

NORTHEASTERN SECTION



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

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Webmaster:

Rob Poodiack, Norwich University

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (VOTING MEMBERS)

CHAIR

Eric Johnson

Department of Mathematics
US Coast Guard Academy
New London, CT 06320
(804) 444-8671
Eric.C.Johnson@uscga.edu

GOVERNOR

Tommy Ratliff

Department of Mathematics/CS
Wheaton College
Norton, MA 02766
(508) 286-3968
tratliff@wheatoncollege.edu

PAST CHAIR

Karen Stanish

Department of Mathematics
Keene State College
Keene, NH 03435-2001
(603) 358-2587
kstanish@keene.edu

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Ann Kizanis

Mathematics Department
Western New England College
Springfield, MA 01119
(413) 782-1784
akizanis@wne.edu

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE REP.

Philip Mahler

Mathematics Department
Middlesex Community College
591 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730
(781)280-3861
mahlerp@middlesex.mass.edu

VICE-CHAIR

Vince Ferlini

Department of Mathematics
Keene State College
Keene, NH 03435-2001
(603) 358-2575
vferlini@keene.edu

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NON-VOTING MEMBERS)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Frank Ford

Department of Mathematics/CS
Providence College
Providence, RI 02893

(401) 865-2334

fpford@providence.edu

WEBMASTER

Rob Poodiack

Department of Mathematics
Norwich University
Northfield, VT 05663

(802) 485-2339

rpoodiac@norwich.edu

UPCOMING SECTION MEETING

May 29 and May 30, 2015

Spring Section Meeting

Keene State College, Keene, NH.

Program Chair: Vince Ferlini

Local Arrangements Chair: Karen Stanish

FUTURE SECTION MEETINGS

November 20 and 21 2015

Fall Section Meeting

Gordon College, Wenham, MA.

TBA (Spring 2016)

Pring Section Meeting

University of New England, Biddeford, ME.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

May 29, 2015

Section NExT Meeting

Keene State College, Keene, NH.

Coordinators

Contributed Papers Coordinator

Shannon Lockard

Department of Mathematics

Bridgewater State University

Bridgewater, MA 02325

(508) 531-2830

stockyard@bridw.edu

Undergraduate Student Papers

Coordinator

Raimondo Kovac

Mathematics and Computer Science

Department

Rhode Island College

Providence, RI 02908

(401) 456-9753

rkovac@ric.edu

Graduate Student Papers**Coordinator****Sarah Mabrouk**

Department of Mathematics
Framingham State University
Framingham, MA 01701-9101
(508) 626-4785
smabrouk@framingham.edu

Section NExT Coordinator**Jason Moliterno**

Mathematics Department
Sacred Heart University
Fairfield, CT 06825-1000
(203) 371-7775
moliternoj@sacredheart.edu

**Student Problem Solving
Competition****Co-Coordinator****Vince Ferlini**

Department of Mathematics
Keener, NH 03435-2001
(603) 358-2575
vferlini@keene.edu

ACTIVITY GRANTS**COORDINATOR****Karl-Dieter Crisman**

Department of mathematics/CS
Gordon College
Wenham, MA 01984
karl.crisman@gordon.edu

New Colleagues Papers Coordinator**Lynette Boos**

Department of Mathematics and
Computer Science
Providence College
Providence, RI 02918
(401) 865-2630
lboos@providence.edu

Dinner Meetings Coordinator**Lucy Kimball**

Department of Mathematical Sciences
Bentley University
Waltham, MA 02452
(781) 891-2467
lkimball@bentley.edu

**Student Problem Solving Competition
Co-Coordinator****Joe Fields**

Mathematics Department
Southern Connecticut State University
New Haven, CT 01420-2697
(860) 392-6519
fieldsj1@southernct.edu

Message from the Chair.....Eric C Johnson

Looking back, we enjoyed an excellent Spring Meeting at Johnson State College this past May 30-31. Once again, thank you to Greg Petrics from JSC and the rest of the Program Committee for putting together a stimulating slate of speakers, and to Julie Theoret and the entire Local Arrangements Committee at JSC for hosting such an enjoyable meeting. Shortly thereafter the selection committee declared Prof. Satyan Devadoss from Williams College to be the winner of the 2014 NES/MAA Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching. On a sad note, Thomas E. Moore, longtime professor of mathematics at Bridgewater State University and friend of the NES/MAA, passed away in July after a long illness. MathFest 2014 was in Portland, OR in early August, and it was nice to see many of you there in the “City of Roses.” During the Section Officers meeting at MathFest we had an interesting theoretical discussion about what to do if we couldn’t hold a section meeting. Hopefully we’ll never have to face that dilemma in the NES, but it was interesting to hear some of the suggestions.

Looking ahead, I’m excited for our Fall Meeting at Southern Connecticut State University November 21-22, 2014. Klay Kruczek, Joe Fields (both from SCSU), and the rest of the Local Arrangements Committee, and Braxton Carrigan (of SCSU) and the other members of the Program Committee, have been working hard to organize and put together an exciting program, highlighted by Dr. Chris Rogers from Auburn University, who will be giving the Christie Lecture on “Amalgamations and Hamilton Decompositions.” You can find the complete meeting schedule, register for the meeting, submit an abstract, sign up for meals, and pay for the meeting fees at the website <https://sites.google.com/site/nasmaafall2014/>. One of the more important things that will happen at this upcoming meeting is the election of new NES/MAA officers, including my eventual successor. You can view the list of candidates and read their brief biographies in the “Current News” section of our website, <http://sections.maa.org/northeastern/news.html>. Thank you both to all the candidates for volunteering to serve as a section officer, and to the members of the Nominating Committee for putting together such a strong slate.

Just seven weeks after leaving SCSU, the Joint Math Meetings will be held in San Antonio, TX from January 10-13, 2015. From there it’s on to Keene State College for our Spring Meeting May 29-30, where we’ll celebrate the MAA’s centennial...and keep the celebration going through MathFest 2015 in Washington, D.C. August 5-8. If you have any good ideas for how the NES can celebrate the MAA’s centennial or otherwise want to help plan the meeting at Keene State College, please contact our Past Chair Karen Stanish at kstanish@keene.edu. She can put you in touch with the chair of their Local Arrangements Committee or the chair of their Program Committee.

Finally, the NES/MAA is always looking for new volunteers to serve the section in

various capacities (on program and/or local arrangements committees, as section officers, etc. – we're especially in need of a new Webmaster), and institutions to host future section meetings. If you'd like to volunteer to serve the section in any capacity, please contact me at Eric.C.Johnson@uscga.edu . **We're also** seeking nominations for the 2015 NES/MAA Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching. Do you have a colleague in your department who has been an excellent teacher for years? Someone whom you strive to be like in the classroom? Is there a math professor in your college whose classes students talk warmly about for months or years afterward? Is there someone you know who has been doing great work for a long time, but is deserving of wider recognition for their success? That person would be an excellent nominee for this prestigious award. Please see the "Awards" section of our website (<http://sections.maa.org/northeastern/awards.html>) for more details and a link to the nomination form. Nominations can be either emailed or postal mailed to me by January 15, 2015.

I hope you all had a relaxing and productive summer, are enjoying your fall semester, and to see you at SCSU November 21-22, 2014

Message from the Governor..... Tommy Ratliff

The Board of Governors had a lively meeting in August at MathFest in Portland (Oregon).

- We reviewed a preliminary version of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics (CUPM) 2015 Curriculum Guide to Majors in the Mathematical Sciences. This builds upon the 2004 CUPM Curriculum Guide that addressed both the majors and non-majors programs. The 2015 Guide is intended to be a dynamic, living document on the web that can be updated periodically. The CUPM has done a tremendous amount of work on the 2015 Guide, and the Board will vote on the final version at our meeting in San Antonio in January.

- The Taskforce on Governance and Communication is considering ways that the Board of Governors can more effectively serve the MAA. This is still in the preliminary stages, but one proposal is to have a much smaller "Board" of seven to eleven members who would bear responsibility for fiduciary decisions of the MAA. This would free the Board of Governors to focus more on strategic thinking and setting priorities for the MAA. The Board will continue these discussions at future meetings.

- Michael Pearson, Executive Director of the MAA, elaborated on the decision to move away from the Combined Membership List. Because of the way the system is

designed, it was very labor-intensive, and therefore expensive, for the MAA to keep our information in the CML up to date. The system built by the MAA will include much more information than the CML, such as MAA committee assignments, areas of interest, etc.

- Karen Saxe, Second Vice President of the MAA, had a very interesting suggestion based on her experience as an AMS/AAAS Science and Technology Policy Congressional Fellow for 2013-2014, serving as Education Policy Fellow for Senator Al Franken: We should invite a local member of Congress to our Section Meetings. We may want to add this to our Guidelines for Local Arrangements Committees.

- The Membership Committee of the MAA is reworking the Departmental Membership to focus more on student involvement. The main benefit of the current Departmental Membership is that it includes print versions of the MAA journals and provides a small number of student memberships. The revised Departmental Membership will not include the print versions of journals, but will include a much larger number of student memberships that will give students electronic access to all of the MAA journals. The details are still being worked out, but the intent is that the Board of Governors will vote on the revised version at the January meeting in San Antonio.

- And lastly, I have learned during my time on the Board that you can depend upon a group of Governors to read a Section's revised bylaws very closely. When it is our turn, we will want to be certain to go through our bylaws very carefully before submitted them because any ambiguity or inconsistency will come back to us for changes.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Southern Connecticut in November!

Message from the Secretary-TreasurerAnn Kizanis

In the spring newsletter, I reported a balance of \$15,895.65. Since that time, the expenses from the successful spring meeting at Johnson State College were \$2,192.50. The revenue from meeting registrations was \$2,417.69. The expenses for the printing and postage of the spring newsletter totaled \$535.05. We reimbursed \$654.18 for expenses from MathFest 2013. Moreover, we received \$48.29 from the spring MAA Book sale and earned \$2.79 in interest from money placed into a Money Market account. We also received our subvention check in the amount of

\$2,515.00 from the national office this fall. Our present balance is \$17,497.69.

The expenses from our spring 2014 meeting were \$8,475.60 less than the total fall 2013 meeting expenses, and the revenue from spring meeting registrations was \$3,624.69 less than the revenue from fall meeting registrations. The expenses for the postage and printing of our newsletter last spring decreased from last fall. We spent \$1,142.40 for the printing and postage of the fall 2013 newsletter and \$535.05 for the printing and postage of the spring 2014 newsletter.

In the spring, I wrote and submitted the yearly Financial Report of the Northeastern Section of the MAA. I also wrote our Section's Annual Report and our Spring Meeting Report at the beginning of the summer.

That is my update for now! We are all looking forward to the Fall MAA meeting at Southern Connecticut State University on November 21 – 22, where I will update you further on our finances. I wish you all a very enjoyable fall semester!

Two-year College Representative's Report Phil Mahler

As I have previously noted community colleges in Massachusetts and Connecticut are under pressure to drastically limit the number of remedial courses that a student must take. These institutions, in all of New England, are “open-door”—the only requirement for admittance is a high school diploma, and less under certain circumstances. This means that students coming in may be very weak in mathematics. (Of course this is part of the mission of community colleges, which is fine.) The Boards of Higher Ed in these states have told these colleges that they can not simply put a student who “tests” weak into a long sequence of remedial courses that are not at the college level. The success rate in these sequences is tragically low.

A newly proposed policy in Massachusetts is that if a student has a 2.7 GPA from high school (within the last 3 years) they must be placed into a college level mathematics course. For non-STEM students this might be a liberal arts survey course, numeracy, math modeling, or in some cases statistics. This policy is being tried in non-STEM areas in some of the colleges, and anecdotal evidence is that it is a reasonable policy. After all, it is a sure bet that these students have seen all of the arithmetic and algebra needed for these courses, even if it was not mastered. The mantra is to “look where a student is going, not where they have been.” There is room for disagreement with this—I happen to agree with it.

STEM students might be a harder issue in this regard, but I personally believe that this can be handled in the fashion recommended, to wit, provide extra support for these students in the entry STEM math, typically pre-calculus.

This all will be part of placement based on “metamajors”, which basically means STEM or not, and within non-STEM at least a business and social science split.

NEMATYC recently held a fall dinner/talk meeting at Holy Cross in Worcester, and heard Catherine Roberts of that institution talk about her work modeling rafting in the Grand Canyon—a real treat, which NE-Section members had at the Fall 2013 meeting at Wheaton College (thank you Rob Poodiack for putting those past newsletters and meetings online, a great reference for the section)

For past and future events of the two two-year college organizations in this region check out their websites, matyconn.matyc.org and www.nematyc.org .

From the Newsletter Editor.....Frank Ford

We had a great Spring meeting at Johnson State College in Vermont. The talks included juggling, Alan Turing and Paul Erdos among other topics. I stayed at a Bed and Breakfast for the first time and enjoyed it. The meeting at Southern Connecticut went well. I had to miss it since I had a nasty viral infection but Providence College sent a two-person team to the problem-solving contest and finished second. I want to thank Lynette Boos for chauffeuring the team on short notice when I decided I had to stay at home.

The section was saddened to hear of the death of Tom Moore of Bridgewater State University. He last served on a committee for the Section when he chaired the Fall 2012 Section Meeting at Bridgewater State. Tom was a gentleman and will be missed by all of us.

As I go to press, I have saddened to hear of the death of June Poodiack, Rob Poodiack’s wife, after a long illness. Rob was devoted to her and I hope you all remember him in your prayers.

Our next meeting is at Keene State College and our host is our new Vice-Chair, Vince Ferlini. Congratulations to Vince on his election and to Joe Fields who was the other worthy candidate for the position. I suspect Joe will be a future winner. Also, congratulations to Ann Kizanis and Phil Mahler for their re-elections. I guess it is against the rules to elect them for life but they are worthy of it.

Tribute to Tom Moore

(I am reprinting this tribute to Tom Moore from the Sullivan Funeral Home in Hanover, MA, and this profile of him from a news release of Bridgewater State at the time of his retirement.)

On June 28, 2014, surrounded by his adoring family, Thomas E. Moore bravely went to God at the age of 70. Son of the late Thomas E. Sr. and Rita (Leahy), he was born in Somerville on May 2, 1944 and grew up in Kingston. He graduated from Sacred Heart High School and Stonehill College, and he earned a Master's degree in Mathematics from the University of Notre Dame.

He valued creativity, curiosity, and logic, expressing these interests through his career as a professor of Mathematics at Bridgewater State University for over 44 years. In his professional career, he was an active member of the MAA and Pi Mu Epsilon. Recipient of the Dr. V. James DiNardo Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1991 and the MAA Award (Northeast Section) for Distinguished College or University Teaching in 1993. A 2014 inductee to the ATMIM Mathematics Educators Hall of Fame. He was a leader of the music ministry at St. Joseph the Worker parish through his singing and playing the guitar. His other interests included playing tennis, enjoying science fiction and mysteries, multicultural appreciation, and spending time with his grandchildren.

Thomas is survived by his wife of 43 blessed years, Kathleen (Rafferty); his loving children, Jennifer A. of Northampton, Bridget & Christopher McNamara and their children, Maeve and Michael of Seekonk, Eileen & Scott Kudlacik and their daughter, Nola of Scituate, and Kathleen D. of Williamsburg, VA. Brother to Rita L. Clasby of Plympton and Terance B. of Middleboro and uncle to many nieces and nephews.

(issued on October 3, 2012)

In December, after more than 44 years on the faculty of Bridgewater State University, Professor Thomas Moore of the Department of Mathematics will retire. But the many scholarly contributions he's made to the field of mathematics -- and the impact he's had on thousands of former students and countless colleagues -- will endure.

“Originally, I hadn’t planned on being a mathematician,” said Dr. Moore. “In fact, when I entered college, my plan was to become a writer and so I majored in English.”

At the time, he was an undergraduate at Stonehill College, and, in his freshman year, met Robert Sutherland, later his long-time colleague in the BSU math department. “Frankly, I was bored with freshman English and was wondering what I should do about it. Bob told me about a dynamic math professor named Joseph Chiccarelli. As soon as I took a class with Joe, I knew mathematics was the field I wanted to study,” he said.

Not long after, Professor Chiccarelli departed Stonehill for what was then Bridgewater State College, where he would become chairman of the math department and later dean of administration. “Joe was one of the most gifted teachers I’ve ever met,” said Professor Moore, “and I came away from my experience with him wanting to inspire students in the way he did. Meeting him was a turning point in my life.”

Down the road, it would be Professor Chiccarelli who would persuade the young Thomas Moore to come to Bridgewater, but before that happened came a journey west to the fabled University of Notre Dame for graduate school, which he called “a total immersion in mathematics.”

From Notre Dame he learned lessons he incorporated into his Bridgewater classroom when he began teaching in the fall of 1968. There were less than 3,000 students at Bridgewater then and faculty numbered approximately 150, with a dozen or so in the math department.

Over the years at BSU, Professor Moore’s commitment to everyday classroom teaching has been one of the pillars of his career. In fact, in 1991, he received Bridgewater’s highest honor for teaching excellence, the Dr. V. James DiNardo Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Achieving such distinction at the midpoint of his academic career caused him to reflect on his own progress as an instructor. “When I first came to Bridgewater, I was fresh out of graduate school and didn’t know what to expect,” he said. “Consequently, when I think back to those earliest years, I realize now that I pushed a bit too hard, trying to cover every single concept in the syllabus in as much depth and breadth as possible. As I gained more experience, and learned from my colleagues in the department, I came to understand how to teach more effectively and get better results. That’s one of the special pleasures of being a faculty member at this level -- you too are constantly learning.”

Of special interest to Professor Moore is working with students whom he calls the “less mathematically inclined,” especially with one class, MA 105, which he’s taught over the years. “Having done this course so often, I know where their weaknesses are and therefore can help address those issues directly,” he said. “I’m sensitive to that kind of student and I’m glad I’ve been able to build a rapport with those who approach mathematics with any trepidation.”

As an expert in the mathematics of games and puzzles, he incorporates those elements into MA 105, so that the average student can see the connections between numbers and what he refers to as “recreational mathematics.”

In addition to being a dedicated teacher, he has also been an active scholar. To date, he has published more than 20 scholarly articles and more than 50 original problems in a variety of academic journals. All this occurred while Professor Moore and his wife, Kathleen, were raising four daughters -- Jennifer, Bridget, Eileen and Kathleen.

Two daughters followed their dad into mathematics. Eileen earned a bachelor’s degree in math Holy Cross and later a master’s degree in the field at Boston College. She’s now director of the MyMathLab program

at Pearson, a major national publishing house. Kathleen (or Katie) was a computer science major at Holy Cross, and is now a PhD candidate at The College of William and Mary.

Professor Moore also has three grandchildren, Maeve and Michael McNamara, and Nola Kudlacik.

Will December be the close of Professor Moore's teaching career?

Unlikely. "I may come back to teach a course in number theory, which is an area of particular interest to me," he said. "I'm not severing my ties with Bridgewater."

Other than that, Professor Moore said, "I look forward to spending more time with my grandchildren and traveling the world with my wife." (Story and photo by David Wilson, '71, University Advancement)



Northeastern Section Fall MAA Meeting , Project NExT
MAA Northeastern Section Newsletter “Lite”
Fall 2014

Full Newsletter accessible from www.maa.org/northeastern
Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT
59TH FALL MEETING OF NES/MAA

Meeting web site: <http://sections.maa.org/northeastern/meetings.html>

Friday, November 21, 2014 Northeastern Section NExT Program

11:30 Registration in Engleman Hall, 1st floor rotunda

12:00 – 1:00 Section NExT lunch

1:00 – 2:00 Section NExT talk: Chris Rodger

NES/MAA 58th Meeting

11:30 – 6:30 Registration in Engleman Hall, 1st floor rotunda

2:00 – 4:00 Student Problem Solving Competition

1:30 – 3:00 Executive Committee Meeting

2:00 – 3:30 GeoGebra Workshop

3:30 – 4:00 Break

4:10 – 5:00 Invited Address: Playing with Surfaces: Spheres, Monkeypants,
and Zippergons

Kelly Delp, Ithaca College

5:15 – 6:15 Undergraduate Student Presentations

6:30 – 7:45 Banquet

8:00 – 9:00 Christie Lecture: Amalgamations and Hamilton Decompositions
Chris Rodger, Auburn University

Saturday, November 22, 2014

8:00 – 11:00 Registration in Engleman Hall, 1st floor rotunda

9:00 – 9:50 Teaching Award Winner Lecture: The Shape of Associativity
Satyan Devadoss, Williams College

10:00 – 10:30 Business Meeting

10:30 – 11:00 Break

11:00 – 12:00 New Colleague Talks/Contributed Papers

1:00 – 1:50 Invited Address: Using fractals to classify and model complex
dynamics

Michael Frame, Yale University

1:50 – 2:10 Break

2:10 – 3:00 Invited Address: Constance Leidy, Wesleyan University

Program Committee:

Braxton Carrigan (chair), Southern Connecticut State University

John Burke, Rhode Island College

Aaron Clark, Southern Connecticut State University

Louis Deaett, Quinnipiac University

Jason Moliterno, Sacred Heart University

Val Pinciu, Southern Connecticut State University

Local Arrangements Committee:

Klay Kruczek (co-chair), Southern Connecticut State University

Joe Fields (co-chair), Southern Connecticut State University

Terri Bennett, Southern Connecticut State University

Leon Brin, Southern Connecticut State University

Ross Gingrich, Southern Connecticut State University

Frank Ford
Newsletter Editor
Dept of Math/CS
Providence College
Providence, RI 02918