

The Mathematical Association of America

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To: Section Secretaries

Dear Colleagues:

At the recent meeting of Section Officers in Washington a number of people expressed concern over the frequent gaps in the information about coming Section meetings printed in the MONTHLY. This discussion convinced me that we must provide Section officers with more information than we have in the past about getting items into the MONTHLY. I am writing now to begin this process. The discussion also suggested some changes in our operating procedure designed to improve the information contained in the MONTHLY. I will explain these changes to you and ask for some information needed to put them into effect.

Section officers often wonder why it takes so long for meeting dates to get into the MONTHLY. There is no point in my going into the technical details about schedules for galley proofs, page proofs, reproduction proofs, printing and mailing, and about delivery time for journals. However, the complex chain of events culminating in the publication of an issue of the MONTHLY requires a lead time of a little less than two months from the last day in which changes can be made until the day when the issues roll off the press. Since an issue of the MONTHLY normally goes to press in the first week of each month except July and August, this means that the absolute deadline for information to get into an issue is approximately six weeks before the first of the month in which the issue is published. As an example, in order for information to get into the January 1975 issue of the MONTHLY, that information had to be in the Editorial Office in Buffalo by November 19, 1974. Information received by Dr. Hailpern on November 19 appeared in the January issue; information received on November 20 will have to wait for the February issue.

Since these deadlines are so critical we urge Section Secretaries to send meeting information not only to the Washington office, but also directly to the Buffalo office. For insurance, each report from a Section received in the Washington Office is immediately Xeroxed and a copy sent to Dr. Hailpern. But, at best this introduces a delay of from 3 to 6 days in delivering items not sent directly to the Buffalo office.

For this reason, we will henceforth supply Section Secretaries with two copies of the report form for future meeting dates and place instructions on the form asking that copies be mailed to both the Washington and Buffalo offices. We will continue to send a Xerox copy to Buffalo "for insurance."

We are also planning to change the format of the printed schedule of future Section meetings in the MONTHLY. At the present time, if we have no information about the date and place of the next meeting of a Section the space opposite the name of that

Section is blank. Given the production schedule I have described above and the problems often encountered by Sections in settling dates and places for meeting, there will always be periods when no specific information is available through the MONTHLY. We would therefore like to develop a short statement from each Section concerning the "normal" meeting times and the lead times normally required for submission of contributed papers. This statement would supply a reader with some information about a Section's meeting schedule, even if specific information is temporarily not available. Dr. Hailpern will use this statement as a "place holder" to be replaced by information about the next meeting when available.

As an example of what I have in mind, consider the following fictitious listing:


NORTHEASTERN, (Sat. after Thanksgiving. 2nd sk. in June in even numbered yrs. Papers 6 wks. bef. mtg.)

Will you send me, as soon as possible, a statement of this type describing the normal lead time required for contributed papers? The requirements for this statement are that it fit, together with the Section name, on two lines as presently printed in the MONTHLY. See, for example, page 106 in the January 1975 issue. Please send me both the statement and your Section name as you would like them to appear in the MONTHLY. If you wish to abbreviate your Section name in order to have more space for the statement about the meetings, please be sure that the abbreviation follows standard practices and is readily decipherable.

Dr. Hailpern will edit these statements as necessary to insure that they fit in the allowed two lines. I propose that the standard statements be enclosed in parentheses to help differentiate them from specific meeting information.

I enclose a form for your use in returning you statement to us. Using this form will help us keep track of the responses to make sure that when the change in format occurs we will have information from every Section.

Sincerely,


A. B. Willcox
Executive Director

ABW/mst
Enclosure