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Michigan Section–MAA Newsletter

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# **Michigan Section – MAA**

NEWSLETTER

Volume 34, Number 2

April 2008



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition

# Mathematical Association of America **Michigan Section Newsletter** Volume 34, Number 2

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### www.michmaa.org

#### Abbreviations

C = College
CC = Community College
CMU = Central Michigan U
EMU = Eastern Michigan U
FSU = Ferris State U
GVSU = Grand Valley State U
KU = Kettering U
LSSU = Lake Superior State U
LTU = Lawrence Technological U
MSU = Michigan State U

MTU = Michigan Technological U NMU = Northern Michigan U OU = Oakland USHU = Siena Heights U SVSU = Saginaw Valley State U U = University UDM = U of Detroit Mercy UM = U of Michigan WMU = Western Michigan U WSU = Wayne State U

# **Calendar of Events**

May 2–3, 2008	Michigan Section Meeting, GVSU
April 9–12, 2008	NCTM Annual Meeting, Salt Lake City
July 31–August 2, 2008	MAA MathFest, Madison
November 20–23, 2008	AMATYC Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
January 5-8, 2009	MAA/AMS Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
May 8–9, 2009	Michigan Section Meeting, CMU
April 22–25, 2009	NCTM Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.
August 6-8, 2009	MAA MathFest, Portland
November 12–15, 2009	AMATYC Annual Meeting, Las Vegas
January 6–9, 2010	MAA/AMS Annual Meeting, San Francisco
April 21–24, 2010	NCTM Annual Meeting, San Diego
August 5-7, 2010	MAA MathFest, Pittsburgh
November 11–14, 2010	AMATYC Annual Meeting, Boston
January 5-8, 2011	MAA/AMS Annual Meeting, New Orleans
November 10–13, 2011	AMATYC Annual Meeting, Austin
January 4-7, 2012	MAA/AMS Annual Meeting, Boston

## **Organizational Web sites**

Michigan Section-MAA MAA NCTM MCTM AMATYC MichMATYC MMPC **MiNExT** 

www.michmaa.org www.maa.org www.nctm.org www.mictm.org www.amatyc.org www.michmatyc.org www.math.oakland.edu/main/mmpc www.calvin.edu/~rpruim/next/mich

### Annual Meeting, May 2–3

The annual meeting of the Michigan Section of the MAA and MichMATYC (the Michigan Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges) will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 2–3, 2008, at the Grand Rapids campus of Grand Valley State University. The program committee is delighted to announce an exciting collection of plenary, local-invited, and contributed talks collectively devoted to interesting results in mathematics and the teaching and learning of the subject.

At the Friday luncheon address, **Gail Burrill** of Michigan State University will share thoughts on the mathemat-



ics that beginning teachers should know, in her talk, "The Mathematical Knowledge Needed for Teaching at the Secondary Level: The Role of Mathematics Departments." One of the focal points of her presentation will be the opportunity that math departments have in shaping future teachers of mathematics.

**Jeff Lagarias** of the University of Michigan will deliver the Friday afternoon plenary address. The author of nearly 200 papers on a wide range of mathematical topics, Professor Lagarias will be speaking on "Hilbert's 18th Problem: Mathematics and Materials Science," including a history of results and recent progress on this problem.

Following dinner and the Friday evening awards banquet, **Francis Su** of Harvey Mudd College will present the banquet address. Winner of the MAA's Alder Award for Distinguished Teaching, as well as the MAA's Hasse Prize for outstanding mathematical exposition, Francis is a regular mentor of undergraduate students engaged in mathematical research. His talk, "Teaching Research: Encouraging Discoveries," will journey through some of his experiences that have led students to move from learners to discoverers.

The Saturday morning program will begin with a plenary address by former First Vice President of the MAA, **Carl Pomerance** of Dartmouth College. In his distinguished career, he has won the MAA's Haimo Award for Distinguished Teaching and the Chauvenet Prize for outstanding exposition. With an Erdős number of 1, Professor Pomerance will be speaking on Erdős's "favorite problem" in "The Covering Congruences of Paul Erdős."

Following Saturday's luncheon, the meeting will conclude with an entertaining look at the mathematics of card tricks as Professor **Chris Swanson** of Ashland University presents "The Probability an Amazing Card Trick is Dull." An Alder Award winner and student MAA chapter enthusiast, Chris will unabashedly share stories of card tricks gone wrong.

In addition to the plenary talks, we are pleased to have 30-minute local-invited addresses by **Anna Gilbert** (University of Michigan, "A Few Good Terms"), **Eddie Cheng** (Oakland University, "Real Problems from Operations Research"), **Stephanie Edwards** (Hope College, "Problems Posed by Pólya"), **Joan Remski** (UM-Dearborn, "A Geometric Approach to the Singular Value Decomposition"), and **Aklilu Zeleke** (Lyman Briggs College, MSU, "Variable Coefficient ODEs: On Solving a Class of ODEs with Variable Coefficients").

There will also be many 20-minute contributed talks that cover a variety of topics in mathematics and pedagogical issues, sessions devoted to talks by undergraduate and graduate students, and book exhibits from the MAA and other publishers. There remains space in the program for some additional contributed talks; interested parties should contact **Matt Boelkins** (boelkinm@gvsu.edu) no later than March 28; student talks may be submitted until this date as well.

Full details about the schedule (including abstracts), registration, and accommodations are contained in the Program for the Annual Meeting, which is included with this Newsletter as well as on the Section's Web site, www.michmaa.org or at www.gvsu.edu/math/michmaa2008.

Please note that advance reservations for all meals must be received by April 25, and hotel reservations must be made by April 1 for the Marriott and April 10 for the Days Inn to receive the conference rate.

Special thanks are due to the local arrangements committee from GVSU, which consists of **Steve Schlicker** (Chair), **Feryal Alayont**, **Shelly Smith**, **Ted Sundstrom**, and **Rebecca Walker**; they have done a fantastic job getting many important conference details in order for us.

The program committee for this year consists of co-chairs Matt Boelkins (GVSU) and **David Redman** (Delta College), and **David Austin** (GVSU).

We look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids May 2-3!

Matt Boelkins, Four-Year College Vice Chair

### **Chairperson's Report**

The main event in the Section each year is the Annual Spring Meeting. This year the meeting will be held at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids on May 2 and 3. The program committee, co-chaired by Matt Boelkins (GVSU) and David Redman (Delta C), has put together an impressive list of invited speakers and there is always a great variety of contributed talks to choose from as well. The local arrangements, headed by Steve Schlicker (GVSU), have been taken care of by our colleagues at GVSU, and all the details about the Meeting are included in this Newsletter as well as on the Section Web site, www.michmaa.org.



Also, on Thursday afternoon, May 1, at GVSU, the Ninth Annual Michigan NExT Symposium will be held. The co-organizers are **Mark Pearson** (Hope **C**) **and** Paul Yu (GVSU), and younger department members are encouraged to participate in the activities they have planned.

For future reference, the 2009 Spring Meeting will be held May 8–9 at Central Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University will host the 2010 meeting. We will want to get back to the west side of the state for the 2011 meeting, so please start thinking about hosting this important event.

The section was happy to join with the Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum, MCTM, MDE Mathematics and Science Partnership, MichMATYC, MSU Division of Science and Mathematics Education, and others in supporting the Fourth Conversations Among Colleagues Conference held March 15, 2008 at Western Michigan University. This conference brings together those responsible for mathematics education to discuss issues related to teaching and learning mathematics at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

This past Fall, on October 5–6, 2007, the annual Upper Peninsula Regional Meeting was held at Northern Michigan University. Thank you to **John Kiltinen** (NMU) and those at NMU for planning and hosting this annual event, and to **Randy Pruim** (Calvin C) for making the trip this year

# **Two-Year College Vice Chair's Report**

Get Excited About These Opportunities:

What fuels your passion for mathematics? Do you love to show students how mathematics shows up where they least expect it? Break down their misconceptions about what mathematics can do, or what it cannot? Do you want your students to know that everything you teach relates to something that they know, see, or do in their life outside the classroom. Here are a couple of awesome opportunities for you to share with your students this semester.

#### Math Horizons.

Arthur Benjamin and Jennifer Quinn are doing a fantastic job as editors of Math Horizons. Math Horizons has a mission to "publish lively articles about the culture of mathematics." Pass out spare copies in some of your courses. Give subscriptions to your promising undergraduates. In the February 2008 issue there are some wonderful articles to engage students with, including an interview with MacArthur Fellow Michael Moshcen, juggler and performing artist. Do your students underestimate their ability in your course? It's very difficult to convince them to invest extra effort in something they "know" they are unable to do. Take ten minutes out of your next session and teach them to juggle! Perhaps they will reconsider other things they "cannot" do.

#### Mathematics Awareness Month.

Blessed with interesting contests that are generating intense public interest, let's not miss our opportunity to share with our students "What makes your vote matter?" Have your students run some mock elections with several alternative voting methods. Ask them to explain the results. Encourage your students to check out the resources at www.mathaware. org/index.html and they may "become more aware of the incredible power of mathematics."

Mathematics is everywhere!

David Redman, Two-Year College Vice Chair

### **Governor's Report**

The January 2008 Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego were very successful. Total attendance exceeded 5600, including over 500 undergraduate students. Upcoming national meetings include MathFest in Madison, WI, July 31-August 2, 2008, and the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Washington, DC, January 5-8, 2009. In addition to the usual research and general interest talks, professional development opportunities and social events for professional mathematicians, these meetings will feature programs designed to attract and enrich students.

In each of my Newsletter reports I

will try to highlight some of the other ways in which the MAA supports mathematicians. This time I want to feature the Professional Enhancement Program (PREP). This year's offerings include workshops on topics like wavelets, biocalculus, mathematics and politics, geometry and art, as well as the Sixth Annual Study Abroad Tour-this year to Peru. For more information about the offerings, visit the MAA PREP Web site at www. maa.org/prep.

The Michigan Section National NExT Fellow Campaign. National meetings and professional development activities are a few of the ways that the MAA helps mathematicians in their ongoing professional lives. The MAA also supports and shapes the future of the profession through Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching), a mentoring and professional development program designed to launch new Ph.D.'s in their faculty careers. The Section is initiating a fund-raising campaign to sponsor one or more National NExT Fellows. Each \$2,500 raised will support one National NExT Fellow. Several past and present Michigan Section Governors have collectively pledged enough to support at least one Fellow, and we are urging Michigan Section members to help us support the future of the discipline through individual contributions. See the box on the following page for further information.

### **Bette Warren, Governor**





### Michigan Section Governors' National NExT Challenge

Support the Future — Contribute to the Michigan Section National NExT Fellow Campaign. The Michigan Section is requesting donations to sponsor one or more National NExT Fellows. Each multiple of \$2,500 raised will support one NExT Fellow. Any residual amount over the last full multiple of \$2,500 will be returned to the Section to support Michigan Section NExT activities.

Donations will be accepted at the Section meeting at GVSU in May, or can be sent directly to:

MI-Section National NExT Fellow Challenge, c/o Lisa Kolbe The Mathematical Association of America 1529 18th Street NW Washington, DC 20036

Checks should be made payable to Mathematical Association of America, with "MI-Section National NExT Fellow" noted on the check.

#### Chair's Report continued from page 3

as one of the invited speakers. Please consider joining our UP colleagues for the next annual meeting in 2008. This time of year is always a great time to visit the Upper Peninsula.

The section also sponsors the Michigan Undergraduate Mathematics Conference (MUMC) as well. The tenth annual meeting was held October 27, 2007 at Michigan State University and we are pleased that this event continues to grow (150 participants this year). The organizing committee was chaired by **Aklilu Zeleke** (MSU), and thanks also goes to **John Clifford** (UMD), the Section Student Activities Coordinator, for finding a location for this event. Please encourage undergraduates at your institution to participate in the eleventh annual MUMC meeting in 2008.

Thank you to all the active volunteer members of the Section who make these events happen each year.

I hope to see you all in Grand Rapids in May!

**Tom Zerger, Chair** 

## Secretary/Treasurer's Report

I would like to thank everyone who has sent in a section dues payment for 2008. At this time there are 140 dues-paying members. Fifty of these are sustaining members, who have paid dues of \$30 or more. The list of sustaining members can be found on page 28.

In addition, we now have 28 institutional members. This list can be found on page 29. If your school is not listed, you might want to remind your department chair to attend to this matter. Last year at this time there were 142 dues-paying individual members, including 50 sustaining members, and 26 institutional members.



If you have not yet sent in a dues payment and wish to do so, the membership form can be found on page 29. Remember, dues-paying members pay no registration fee for the annual meeting.

3/'03	3/'04	3/'05	3/'06	3/'07	3/'08
dues-paying members 103	96	90	93	92	90
sustaining members 60	58	51	52	50	50
institutional members 16	26	25	18	26	28

The Michigan Section's current bank balance is \$4986.76. This year's balance is down somewhat from last year's balance at this time, which was \$6321, due to slightly larger expenses associated with the 2007 Annual Meeting. With that noted, we have a good balance of income and expenses, and the Section is in good shape financially.

### Mark Bollman, Secretary/Treasurer



### **Remembering Janet Andersen**

The Michigan Section Executive Committee would like to honor the memory of Professor Janet Andersen through a brick in the Paul R. Halmos Commemorative Walk (the "River of Bricks") at the Carriage House Conference Center, part of the MAA's Headquarters in Washington, DC. Janet was a very active member of the MAA and was the Michigan Section Four-Year College Vice Chair at the time of her death in 2005. We will accept small donations for this memorial at the Annual Meeting at GVSU in May.

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# Oakland University

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### **Michigan NExT**

The Ninth Annual Michigan NExT Symposium will be held at Grand Valley State University on the afternoon of Thursday, May 1, 2008, in conjunction with the 2008 Section Meeting (May 2-3 at GVSU). The symposium will address issues of importance to new faculty, such as developing successful teaching and assessment strategies, mentoring undergraduate research projects, planning new courses and selecting texts, and balancing the responsibilities of an academic career. This year's topic will be on "Mathematics Education." One aspect of most, if not all, mathematics departments is teaching future mathematics teachers. From teaching service courses for future elementary education teachers to upper level content courses for future secondary mathematics teachers, mathematics departments and faculty are inundated with a myriad of curricular and instructional issues. As we engage this important topic, we look forward to broad participation from faculty across the state to discuss the diverse nature of this issue. Coorganizers Mark Pearson (Hope C) and Paul Yu (GVSU) are currently soliciting suggestions for specific discussion items and speakers (self-nominations welcome) for this year's symposium theme.

As plans for this year's symposium unfold, information will be posted on the Michigan NExT Web site, at www.michmaa.org/minext.

Michigan NExT is a forum for pre-tenure faculty, although all faculty are invited who have a strong commitment to teaching undergraduate mathematics. To become involved in Michigan NExT, or to recommend a topic or speaker for this year's symposium, please contact Mark (pearson@ hope.edu) or Paul (yupaul@gvsu.edu).

### Mark Pearson, Hope C and Paul Yu, GVSU

# GVSU in May

# 10 Webmaster's Report

There have been some additions to the Michigan Section Web site (www. michmaa.org) recently.

- Google Custom Search is now available on the site. Google provides ad-free intra-site searches to nonprofit organizations.
- There are now four pages devoted to resources for undergraduates. Please consider submitting links or content to publicize your institution's undergraduate-related events on these pages.
- Voluntary Section dues are now accepted online. Visit www.michmaa. org/dues for details.

Google provides access and usage reports for the site. During January 2008, the most recent month for which a complete report is available, there were 301 visits to the Web site, with 105 of those visits the result of Google searches. (The second most-frequently-used search engine was the Yahoo engine, accounting for 8 site visits.) Aside from searches using keywords that are variations of "Michigan MAA," statistics from late 2007 through mid-February indicate that site users most often search for and view pages related to the MMPC, the High School Visiting Lecture Program, and the MUMC, in that order. To make information about these topics easy to find, the following "friendly" URLs are now active:

www.michmaa.org/mmpc

www.michmaa.org/hsvlp

www.michmaa.org/mumc

Additionally, information about Michigan NExT, currently directed by **Mark Pearson** (Hope C) and **Paul Yu** (GVSU), is available at www. michmaa.org/minext.

Future plans include the addition of older Section *Newsletters* to the site and a better expression of gratitude to our institutional members.

A big "thank you" goes to **Earl Fife** for creating the Section's Web site and for continuing to maintain the server from which it operates.

Web site content suggestions are always welcome. Please share your thoughts by contacting me at sebarnett@hfcc.edu.

Scott Barnett, Henry Ford CC



Serving the mathematics community and helping students and instructors achieve *success*.



## 12 Teaching Award Nominations Sought

This is a preliminary announcement that the Distinguished Teaching Award Committee will be seeking nominations for the eighteenth annual (2009) MAA Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. The committee will choose one of the nominees for the Michigan Section Award, and he or she will be honored at the Spring 2009 meeting of the Section. The awardee will also become the Section's candidate for the national MAA's Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award.

This year's award recipient will join the continuing members of the committee, **Tim Carroll** (EMU), chair, and **Eddie Cheng** (OU), the previous recipients, for next year's selection process.

Anyone, other than the candidate him/herself, is entitled to make a nomination. To be eligible, a candidate must be a college or university teacher teaching a mathematical science at least halftime during the academic year in a two- or four-year college or university, have at least five years teaching experience, and be a member of the MAA. Nominations are due by December 31, 2008. More information will be available in the Fall *Newsletter*. Please start thinking now about nominating your department's best teacher.

On a related note, Past Chair **Randy Pruim** (Calvin C) reports that **Steve Schlicker** (GVSU) was selected to receive the Section's 2007–2008 Distinguished Service Award. Details will appear in the Fall 2008 *Newsletter*.

## **Student Chapter News**

### Grand Valley State University

Under the guidance of **Feryal Alayont**, the Mathematics and Statistics Club had a very active year. Events included a Euchre tournament in the Fall, a careers presentation featuring three mathematics alumni, who discussed their work for the Foremost Insurance Company, and an advising night conducted by senior mathematics majors. Soon to come is the club's "Pi Day" contest, which features a pie-eating contest for students, with the winner receiving the opportunity to pie in the face his or her favorite instructor. Student officers this year are **Casey Jelsma**, **Dan Gorski**, **Thao Le**, and **Jessica Spears**.

### Lawrence Technological University

The Math Club plans a professors' very used book sale in February, and will celebrate Pi Day on March 14 (3.14).

# Maplesoft-MAA® Placement Test Suite

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Make scenes like this a thing of the past.

# New version of Placement Test Suite provides expanded content and tools for deeper analysis

The Placement Test Suite is a collection of placement tests developed by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). These tests are administered via Maple T.A., a Web-based system that automatically assesses student responses and performance.

Version 3.0 comes with many new features that will assist users of the Placement Test Suite in the administration, analysis of the results and refining of their placement tests. Highlights include:

- The availability of the MAA calculator-based tests, which contain problems similar to those seen in typical classrooms where calculator use is encouraged.
- Improvements to infrastructure provide more options for analyzing test results and providing feedback to students. These include scores for individual questions, grade reports on groups of questions, and customized feedback for students.
- *Simplified administration*. The administration of the placement tests has also been further simplified in this release with single sign-on for students, force-grade open assignments, and tighter administration controls which prevent students from creating multiple accounts.

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## 14 MMPC Honors Top High School Students

A total of 106 Michigan high school students, from 38 different schools, were honored for their achievement in the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition at the Awards Day program held on Sunday, February 24 at Oakland University. This was the third year of the three-year term of director **Eddie Cheng** (Oakland U).

Gerard Venema (Calvin C) spoke on "Some Miracles of Euclidean Geometry," and Sid Graham (CMU) lectured on "Triangular Peg Solitaire."

The first place Gold Award winner was **Alan Huang** (Detroit Country Day). The second place Gold Award went to **Neil Gurram** (Detroit Country Day). The third place Gold Award went to **Willa Chen** (Canton High School). The Silver Award winners at the first level were: **Sudharsham Mohanram** (Novi High School) and **David Sherman** (Groves High School); at the second level, **Seong Hyun Hwang** (International Academy) and **Robin He** (Ann Arbor Huron High School); at the third level, **Allen Yuan** (Detroit Country Day), **Roger Jia** (Groves High School), **Thunwa Theerakam** (Cranbrook Kingswood) and **Yong II Kwon** (Cranbrook Kingswood). In addition, 42 Bronze Awards were given, and 53 students received Honorable Mention.

The top 53 students received scholarships in amounts ranging from \$250 to \$2,600. Thanks go to the corporate and other donors to the MMPC scholarship fund. The Honorable Mention winners received copies of the SIAM publication: *Ants, Bikes & Clocks*, by **William Briggs**. We would like to thank the Michigan Council of Teachers of Mathematics for their generous donations that covered a portion of the cost of these books.

Part I of the MMPC is a 40-question multiple choice test, which this year was administered on October 10. About 1,000 participants from Part I were invited to take Part II on December 5.

The official Web site of the MMPC (www.math.oakland.edu/main/mmpc/ index.html) contains information about the competition. The competition is given in the Fall of each year.

# **GVSU** in May

- The top Gold Award winner Alan Huang is a junior who was top Gold Award winner last year. The second-place Gold Award winner, Neil Gurram, is a sophomore. The third-place Gold Award winner, Willa Chen, is a junior.
- Of the eight Silver Award winners, two are senior, three are juniors, two are sophomores, and one is a freshman.

### **Top MMPC Results for Each Grade**

Grade	Place	Score	Grade	Place	Score
12	5	57.6	8	NA	NA
11	1	68.6	7	102	39.6
10	2	67.2	6	NA	NA
9	8	58.6	5	NA	NA

### Top 106 Results by Grade

Grade	Total	12	11	10	9	8	7
Scholarships	53	21	22	9	1	0	0
Honorable Mention	53	26	19	2	5	0	1
Total	106	47	41	11	6	0	1

### Top 106 Results by Gender

Grade	Total	Μ	F
Scholarships	53	46	7
Honorable Mention	53	40	13
Total	106	86	20

- About 43% of the original contestants were female, as were about 29% of those who qualified for Part II. There were 21 young women among the Top 106 (including seven scholarship winners).
- The total score for the competition is the sum of the Part I points (out of 40) and 1.2 times the Part II points (out of 50). The highest score was 68.6 out of 100. The cutoff score for scholarships was 45.2. The cutoff score for the Top 106 was 39.2 (after regrade).
- The cutoff score to qualify for Part II this year was 16.

# MMPC Awards Day, Oakland University, February 24, 2008



Gold and Silver Award Winners (l to r): Alan Huang, David Sherman, Yong Il Kwon, Thunwa Theerakarn, Willa Chen, Allen Yuan, Neil Gurram, Sudharsham Mohanram, Robin He.



*Tom Zerger congratulates the First Place Gold Award Winner, Alan Huang.* 





Gerard Venema spoke on "Some Miracles of Euclidean Geometry,"

*T-shirts were given out to those winners who showed extraordinary levels of enthusiasm in receiving their award.* 



Ruth Favro recognizes Willa Chen as the top female contestant.





Sid Graham recruited a volunteer to try out some moves in his talk on Peg Solitaire.



Krithika Shanmugasundaram talked about how much fun the ARML experience was.



Without Grading Day, and its many dedicated volunteers, there would be no Awards Day.



Outgoing Director Eddie Cheng working on a problem that begins, "Find x such that..."

# 18 51<sup>st</sup> MMPC Part II Problems

The top 1000 students had 100 minutes to solve these five problems.

1. Let *A* be the point (-1,0), *B* be the point (0,1) and *C* be the point (1,0) on the *xy*-plane. Assume that P(x,y) is a point on the *xy*-plane that satisfies the following condition

$$d_1 \cdot d_2 = (d_3)^2,$$

where  $d_1$  is the distance from P to the line AB,  $d_2$  is the distance from P to the line BC, and  $d_3$  is the distance from P to the line AC.

Find the equation(s) that must be satisfied by the point P(x, y).

- 2. On Day 1, Peter sends an email to a female friend and a male friend with the following instructions:
- If you're a male, send this email to 2 female friends tomorrow, including the instructions.
- If you're a female, send this email to 1 male friend tomorrow, including the instructions.

Assuming that everyone checks their email daily and follows the instructions, how many emails will be sent from Day 1 to Day 365 (inclusive)?

- 3. For every rational number a/b in the interval (0, 1], consider the interval of length  $1/(2b^2)$  with a/b as the center, that is, the interval  $(a/b 1/(4b^2)$ ,  $a/b + 1/(4b^2)$ ). Show that  $\sqrt{2}/2$  is not contained in any of these intervals.
- 4. Let *a* and *b* be real numbers such that 0 < b < a < 1 with the property that

 $\log_a x + \log_b x = 4 \log_{ab} x - (\log_b (ab^{-1} - 1))(\log_a (ab^{-1} - 1) + 2 \log_a ab^{-1})$ for some positive real number  $x \neq 1$ . Find the value of a/b.

5. Find the largest positive constant  $\lambda$  such that

$$\lambda a^2 b^2 (a - b)^2 \le (a^2 - ab + b^2)^3$$

is true for all real numbers a and b.

# Thanks from the MMPC Director

You might know some of the people behind the scenes of the competition, but we would still like to bring them to your attention and formally thank them. We apologize in advance if we do not mention all of the significant contributions to the competition.

The examination committee works diligently behind the scenes preparing Part I and Part II: Akalu Tefera (GVSU, Chair), Lazaros Kikas (UDM) Ada Cheng (Kettering U) and Jennifer Zhao (UM-Dearborn). They patiently work with the Director and the reports of the various reviewers, who in turn deserve a great deal of thanks, though they are too numerous to mention here. The examination committee also provides the Director with a valuable sounding board and advisory group.

The volunteers from various institutions around the state who attended Grading Day did a wonderful job. They are listed on the MMPC Web site.

The MMPC supervisors at the participating schools are essential, collecting information and organizing participants, keeping timely and frequent contact with the Director. If you know a supervisor at a participating school, thank them, and if you have any contacts in your local high schools, encourage them to consider participating if they do not already do so.

I would like to thank John Clifford, Patrick Pan, Akalu Tefera, Lasaros Kikas, Ada Cheng and Jennifer Zhao, who served as members of the examination committee at various time during my term as Director. Although my term has ended, I will continue to be involved in the MMPC as I will be joining the examination committee. I would like to introduce the next director, Hasan Al-Halees from Saginaw Valley State University. Please join me in welcoming him as the new Director.

**Eddie Cheng, OU** 

# GVSU in May

# **News from the Campuses**

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### Adrian College [reported by Elizabeth Lamprecht]

In November 2007, the Adrian College Mathematics Department dedicated a new Math Lab in memory of Professor Cynthia Bosio. Bosio, who passed away in January 2007, had taught in the department for almost 25 years. During her time at the college, she had served as both department chair and director of the former math lab. Professor Bosio was known for her enthusiasm in the classroom and her commitment to the college. Among the awards she had received were the Excellent Instructor of the Year Award, the Adrian College Phenomenal Woman Award, and the Ross Newsom Award for Excellence in Teaching. The Cynthia Tremonti Bosio Mathematics Lab is open Monday through Friday on the Adrian College campus. It contains mathematics resource and career materials. Free tutoring in math is also available to interested students. [elamprecht@adrian.edu]

### **Albion College** [reported by Robert Messer]

Michael Robison joins the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Albion C as a visiting instructor starting spring semester 2008. He was the director of the Mathnasium learning center in Okemos, Michigan, a program to boost the math skills of school children. He also has taught at GVSU and MSU. • The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Albion C invites people around the world to wear plaid on April 25, the last Friday of Mathematics Awareness Month, to show their support of mathematics. [Ram@albion.edu]

### *Calvin College* [reported by John Ferdinands]

Marilyn Myers will be on leave for all of 2008 and 2009 at the University College, Dublin, Ireland. She has been awarded an Embark Postdoctoral Fellowship from the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET). [ferd@calvin.edu]

# **Central Michigan University** [reported by Sid Graham]

Yury Ionin, Susan Lenker, and Terry Lenker retired in December. Dan Wang is on sabbatical in the Spring semester. [sidney.w.graham@gmail.com]

### **Eastern Michigan University** [reported by Tim Carroll]

Yali Zhao, Department of Mathematics, Bohai University, Jinzhou, People's Republic of China, is a visitor to the department. • EMU will be hosting the TI-N'spire Workshop May 17. [tcarroll@emich.edu]

### Grand Valley State University [reported by Paul Fishback]

Ed Aboufadel has completed his first year as department chair. • On February 27, the department hosted /Math In Action/, which attracted 240 local educators and featured a keynote address by **Glenda Lappan**. The following evening, Alder Award recipient Tim Chartier, from Davidson College, entertained and educated

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the university community with his well-known "Mime-matics" performance. [fishbacp@gvsu.edu]

# *Lawrence Technological University* [reported by Michael Merscher]

The 39th Annual LTU High School Mathematics Competition will be held on Sunday, April 27. The World Robofest Championship will be held at LTU on April 26. In 2007, a total of 576 teams from five countries, involving 1,413 students, participated in Robofest. **CJ Chung** runs the Robofest gala. LTU will host the Lower Michigan Math Competition on April 5. [merscher@ltu.edu]

### Schoolcraft College [reported by Randy Schwartz]

The Schoolcraft College Mathematics Department will be relocated by Fall 2008 to a new facility currently under construction, the Biomedical Technology Center. We foresee a greater degree of interdisciplinary work with our colleagues in biology and other disciplines in science, technology, and engineering, including some new courses and course modules. • In accord with guidelines from the Higher Learning Commission (our accrediting body), responsibility for teaching Business Math is being transferred from the Business Dept. to the Mathematics Dept., effective Fall 2008. [rschwart@schoolcraft.edu]

### University of Michigan-Dearborn [reported by Margret Höft]

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics will host the 2008 Michigan Undergraduate Mathematics Conference. For more information contact John Clifford or John Gillespie. [mhoft@umd.umich.edu]

### University of Michigan-Flint [reported by Ken Schilling]

**Mehrdad Simkani** is on sabbatical for the Winter semester. **Kirk Weller** is coteaching a capstone course for preservice secondary mathematics education students at MSU, under an NSF grant. **Lixing Han** has been invited to spend the Winter 2009 semester as a visiting scholar at the U of Connecticut. • Family Math Night, an evening of mathematical fun for elementary school children and their parents, was held at UM-Flint on February 13. • Two UM-Flint students, **Clelste Thornburg** and **Teresa Olson**, participated in the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in mathematics on February 8–10. [ksch@umflint.edu]

### Wayne State University [reported by Daniel Frohardt]

**Boris Mordukhovich** has been awarded the title of Distinguished Professor by WSU. • **Stephen Smale** will give this year's Owens Lecture, "Vision and Learning via Geometry and Functional Analysis", on March 31. • **Ian Putnam**, U of Victoria, was a visiting scholar during February. • **Frederick J. Sievert**, MA, WSU, former president of New York Life Insurance Company, will be the guest of honor at this year's departmental awards ceremony, April 18. • The department is in the process of making a tenure-track hire, but the outcome of this process was not available at

the time of this writing. The Dean and the Department have narrowed the search for a new department chair to an internal search. This search is underway at the time of this writing. • **Irvin Reid** has announced that he will be stepping down as WSU President at the end of this academic year. [danf@math.wayne.edu]

### Western Michigan University [reported by Paul Eenigenburg]

This year's Conversation Among Colleagues Conference, co-hosted by the Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum and the Department of Mathematics, is scheduled for Saturday, March 15, 2008. • The Mathematics Department will host the 2008 Fall Central Section Meeting of the American Mathematical Society, scheduled for October 17–19, 2008 (Meeting #1043). • Terrell Hodge is Co-Director for the project "Modern Biology, Modern Mathematics, and Modern Solutions: Moving Biomathematics Education beyond Calculus". The National Science Foundation is funding this project for the period 2008–2010. • Annegret Paul is a member of the celebrated team that computed the representations of the Lie group E8. She is currently on sabbatical leave. Jane-Jane Lo and Jim Zhu will be on sabbatical leave in 2008–2009. • The WMU campus will again be a host site for the American Mathematics Competition, February 27, 2008. • The department is continuing its series of career talks, hosted by Western's Pi Mu Epsilon chapter: January 25, Deming Zhuang, Ph.D., Securities Analysis and Risk Management CitiGroup, Inc, New York; February 22, Gordon Wilfong, Ph.D., Mathematical and Algorithmic Sciences Center Bell Labs, Murray Hill, New Jersey; March 18, Don Southwell, FSA, President and CEO Unitrin, Inc, Chicago; April 11, Erica Klampfl, Ph.D., Supply Chain Management Research Group Ford Research and Advanced Engineering, Dearborn. [paul.eenigenburg@wmich.edu]



The Eleventh Michigan Undergraduate Mathematics Conference will take place at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in Fall 2008. Information about the conference date and the key note speaker will be posted at a conference Web site soon. There will be opportunities for student talks, as well as presentations by faculty representatives from graduate schools and local mathematics REU programs.

### John Clifford, UM-Dearborn

# New Officers to be Elected at Annual Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Michigan Section-MAA will take place at 5:00 p.m. on May 3, 2008 at Grand Valley State University during the Annual Meeting. One of the major items of business is the election of officers. The Nominating Committee, chaired by **Randy Pruim** (Calvin C), will propose a slate of candidates. **Matt Boelkins** (GVSU) will be nominated for Chair. Nominations for Four-Year College Vice Chair and for Two-Year College Vice Chair will be presented at the business meeting and I also will be distributed through the Liaisons e-mail list as soon as they are available.. Nominations from the floor are also accepted (permission of the nominees should be secured in advance). The Annual Meeting will also have reports on Section activities during the year, as well as an opportunity for members to raise other issues. The Nominating Committee is listed on page 31.

## **Positions Available**

NOTE: Most positions in the mathematical sciences, including many of the ones listed here, are advertised in Employment Information in the Mathematical Sciences (www.ams.org/eims). The MAA also has a Web site for employment opportunities (www.maa.org/pubs/employ.html). All openings are for Fall 2008 unless otherwise stated, and further information is available from the department.

Albion College (www.albion.edu/mathcs/Position\_Math.asp) has an opening for a tenure-track position in mathematics. Details are available at the site listed.

**Grand Valley State University** (www.gvsu.edu/math) anticipates filling three tenure-track positions this year.



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## 26 Contest News

The MAACommittee on the American Mathematics Competitions (CAMC) is dedicated to the goal of strengthening the mathematical capabilities of our nation's youth. The CAMC believes that one way to meet this goal is to identify, recognize and reward excellence in mathematics through a series of national contests, called the American Mathematics Competitions. The American Mathematics Contest 8 (AMC 8) for students in grades 8 and below is a 25-question, 40-minute multiple-choice examination in junior high school (middle school) mathematics designed to promote the development and enhancement of problem-solving skills; to demonstrate the broad range of topics available for the junior high school mathematics curriculum; and to promote excitement, enthusiasm and positive attitudes towards mathematics. Calculators are not allowed starting in 2008.

The 2007 AMC 8 Exam was taken by 5738 students from 73 schools in Michigan on November 13, 2007. The overall Michigan average score was 8.66. **David Lu**, an eighth grader from Detroit Country Day Middle School (Beverly Hills), got a perfect score of 25. Nine students achieved a score of 24. They are seventh graders **Aparna Yechoor** from Novi Middle School and **Aishvar Radhakrishnan** from Boulan Park Middle School (Troy); and eighth graders **Stephany Liu** from Frost Middle School (Livonia), **Allen Chen** and **Rolland He** from Boulan Park Middle School (Troy), **Vikra Prasad** from Boyd Larson Middle School (Troy), **Deepti Mahajan** from ICAE (Troy), **Sandeep Arakali** and **Mallik Guduguntla** from Smith Middle School (Troy). In addition, three sixth graders qualified for the Distinguished Honor Roll (scored 25–21): they are **Stephen Li** from Education Enrichment Center (Troy), and **Apurva Shrivast** and **Alan Xu** from ICAE.

The Edyth May Sliffe Award recognizes the excellence of 50 exam managers whose students are most successful on the AMC 8. The 2007 recipients of the award in Michigan were **Tracie Kania** of Smith Middle School in Troy, **and Shelley McHugh**, of Boyd Larson Middle School in Troy.

The Harvard-MIT Mathematics Tournament (HMMT) is an annual math tournament for high school students, held at MIT and at Harvard in alternate years. It is run exclusively by MIT and Harvard students. Most of them participated in math contests in high school, and they try to incorporate what we liked best about those competitions into HMMT to make the contest both challenging and entertaining for all the participants. The eleventh annual HMMT was held on Saturday, February 23, 2008, at Harvard, with 700 participants.

Michigan participated with a team, the Michigan All-Stars, of eight stu-

dents in 2008, led by Detroit Country Day School (DCDS, Beverly Hills) mathematics teacher and Department Head, **Ross Arseneau**. The Michigan All-Stars team was sponsored by General Motors and a DCDS alumnus who was a former Michigan math star. The team members are: **Nikita Consul** (Plymouth Salem), **Neil Gurram** (DCDS), **Robin He** (Ann Arbor Huron), **Alan Huang** (DCDS), **Andrew Jeanguenat** (DCDS), **Nicholas Triantafillou** (Saginaw Science and Arts), **Kevin Wu** (Cranbrook) and **Allen Yuan** (DCDS). Among them, Neil Gurram ranked number 10 in Algebra, Robin He ranked number 9 in Geometry and number 10 in Algebra Subject Tests, Alan Huang ranked number 9 in the Geometry Subject Test, Nicholas Triantafillou ranked number 11 in the Combinatorics Subject Test, and Allen Yuan ranked number 4 in the Combinatorics Subject Test. The team finished fourth overall in the Individual Total ranking and earned a final rank of twelfth.

The performance of the Michigan All-Stars team is truly commendable: a team without seniors finished with a final rank of twelfth among about 90 teams by participating in only three-fourths of the competition (the team was not able to travel to Boston due to the winter storm flight cancellation and hence hindered its chance to participate one-fourth of the competition, the on-site round).

The Mathematical Association of America

MathFest 2008

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### Ada Dong, Oakland University

# **GVSU** in May

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### **Sustaining Members Listed**

The Michigan Section dues structure includes a sustaining individual member category for those who make a \$15 contribution beyond the basic dues rate of \$15. For 2007–2008, as of February 19, the 49 members of the Section listed below are sustaining members. The Section is grateful to those several individuals who generously exceeded the suggested sustaining member contribution. If you have not already sent in your dues, please do so, using the form on page 29, and please be generous!

Aboufadel, Edward Alavi, Yousef Althoen. Steve Anderson, Bernard Austin, David **Bosier**, Edward Bragg, Mary **Carroll**, Tim Clifford, Loren **Daniel.** Arthur **Eenigenburg**, Paul Favro, Ruth Fleming, Richard Frohardt, Daniel **Gardiner**. Chris Gilbert, R. Kent Gioia, Tony Graham, Sid **Grossman**, Jerry Hammel, Arnold Hoft, Margret Jackson, William Kaplan, Wilfred Kiltonen, John Lovell, Robert

Miles, Tom Miller, Jack Moore, W. Keith **Mosier, Ronald Myers, Robert** Nyman, Melvin Petro, John Principato, Angela Rahn, Joan **Rands III. William Richert**. Norm Sherburne, Frank Sinke. Carl Slaby, Harold Smyrski, Larry Stob, Michael Tanis, Eliot Van Zwalenberg, George Venema, Gerard Verdonk, Sylvia Warren, Bette Winter. Dale Wyneken, Matthew **Xeras, Robert** 

### **Institutional Members**

As of February 19, the 27 colleges and universities listed below have begun or renewed their institutional memberships in the Michigan Section for 2007–2008. Tardy institutions and others who wish to join are encouraged to send in their dues, using the form below.

Albion College Alma College Andrews University Calvin College Central Michigan University Eastern Michigan University Grand Valley State University Henry Ford Community College Hope College Kalamazoo College Kellogg Community College Kettering University Lake Michigan College Lake Superior State University Lawrence Technological University Michigan Technological University Muskegon Community College Northern Michigan University Oakland University Siena Heights University Spring Arbor University University of Detroit-Mercy University of Michigan-Ann Arbor University of Michigan-Flint Wayne State University West Shore Community College Western Michigan University

# **Section Dues: Individual • Institutional**

The 2007–2008 individual and institutional membership dues for the Michigan Section are now being accepted. The \$15 individual dues payment (or \$30 contributing member payment) and the \$40 (small school) or \$70 (large school) institutional dues help support the activities of the Section such as its annual meeting and *Newsletter*. This coupon may be used to submit dues payments.

Enclosed is a check for:	Regular Dues Contributing Membership Small Institutional Dues Large Institutional Dues	@ \$15 @ \$30 @ \$40 @ \$70
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Institution:		
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Make checks payable to the Michigan Section–MAA, and mail them to: Mark Bollman, Secretary/Treasurer, Michigan Section–MAA, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Albion College, Albion, Michigan 49224-5013.

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# **COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENTS**

# **Michigan Section**

# **Mathematical Association of America**

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