

The March Meeting of the Metropolitan New York Section



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THE MARCH MEETING OF THE METROPOLITAN NEW YORK SECTION

The twelfth annual meeting of the Metropolitan New York Section of the Mathematical Association of America was held at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, on March 28, 1953. Professor W. H. Fagerstrom, Collegiate Vice-Chairman, presided at the morning session, and Professor L. F. Ollmann, Chairman of the Section, presided at the afternoon session.

One hundred thirty-two persons attended the meeting, including the following eighty-four members of the Association:

R. G. Archibald, Winifred A. Asprey, L. F. Babcock, C. Y. Bartholomew, J. S. Bergen, Samuel Borofsky, C. B. Boyer, A. D. Bradley, A. B. Brown, Jewell H. Bushey, A. J. Carlan, Audrey M. Carlan, P. L. Chessin, Charles Clos, P. J. Cocuzza, H. R. Cooley, T. F. Cope, W. H. H. Cowles, Mary P. Dolciani, Jesse Douglas, Brother E. I. Duggan, J. N. Eastham, Samuel Eilenberg, W. H. Fagerstrom, H. F. Fehr, William Forman, R. M. Foster, E. T. Frankel, Leona Freeman, Brother Bernard Gerald, B. P. Gill, Bernard Greenspan, G. C. Helme, L. J. Herbach, Arthur Herskowitz, E. Marie Hove, T. R. Humphreys, O. J. Karst, E. R. Kiely, H. S. Kieval, A. E. Kinney, M. S. Klamkin, Morris Kline, Charles Koren, David Kotler, H. C. Kranzer, R. A. C. Lane, C. H. Lehmann, M. E. Levenson, D. M. MacEwen, J. R. Macy, J. H. Manheim, May H. Maria, K. A. McGown, Brother J. G. McKenna, F. H. Miller, Jack Minker, Morris Morduchow, Eugene Odin, L. F. Ollmann, C. F. Pinzka, J. J. Quinn, J. K. Reckzeh, M. R. Reeks, Selby Robinson, I. H. Rose, N. J. Rose, M. F. Roskopf, H. D. Ruderman, J. P. Russell, D. A. Russo, John Salerno, Charles Salkind, Aaron Shapiro, E. I. Shapiro, James Singer, Sister M. Anita, E. R. Stabler, R. L. Swain, N. Y. Tang, H. E. Wahlert, Etta A. Waite, M. E. White, R. C. Yates.

The following officers were elected for the year 1953-54: Chairman, Professor W. H. Fagerstrom, City College of the City of New York; Collegiate Vice-Chairman, Professor H. F. Fehr, Teachers College, Columbia University; High School Vice-Chairman, Mr. Charles Salkind, Samuel Tilden High School, Brooklyn; Secretary, Professor E. Marie Hove, Hofstra College; Treasurer, Mr. Aaron Shapiro, Midwood High School, Brooklyn.

At the business meeting, the following report on the activities of the Committee on Contests and Awards was given by its chairman, Professor W. H. Fagerstrom:

The Committee on Contests and Awards of the Metropolitan New York Section reported that 339 schools had registered for the fourth annual contest and that these schools had requested 9,672 copies of the contest booklets. In addition to these schools, there are three units operating independently using the Metropolitan New York Section's questions. These units are centered at 1) The University of Oregon, 2) The University of British Columbia, and 3) The Board of Education of Buffalo, N. Y. These three units have requested a total of 2,300 booklets. The 339 schools listed above are from 29 states and 2 Canadian provinces. The contest will be held on May 14, 1953.

Dr. Paul Bulger, Assistant Provost of Columbia University, welcomed the people at the meeting, and then the following papers were presented:

1. *Mathematics and the liberal arts student*, by Professor Morris Kline, New York University.

The practice in American colleges and universities of offering college algebra and trigo-

nometry to students who do not intend to use mathematics in later life was severely criticized. These courses have no cultural content and consist of dry, unmotivated, and purely technical procedures which students learn to repeat in parrot-like fashion. Instead of such courses, the speaker described and recommended a course which presents basic mathematical concepts in the cultural context in which these concepts arose and which includes a presentation of the significance of these concepts for modern civilization and culture. Such a course is being tried at the Washington Square College of New York University.

2. *Theory and methods of electronic digital computation*, by Mr. J. H. White, Jr., International Business Machines, New York City, introduced by the Secretary.

This paper states what one can expect of computing machines and particularly why they are important for scientific and engineering problems. Each of IBM's three types of electronic calculators is described in terms of the five elements of logical design: input, output, storage, arithmetic unit, and control unit. They are used in industry, government, and education. Twenty-six colleges and universities now have IBM computing installations. Some of the types of mathematical and physical problems readily solved by these machines are mentioned with emphasis on a problem of aircraft propeller design involving solution of two simultaneous fourth-order differential equations reduced to a set of forty simultaneous linear equations in forty unknowns.

3. *Trends in mathematics: the elementary school*, by Dr. Laura K. Eads, Board of Education of the City of New York, introduced by the Secretary.

The elementary school mathematics program in New York City, designated as *Developmental Mathematics*, is moving toward helping children to think mathematically: to discover mathematical relationships, to derive their own generalizations, to develop independence in problem-solving through estimation and computation without the use of paper and pencil. This program emphasizes the development of mathematical concepts, facts, and processes through levels of learning, engaging in experience, using representative materials, thinking through mathematical relationships, written computation. The mathematics is learned sequentially from the first grade. Understanding of the mathematical meaning or structure of numbers and processes, and of measurement is developed before skill in computation is emphasized.

4. *Curriculum trends in high school mathematics*, by Mr. Max Peters, Long Island City High School, New York City, introduced by the Secretary.

The most significant factor affecting the mathematics curriculum in the high schools is the fundamental change in student composition. There is grave danger that the traditional academic mathematics courses will be seriously weakened in the attempt to reach the mediocre and poor student. The development of second track courses can help to check this tendency. The two major movements in the academic mathematics high school curriculum are greater emphasis upon meaning and more systematic attempts at integration. Complicated manipulation in algebra has been de-emphasized in favor of rationalization of operations. The postulational structure of plane geometry has been stressed. Units of coordinate geometry have been included in plane geometry courses and progress has been made in developing a fused course in the eleventh year combining intermediate algebra and trigonometry.

5. *Topology: Its relation to other branches of mathematics*, by Professor Samuel Eilenberg, Columbia University.

H. S. KIEVAL, *Secretary*