albeit on an unofficial capacity.

I want to thank all of you for your support over the years, and especially my fellow board members for their friendship and respect.

