
DSA Newscast

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The official newsletter of the Dozenal Society of America

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THE NEUTRAL APPEAL

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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.

I **I**N OUR LAST *Bulletin*, a letter written by William S. Crosby noted that “argument for the twelve-system should not be even slightly chauvinistic. As I recall them, Grover Cleveland Perry’s pamphlets laid objectionable stress on the Anglo-Saxonness of twelve.” Having recently hunted down and scanned a copy of Mr. Perry’s *Mathamerica* pamphlet (through interlibrary loan), your humble editor cannot help but agree with this particular verdict. But we should also bear in mind this precept in the more general sense. We advocate for dozenals not because they are Anglo-Saxon, or traditional, or coincide with the number of the Apostles or signs of the Zodiac; we advocate for dozenals because they are *better*, and for no other reason.

True, any of these factors may form part of our argument for *why* dozenal is better (though emphasizing its role in any particular culture is likely counterproductive); but we must always make sure that we put the horse before the cart. Perhaps dozens *are* tied up in what it means to be an Anglo-Saxon (whatever relevance that concept might have in our modern times); but if so, dozens are Anglo-Saxon because they’re better, they’re not better because they’re Anglo-Saxon.

It’s easy to fall into this parochial trap, particularly for a Society like ours, based as it is in the only major country on the planet that has not rushed headlong into the objection-

ably decimal *Système Internationale*. Some of our measures here in America are still dozenal; we still measure distances in dozenal feet and inches, and jewels and precious metals in dozenal troy ounces and troy pounds. It’s tempting to argue that dozenals are therefore *American*, arising out of our Anglo-Saxon heritage and fully embraced by our freedom-loving and messianic Republic. Indeed, Grover Cleveland Perry argued more or less exactly that.

But these arguments are not only counterproductive, alienating the many non-Anglo-Saxons who are attracted to the objectively superior dozenal base; they’re also, quite simply, *wrong*. The very earliest treatise on dozenal arithmetic came from Cardinal Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz, a cosmopolitan cleric born a Spaniard, well-studied in Asian languages and cultures, and having extensive connections in Austria and Bohemia—of which, the careful reader will note, *none* are Anglo-Saxon. Further support for dozenal came from noted French scholars, such as Laplace and Buffon; only then did any Anglo-Saxon writers get turned on to the concept, starting with John Playfair. And in this early heyday of dozenal advocacy, D. Vicente Pujals de la Bastida wrote a full-length book advocating for dozenals, something not duplicated in the English language until Thomas Leech wrote his *Dozens vs. Tens* nearly two unquennia later. In the last biquennium, only our own F.

Emerson Andrews and George Terry have published book-length expositions of dozenal; the only other was, in fact, a French work, *Douze: notre dix futur* by Jean Essig, the most recent such work published.

Clearly, to say that dozenal is somehow “Anglo-Saxon” is to be ignorant of dozenal’s history.

Conversely, it’s easy to attack decimal systems as somehow *foreign*, and therefore inferior. We’ve seen signs

of this in some of our own literature, unfortunately, with arguments against the “French” decimal metric system, opposing it to the “English” or “Anglo-Saxon” imperial system (which isn’t even what we use here in America, the largest “Anglo-Saxon” country, anyway). Not only is calling the decimal metric system “French” a misnomer, it’s also irrelevant: we oppose it not because it’s French, but because it’s *decimal*.

Arguing for dozenal from some cultural or national connection is both historically myopic and fundamentally counterproductive. Dozenal is an *international* issue with *international* history and *international* appeal. Let us always remember to support it not for its parochial connections, but for its merits, which are surely strong enough to support it on their own.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

REMINDER: ANNUAL MEETING FOR 1188

Last month, Treasurer and Board Chairman Jay Schiffman (#278) spent some time in Cincinnati and has been located a fine venue for our annual meeting. It will be held at the Embassy Suites Cincinnati-Riverfront at 10 E. Rivercenter Boulevard, Covington, Kentucky 41011. Our meeting itself will be on October 15, 1188.

During the annual conference of

the Ohio Conference of Teachers of Mathematics, we will be presenting a program on dozenals and other non-decimal bases; titled “Alternate Bases and CC Connections to Programming, Music, and History,” this program will be presented at 10:00–11:40 (12:00–13:20) on Friday, 14 October 1188.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

As noted in our last issue, the next issue of *The Duodecimal Bulletin*

will be released later this year, and will focus on dozenal’s contribution to metrology. If you have ideas about metrology, please write them out and send them to the Editor:

editor@dozenal.org

We’re all very excited about this issue and hope to have a great deal of input from our membership to include. Thank you.

DOZENAL NEWS

Member Siddhanathan Shanmugam (#454) has presented a very attractive image of depicting dozenal primes: comic relevant to dozenals (and, of course, polydactyly):

Dozenal primes									
(arranged in grid of dozens across)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	1E
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	2E
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	3E
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	4E
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	5E
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	6E
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	7E
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	8E
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	9E
E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	EE

Click for Full-size Image



Click for Full-size Image

Member James Peterson (#457) gives us a delightful little

Both of these images were posted on the “Dozenalism” group on the Google+ social network. Thanks to these members for their posts!

POETICAL DIVERSION

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east; the Dozen is the Sun;
old Ten, the Moon, it sinketh to the west,
endarken'd as the Dozen riseth up
and shines its light upon the bright'ning world.
At best old Ten reflected Dozen's light,
as Moon reflecteth Sun, but shineth not
on its own power; rather, it has use
only in that it shares in Dozen's shine.
The Dozen, though, shin'th out on all it see'th;
the integers are dark until we see
their glories by the light the Dozen gives.
What greatness does the Dozen give to math;
to knowledge, power, Dozens are the path.

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 \$10; (\$12.) 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

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 or WePay, both of which are 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 will likely soon be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; when this happens, your contributions will be tax deductible under applicable law.

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.

Item	Price (\$)
Wall Calendar for 11gg, coiled binding	10.05
Weekly Planner for 11gg	8.29
TGM: A Coherent Dozenal Metrology	8.00

Prices are, unfortunately but by necessity, in decimal. To find these works, simply go to:

<http://www.lulu.com/shop/shop.ep>

and enter the appropriate terms. E.g., searching for "11EE" will turn up these calendars and the planner; 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 near future.

Dozenal primes

(arranged in grid of dozens across)

1	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	4	<u>5</u>	6	<u>7</u>	8	9	ɔ	<u>ε</u>	10
<u>11</u>	12	13	14	<u>15</u>	16	<u>17</u>	18	19	1ɔ	<u>1ε</u>	20
21	22	23	24	<u>25</u>	26	<u>27</u>	28	29	2ɔ	2ε	30
<u>31</u>	32	33	34	<u>35</u>	36	<u>37</u>	38	39	3ɔ	<u>3ε</u>	40
41	42	43	44	<u>45</u>	46	47	48	49	4ɔ	<u>4ε</u>	50
<u>51</u>	52	53	54	55	56	<u>57</u>	58	59	5ɔ	<u>5ε</u>	60
<u>61</u>	62	63	64	65	66	<u>67</u>	68	69	6ɔ	<u>6ε</u>	70
71	72	73	74	<u>75</u>	76	77	78	79	7ɔ	7ε	80
<u>81</u>	82	83	84	<u>85</u>	86	<u>87</u>	88	89	8ɔ	<u>8ε</u>	90
<u>91</u>	92	93	94	<u>95</u>	96	97	98	99	9ɔ	9ε	ɔ0
ɔ1	ɔ2	ɔ3	ɔ4	ɔ5	ɔ6	<u>ɔ7</u>	ɔ8	ɔ9	ɔɔ	<u>ɔε</u>	ε0
ε1	ε2	ε3	ε4	ε5	ε6	ε7	ε8	ε9	εɔ	εε	100

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