

1067-A0-578

Zvezdelina Stankova*, Mills College. *What comes from within...when life serves you lemons.*

No, there is no mistake: a deliberate pun, the title is a hybrid between a wisecracker by a most famous American writer and the dramatic math story of a 5th grade girl. As the epilogue in the book “A Decade of the Berkeley Math Circle—the American Experience”, vol. I, (publ. AMS/MSRI, 2009) retells: *There is more than one way to fall in love with mathematics. Many Eastern European mathematicians have come along the path of math circles, where they have learned for the first time that the world of math is larger than one could imagine, more interesting, and more diverse. The math circle culture is ingrained in the societies in these countries. During the communist era, established mathematicians and pre-college teachers considered it their duty to expose the younger generation to the wonders of mathematics. And so they teamed together to found and run math circles...*” for over a century. The idea of math circles was carried over to the U.S. about 15 years ago mainly by immigrants, yet it was implemented on the U.S. soil with the help and enthusiasm of U.S.-grown mathematicians and educators. Has the young but already strong and contagious U.S. math circle movement had any impact on the battered pre-college educational landscape of the U.S.? Has it had any effect on preparing the U.S. best minds for their future role as mathematics, science, and technology leaders? To answer these questions is much related to deciphering the meaning of the present title, which this talk aims to do. (Received September 10, 2010)