



November 2012



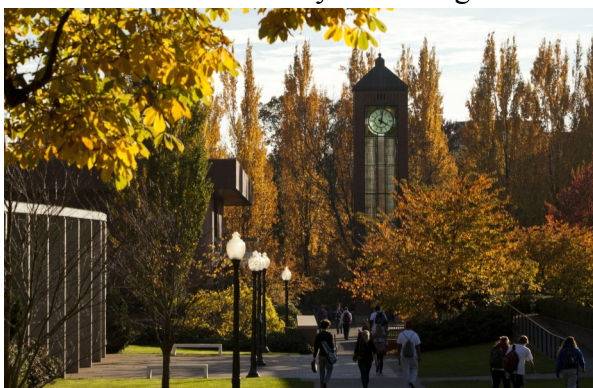
Matters Mathematical
The Newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Section of the Mathematical Association of America

SALEM MEETING

April 12-13, 2013

**April 2011 PNW MAA Meeting at
University of Portland**

The annual PNW MAA meeting will be held on April 12th and 13th, 2013. Willamette University, located in downtown Salem, excited to have the meeting return to Salem. The invited speakers are David Kung of St. Mary's College of Maryland and Elizabeth McMahon of Lafayette College.



Photos courtesy of Willamette University

His upcoming Great Courses lectures on Mathematics and Music will be released in January of 2013.

Dave Kung fell in love with both mathematics and music at a very early age. More successful with one than the other, he completed three degrees from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, none in music, before joining the faculty at St. Mary's College of Maryland. A recently promoted Professor of Mathematics, he still enjoys playing violin with students and in the local community orchestra. He has authored a variety of articles on topics in harmonic analysis and mathematics education, and is the recipient of numerous awards including the 2006 Teaching Award from the MD/VA/DC section of the MAA. He is co-writing a book about college math teaching entitled, "What Could They Possibly Be Thinking? Understanding Your College Math Students."

For a brief bio of Elizabeth McMahon, please visit her website: <http://sites.lafayette.edu/mcmahone/>

Expect to see announcements for session proposals for the contributed paper sessions in your inbox soon. If you already have an idea for a session you'd like to organize, please contact the contributed program chair, Chuck Dunn (cdunn@linfield.edu).

Information pertaining to the meeting including minicourses, the invited program, *online* registration, paper submission, travel and hotel accommodations will soon be available on the official meeting website:

http://www.willamette.edu/cia/math/PNWMAA_2012/index.html

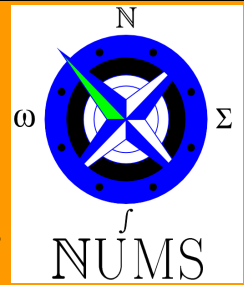
Contents

PNW MAA Meeting	1
NUMS Conference	2
Editor's Greetings	2
Upcoming Events and Conferences	2
2012 DTA Winner	3
Section News	5-6



NUMS Conference April 6, 2013

Call for Undergraduate Presentations



We invite you and your students to the fifth annual Northwest Undergraduate Mathematics Symposium (NUMS) to be held on **Saturday, April 6, 2013 at Pacific Lutheran University**.

NUMS is a one-day regional mathematics conference whose objective is to provide a venue for undergraduate and high school students to present their mathematical research. While the main program will consist of talks by undergraduate students, NUMS will also feature a keynote address by Professor Inga Johnson from Willamette University, and a panel discussion featuring participants who have put their mathematics degrees to use in a variety of ways. Registration is free for all participants, as is lunch.

When planning for the spring semester, we encourage you to consider NUMS as a forum for your students and advisees to present results from their coursework, capstone projects, senior theses, modeling competitions, and undergraduate research projects. NUMS is open to undergraduates at all levels and experience, so please encourage all students, including freshmen and sophomores, to attend and give talks at NUMS. The research that students present need not be original!

Registration for NUMS is already open and continues through March 1. To find out more information and to register for NUMS, please visit <http://www.plu.edu/~edgartj/nums/nums.html>.

We look forward to seeing you and your students in April. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Tom Edgar (edgartj@plu.edu), Ashlyn Munson (munsonah@plu.edu), Ksenija Simic-Muller (simicmka@plu.edu), Department of Mathematics, Pacific Lutheran University

Editor's Greetings

We at Willamette are very excited to be hosting the 2013 PNWMAA meeting!

And welcome to all of the new faculty in our region. I hope to see you at Willamette in the spring.

Colin Starr, Editor

cstarr@willamette.edu

Colin Starr, cstarr@willamette.edu

Upcoming Events and Conferences

Upcoming Meetings:

2013 PNW MAA at Willamette University (Salem)
2013 NUMS at Pacific Lutheran University (p. 2)

<http://sections.maa.org/pnw/events/> (section)

http://www.maa.org/subpage_4.html (national)

Congratulations to Tom Thompson - winner of the Pacific Northwest MAA 2012 Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics.



Tom Thompson

It is a proud moment in the life of any professional when colleagues pause to recognize your work and honor you with a prestigious award. Tom Thompson, longtime professor of mathematics at Walla Walla University, recently received the Mathematical Association of America's Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics in the Pacific Northwest.

Such recognition is quite significant; the MAA has approximately 20,000 members nationwide, including about 800 in the Northwest, spread throughout five U.S. states and five Canadian provinces. In 2012, the Pacific Northwest sectional meeting was held at the University of Portland in Oregon, where Professor Thompson was presented with a certificate from the MAA.

"I have to say that I really am speechless," Thompson said. "It tells me that my administration, colleagues, and students believe that I am making an important contribution. I really don't know what to say, except 'thank you.' I know that I will need to work harder to make sure that their trust was not misplaced."

Thompson, who was the WWU Distinguished Faculty Lecturer in 2009, was nominated by Professor Ken Wiggins, chair of the mathematics department. Along with Wiggins's initial nomination and supporting documentation, further letters of recommendation were sent in by a colleague, a university administrator, and recent graduate. Interestingly, all of these individuals were also former students of Thompson.

The award from the MAA "helps to put us on the map," Thompson said. "Today, Christian education is not always an easy sell, especially considering the costs. For someone at WWU to be chosen is significant. This is a high honor for the university."

The mathematics enthusiast and amateur astronomer also explained how the joy of being a teacher is not about receiving impressive awards, but rather in working with students. "I really enjoy trying to hook students on a subject that many of them are required to take for another discipline," he began. "When you can toss out extra problems, some easy, and some more challenging, and get students of a wide variety of abilities to latch onto them, it really doesn't get better than that!"

Thompson graduated from WWU and first began teaching in 1971, and later he received his doctorate from the University of California, Davis. Since then, he has made presentations around the world, including in Brazil and Poland. The book he published in 1984, "From Error Correcting Codes Through Sphere Packing to Simple Groups," is now in its fifth printing with MAA, and his fundraising efforts were instrumental in acquiring the observatory on top of Kretschmar Hall.

Amazingly, Thompson is now in his 41st year behind the lectern, but he relishes each day like it is his first on the job. "I tell my students that I am so lucky," he said. "Walla Walla is my alma mater and, quite frankly, I never expected to be back here. I get to do that which seems to suit me exactly. I wake up in the morning and look forward with relish to what I am privileged to do that day—teach mathematics, maybe even change attitudes."

SECTION NEWS

Alaska

Dr. Stefanos Folias has been hired as a tenure track Assistant Professor of Mathematics, effective August 2012 at **University of Alaska Anchorage**. He obtained his Ph.D. at the University of Utah, and before coming to UAA, was a post doctoral associate in the Complex Biological Systems Group in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh. His research interests lie in the area of mathematical neuroscience, spatio-temporal nonlinear dynamics, and nonlocal integrodifferential equations.

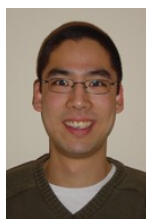
The Computer Science program moved to the School of Engineering, effective July 1, 2012. The Mathematical Sciences Department is grateful for their faculty and student contributions to the Mathematical Sciences Department.

Dr. Hilary Davies (Professor of Mathematics) will be retiring, effective June 30, 2013. Over her career, she taught at San Diego State University, the University of Calgary, and the University of Alaska Anchorage.

UAA is now a Ph.D. granting institution. In early May, 2012, UAA received approval from its accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, when it approved the expansion of UAA's offerings to include doctoral degrees. As a doctoral granting institution, UAA will be able to better serve the community of Anchorage and the state of Alaska in the future.

British Columbia

Quest University is delighted to welcome **Richard Hoshino** to our faculty. Richard completed his PhD at Dalhousie University in 2008 (Independence Polynomials of Circulant Graphs). Since then, Richard was manager of the mathematics and data exploration section of the Canadian Border Services Agency, and most recently was a post-doctoral fellow at the National Institute of Informatics (Tokyo). In addition to his research and teaching, Richard has been actively involved in mathematics outreach: camps, math circles, Putnam coaching, and Mathematical Olympiad training, to name a few; he is also writing a novel entitled *The Math Olympian*. Richard will start teaching at Quest in February 2013.



Richard Hoshino

Oregon

Faculty at University of Portland have several accomplishments to report:

Hannah Callender received a Butine Faculty Development Grant to attend the SIAM annual meeting in Minneapolis and an NSF Travel Grant to attend the Workshop on Mathematical Methods in Systems Biology and Population Dynamics in Cape Town, South Africa in January 2012.



Hannah Callender

Fr. Charlie McCoy went to the Computability in Europe conference at the University of Cambridge in June. CiE is an annual conference, but this was a special celebration in honor of the centenary of Alan Turing's birth.



Fr. Charlie McCoy

Montana



Samuel Gross

The math department at **Rocky Mountain College** hired **Dr. Samuel S. Gross** as

assistant professor of mathematics (tenure track) in August 2012. Dr. Gross received his Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina in 2012 after earning his BS from Kent State University in 2007. He was a member of the US Marine Corps from 1999-2003. His hobbies include ice hockey, reading, and navigation.



Hans Nordstrom

Hans Nordstrom published "Simple modules over generalized Weyl algebras and their associated primes," in *Communications in Algebra*.

Valerie Peterson was invited to attend the 3-week summer program in geometric group theory at the Park City Mathematics Institute held July 1-21 in Park City, Utah; she received funding from the IAS and PCMI to



Valerie Peterson

(Continued from page 4)

attend the entire session. While in Park City, she collaborated with others in the Undergraduate Faculty Program and workshopped problems in geometric group theory that might be suitable for student research, a few of which she hopes to incorporate into next summer's WiVaM REU-RET.

In Spring 2012, Valerie was awarded an Arthur Butine Faculty Development Grant for research projects related to state complexes and special cube complexes, and in determining the rank of a particular class of recurrence matrices.

Stephanie Salomone: Stephanie Salomone was awarded a 5-year, \$1.2 Million grant from the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, part of the DUE division of the NSF. The grant will provide scholarships and paid internship opportunities for undergraduate STEM majors who are interested in becoming K-12 teachers and scholarships for career-changing STEM professionals who are interested in earning an MAT degree and teaching K-12 science, mathematics, or engineering. The grant is a comprehensive partnership between the College of Arts and Sciences, the Shiley School of Engineering, the School of Education, the Moreau Center for Service and Leadership, and Saturday Academy.



Stephanie Salomone

Washington

Eastern Washington University regrets to report the shut down of its masters program in mathematics.

Green River Community College welcomes **Brenda Praggastis** as its newest tenure-track faculty member in mathematics.

Brenda earned her BA and MA from SUNY at Stony Brook and her PhD from the University of Washington and holds teaching certifications in New York and Washington states. She will teach our full curriculum from developmental courses through linear algebra and differential equations as well as our business track and statistics courses.

Seattle University hired three new faculty this year: **Eric Bahuaud**, **Steven Klee**, and **Katie Oliveras**.



Katie Oliveras



Eric Bahuaud joins Seattle University after postdoctoral positions at Stanford University and Universit'e Montpellier II. Eric received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 2007 under the supervision of John M. Lee. His research interests are in differential geometry and partial differential equations, especially related to geometric flows.

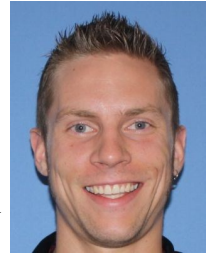
Steven Klee received his Ph.D. from the **University of Washington** in



Steven Klee

2010 under the supervision of Isabella Novik. He spent 2010-12 as a VIGRE Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California, Davis and is very excited to be back in the Pacific Northwest starting a new job at Seattle University. His research interests are combinatorial in nature, with an emphasis on geometric and topological combinatorics.

The Math Department at **Seattle Pacific University** is pleased to announce the appointment of **John Hossler** as our



newest Assistant Professor. John is a native of Oregon who did his undergraduate work at George Fox University. He comes to us having just completed his Ph.D. in statistics at the **University of Montana**.



Mary Ehlers

In addition, **Mary Ehlers** has retired from Seattle University.

