

March 2009

MAA Update, from recent Board of Governors' Meetings:

A quick summary of the MAA currently would be this, I think: the organization is thriving in just about every way. That even includes doing well financially.

Finances: MAA investments have fallen off (from \$8.2 million to about \$6 million currently), income from MAA books has fallen slightly, and MAA membership declined slightly (current active members number about 20,000); these are slight changes at a time of great instability. It's impressive how frugal the Washington staff has been, and the MAA investment committee (ably chaired by John Kenelly, Clemson University), has steered a wise, conservative course in investments. The investment total doesn't include the Washington buildings: the office building and the Carriage House. Total MAA assets are around \$16 million, with an annual budget of close to \$8 million. The executive committee is addressing a likely budget deficit this year and trying to find ways to cut back. (Sounds all too familiar.)

Publications, print & web: The MAA published 17 new books in 2008, and several more are expected in 2009. The texts in MAA Texbooks are competitively-priced and quite attractive. You can now access your MAA journals at MAA Online. And if you haven't looked at MAA Online lately, you should: there's lots of new stuff. There's an MAA Video channel on YouTube, for example, an online version of MAA FOCUS, Digital Classroom Resources, book reviews on the MAA Reviews (8 new reviews each week), Classroom Capsules, and many other resources.

Project NeXT and PREP: Project NeXT has been a phenomenal success, with a surprising number of 'Nexters' now in leadership positions in the MAA. There are over 1000 fellows at this point. There are section NeXT chapters in some sections; we've discussed founding such a group in our section and should discuss that further.

PREP, the Professional Enhancement Program, has funding from NSF to continue through 2013. There is a variety of workshops offered at low cost through this program; see details at MAA Online.

New Opportunity for Students: The MAA has funding from NSF to support student presenters at Mathfest and at the winter meetings. Travel grants are available to undergraduates for the next 5 years, at least.

Math Competitions: Almost 400,000 AMC exams were taken at all grade levels in 2008. The MAA co-sponsored participation of two four-member teams of high school girls in the 2008 China Girls Math Olympiad held in ZhongShan, China, August 14-21, 2008. All eight girls earned a medal. At the 2008 International Mathematical Olympiad held in Madrid, Spain, the USA team placed third place, earning four gold medals, two silver medals, and one perfect paper.

Strategic Planning: The MAA decided several years ago to form task forces to deal with issues of interest/concern for the organization. At this point, several of these groups have finished their studies and submitted reports: Professional Development, Revenue, American Mathematics Competition, Students, Membership and Governance. Task forces that will have reports for the

1020 JMM Board of Governors' meeting are the ones on STEM Issues, Sections, Meetings, and Publications. Each of these groups has made, or will make, recommendations; then the MAA will have time to study the reports and decide what actions should be taken.

MAA Study Tours: This is another really successful, fairly new MAA program. There were tours to Ecuador and Peru in 2008. A trip to Egypt is planned for May 20 - June 1, 2009, and one to Portugal and Spain is planned for 2010. In each case, the tours include highlights of interest to mathematicians, and the trips are led by mathematicians.

Carriage House: If you haven't visited the MAA Headquarters in Washington DC recently, then you haven't seen the renovated 'Carriage House' next door. This facility was renovated using funds from Paul and Virginia Halmos, and Virginia continues to donate generously. Last year, she pledged \$600,000 to be matched on a two for one basis, and 36 donors have met that challenge. Virginia has pledged another \$200,000, to be matched. Outside the Carriage House is a 'river of bricks' – see <http://www.maa.org/development/riverofbricks.html>. One can purchase a brick for \$303 (in honor of Paul Halmos' March 3 birthday). You can visit the website and note that the Intermountain Section is one of the few sections missing a brick. Perhaps we should do something about that???

Final Note: One last comment from the January, 2009, Board of Governors meeting: There was a lengthy discussion about future locations of MAA meetings. The discussion began with one governor noting that Salt Lake City was listed in our agenda as a possible site for Mathfest in 2013 and/or 2014. He commented neither he nor many other MAA members would consider attending a meeting in a state that had strongly supported Proposition 8 in California. Though no official action was taken at the meeting, it seemed a group consensus that, as Executive Director Tina Straley put it, "the MAA will not be holding meetings in Salt Lake City in the near future."

Final, final note: I'm sure I have missed many important MAA issues in this brief summary. If you'd like more details on anything mentioned, please contact me! Also, MAA Online has a wealth of information.

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