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Undergraduate Mathematics in China

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In June, at the invitation of the Chinese Mathematical Society and under the auspices of People-to-People International, a delegation of 56 U.S. and 2 Canadian mathematicians and 13 spouses visited the People's Republic of China. The delegation, led by former CUPM (Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics) Chairman Don Bushaw of Washington State University, represented all levels of undergraduate mathematics education and all regions of the U.S.

The delegation visited Beijing (Peking), Shanghai, and Guangzhou (Canton), each with several million residents, and Wuxi, Suzhou, and Hangzhou, smaller cities of about one million each. We visited universities, research institutes, technical schools, and middle schools, as well as the requisite tourist attractions. In many of the professional sessions, members of the delegation presented papers on various aspects of North American undergraduate mathematics education, and engaged in extensive discussions with Chinese mathematics teachers. Delegates also talked with representatives of the Ministry of Education. These exchanges revealed a fragmentary picture of mathematics education in China, but suggest a pattern of intensity and specialization that is unlike anything in U.S. education.

Leader Don Bushaw signs in for the Delegation at Fudan University in Shanghai as University Vice President Zhou Jin Qui and an interpreter look on.

China is a society in the midst of great change. It is less than 12 years since Richard Nixon re-opened U.S. relations with China—an act of political courage which the Chinese people still remember with frequent public appreciation—and only seven years since the deaths of Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong, the end of the disastrous Cultural Revolution, and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four". In recent years, Deng Xiaoping and Hua Guofeng have moved forcefully to modernize China on four fronts: agriculture, industry, defense, and—most important for the mathematics education delegation—science and technology. Although China's population and poverty still exert an enormous drag on these "four modernizations", everyone we met—from hotel clerks to university professors—appeared to be encouraged about the direction (if not the speed) of change.

Education in China, including mathematics education, is designed to produce leaders for the four modernizations as efficiently and as rapidly as possible. Beginning with entrance requirements (influential parents or evidence of precocity)

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Louisville to Host MAA Winter Meeting

The Sixty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Mathematical Association of America will be held in the Commonwealth Convention Center and the Hyatt Regency Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky, from Wednesday, January 25, through Sunday, January 29, 1984. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the meetings of the American Mathematical Society and the Association for Women in Mathematics.

Highlights of the meeting may be found on page 5 of this issue. The preliminary meeting program, information about meeting arrangements, and preregistration and housing forms will be mailed to all MAA members in October.