

## Mini-Conferences

IN 1976, THE EXECUTIVE BEGAN to encourage mini-conferences as a service to members, particularly outside the Calgary-Red Deer-Edmonton areas. The original idea was to use the model of the Metric Missionaries, that is, to send speakers or consultants to places, on request. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, several mini-conferences were conducted, although the information in the minutes lacks details. In 1988, the executive recommended the preparation of a mini-conference booklet to assist those interested in making a request.

Because of these and other efforts, mini-conferences, as another successful dimension of MCATA's professional development activities, have been an increasingly strong force in the 1990s. Approximately 700 teachers annually attend the many excellent mini-conference sessions provided at various locations provincewide. Edmonton and Calgary are the most popular centres; however, others have included

Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge.

Mini-conferences and resource fairs are planned around emergent needs in any area of the province. Speakers cover topics from ECS to the postsecondary level and include representatives from Alberta Education, the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta and countless schools throughout the province.

An eclectic array of foci (math talk!) within the learning, teaching and assessing of mathematics have been explored. Teachers have been encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and values and, through cooperative work with colleagues, shape, mold and develop new understandings in mathematics and mathematics education.

The regenerative schools of the 21st century require all members of the learning community to improve continuously. The mini-conference structure supports and promotes mathematics teachers in their role as such reflective practitioners.

AD 1622

English mathematician William Oughtred invents the slide rule. He later introduces symbol  $\times$  for multiplication.

AD 1635

Bonaventura Cavalieri conceives geometry of indivisibles.

## Convention Displays

IN THE MID-1970S, BOOTHS AND displays at teachers' conventions began as a service to members and an attempt to increase membership. Usually available were information on MCATA and NCTM membership

and publications from both organizations. Judging from comments made at executive meetings, these materials have been of interest and benefit to the teachers attending conventions and the MCATA members staffing the booths.