

The V²CTM Reflection



THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS

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Spring Meeting Set for April 2 at Wilson Memorial

The Annual Spring V²CTM Meeting is to be held on Wednesday, April 2, at Wilson Memorial High School in Fishersville. The program includes a wide variety of presentations including a keynote by John Almarode about brain research associated with learning mathematics. Other sessions will be provided by Laurie Biser, Jody Coffey, Crystal Choate, Tiffany Campbell, Amanda Fagan, Emily Fagan, Jason Yoder Rupp and Pat Lintner. To get to Wilson Middle School from I-81 take Exit 222 onto US 250 East toward Fishersville. Stay on 250E for approximately 3 miles. Turn left at the traffic light onto Woodrow Wilson Ave. You will see signs directing you to turn right onto John Lewis Road which leads to Wilson Memorial High School on the right. A registration form is available on the last page of this newsletter. Better yet, registration is available on-line at <http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/register>. Registrations need to be in before March 27. The cost of membership and dinner is just \$10. If you paid your annual membership at the November meeting, the dinner cost is only \$5. Door prizes will be given at dinner! Students have membership and dinner fees waived! The program is as follows:

- 4:30 – 5:00 **Registration.** Thanks to the Harrisonburg High School Math Department for refreshments!
- 5:00 - 6:00 **General Session:** *Brain-Research in the Mathematics Classroom: A look at how the student brain learns in the mathematics classroom.* by John Almarode of the Shenandoah Valley Governor's School
- 6:00 – 6:45 **Dinner prepared by White Hill Catering:** Beef Lasagna, Chicken Alfredo, Caesar Salad, Garlic Bread, Beverages, Dessert
- 6:45 - 7:00 **Business Meeting.** Terry Murray, President
- 7:00 - 8:00 **Sessions:**
K-2: *Ideas for K-2 Math Lessons* by Jody Coffey, Crystal Choate, and Tiffany Campbell, Wilson Elementary
3-5: *Hands on Equations* by Laurie Biser, Riverheads Elementary School
6-12: *Sing Your Way Through Math Class* by Emily Fagan, Broadway High School, and Amanda Fagan, Wilbur S. Pence Middle School
9-12: *Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis* by Jason Yoder Rupp and Pat Lintner, Harrisonburg High School

Keynote Session about Brain Research in the Mathematics Classroom.

Ever wonder what's going on inside that student's head in your math class? John Almarode, faculty member at the Shenandoah Valley Governor's School, will deliver the keynote address at the April 2 meeting, *Brain Research in the Mathematics Classroom: A look at how the student brain learns in the mathematics classroom*. John teaches math and science at SVGS as well as develops and coordinates the regional outreach program. In addition to his teaching duties, John provides staff development on the use of neuroscience research in education. He has presented locally, regionally, nationally, as well as internationally. Allowing audiences to experience brain-based learning, his action-packed workshops create instant change in the classroom and school community. John is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Virginia.

Middle School Session To Feature Local Math Teachers/Musicians

Math has become a toe-tapping experience for some students in Rockingham County, particularly those in Emily and Amanda Fagan's math classes at Broadway High School and Wilbur S. Pence Middle School. Genetics would appear to dictate this. To these sisters, daughters of Gary and Phyllis Fagan who are both music teachers at Henley Middle School in Albemarle County, bringing music into their math classrooms seems the natural thing to do. So, they write lyrics and compose their own songs as well as sing verses found on the web written by others to help their students remember key mathematical concepts.

And it works - works well, according to Amanda, a third year teacher, who admits that at first the experience is a little odd for her Pence Middle School students. "It takes a while to get the students involved. The first time I sing in class they look at me like I'm crazy. By the end of the year almost all of them are singing with me. I usually have at least one outgoing student who will get really into it and the rest of the kids will follow. I know they sing while they do their homework because I have had some parents see me in town and tell me that their kids have taught them the songs."

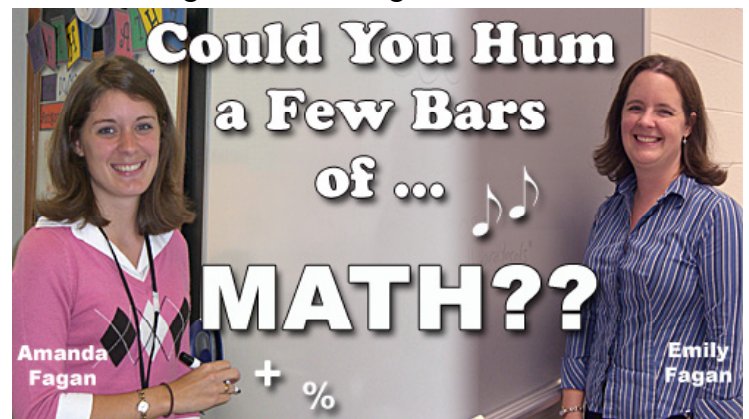
Necessity is the mother of invention for Emily and Amanda's strategies. Emily, a 9-year veteran who teaches Geometry to her BHS students, explains how she began to use music with her students, "I think The Parallelogram Song was the first one I wrote because my students had a hard time remembering the properties of a parallelogram. It just seemed like the thing to do to help. I'm always using tricks like mnemonic devices etc., so songs were just another method to help them remember."

Amanda adds that she draws from personal experience in using this technique to help her students, "When I was in college, the only way I could remember the quadratic formula was by singing The Quadratic Formula Song which I think I learned in high school. I figured that since it was a good memory tool for me, it might work well for my students. I thought creating more math songs for my classes would be something fun for the kids and would really help them to remember key concepts. Now when I call on kids to answer in class they often answer me in song!" And, she adds that some of her students now will write their own jingles.

Their repertoire now consists of nearly 20 songs, 12 of which the Fagan sisters have written themselves. So, they marry their two passions of math and music and offer a unique and successful learning strategy to their students. And all have fun in the process!

Thanks to Emily and Amanda for providing one of the sessions at the Spring V²CTM meeting. Non-singing math teachers everywhere appreciate and thank them for their efforts and willingness to share their work!.

[thanks to Stephanie Failes, Rockingham County Public Schools, for the text and photo of this article]



Other Sessions Feature Local Educators

All teachers appreciate the willingness of their colleagues to share good ideas. For the K-2 session at the Spring V²CTM meeting, Jody Coffey, Crystal Choate, and Tiffany Campbell of Wilson Elementary School in Augusta County will do just that. They'll share lots of ideas for teaching math in the K-2 classroom.

Laurie Biser, 4th grade teacher at Riverheads Elementary School, will provide 3rd-5th grade teachers with an opportunity to see the advantage of using Hands On Equations™ in the elementary school classroom.

Jason Yoder Rupp and Pat Lintner of Harrisonburg High School will conduct the high school session. They will discuss the pilot project Harrisonburg High has conducted during this school year of teaching the new math course approved by the State, *Algebra, Functions, and Data Analysis*. They'll share some ideas, materials, and statistics from their pilot which has been held during this school year.

Election of V²CTM Officers for 2008-10

At the business meeting, the following slate of current officers will be presented for election. President-elect: John Matherly, Augusta County Schools; Treasurer: Judy Phillippi, James Madison University; Elementary School Representative: Laurie Biser, Riverheads Elementary School; Middle School Representative: Kara Velez, Wilbur S. Pence Middle School; and High School Representative: Chris Noll, Turner Ashby High School. The other officers and Board members were elected or appointed in 2007.

24 Challenge Tournament to be held March 31

V²CTM is again sponsoring the 24 Challenge Tournament to be held March 31 at the Wilson Middle School Gym. Registration is from 5:30 - 6:00 and the tournament begins at 6:00 pm. Elementary schools are invited to send four students to the tournament. Each elementary school in Augusta County, Rockingham County, Rockbridge County, Harrisonburg, Staunton and Waynesboro cities were sent direct invitations. Over 100 students are expected to attend this Spring's tournament. Single Digit and Double Digit 24 Cards will be used in this year's tournament. If your school would like to participate, contact Harvey Almarode (almarohl@jmu.edu). There is no cost to schools.



Conferences Coming Up...

The 2008 NCTM Conference: *Becoming Certain About Uncertainty* is to be held April 9-12, 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The 2009 NCTM conference: *Equity: All Means All* will be held in Washington, DC from April 22-25, 2009. The 2009 VCTM conference will be an academy-format conference again and will be held in the VA Beach area in March 2009. Don't forget that the VCTM conference will be at JMU in March 2010!

2007-2008 V²CTM Officers

President	Terry Murray, Harrisonburg City Schools (tmurray@harrisonburg.k12.va.us)
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VCTM/NCTM Representative	LouAnn Lovin, James Madison University (lovinla@jmu.edu)
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V²CTM Spring 2008 Meeting Registration

Return this registration form to Joe Hill, Rockingham County Public Schools,
100 Mount Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg VA 22802. Better yet, register on the web at
<http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/register>
You may pay at the door on April 2.

Name _____

School _____

School Address _____

Home Address _____

Annual Membership & Dinner Fees for those who did not pay membership dues in the Fall \$10.00

Dinner Fees for those who did pay membership dues in the Fall \$5.00 Enclosed _____

E-mail Address _____

**See you at Wilson Memorial High
School on April 2!**

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Joe Hill, Editor
Rockingham County Public Schools
100 Mount Clinton Pike
Harrisonburg VA 22802

**PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH ALL MATHEMATICS TEACHERS,
GRADES K-12**