# SOUTHWESTERN SECTION NEWSLETTER

Volume 20 Number 1, October 2006 (Word Edition)

Editor:  Thomas Gruszka, WNMU

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## 1.  CONGRATULATIONS TO APPLE BLOOM

The winner of the Southwestern Section's 2006 Teaching Award was Irene ("Apple") Bloom, from Arizona State University.  She was nominated by Marilyn Carlson, who in her nomination noted that Irene has taught in a wide variety of settings, from an inner-city high school in Florida to ASU's undergraduate classrooms to in-service graduate courses for secondary teachers.  In every teaching venue she displays her passion for mathematics and for her students' learning.  The Southwestern Section congratulates Irene on her award and wishes her the best of luck in the national competition.

## 2.  CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2007 SECTIONAL AWARD FOR THE DISTINGUISHED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

It's time again to think about nominating a colleague for our section's distinguished teaching award.  Any member of the Southwestern Section may nominate any other member of the section for this award. Self-nomination is not permitted.  To be eligible for the award, the nominee must be a member of MAA, have at least five years teaching experience in mathematics, and be currently teaching at least half time during the

academic year.

A nominee should be recognized as extraordinarily successful in his/her teaching; have teaching effectiveness that can be documented; have influence reaching beyond her/his own institution; and foster curiosity and generate excitement about mathematics in their students.

For further information about the MAA Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics, and for nomination forms go to http:www.maa.org/Awards/haimo.html.

Please let me know if you are planning to nominate someone – or have questions about this award. (Joanne Peeples, (915) 831-5047 or joannep@epcc.edu). The completed nomination packet must be received no later than January 31, 2007. Send the packet to: Joanne Peeples, 6917 Orizaba, El Paso, TX 79912.

## 3. SPRING MEETING, April 13-14, 2007, Los Lunas, NM

Save the dates April 13 and 14 for our Spring Section meeting, which will be held jointly with NMMATYC (for the first time). It will be held at UNM-Valencia; Mary Robinson is chair.

## 4. Governor's Report, Janet McShane, **janet.mcshane@nau.edu**

As the new Governor for the Southwestern Section, I attended my first Board of Governor's meeting in Knoxville, TN on August 9, 2006 on the day preceding MathFest. The meeting was very informative and since this was my first BoG meeting I was pleased to personally witness the talented leadership in the MAA. Via this report, I hope to share with you some of the highlights of the meeting.

Under the competent direction of MAA Treasurer, John Kenelly, the MAA's financial situation is very healthy. The MAA is working toward the goal of having an unrestricted endowment equal to one year's operating budget, and this year a budget surplus of about $600,000 was transferred to investments. The MAA's assets are now at the $15 million level.

Executive Director of the MAA, Tina Straley, reported on a number of developments including the renovation of the Carriage House. This renovation, funded primarily from a generous gift of Paul and Virginia Halmos, was completed at the end of August. The century-old building has been transformed into a state-of-the-art mathematical meeting center that can accommodate groups of up to 60 people. The Carriage House will be

used for mathematical programs (both local and national), and it will be rented out to generate revenue. There is a Grand Opening scheduled for April 19-21, 2007. No doubt I will have more news on this for the next newsletter.

As Bill Stone reported in our last newsletter, the MAA has instituted a program of continual strategic planning. Cycle I is almost complete, and the governors should receive reports at the Joint Meetings in January on the three areas studied (revenue, professional development, and mathematics competitions). Cycle II (governance, students, and membership) has just begun. As a part of the "governance" planning, at this year's BoG meeting we broke into focus groups to discuss ways in which the governors can play a more proactive role in the governance of the organization.

William Hawkins, Jr. reported on a new program funded by the Tensor Foundation, called the MAA Tensor-SUMMA program. College and universities, working in collaboration with middle and high school teachers, may apply for grants of up to $5000 to support enrichment programs for middle and high school minority students.

A new position, Associate Director for Student Activities, has been created by the MAA at the national level to coordinate existing student programs, provide more information for students on the website, and work on initiatives coming out of the 'student' segment of the Cycle II strategic planning.

Project NExT begins each year at MathFest. This year Project NExT had 84 new fellows, including 2 from our section (Shannon Guerrero, NAU and Taliesin Sutton, U of A). The MAA's publication program continues to be very successful – 17 new books are currently in the pipeline. The online journals JOMA (Journal of Online Mathematics and its Applications) and other parts of the MathDL and Math Gateway continue to attract new readers.

The MAA Regional Undergraduate Mathematics Conferences has received 3 more years of NSF funding; 73 conferences were funded by the first grant, and it is expected that a similar number will be funded under the second grant. AMUC (Arizona Mathematics Undergraduate Conference) has received funding from this grant for three years now. More information is at www.maa.org/rumc.

The MAA's Professional Enhancement Program (PREP) is funded through 2008 – watch for the list of next summer's PREP workshops at www.maa.org/prep. Next summer's Mathematical Study Tour, July 1-16, 2007, will focus on Euler, and will visit St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Basel. In 2008 the Study Tour to Peru will be led by Joel Haack.

The American Mathematics Competitions is seeking colleges and universities interested in administering the AMC 10 and AMC 12 on February 21, 2007. For information on the American Mathematics Competitions see www.unl.edu/amc. A documentary film, "Hard Problems", about students in the USA Math Olympiad is in production and should be ready in a year. It is similar to the book "Count Down" and the film "Spellbound".

Both MAA staff and the MAA's Science Policy Committee expressed concern over cuts in undergraduate oriented programs at NSF and in the small increase in funding of mathematics in the 2008 NSF budget. All members of the MAA need to continually remind elected officials of the importance of mathematics.

President Carl Cohen talked about the Third International Conference on the Teaching of Mathematics in Istanbul, Turkey (that was supported by the MAA). He feels that it is important for the MAA to foster international discussions of college teaching issues, and he encourages the MAA to expand international collaborations.

The next JMM will be in New Orleans, January 5-8, 2007, and the next MathFest will be held in San Jose, California, August 3-5, 2007. Hope to see you there!

## 5. SECTIONAL NEWS

**Arizona Western College** (by Dan Russow <daniel.russow@azwestern.edu>)

This fall, Arizona Western College is piloting several modular classes in our developmental sequence. The need for this type of class was determined through our assessment project on developmental math here at the college. The project originated with our participation in the MAA's SAUM program. We lost 2 faculty members this fall and have changed the status of Phong Chau, from temporary to a continuing faculty member. We also recently added Theresa Tincher as a full-time temporary faculty member and are currently in the market for another full-time instructor.

**Glendale Community College** (by Anne Dudley <anne.dudley@gcmail.maricopa.edu>)

GCC hired two new faculty members. Dr. Beth Dawkins, who formerly taught at Grand Canyon University (17 years), has a Master's Secondary Math and PhD in Measurement & Statistics from ASU. Beth will be teaching primarily in our Mathematics for Elementary Education program. Brandi Bass hails from Nunez Community College in New Orleans. Brandi, a Katrina survivor, has her B.S. in Math from Southeastern Louisiana University and her M.S. in Mathematics from University of New Orleans. She is a Project ACCCESS Fellow (the AMATYC equivalent of Project NEXT).

GCC also has (finally) a permanent college president. Dr. Velvie Green is from Grand Rapids Community College. She has a Master's from Western Michigan University in Business Administration. Dr. Green has over 20 years in the classroom and many more years as department chair, dean, provost and executive vice president.

**New Mexico State University** (by Robert Smits  <rsmits@nmsu.edu>)

The NMSU math department has begun offering a research-based, collaborative-learning gateway course which incorporates materials provided by faculty from departments across campus.

With the support of a minigrant from the NMSU informations Sciences and Security Systems Research Cluster, David Finston conducted a summer
institute on mathematical cryptography and coding theory for Las Cruces area high school students.  Students learned the elements of public key
cryptography, the number theory behind RSA, and how it is implemented by the office of Information and Computing Technology at NMSU.  They also delved into error correcting codes, culminating in an analysis of the code used in the transmission by the Voyager spacecraft of photographs of Jupiter and Saturn.

The AMS publication based on the CBMS lectures held at NMSU in 2005, organized by Tiziana Giorgi, Joe Lakey, Cristina Pereyra and Robert Smits has been completed.  Fields Medalist Terence Tao is the author of Nonlinear Dispersive Equations: Local and Global Analysis, available from the AMS.


**Northern Arizona University** (by John Hagood <John.Hagood@NAU.EDU>)

The department has two new tenure-track faculty:  Shannon Guerrero,  PhD from UC Davis in Mathematics Education, and statistician Philip Turk, PhD from Montana State University.  We also have a new Chair, Janet McShane, and a new Associate Chair, Terry Blows (his fourth tour of duty).  The meeting of the Western North American Region of the International Biometrics Society in June went fabulously with over 150 attenders. Also in the summer, our mathematics educators conducted three workshops for teachers, one each for  Coconino County, Pinal County and Ganado School.  Our Research Experiences for Undergraduates program was held again in summer 2006 and will continue next summer with NSF funding.  Finally, enrollments this fall are up sharply in the department and at the mountain campus of NAU in general.

## 6.  AMC

The American Math Competitions is starting a new program.  In the past the competitions have always been held at the high school.  It is now possible for a college or university to host a competition, with students from several high schools participating.  Just think what a good project this would be for a math club at the college or university to host.  The "college date" for the competition is Wednesday, February 21, 2007 – but college/university registration should be done much earlier (the cost is $50, and I would suggest registering no later than November).  When you register, you need to order the number of tests needed; the tests come in bundles of 10 and cost $20 for each bundle. For more information go to the AMC web site:  www.unl.edu/amc or email amcinfo@unl.edu  or call (800) 527-3690.

**7.  THE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL**

If any member of the Southwestern Section would like to receive the sectional newsletter by email INSTEAD of through the postal service please email the editor (<tpeter@cs.wnmu.edu>) with the words EMAIL PLEASE in the subject heading or the body of the message.  The newsletter is published twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring.

**8.  WANTED: MAA LIAISON COORDINATOR FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN SECTION**

Joanne Peeples would like to hand off this responsibility to a section member that would like to become more involved with the section.  There is not a lot of work involved, mostly on the computer, but it would be a good way to help the section and find out what is going on.  It would also be a plus for those of you who will be putting together tenure packets in the next couple of years. If interested, please contact Joanne: joannep@epcc.edu.

**9.  WANTED:  NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

This will be the last year that Tom Gruszka will serve as editor of the newsletter; he will continue as editor through next spring's newsletter.  If you would like to take over as editor or if you would like to suggest a colleague who might be interested in being the editor please write to the section governor, Janet McShane <janet.mcshane@nau.edu>, providing that information.