

# WESTCHESTER MAGAZINE

## Help for the Numerically Challenged

*"In July 1999, a math-help Web site's newsletter debuted with 100 subscribers. By May 2005, it had 24,902 subscribers. By what percentage did its subscription list increase?"*

If questions like this leave you or your children baffled, take heart. Math Goodies ([www.mathgoodies.com](http://www.mathgoodies.com)), a nationally acclaimed, award-winning, free math help website based in the county, can help you figure out the answer. Numbers maven Gisele Glosser, 46, a self-described "Internet granny" who first started designing commercial websites back in 1995, drew upon her computer and math-teaching skills when she created the site in 1998. "I wanted to make math fun," the former math teacher explains.

And fun Math Goodies is. Glosser, who taught middle-school and high-school math in New Rochelle and Mamaroneck, oversees the operation mostly by herself out of a cluttered extra bedroom in her Cortlandt Manor home. Her site contains more than 400 user-friendly web pages offering an impressive range of services, including interactive math lessons on such topics as perimeter and area of polygons, as well as worksheets, puzzles, and moderated forums for kids, educators, and parents. Stumped students can choose from forums such as frequently asked questions, standardized test-prep help, and the all-popular homework help, where a small staff of volunteer math educators assist those struggling with specific math problems.

While they won't just provide answers or do the actual work for them, these number wizzes try to help students (generally 5th through 8th graders) find their own answers. Earnings from the "part hobby, part revenue-producing company" are plowed back into the site in order to maintain free access for its 200,000 monthly visitors.

"I didn't expect to be famous in the online math world. I just started it to help people," explains Glosser, who's received thousands of emails from grateful users thanking her.

As a mathphobe of longstanding, my recent visit to the site's homework help message board had me commiserating with poor "Amanda," who posted a convoluted math problem at 13:17:51, about a worker at Dunkin' Donuts involving 34 ten-, 14-, and 20-ounce coffee cups and five 96-ounce pots, that had me reaching for my migraine meds. Fortunately, "mts" from the United Kingdom appeared out of cyberspace at 13:53:42 and walked her through the process of finding the correct answer. Now if only he would explain to me how he did it.

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