

## Governor's report, 2013 Joint Mathematics Meetings, San Diego CA

The Board of Governors took several significant actions at its meeting on January 8, 2013 at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego, CA. First, there was substantial discussion of the budget for 2013, which had been sent to the governors electronically at the beginning of December, but which a sufficiently large group of governors felt needed further discussion that its approval was postponed until the January meeting. The MAA has been concerned for several years about the continuing deficit in the MAA budget, and the Strategic Plan the governors endorsed at MathFest 2012 included several initiatives that would cost money in the short term (thus further drawing down the reserves) but were intended to result in surpluses within a few years, and thus the opportunity to add to the reserves in the long term, putting the MAA on a firm financial footing within about five years. The concern was that there is a danger in doing this, and what would we do once we run out of those reserves? The Treasurer, Jim Daniels, explained that (1) to put the Strategic Plan in place, we would indeed draw down those reserves, and possibly even have to borrow money in the short term, but that (2) some of the initiatives, such as moving fulfillment (customer service) back to the MAA will pay off very quickly – within at most two years we will be saving money from doing this, and that (3) *if* this all doesn't work, then it will be the appropriate time to ask whether we, as an organization, should look into shrinking our mission to keep up with our membership size. Following this discussion, the Board passed the proposed 2013 budget.

The second significant action was a complete reorganization of the membership dues structure. Currently there are 373 distinct membership categories, each paying a different amount of dues. The Membership and Marketing Department has proposed to reduce this to 5 categories: Member, Member Plus, K-12 Teacher, Full-time Student, and Departmental. Within each category the dues would be the same (except "Member", where those over 70 years old and a member for at least 25 years would pay a discounted rate), which would include all appropriate electronic journals, and then members would have the option of buying print versions of the journals at a discounted rate. There was considerable discussion, including several governors expressing strong reservations at the disappearance of reduced rates for unemployed mathematicians and retired mathematicians, as well as discounts for new members. Concerning the third issue, it was noted that there are quite a few folks who join for three years, until they're no longer getting discounted dues, then quit, then rejoin a year later at the new member rate: the proposed policy would end this. There was also some discussion about the need for the "Member Plus" category and of the proposed benefits for the individual categories. The staff suggested that it could allow someone in the Member category who provides necessary documentation of unemployed or emeritus status to have a discounted dues, but it would still be the same category. The proposal was approved "in principle", with details still to be worked out in consultation with the membership and executive committees.

The third significant item was the approval of the report of the Strategic Planning Working Group on Books, a draft version of which was presented at MathFest, and the final version of

which will be posted on the MAA website. The main recommendations involve increasing income from book sales via a range of initiatives. These include hiring an acquisitions editor to allow the MAA pipeline to continue flowing and to seek out books with potential for strong sales (which has already been done: Steve Kennedy, of Carleton College, has been hired) and to seek out new markets, such as textbooks or books that have the potential to be of interest beyond the traditional MAA community.

Other business passed by the board included the re-election of Gerard Venema as Associate Secretary (the person responsible for meetings), confirmation of the Alder Award nominees, to be presented at MathFest 2013, and approval of several motions coming from the Council on Prizes and Awards. These include moving the awarding of the Meritorious Service Awards from the Joint Meetings to MathFest beginning in 2015, agreeing on guidelines for new prizes and awards (as well as updating some of the current awards so that the levels of the awards are more consistent), and establishing guidelines for the Dolciani Award.

Ivars Peterson, the Director of Publications, announced a new direction for section book sales. The MAA will produce a kit—"MAA Section Book Sale in a Box"—that offers a recommended procedure for conducting a section book sale, using web-enabled laptop computers or tablets to place orders at the MAA store and a special Section discount coupon code that could also be made available for a short period before and after the meeting on the Section website. They would also produce a custom set of slides, providing basic instructions for online purchases and promoting recent MAA books, which could be posted with the Section meeting announcement on the website and presented at the beginning of the meeting itself. Sections will continue to receive a sampling of books and other items for display.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Gold