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Letter from the Editor, issue 3, 1988

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December 1988

DEPARTMENT
OF
MATHEMATICS

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Dear Colleagues:

Mathematics as a Humanistic Discipline began modestly, but the concept and the Humanistic Mathematics Network have grown rapidly. The initial conference of about thirty has become a network of about four hundred. A network list is included in this newsletter. The November 12 Southern California regional MAA meeting included a contributed paper session on Humanistic Mathematics with six presentations. The January national meeting in Phoenix will have three contributed paper sessions on Humanistic Mathematics with a total of thirty presentations. A book Humanistic Mathematics will be published as one of the MAA Notes.

The Network and Newsletter are arriving at a situation where decisions about the future should be made. Interested people may be able to gather in Phoenix to discuss future directions of the Network and Newsletter. At each of the three contributed paper sessions a time and place for such a gathering will be announced. If you would like to contribute to the discussion by having your remarks printed in a future newsletter send your remarks to me (single spaced). Include your BITNET address if you have one. A steering committee will discuss various ideas and suggestions and try to chart the future.

The initial Exxon grant for the newsletter will run out soon. Should the Network do more than publish the Newsletter? The Network and Cal State University, Northridge, are sponsoring a workshop February 3, 4, at which Sherman Stein will lead us in creating non routine problems. Should other workshops or conferences be part of the Network activities? Should contributed paper sessions at regional and national meetings be regularly organized?

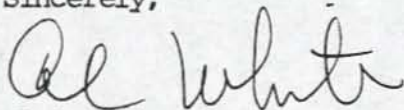
The essays that have been printed in the Newsletter have been of high quality. Many have been reprinted in more established refereed journals. Several have been mentioned in other journals and many requests for copies have come to me. Should the informal submission and solicitation of essays be continued?

Among the requestors for a copy of an essay was a senior editor from Freeman and Company, Publishers. A senior editor from Random House Publishers is very interested in the Network and Newsletters and would like to encourage authors of texts and other math books to write "humanistically." The Random House editor sent me some copies of the Random House Dictionary, Second Edition Unabridged as possible prizes for outstanding essays printed in the Newsletter, or any other use. Suggestions are welcome.

If we pay at least \$5 a year dues, the Network can become a constituent organization of the AAAS. Should we become a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the MAA if that is possible? Should we charge dues to finance the Newsletter and other activities? Should we apply to foundations, publishers, corporations, etc. for funding? Should the Network be guided by a "Mission Statement" or equivalent?

Newsletter #4 will include presentations to the MAA contributed paper sessions, essays about our future directions, and perhaps other essays which are contributed. I hope that the time between #3 and #4 will be shorter than the time between #2 and #3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alvin White". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word "White".

Alvin White

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AW/bg