

# DSA Newscast

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*The official newsletter of the Dozenal Society of America*

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## THE SUCCESS OF THE DOZEN

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*The Dozenal Society of America is a voluntary, nonprofit educational corporation, organized for the conduct of research and education of the public in the use of dozenal (also called duodecimal or base twelve) in calculations, mathematics, weights and measures, and other branches of pure and applied science.*

**A**S DOZENALISTS, WE'RE likely all used to being asked, "What's the point?" That is, why do we bother with all the weird math, which has *letters* instead of *numbers*, and which nobody else can understand? Why do we use units in strange systems that even Americans find odd? What exactly are we shooting for here?

It's been asked many times, both in the decimalist "muggle" world and among dozenalists ourselves, what would count as "success" for dozenalism. Are we just trying to raise awareness of the nature of place-value notation? Are we trying to spread the word about non-decimal bases? Are we trying to promote the use of twelves specifically; and if so, as a better means of arithmetic or merely as a mental exercise? Or is nothing less than the full-scale conversion of the world to dozenal our goal?

To a certain extent, each dozenalist will give a different answer when posed this question. Your humble author is in the last camp; I think that dozenals are just plain *better* than decimals, make arithmetic easier, and should entirely replace decimals. But we have many members who think otherwise; some of them are on our Society's Board.

*And these differences are fine.*

Simply put, we don't all need to be on the same page about what our end-game is, because there's a huge amount of work for us to do regardless of that end. To appreciate, in a small way, the scale of the task before us, take a look at the mission statement of the Dozenal Society of America:

The Dozenal Society of Amer-

ica is a voluntary, nonprofit educational corporation, organized for the conduct of research and education of the public in the use of dozenal (also called duodecimal or base twelve) in calculations, mathematics, weights and measures, and other branches of pure and applied science.

We've all read it dozens of times; it appears at the start of every issue of our *Bulletin*, and on the first page of every issue of this *Newscast*. But how far have we really gotten in this? For example, the last time dozenals came up in a conversation, how many of the people involved had ever even heard of the concept?

Regardless of our goals, we all have a common means: teaching people arithmetic. And it really is that basic: vast numbers of people simply do not understand how numbers work.

An example may prove illustrative. The last time your author spoke to someone about dozenals, she was utterly flabbergasted; she had never been taught how numbers work, so the notion that we might count by any number other than ten, much less twelve, was completely new to her. She had also been trained to think of mathematics as impossibly difficult, a matter of the trained and elite intelligentsia rather than the normal educated citizen. This was a learned person, a professional of over two unquennia of experience, with a post-graduate education; yet the notion of a non-decimal base was completely new to her.

*That is the level of education that we're*

facing in society today; and that is the level at which we need to focus our efforts. Whether we think dozenals are a fun hobby or the proper future of mathematics as a whole, this basic education is the task before

us. Innumeracy is incredibly widespread; as a result, the task is a large one. But it's one that we, as members of the Dozenal Society of America, have placed before ourselves.

And so, let us move forward, remember-

ing the injunction of one of our founders, writing so long ago:

EACH ONE, TEACH ONE

## DOZENAL NEWS

### SPANISH LANGUAGE DOZENAL WORKS

It's been some time since your humble editor has looked around for non-English dozenal work, and he was delighted to find a good deal of Spanish-language work.

Vincente Muñoz Walther, of la Universidad de Chile, wrote a delightful little piece with a reasonable history of number bases and a defense of dozenal:

<https://naukas.com/2015/08/27/en-defensa-del-sistema-duodecimal/>

Pablo B.G. at *The Spanish Prisoner* gives a brief explanation of dozenalism and an explanation of why we like it so much:

<http://www.spanishprisoner.net/2013/06/adeptos-al-sistema-duodecimal.html>

Miguel Ángel Morales Medina wrote a brief article on *La Sociedad del 12*:

<https://www.gaussianos.com/la-sociedad-del-12/>

Taringa offers a meme-like explanation of the dozen through Marty McFly having a conversation (in Spanish) with Doc:

<https://www.taringa.net/posts/ciencia-educacion/14130806/Explicandole-el-Sistema-duodecimal-a-Marty-McFly.html>

Alvaro Fernandez gives us a brief summary of why the number twelve is so important, and how the dozenal system works:

<https://soymaracaibero.blogspot.com/2013/07/el-sistema-duodecimal.html>

If you read any Spanish, these will be useful and enlightening to you. It's wonderful to see dozenals getting coverage in other languages.

### DOZENAL IN VOLAPÜK

Volapük (a pre-Esperanto proposed international auxiliary language) is still alive and kicking, and its journal recently published an explanation of dozenal in the language. It doesn't appear to be available anywhere on the Internet, but thanks to Brian Bishop for notifying us. We hope to make it available ourselves in the near future.

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As mentioned earlier, the DSA is an all-volunteer organization, and we pay no salaries. As a result, everything that we do comes out of the spare time of our members, time that they have to take away from their families, jobs, or other obligations.

We all love dozenals and enjoy assisting the Society in educating people about them; however, as the Society expands and does more, we find ourselves in need of more help.

Fortunately, the Society has a large membership with a very broad range of professions and experience. If you think you can spare any time or effort for the cause of educating the world about dozenals, please

let us know:

[contact@dozenal.org](mailto:contact@dozenal.org)

You can help as much or as little as you'd like. Thank you.

dozenal perspective, so no question or topic is too easy or too complex. Don't be shy!

### ANNUAL MEETING

#### OUR NEXT BULLETIN

Though the delay since our last issue may make this hard to believe, work on the next *Duodecimal Bulletin* continues apace. Have an article? A letter containing a question (common or uncommon) you'd like answered? Send them in!

[editor@dozenal.org](mailto:editor@dozenal.org)

Remember that our *Bulletin* is designed to cover all aspects of mathematics, from the most basic to the most advanced, from a

Your Board has at last scheduled a date and location for our annual meeting for 1202!

We will be at the now-familiar location of the Atlanta AMA Conference Center in downtown Atlanta, GA, on 24 (28.) September 1202, from 10:00–15:00 in the afternoon. Once again, we are looking forward to some excellent presentations from the likes of Jay Schiffman (#228) and Michael deVlieger (#378), so we hope many will be able to join us.

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This will likely be our last meeting in Atlanta for some years, so if you're in the area, please do drop by! It's a great time for some education, conversation, and fellowship.

## POETICAL DIVERSION

### TWELVE RINGS TO RULE THEM ALL

Two rings for computers, which can handle no more;  
Twenty for the Mayans, with their tables and charts;  
Sixty for Babylon, ancient in lore;  
Ten for the Decimalists and their dark arts,  
in the land of Decimal, where the shadows lie.

Twelve rings defeat them all; twelve rings will beat them;

Twelve rings will win them all, and bring the light  
to cheat ten,  
in the land of Decimal, where the shadows lie.

## DONATIONS

Members, please remember that while dues are no longer required for membership, we still rely on the generosity of members to keep the DSA going. Donations of any amount, large or small, are welcome and needed.

A donation of \$16; (\$18.) will procure Subscription membership, and entitles the payer to receive both a digital and a paper copy of the *Bulletin* if requested. Other members will receive only a digital copy. To invoke this privilege, please notify the Editor of the Bulletin, John Volan, at

[editor@dozenal.org](mailto:editor@dozenal.org)

As members know, we are a volunteer organization which pays no salaries. As such, every penny you donate goes toward furthering the DSA's goals.

It may be worth considering a monthly donation; say, \$3, or \$6, or whatever seems reasonable to you. This can be set up quite easily with Paypal, which is available at our web site.

Of course, if you prefer to donate by check, you may send them to our worthy Treasurer, Jay Schiffman, payable to the Dozenal Society of America, at:

Jay Schiffman  
604-36 South Washington  
Square, #815  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4115

Remember, too, that the DSA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; as such, your contributions may be tax deductible under applicable law.

Thanks again for your assistance; it's your donations that keep the DSA going. We can't keep doing it without you.

## FOR SALE

The DSA is pleased to offer the following for sale. These are all either at cost, or the proceeds go to the Society. The exception is *Basic Dozenal Arithmetic*, which is a private production.

Item	Price (\$)
Dozenal Wall Calendar, 1202	9.05
Dozenal Planning Calendar, 1202	8.32
TGM: A Coherent Dozenal Metrology	8.00
Manual of the Dozenal System	3.46
A Dozenal Primer	4.50
Basic Dozenal Arithmetic	15.00

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Prices are, unfortunately but by necessity, in decimal. If for some reason the links above do not work, simply go to: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/shop.ep>  
and enter the appropriate terms. E.g., searching for “TGM dozenal” will turn up the TGM book.  
We hope to offer other titles, and even some other items (such as dozenal clocks and the like), in the future.

## EACH ONE, TEACH ONE