

Indiana School Mathematics Journal...lost forever?

Fall, 2021

In the fall of 2019, I wrote about the early Indiana Section winners of the Certificate of Meritorious Service. In that essay, I noted that Gus Wollan, from Purdue University, was editor and publisher of the *Indiana School Mathematics Journal*. This journal, which he first published in 1965, brought “mathematical articles and problems to high school and junior high school students in Indiana.” I learned this from Gus’s obituary which was published by the Purdue University Faculty Senate in 1985. The obituary also stated that, at that time, there were over 900 subscribers.

I decided that it would be interesting, both for me and for you, to find out more about this journal which isn’t published any more. So I googled it and found ... nothing. So I went to Jstor and found ... nothing.

Well not quite. In Jstor, I found a reference to the journal in a 1968 issue of the *Mathematics Teacher*, in the form of a review, written by a L. J. Cote, of an article published in the journal. The review, of an article titled “Surprising Probabilities II,” was of interest to Cote because of its appealing nature for students: the core of the article was a discussion of the birthday problem and the implications of changing various assumptions related to it.

Knowing that Gus spent his highly successful career at Purdue University, I then did an online search of Purdue’s library and archives, but found ... nothing.

Not trusting my search skills, I contacted Angela Ewing, librarian for the Purdue University Mathematical Sciences Library and asked her to search for me. She found ... nothing. But she referred me to Adriana Harmeyer, Archivist for University History at Purdue University. She searched the archives and found ... nothing. Ms. Harmeyer referred me to Monique Howel, at the Indiana State Library, who searched there and found ... nothing.

At this point, I turned to friends at Ball State University and at Indiana State University to ask about their memories. I searched on the Indiana Council of Teachers of Mathematics website and also checked at the Archives of American Mathematics. Unfortunately, these inquiries again turned up nothing.

So I turn to you, my readers. With over 20 years of publication and over 900 subscribers at some point, there are surely hard copies of the *Indiana School Mathematics Journal* scattered across Indiana. Hard copies ... this was in the era of print publication, with articles and problems typed onto mimeograph paper and then copied. Issues would have been hand stapled and folded then mailed via the postal service. (Much like the Indiana section newsletter was at the time.) Do you know a mathematics teacher from that era, or have connections to a school district, that may have yellowing copies filed away in a box? If so, I ask that you inquire so that we can tell the story of the *Indiana School Mathematics Journal* before it is forgotten.