Spring meeting at Roanoke College

On April 13-14, 2007, Roanoke College will host the Spring 2007 MD-DC-VA Regional Meeting of the MAA. Roanoke is located in beautiful Salem, VA. For detailed driving instructions and campus maps, see http://www.morgan.edu/maa/spr07/directions.html.

On Friday afternoon, recent Alder Award winner Garikai Campbell from Swarthmore College will be sharing a workshop titled, "A bunch of questions I can't answer about the game of Hex".

The banquet speaker on Friday evening is the always entertaining Ezra (Bud) Brown of Virginia Tech. The title of his talk is "Hat Problems."

Garikai Campbell will speak again on Saturday and share his talk, "My favorite elliptic curve."

Also on Saturday, Jason Rosenhouse from James Madison University will close out the meetings with "The Monty Hall problem revisited."

There is also an undergraduate mathematics conference that will run parallel to the meetings. There will be undergraduate paper and poster sessions. All undergraduates are invited to attend and are welcome to give a talk or present a poster. For more information and submission forms see http://www.morgan.edu/maa/spr07/home_ugrad.html.

Participants should pre-register for the meeting. You MUST pre-register (by April 2) if you wish to attend either the dinner on Friday evening or the lunch on Saturday. While on-site registration is available, pre-registration simplifies the process. Your badge, receipt, and any meal or workshop tickets will be waiting for you at the registration desk when you arrive.

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Dates to remember

Deadline for contributed talks: March 28
Banquet registration: April 2
Hotel reservations: March 13 for MAA rate
Spring meeting: April 13-14
MathFest: August 3-5 in San Jose

Comfort Suites Inn
540-375-4800
Exit 141: 2898 Keagy Road
4.6 miles $79 until 3/13

Quality Inn
540-562-1912
Exit 141: 179 Sheraton Drive
3.6 miles $59 until 3/13

Other lodging (15-20 minutes from campus)
Rates: $42-$85
See: http://www.morgan.edu/maa/spr07/hotel.html
Workshop Abstract:
In this workshop, I will introduce the game of Hex. We will play the game, discuss some known facts, talk a little about winning strategies and "conclude" by thinking about a few open questions that I will pose.

Talk Abstract:
Can you find four points on the parabola $y=x^2$ such that each pair is a rational distance away? Can you describe all triangles whose three sides and whose area are rational? These and a whole host of other questions lead quite naturally to elliptic curves. In this talk I will introduce the topic of elliptic curves by way of problems like the ones above. We will observe the curious fact that some of these problems lead to the same elliptic curve. I will catalog some things that we know and some things that we would like to know about this curve.

Bio:
Garikai Campbell received his PhD from Rutgers University and his BA from Swarthmore College, where he is currently an Associate Professor. Garikai often spends time looking for elliptic curves with large rank and non-trivial torsion, but when he's not doing that, he most likely spending time with his wife, helping coach his three boys' soccer teams or

Bud Brown  
Virginia Tech

Abstract:
Hat Problems are all the rage these days. You know about them, don't you? 'Course you do! A number of people enter a room and hats are placed on their heads. The object is guess your own hat color. In some games, you may only mention a color. In some games you may pass. In some games wrong guesses are not penalized. Sometimes the guesses are spoken. Sometimes the players are not allowed to communicate with each other during the game, but they can meet and plan a strategy. Some of these have connections with error-correcting codes and combinatorial designs. During this talk we will stage several of the Hat Problems. For this reason, audience participation is not merely encouraged, but required!

Bio: Ezra (Bud) Brown has degrees from Rice and Louisiana State, and has been at Virginia Tech since 1969, where he is currently Alumni Distinguished Professor of Mathematics. His research interests include number theory and combinatorics, and he particularly enjoys discovering connections between apparently unrelated areas of mathematics. He was the recipient of this section's 1999 Award for Distinguished Teaching, and is a frequent contributor to the MAA journals. He enjoys singing (everything from grand opera to rock'n'roll), playing jazz piano, working with students who are engaged in research, and talking about his granddaughter Phoebe Rose. With his wife Jo’s help, he has become a fairly tolerable gardener. He ococc optimistically

Invited Address:  
The Monty Hall problem revisited

Abstract:
In the classical Monty Hall problem, a game show contestant is shown three identical doors. One of them conceals a valuable prize, while the other two conceal goats. The contestant chooses one of the doors. Monty Hall, the host of the show, now opens one of the remaining two doors, always choosing a door he knows to conceal a goat. After doing this, Monty gives the contestant the option...
of either sticking with his original choice, or switching to the other unopened door. After making this choice, the contestant receives whatever is behind the chosen door. Assuming the contestant wants to maximize his chances of winning the prize, what choice should he make? The problem is remarkably subtle, and its solution is highly sensitive to seemingly unimportant initial assumptions. We will show how the Monty Hall problem, together with certain variations of the basic situation, can be used to illustrate many fundamental concepts in the theory of probability.

Bio:
Jason Rosenhouse received his PhD in mathematics from Dartmouth College in 2000. After spending three years as a post-doc at Kansas State University, he became an assistant professor of mathematics at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. His main mathematical interests are in combinatorics and number theory. He is also a blogger for "Seed" magazine, where he writes about science and politics, focusing on evolutionary biology. His blog can be found at http://www.scienceblogs.com/evolutionblog.

CHAIR’S REPORT

It’s hard to believe that this will be my last meeting as chair. The time has gone by quickly, and thanks to all of you it has been very enjoyable. I encourage everyone to get more involved in the section. We will have elections at the spring meeting for a new newsletter editor and two at-large executive committee members. Laura Taalman (taal@math.jmu.edu) is the chair of the nominating committee. Contact Laura if you would like to make a nomination. Self nominations are not only fine, they are highly encouraged.

One of the benefits of the MD-DC-VA section is our proximity to the national headquarters. Since the completion of the renovations to the carriage house, the MAA has begun hosting lectures. Upcoming programs include lectures by David Bressoud on March 14 and Bernd Sturmfels on May 17. Announcements are sent to MAA liaisons so ask your department liaison to keep you informed.

The American Mathematical Contests, which are sponsored by the MAA, are asking colleges and universities to become administration sites for the tests. Talk to your local high schools and middle schools to see if they have any interest in participating in the AMC. This may be a wonderful way to get some excellent students on your campus for a day of math events. The tests are given in February so now is a good time to start planning for next year.

Our hard working treasurer, Robb Koether, has been investigating bringing the section into the 21st century with online meeting registration. We hope to have this working for the Fall 2007 meeting. Payments will be made through PayPal. So if you don’t yet have a PayPal account find a friendly teenager to help you set one up this summer. This is very exciting for the officers. We hope this will work smoothly and that the membership will be excited about it too.

Our wonderful program chair, Laura Taalman, has planned another action-packed meeting for us. Roanoke is a beautiful city in a beautiful part of Virginia. We will again be hosting an Undergraduate Student Conference in conjunction with the section meeting. So load up the college van with a bunch of students and we’ll converge in Roanoke.

Eve Torrence, Chair
My last Governor's report. Which means I have attended my last Board of Governors meeting. Members of the Board will often joke about the long days at the national meetings, but the opportunity to learn more about the many activities of the MAA and to participate in planning for the future of the organization is something that makes it all worthwhile. This has been a very rewarding experience for me, and I thank the members of the section for the opportunity.

There have been a number of changes in the MAA in the past three years, even if none of them would strike the casual observer as revolutionary. Among the most notable for us the typical MAA members is the continuing increase in programs and services at the MAA. Many section members have participated in PREP workshops. The MAA Undergraduate Mathematics Conferences supported by a grant from NSF have been a wonderful addition to the opportunities available to students in our section. PMET has helped us address teacher education. The National REU has greatly enhanced research opportunities for underrepresented undergraduates, including projects in our section. Other MAA programs address college algebra, assessment, and many issues facing academic departments.

Special congratulations to a member who not only lives and works in our section, but who also was born and attended college here. William Hawkins of the University of the District of Columbia and director of the MAA Strengthening Underrepresented Minority Mathematics Achievement (SUMMA) program has won a 2006 Banneker Legacy Award. This national award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to increasing the number of African Americans in mathematics and science.

It is not too early to begin making plans for Mathfest in San Jose, August 3-5. Mathfest once again promises to have a very interesting mathematical program in this the Euler anniversary year, with many many opportunities for students.

David Carothers
Spring 2007

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**TREASURER’S REPORT**

February 26, 2007

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**John G. Milcetich Memorial Student Achievement**

| Fund Balance, Sep. 30, 2006 | $658.42 |
| Contributions               | 42.00   |
| MAA Booksale, Spring 06     | 92.32   |
| MAA Booksale, Fall 06       | 119.75  |
| Vendor fee                  | 150.00  |
| **Balance, February 26, 2007** | $1062.49 |

**Section NExT Fund Balance, Sep. 30, 2006**

| From registration fees        | 440.00  |
| Meals, Spring 06              | (192.00) |
| Book Awards                   | (137.50) |
| **Balance, February 26, 2007** | $342.76  |

**Project NExT Fund Balance, Sep. 30, 2006**

| Contributions                 | $1100.00 |
| Transfer from General Account | 230.00   |
| Sponsorship of Project NExT fellow | 1170.00 |
| **Balance, February 26, 2007** | $(230.00) |

Robb T. Koether
Treasurer
St. Mary's College of Maryland
Our ever-growing group of majors is doing wonderful things! Four of them went away to REU programs last summer and we ran our first local REU, headed by Katherine Socha and funded through MAA’s NREU Program. Five students joined us in New Orleans for the joint meetings. Heather Langdon gave a short talk and Kenny Salau and Katie Toman gave posters about their REU work. Having started a successful Emerging Scholars Program at St. Mary’s, Katherine Socha and David Kung will be running an MAA PREP workshop in Austin, Texas this summer. If you are concerned about your program’s retention of underrepresented minority students, you should consider attending.

Montgomery College- Takoma
The Math Department of Montgomery College Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus welcomes Kevin F. Johnson to its faculty. After receiving an associate degree from Montgomery College, Kevin received his undergraduate degree in mathematics and computer science from the University of Maryland. He later received his graduate degree in mathematics from Texas A and M University. Prior to joining our faculty, Kevin was a faculty member at Texas A and M University.

UMW
Three of our students, Bob Carrico, Sean Droms, and Erin Keegan presented posters about their summer research at the Joint Meetings in New Orleans and Sean won a prize. These students also participated in the SUMS conference at JMU and student Ryan Johnson presented his research at the regional MAA meeting at Longwood. Finally, our student MAA group at UMW will host its first regional Calculus Tournament for high school students preparing for the Advanced Placement test this spring.

University of Maryland University College
Dr. John F. Beyers, Professor and Chair of the Mathematics and Statistics Department at the University of Maryland University College was recently named the winner of the 2007 national Adelle F. Robertson Professional Continuing Educator of the Year Award by the University Continuing Education Association. This prestigious award recognizes the scholarship, leadership and contributions to the profession of a person who has entered the profession within the past five to ten years. Just recently, Dr. Beyers received the UCEA's 2006 Alexander Charters Award for his contributions in mathematics education at the university level. John received his Ph.D. in mathematics education from the American University in Washington, D.C. under of Dr. Mary Gray.

College Mathematics Journal
The Mathematical Association of America seeks to identify candidates to succeed Lowell Beineke as Editor of the College Mathematics Journal when his term expires in December 2008. For more information see: http://www.maa.org/news/113006cmjeditor.html

Math Horizons
The MAA is searching for a new Editor for Math Horizons, the MAA student magazine. For more information, see http://www.maa.org/news/111306mheditorsearch.html

NCTM
On September 12, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released a new set of recommendations, entitled "Curriculum Focal Points." For a copy of the document, see: http://www.nctm.org/focalpoints/.
This is a new column in our newsletter. If you have something you wish to share that involves mathematics and popular culture, let me know at joberger@salisbury.edu.

FLATLAND: THE MOVIE

Flat World Productions has released its motion picture adaptation of Edwin Abbot’s 19th century classic, Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions. The thirty minute animated journey is the creation of producer Jeffry Travis, director Dano Johnson, and animation director Seth Caplan and stars the voices of Martin Sheen as Arthur Square and Veronica Mars as Hex. For more information, see: http://www.flatlandthefilm.com/store.html

THINGS TO DO

Get involved in your section

Give a talk at the Spring meeting. Submit your abstracts by March 28. Use the form at: http://www.morgan.edu/maa/spr07/call4papers.html.

Bring your students to the spring meeting. There is a great undergraduate conference that will be held this spring. Events include a poster and paper session. Registration information will be linked to the spring meetings site: http://www.morgan.edu/maa/spr07/home_ugrad.html

Nominate yourself to serve at-large executive committee member for our section. See Laura Taalman at the spring meetings or email her at taal@math.jmu.edu to nominate yourself or someone else.

Volunteer at MathDL. There is need for a reviewer for Convergence, a referee for JOMA, and a reviewer for MAA Reviews. For more information, or to volunteer, see: http://www.maa.org/mathdl/volunteer.html.

Future National MAA meetings

Joint Mathematics Meetings, January

2008 San Diego
2009 Washington
2010 San Francisco
2011 New Orleans
2012 Boston
2013 San Diego
2014 Baltimore
2015 San Antonio

MathFest, August

2007 San Jose
2008 Madison
2009 Portland, Or
2010 Pittsburgh
2015 Washington, D.C.
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