

# CrossSections



Edited by: David Ballew, February 1990

## THE CHANGING COMPLEXION OF THE MAA MEMBERSHIP IMPACT ON THE SECTIONS

The total MAA membership is over 30,000 and this has caused a large change in the categories of membership which provides a great deal of opportunity to the various sections. As the charts on the next two pages show, the percentage of College and University Faculty has decreased from 54.1% in 1984 to 44.5% today (the raw number has increased however). The largest growth has been in the Student and the High School Teacher categories. We believe that the Student numbers are up because of the new Student Chapters, and the High School Teacher Category may be up because of advanced placement teachers. If the latter is true, they are looking for collegiate mathematics and are interested in calculus, articulation problems, use of calculators, etc. In any event, these new members are there and the sections should consider them when planning for the Annual Meetings.

A large number of our new members might be invisible if we don't make an effort to involve them. Most of the sections have successful programs for the students and others are working to involve the Student Chapters. Several sections have begun to involve high school teachers in their programming and committee structure. We encourage all sections to consider the problems and opportunities at their next meeting and to make all of our new members welcome and an integral part of the section.

## 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAA

All sections are asked to encourage, through their newsletters and Annual Meetings, their membership to attend the 75th Anniversary of the MAA in Columbus in August. An excellent program is planned with events catering to all interests. FOCUS and the Notices will be detailing the program, and if it is true that "programming makes the meeting", then this one will be very successful.

The sections are going to be involved in a very unique way. During the Opening Ceremonies there will be a Parade of Sections with each section having a representative carrying a 3' by 5' banner giving the name of the section and the date of its founding; the sections get to keep the banners for use at section meetings. By the way, these

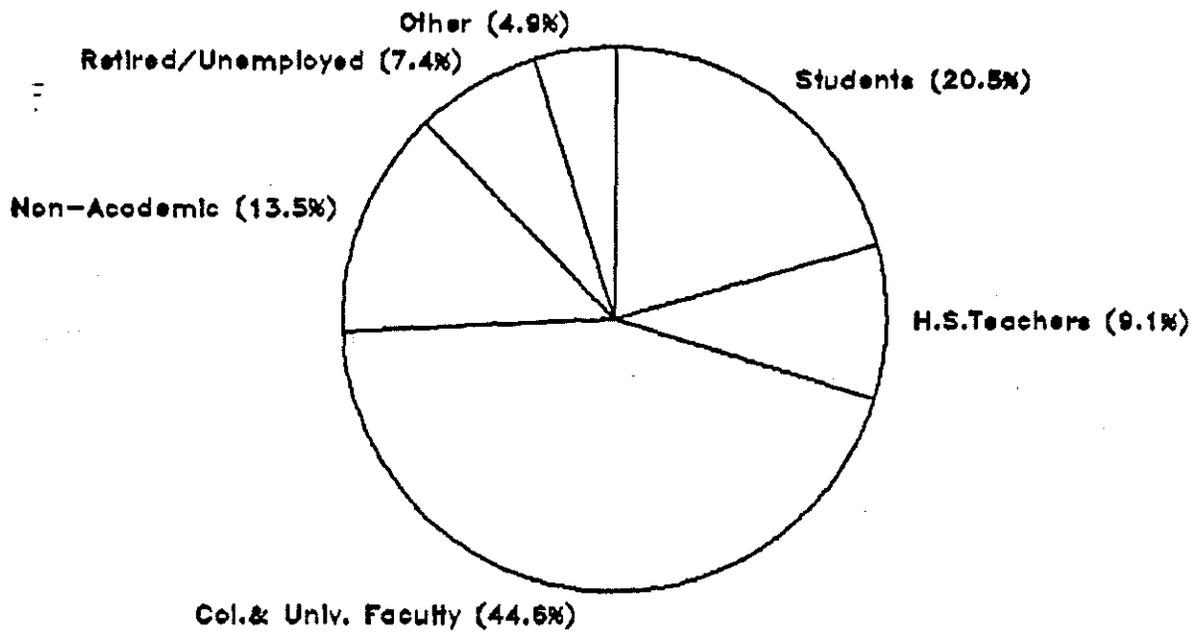
banners will be on a 10' pole and will be heavy and awkward so when you choose the representative from your section to carry it, the oldest and most distinguished member might not be a good choice if he or she cannot handle the weight.

Below is a listing of the Dates of Founding of the Sections; we realize that there is considerable controversy about which section was FIRST, so this list focuses only on the years.

Section	Year of Founding
Ohio	1915
Missouri	1915
Kansas	1915
Iowa	1916
Maryland/DC/Virginia	1916
Indiana	1916
North Central (formerly Minnesota)	1916
Kentucky	1917
Rocky Mountain	1917
Illinois	1917
Texas	1920
Southeastern	1922
Michigan	1923
Nebraska	1924
Louisiana-Mississippi	1924
Southern California	1925
Eastern Pennsylvania & Delaware (formerly Philadelphia)	1926
Wisconsin	1932
Allegheny Mountain	1933
Oklahoma-Arkansas	1933
Southwestern	1936
Northern California	1939
Seaway (formerly Upper New York State)	1940
Metropolitan New York	1941
Pacific Northwest	1945
Northeastern	1955
New Jersey	1956
Florida	1967
Intermountain	1975

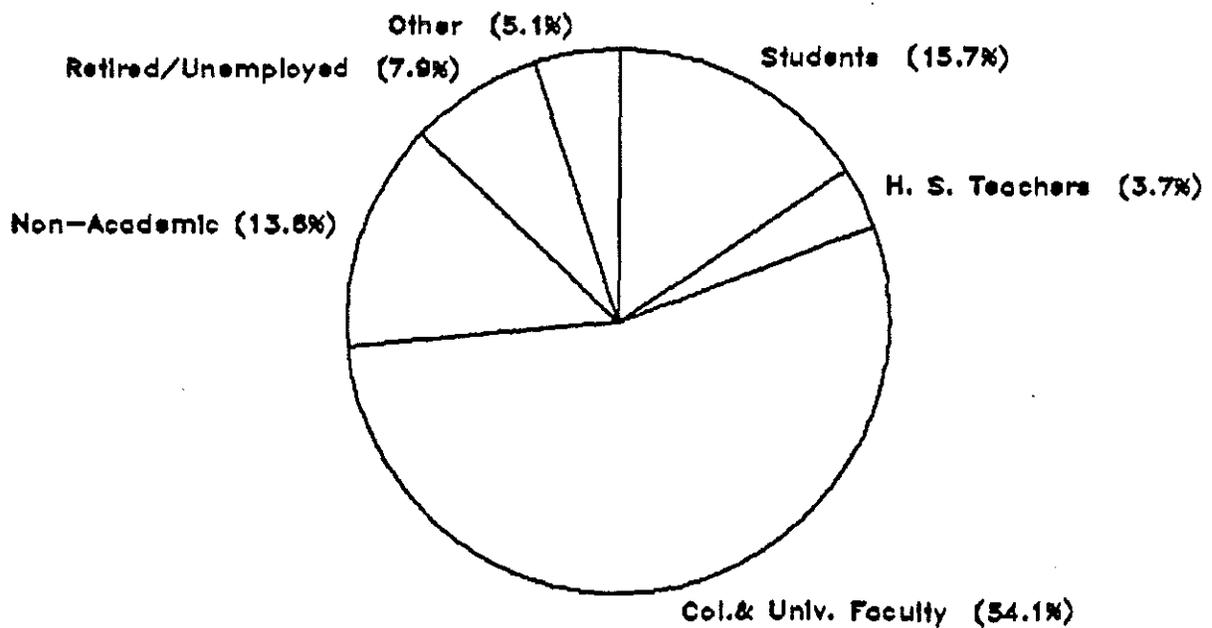
# M.A.A. MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

December 31, 1989



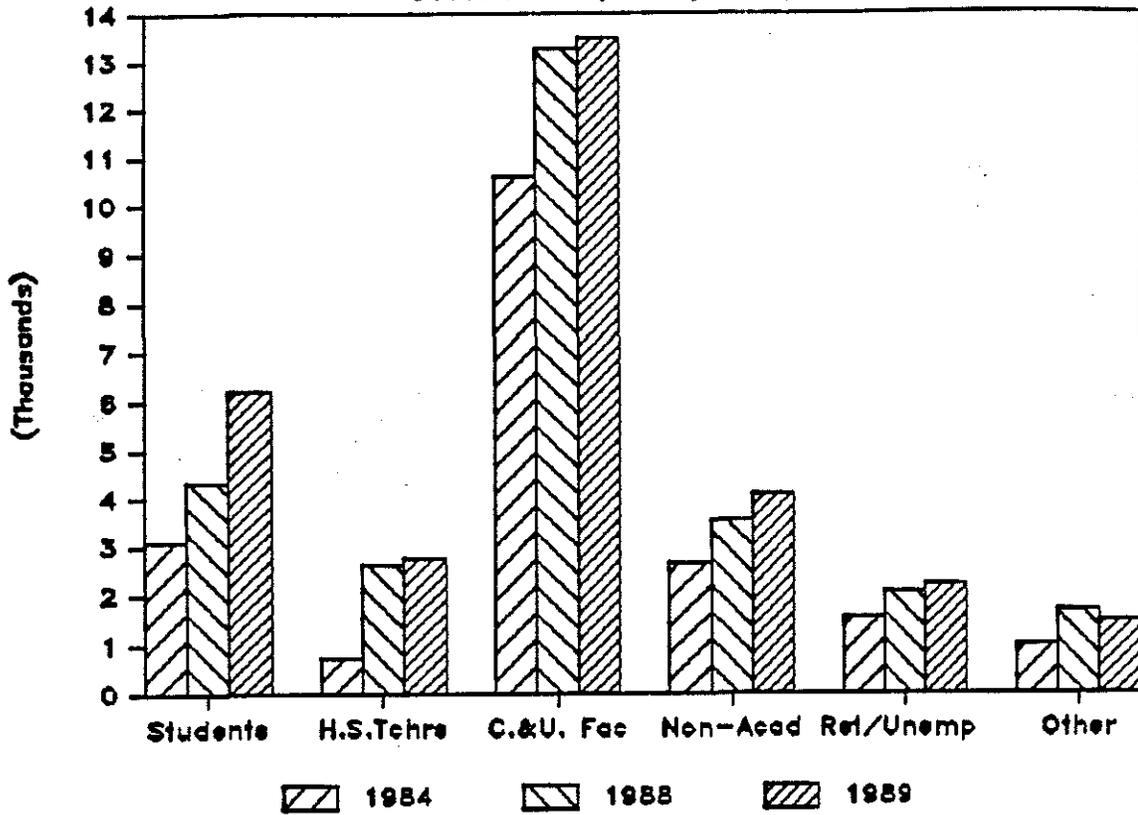
# M.A.A. MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS

December 31, 1984



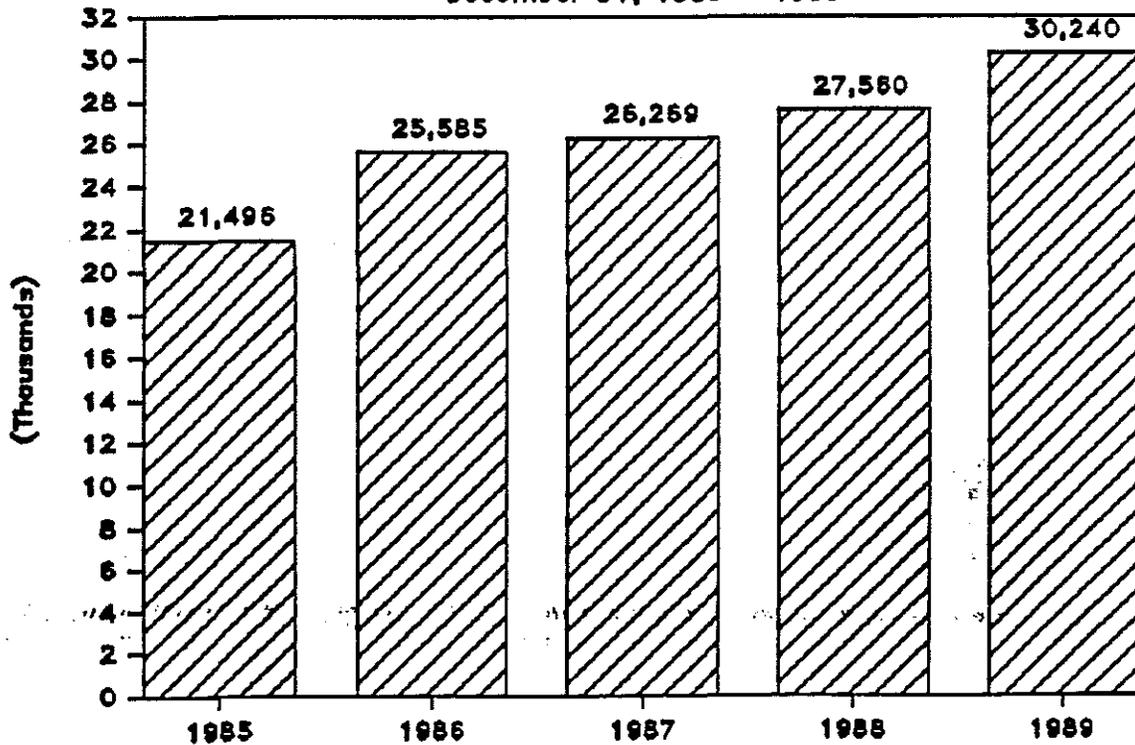
# MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

December 31, 1984, 1988, 1989



# MAA MEMBERSHIP

December 31, 1985 - 1989



## CAN THE NATIONAL OFFICE COLLECT SECTION DUES?

We often get the question of "Can the National Office collect Section Dues and return them to the Sections?" The following is a response to this question by Dr. Alfred Willcox, Past Executive Director of the MAA:

"This suggestion has come up a number of times over the past several decades. It has not been implemented for several reasons.

"1. It would be administratively complicated to collect dues for some, but not all, sections at differing rates. The difficulties could be overcome, if there weren't other objections.

"2. To collect, say \$5 for the XYZ Section, explicitly on the dues bill would be exceedingly unpopular with members who do not choose to be active in the Section. Membership in the section per se is involuntary.

"3. A section that collects "dues" at meetings or charges meeting registration fees substantially higher than those needed to cover the meeting costs, is assessing those who do choose to be active in the section.

"4. MAA already collects dues (admittedly quite modest) for sections and remits the dues income to the sections annually in March. The amount of this subvention (and the dues equivalent) is reviewed every several years and is often increased. A further increase is available for needy sections from the Fund for Aid to Sections. Your section can apply -- and the increase may be approved in perpetuity, if the need warrants -- for a supplement to the annual subvention. The only requirement is substantial and continuing need."

This item came up at the Winter Section Officers Meeting in Louisville, and it was noted that the cost of publishing newsletters was becoming very expensive (postage and printing). Indeed the US Postage Service is discussing a postage increase. I, as Chairman of the Committee on Sections, have asked the Budget and Finance Committee to raise the subvention and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

## STUDENT CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

As of 1-1-90 there are 1,923 students active in MAA Chapters, and as of 2-6-90 there are 162 active chapters!

The Student Chapter Committee has received a grant from Exxon and will sponsor four pilot programs for students at section meetings this Spring. The sections receiving the initial grants will be Oklahoma/Arkansas,

Ohio, Joint Maryland, DC, Virginia, and Allegheny Mountain, and Northeastern. These projects will include a variety of activities such as speakers, minicourses, and student paper competitions.

These programs or symposia which will be held in conjunction with a regular section meeting will be open to all students and faculty, regardless of whether they are currently involved with the MAA or student chapters. The basic idea is to experiment with prototypes of activities that might later be implemented at national meetings. Each regional symposium will include some or all of the following:

1. Minicourses for students;
2. National speakers giving student oriented talks;
3. Sessions that deal with mathematics outside the classroom;
4. Unstructured social activities at which students given the opportunity to network with other students and professional mathematicians;
5. Swap sessions at which chapters can exchange information about chapter activities they have found to work best.

The Student Chapters will be very active at the 75th Anniversary Meeting with MAA Student Paper Sessions, presentations by the Mathematical Modeling Contest Winners, presentation of section or chapter projects, the presentation of the Charter Chapter Certificates, and a breakfast for Charter Chapters and their advisors (on what works and what doesn't). There will also be some travel grants (from the Exxon grant) of up to \$200 or for students traveling to Columbus to participate in presentation of papers or a group project.

If your Section or Chapter has a group project that you would like to present at the National Meeting, contact Howard Anton, Chairman of the Committee on Student Chapters, The Pavilions of Voorhees, Suite 506, 2301 Evesham Road, Voorhees, NJ 08043, (609) 772-2999.

## FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE THIRD ANNUAL MAA UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PAPER SESSION

The Third MAA Undergraduate Student Paper Session will take place at the Joint MAA/AMS Summer Meetings in Columbus, Ohio. The Session is sponsored by MAA in conjunction with Pi Mu Epsilon, the undergraduate mathematics honorary society, and the MAA Committee on Student Chapters. The talks will be given on Thursday, August 9, 1990. Nominations for 10 to 15 minute papers from sections of the MAA, mathematics departments, and other interested parties, with a brief abstract, should be sent to Ron Barnes, Department of Mathematics, University

of Houston-Downtown, 1 Main Street, Houston, Texas, 77002. Such nominations would be appreciated by May 15.

In addition to the student paper sessions, MAA and Pi Mu Epsilon will sponsor a number of other student activities including invited addresses, a session on Undergraduate Mathematics in Industry, and a Student Reception. Funds for these activities and travel assistance (up to \$200) for authors of papers selected has been provided by a grant from the Exxon Education Foundation.

#### 1990 - YEAR OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE

If you haven't already received it, you will soon be receiving a kit from the National MAA detailing possible activities for the Year of National Dialogue that might be appropriate for section activities. Some of these include:

##### Invite a Special Year of National Dialogue Speaker --

One of the National MAA Speakers, a special speaker from your section who is involved in the Mathematical Science Education Board (MSEB), a high school teacher from your section who received a 1989 Presidential Award For Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics and Science, or a non-mathematical speaker who can provide new perspectives on the mathematics education enterprise.

##### Discuss National Goals for Mathematics Education --

Schedule a session at your Section meeting on National Goals for Mathematics Education. President Bush and the 50 State Governors are developing national goals for education. The mathematics community should be actively involved in the developing of more detailed goals for mathematics.

##### Encourage Broad Participation in Section Meetings --

To broaden the dialogue, make a special effort to attract students, faculty from other departments, representatives of business/industry, and others who might not normally attend a Section meeting.

##### Plan Special Student Chapter Activities --

Plan special activities for the Student Chapters in the Section, and make it inexpensive and attractive for students to attend Section meetings. Student papers, pizza parties, and films will help attract students.

##### Generate Interest Through the Section Newsletters --

Publicize the Year of National Dialogue and the 75th Anniversary in your Section Newsletter.

#### Begin a Short Course Series --

If your section doesn't already have one, you might consider a Short Course or Minicourse. Maybe one for High School Teachers or students???

These are just some of the ideas that are included in the kit you will be receiving. We would be interested in knowing which ones you tried and which ones were successful.

#### COMPUTER ALGEBRA SYSTEM WORKSHOPS

Don Small of Colby College writes that the following are the NSF sponsored Computer Algebra System Workshops for 1990:

March 16-18, Portland State University, Portland, OR; contact Majorie Enneking at Portland State.

June 18-22, Mississippi State University; contact Jimmy Solomon at Mississippi State.

July 15-20, Colby College, ME; contact Don Small at Colby.

July 22-27, St. Olaf College, MN; contact Don Small at Colby College for this one too.

#### MD-DC-VA WORKSHOPS

The Maryland-DC-Virginia Section will sponsor two workshops at Salisbury State University this summer. The first on "The Mathematics of Neural Networks" by Dr. R. J. Scott will be June 4 to 8, and the second "The Mathematics of Computer Graphics" by Dr. J. W. Weiss will be June 11 to 15. For more information contact Ben Fusaro at Salisbury State (301)-543-6470. The total cost is \$245 per workshop including room and board.

#### NOTES ON LONG RANGE PLANNING FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

In August of 1989 the MAA Board of Governors generated a considerable number of ideas to improve the MAA and some of which are of particular interest to the Sections.

Increase the awareness of mathematics-based careers; expand the publication on professional opportunities in mathematics to include the variety of careers open to mathematics majors; provide information about where people with mathematics degrees end up and the role of mathematics in getting there; have sessions at section meeting on these topics.

duced a passable cover—an assemblage of fattened up copies of the sine curve which we called "A multitude of sines." (Half of the fun was coming up with the name.) We have continued the series with "Going off on tangents" and are already working on a pun and design involving the secant graph for next year.

Our April cover always has a map of the state highlighting the site of the annual meeting and a listing of the main speakers beside it. The back of the cover sheet has the necessary mailing imprints. The inside surfaces are used for a table of contents in the front and a list of committees in the back.

**Production methods** For the past three years, we have been making growing use of desktop publishing methods. This is an exciting time to be involved with editing a newsletter because the technology that is available allows one to produce a higher quality product much more efficiently than was possible earlier. We use the PageMaker desktop publishing software package on a Macintosh system. We have found the software to be easy enough to learn and quite satisfactory for our purposes. Not having tried any of the alternatives, we are not in a position to compare. However, a newsletter does not place severe demands on the system's capabilities, and so we are sure that other software systems would be equally satisfactory.

One minor frustration we have had with PageMaker has to do with pagination. One wants to be able to look at layouts for facing pages (e.g. pages 2 and 3) on the screen in order to see how they will look together. PageMaker allows one to do this just fine. Then with our format, we want to be able to print pages as they will be printed in the booklet. Thus, pages 2 and 23 are together with 2 on the left, and pages 3 and 22 are together with 3 on the right in a 24 page booklet. PageMaker does not have a way of automatically printing pages organized in this way. To get around this, we must declare the double pages such as 2 - 23 and 3 - 22 as pages 2 and 3 for PageMaker's purposes. Then when we are looking at facing pages on the screen, we see a reduction of an 8.5 by 22 inch double page spread. Pages 22 and 23 are together, but on the opposite sides of each other from how they will appear in the booklet. Pages 2 and 3 are on the right sides of each other, but they are separated by pages 22 and 23. It is a bit cumbersome, but it works.

With a laser printer and our layout artifice described above, we are able for the most part to take camera-ready, finished size page layout masters straight off of the LaserWriter to the printer. We do still paste on the MAA icosahedron logo, and the printer must do some setup work with our photographs.

Our basic style has not changed much as a result of the move to desktop publishing. Prior to the change, we did our layouts using a high quality daisy wheel memory typewriter which gave us capability of using several fonts and bold face. We developed a simple style of having one column per page and using bold face for headlines on stories and to highlight people's names within stories. We have stayed with a relatively simple style like this. The computer allows us to do our headlines a bit larger, and it is now easier to use italics.

The software gives one the capabilities of doing much more with style, but we have been rather sparing in our changes. We box in announcements, calendars and copies of award citations, but other than this, we have stayed with our simple look. Amateurs such as we are can fall victim to the temptation to use the full power of their publishing software and the result is a garish product. Fearing a slippery slope, we have stayed far away from the edge.

**Photographs** A standard feature of our newsletter for the past five years has been a center page of photographs. We first got the idea from seeing some pictures from a section meeting in an issue of the newsletter of the Northern California Section. I now take my camera to all Michigan Section events and get pictures for forthcoming issues. My co-editor, Bill Babcock, takes pictures at meetings when I cannot.

The subject of our photo spread does not change much, being pictures from the previous May's section annual meeting in the December issue, and ones from the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition grading session and awards day program in the April issue. In spite of the sameness in theme, I believe that they provide a worthwhile chronicle of section activities which can be helpful in attracting new meeting attenders and provide those who cannot attend with a better sense of what happened.

We keep production costs down by mounting the pictures into a collage from which the printers make a single plate for printing. This represents a slight compromise in that they could deal with differences in contrast among

the pictures and get better results by making separate plates. However, we have been satisfied with the results of our economical method.

We produce the collage by starting with 5 by 7 inch prints, cropping them as desired, and mounting them onto a piece of poster board of about 18 by 18 inches. We use white correction or label tape between the prints to produce straight edges. This type of tape is easily removable so changes are no problem.

**Content** Most all of the section newsletters include things such as reports from the section's chairperson, governor and secretary-treasurer, news from the campuses and announcements of forthcoming meetings. There is nothing unique that we have to say about these basics. We have strived to go beyond these expected components to include more news and other material of interest to the statewide mathematics community. Rather than having the only mention of section activities be just in the officers' reports, we write separate articles on them with headlines which can draw interested readers' attention to the subject. We report in detail on the Section's premier program, the Michigan Mathematics Prize Competition (MMPC) in which 20,000 high school students take part each year. Some of the other things we include, or have included, are:

- The Part II problems from the MMPC
- A "Positions Available" column
- A "Nonempty Intersection" column with news gleaned from newsletters of other MAA sections
- A calendar of events which lists meetings of the section, national meetings and meetings of other groups within Michigan or nearby
- Announcements about summer short courses of our section and others
- Stories based upon press releases from the MAA national office or the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics
- Copies of the citations for the section's Distinguished Service Award
- A section dues coupon and a national MAA application form
- A listing of the dues-paying institutional members
- A list of the long-standing MAA members of the section supplied to the section governor by the national office of MAA
- Occasional transcripts of talks at the section meeting, such as one on the history of the Department of Mathematics at the University of Michigan
- MAA position papers, such as the statement on the Holmes and Carnegie reports on teacher preparation
- The section's bylaws

**News gathering** We solicit news from the campuses by means of a mailing to the MAA institutional representatives a few months before each issue. At the same time, we send reminders to the officers to submit anything they have to go into the newsletter. Section editors are on the mailing list to receive press releases from the national office, and we receive announcements from other sections because of MAA-provided mailing labels. Beyond this, we try to stay alert to items in the general media that would be of interest, and do an occasional telephone interview to fill in details on some item of interest.

**Humor** The guidelines I received from the section's executive committee indicated that bits of mathematically related humor to liven up the newsletter were possible. Being an inveterate punster and limerick smith from way back, I could not pass up this license to inflict some of my alleged wit on mathematical colleagues throughout the whole state.

Indeed, the opportunity to exercise a bit of humorous creativity has been one of the side benefits which has offset some of the tedium of the job. I have gone through phases in my humorological evolution. An early one involved a series of "Rumor Control Reports" (e.g., about the mathematician whose teenage son smashed the car up so badly that all four of its Goodyear Vectors were mutually orthogonal). Then there were the abelian limericks, which evolved into abelian riddles (What's purple and commutes?... *An abelian grape*.... What gets taken on overnight trips and commutes?... *An abelian grip*).

Given the April 1 publication date for our spring issue, there is added license for a bit of silliness. In one issue, we inserted a suitably ridiculous news item and offered a prize to the first person to find it. Nobody came forward to claim the prize. Does this mean that the item was too subtle, or is it indicative of how little the newsletter is read? I keep hoping that the former is closer to the truth.

**Mailing lists** The MAA supplies mailing labels for all of its members within the section. This provides the core of the audience for our Michigan Section newsletter. In addition to this, the section's executive committee has adopted a policy of trying to get the newsletter to every college and university faculty member in the state. To this end, we have assembled our own supplementary mailing list of faculty members who are not MAA members. We send the institutional representatives a printout of their portion of our list every year and ask for their help in updating it. Many of them have been quite helpful in keeping us up to date.

Over the years, we have been able to build up a rather substantial supplementary list. There are nearly 1,000 MAA members in Michigan. We are able to mail newsletters to an additional 600 mathematics faculty members and graduate students. The newsletter contains an MAA application form, and it is our hope that its ready availability will encourage some of these non-members to join. Their copies are stamped with a "complimentary copy" label, a subtle suggestion that their support of our professional organization would be appreciated.

**Editorial policy** Any publication worth its salt must have an editorial policy, even if unwritten. Ours is that (unwritten), but it does exist. We reserve the right to edit most of what is submitted to us to achieve consistency in style. The exception is the officers reports, which we print as they submit them, except for correction of obvious typographical errors and imposing our practice of setting names in boldface. We set names in boldface throughout the newsletter, except for multiple occurrences of the same name within an article, in which case only the first occurrence is bold.

We avoid the use of titles such as Dr. or Professor. In the academic community, these can go without saying, and they tend to give a ponderous tone where we are after something lighter. We avoid the use of capital letters, such as on names of committees and offices, job titles, course names, etc. Unless it is essential to communicate that the title is an official one and is being used as such, we do not capitalize it. Again, the reason is to avoid pomposity. (I think that it is just as noble a calling to teach mathematics as it is to teach Mathematics.)

Finally, we avoid with a passion the use of the symbol "/" in the currently fashionable mode (e.g., *reader/reader*, *discussion/workshop*, *equation/graph*, *comfort/noncomfort*, *folkloric/gothic/Oz*—all of these examples were found in just a few minutes of scanning a collection of papers on using writing to teach "math/science"). Our avoidance is due to my person distaste for this usage. In my opinion, it signals that the writer has been too lazy either to clarify his/her concept or to take the time to find a proper way to name it. The only legitimate use of compound concepts held together with a slash is to signal that you are purposely trying to be equivocal/obscure. In cynical moments, I occasionally use a slash this way myself.

I began this section saying that our editorial policy was unwritten. I now retract that statement, having just written it.

**Budget and costs** We pride ourselves on producing a quality newsletter at rather modest costs to the Michigan Section. Our two issues in 1988-89, which contained 24 pages inside (six 8.5 by 11 inch sheets of paper) as well as a cover, cost 45 cents per copy, including printing and mailing. Access to the necessary computer and office equipment is not reflected in these costs, as they are provided without charge by my university. Northern Michigan University supports us in several other ways. Our news bureau develops and prints the photographs without charge. The computer center maintains our supplementary mailing list and provides our mailing labels at no charge. There is a modest amount of clerical support for typing of copy and preparing the mailings.

The point is that a rather nice newsletter can be produced at modest costs to the section given an editor who has access to the appropriate computer equipment and whose employing institution is sympathetic and supportive like Northern Michigan University is.

**Advertising** The Michigan Section newsletter is one of a very few which is supported in part by advertising. We have made a modest effort to develop this source of support, and have had success in proportion to our efforts. In the process, we have learned that to expand our advertising revenue, it would take more effort to solicit advertising than we feel that we can invest.

We do one mailing per year in January to the advertising departments of the mathematics textbook publishers to solicit advertising. In addition, I talk to the sales representatives who visit here whenever I can, and several of the officers of the section do the same with the ones that they see.

The trick is to get to a person who is willing to make a decision. For the most part, the sales reps are not decision-makers. There is an occasional exception, however. For example, I once had a regional manager in the office with the new sales rep for our area. I told him about our advertising, and he pulled out his wallet and paid for an ad in cash on the spot.

We have had one case of an unsolicited full-page ad that fit into some sort of saturation campaign that one publisher was doing. Otherwise, we mostly have to actively solicit the advertising.

We do the layout work for some of our advertisers for a modest additional charge. This is easily done on the computer for the most part, but we have had success with pasting in copies of their logos that were clipped from other advertising of theirs. Some of our advertising comes to us as camera-ready art. We ask them to submit it in actual size, but our printers can deal with other sizes as long as the art work is properly proportioned.

We established a pricing concept several years ago when we began and have adjusted our rates according to it since then. Our rule of thumb is that a quarter page ad should pay for the expense of a full page in the newsletter. For larger ads and for multiple insertions, we offer discounts from there.

This system produces rates that are probably too low. (It works out to 2.3 cents per contact for a half page ad run twice.) If we were pressing to have advertising be a major source of newsletter revenue, I would probably double our rates. However, in recent years, we have found tying newsletter advertising in with publishers' support of our annual meeting has been more productive. I no longer really regard it as a serious source of revenue to support the newsletter but rather as a bonus we can offer to publishers who agree to provide major support for the meeting.

Much of our advertising for the past few years has been of this sort. We offer reduced rates on ads to publishers who have exhibits at the meeting. They pay a respectable fee to have a display there, and that of course is regarded as helping to offset meeting expenses. We also offer free ads to publishers who host a pre-banquet cocktail party or host one of the coffee breaks or continental breakfasts during the meeting. We have found that they are willing to provide this substantial support of meeting social functions, and an ad in the newsletter which mentions that they are hosting an event is something to offer them as a vehicle for increasing the goodwill they hope to achieve.

One could also look to other sorts of advertisers such as computer software and hardware suppliers, and universities wishing to publicize their graduate programs. I have never had the time to try out these approaches.

I would suggest that any section planning to develop advertising as a source of revenue for a newsletter try to identify one person to work on the project who will be willing to stay with it for several years. It will take time to develop contacts and learn what does and does not work. This is not the sort of thing that will work if the person doing it changes every year.

My final comment is this: It takes a good bit more work than one might expect to generate newsletter ads. If I were to do it right, I would be putting in more time identifying contacts with the publishers and doing solicitations by telephone... So far we have not needed to do this because we have had enough money coming from members' dues to support the newsletter. Putting out a quality product is enough work as it is, so I have chosen not to take on more.

**Qualifications** If a section wants to upgrade their newsletter following the Michigan Section model, what sort of person should they look for to do the job? First of all, it should be someone who is willing to stay with it for several years. It takes some time to learn what needs to be done, but as one goes along, one becomes efficient at the basics and can begin to give some attention to innovation and change. It is only after a few issues that one can begin to exercise some creativity and reap some satisfaction thereby. If the term has expired after a year and the job is passed on to someone else who must learn it anew, the opportunity for innovation is thwarted, and the newsletter continues to be produced with eyes fixed squarely on the rearview mirror.

The editor should enjoy writing and be reasonably good at it. He or she should also have access to the necessary computer equipment and software, and have some prior experience with using a word processing system and other application software such as page layout, draw and paint programs, together with a willingness to invest a bit of time in learning how to use these systems.

Some prior experience with editing and layout work can be helpful, but is not necessary. In my case, I had experience some 25 years ago editing a college yearbook. Also, if there is an interest in having photographs, either the editor or someone else should be identified to take pictures at section events on a regular basis. Some experience with a camera is clearly helpful.

**Time commitment** What sort of time commitment is involved in producing our newsletter? There are little details to attend to several months before the issue is to appear which do not take much time but must get done on schedule. The major work comes within a period of about two weeks before the issue goes to the printer. I find that it takes four or five late night sessions to get the work done during those final two weeks.

For the first three years, I did nearly everything myself, and was getting burned out and ready to give up the job. I agreed to stay with it when a colleague, Bill Babcock, agreed to become a co-editor. He now handles some of the sections, such as the news from the campuses.

Another motivation to continue was the chance to begin using desktop publishing methods. This represented an opportunity to upgrade the quality of our product with which I wanted to be involved. The new methods streamline some of the more tedious aspects of the job and allow more time for creativity. For example, we now get a significant portion of our material from other officers on disk, and do not have to retype it. (We even have some of them pushing us to gear up to be able to receive things by means of electronic mail, but we haven't mustered the will to learn how to do that yet; the technology that we have seen is not yet up to our standards of user-friendliness.)

We have found that the new technology does not reduce the total amount of time we spend preparing an issue. However, in the same amount of time, one comes out with a higher quality product. There is a phenomenon which takes over which is real enough to deserve a name but I do not know of one for it. It works as follows. The new tools make perfection more of a practical possibility. One can easily do a new copy of a page with a correction of that last typo if one could only find it, or to nudge a block of text over just a bit to make it look better. Thus, one finds oneself getting much fussier about the looks of the final product, and spending time trying to get it just right. It also takes time to learn how to use the software to do new things to improve the product.

**Concluding thoughts** Editing a section newsletter can be a valuable and very gratifying form of service to the profession for a person with the right combination of interests and talents. Again I wish to repeat my conviction that it is the sort of job that someone should plan on staying with for several years in order to be able to get beyond the nuts and bolts and be able to be creative.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with the Michigan Section newsletter and take some satisfaction in the results of our efforts. It has also been interesting to (of necessity) stay actively involved with what is going on in the section. I am also pleased to have the chance to share something of what I have learned through the experience, and hope that this will be of some help to others. If I can clarify and amplify on anything discussed above, I would be happy to do so. I can be reached at the address given with the title, or by telephone at 906-227-1600.