



Louisiana/Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America

NEWSLETTER—FALL 2006
Volume 29. No. 1

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LETTER FROM SETH OPPENHEIMER—LA/MS SECTION CHAIR

Dear Section Members,

Greetings from Starkville! Planning for the spring 2007 sectional meeting is well under way. The date for the meeting is March 1 – 3, 2007. Our main speaker will be Prof. Arthur T. Benjamin from Harvey Mudd College, who has also agreed to speak to the students in the undergraduate math team competition.

Most of the meeting will be held in the excellent facilities of our college of veterinary medicine, where we have hosted several highly successful meetings in the past. We are looking forward to having you see our growing campus and the many new restaurants available in Starkville. We are currently planning a panel session on the training of teachers, including a representative from our college of education and a tour of our mathematics teaching computer lab, the math domain.

It is my goal that you have a good and informative time during your stay in Starkville. I would like to thank Mississippi Vice Chair, Vivien Miller for her help so far as well as the rest of the executive committee of the Louisiana-Mississippi section of the MAA.

LETTER FROM THE SECTION GOVERNOR

Governor's Report, September 29, 2006.

In August I had the opportunity to travel to Knoxville for MathFest and the corresponding Board of Governors' meeting. As always, MathFest was rewarding and enjoyable. The MAA is moving forward with its continuous strategic planning initiative. The working groups from Round I, on Professional Development, American Math Competitions, and Revenue, will submit their final reports in November, 2006. Reports from the Round II groups on Students, Governance, and Membership are due in November, 2007. The MAA continues to be financially sound. External auditors gave the organization a very positive report. Don Albers, retiring Associative Executive Director for Publications, reported that MAA book sales through the spring of 2006 were running ahead of the record-setting 2005 pace. Steve Dunbar, American Mathematics Competition Director, reported that a total of 226,749 students took either the AMC 10 or the AMC 12 exams in January or February. This was actually down slightly from the 2005 number. Steve also reminded the Board that on Feb. 21, 2007, colleges and universities will be given the opportunity to serve as AMC host sites. You may get details on how to participate at www.unl.edu/amc/.

This coming spring we will be electing a new Section Governor. Time does indeed fly when you are having fun.

Roger Waggoner

SECTION GOVERNOR ELECTION

Watch the mail for the ballot materials for the election of a new governor for the LA/MS Section.

SECTION NExT

New faculty are invited to apply to become LA/MS Section NExT Fellows. LA/MS Section NExT is a 2-year professional development program that is modeled after the national Project NExT program. Section NExT Fellows attend the LA/MS Section meeting where there will be programming designed specifically for them. To be eligible to apply, faculty must have at least a master's degree in mathematics and be in their first three years of full-time teaching at a 2-year or 4-year institution in the LA/MS Section. More information, including the online application form, can be found at <http://sandbox.mc.edu/~travis/maa/application.html>. The application deadline is December 15, 2006.

(Submitted by Jenna Carpenter and Clifton Wingard, Section NExT Committee)

Outstanding Teaching Award

The Outstanding Teacher Award Committee seeks nominations for 2007. A completed application must accompany each nomination. A complete application consists of a nomination form, a narrative describing the nominee's extraordinary teaching success (limit 5 pages), evidence of the nominee's extraordinary teaching success (limit 3 pages), and up to five one page letters of recommendation two of which must come from the nominee's present or former students. For more details see <http://maa.mc.edu/meeting/distinguished.html>. Completed applications must be received no later than February 1, 2007. Please send applications to:

Dr. Randall Wills
SLU Box 10295
Hammond, LA 70402

NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECTION

Delta State University

Rose Strahan and **Stella Wear** conducted a summer geometry and algebra workshop during the month of June for teachers in grades 5 – 8. Seventeen teachers from schools in the Mississippi Delta participated in the program. This workshop was funded by the No Child Left Behind Program of the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

The Department of Mathematics hosted its Sixth Annual Mathematics Tournament for high school students on February 24, 2006. Over 120 students participated in the tournament.

Clifton Wingard was a member of the Mathematics Education Delegation which visited China on September 3 – 15, 2006. The delegation visited schools and talked with teachers in Beijing, Guilin, and Shanghai and had professional discussions with mathematics educators at teaching universities in Beijing and Guilin. This program was sponsored by People to People Ambassador Programs. (Submitted by Clifton Wingard)

Louisiana State University – Alexandria

Syrous Marivani was tenured at MAPS Department at LSUA in the Spring 2006 semester. (Submitted by Syrous Marivani)

Louisiana Tech

Dr. Gene Callens retired after being the Academic Director for the program of mathematics and statistics for 9 years.

Dr. Don Liu, a numerical analyst, and **Dr. Mihaela Paun**, a statistician, joined the program for the new academic year. (Submitted by Bernd Schroeder)

Mississippi State University

Dr. Mohsen Razzaghi was appointed as the new Interim Department Head for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. He replaced **Dr. Michael Neumann**, who served the department with distinction as the Interim Department Head from July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2006.

Dr. Jeffrey Jonkman was promoted from Assistant Professor of Statistics to Associate Professor of Statistics and was granted tenure.

Dr. Ratnasingham Shivaji was appointed as the new Director of the Center for Computational Sciences within the College of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Shivaji was also recognized by the Shackouls Honors College at Mississippi State University as the Outstanding Honors Faculty member.

Ms. Diane Daniels received the National Academic Advising Association's 2006 Outstanding Advising Certificate of Merit. Ms. Daniels was also awarded MSU's 2006 Irvin Atly Jefcoat Excellence in Advising Award.

Dr. Russell Stocker received an ASA award for Outstanding Presentation (Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences) at the 2006 Joint Statistical Meeting in Seattle, WA.

On July 10-28, 2006, the Department of Mathematics & Statistics at MSU hosted a very successful IMA PI Summer Program for Graduate Students entitled “Topology and its Applications.”

Drs. Grace and **Dean Boswell** established the Spencer B. Murray and Arthur Ollivier Endowment Fund at Mississippi State University. The fund was established in memory of two MSU faculty members (Murray and Ollivier) in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. The gift was used to establish one endowed fund in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics to bring scholars to campus to lecture on a branch of mathematics or statistics. In recognition of the generosity of the Drs. Boswell, the department will call these lectures "The Murray/Ollivier Annual Lectures." (Submitted by Lydia Scott)

Mississippi University for Women

Dr. Bonnie Oppenheimer was promoted to Professor of Mathematics.

Dr. Dorothy Kerzel is serving as Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, along with continuing as Chair of the Department of Sciences and Mathematics.

Dr. Jane Wenstrom is on leave for a year in Washington D.C. where her husband **Dr. LeRoy Wenstrom** is serving as an Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow. (Submitted by Dorothy Kerzel)

Nicholls State University

With the retirement in January 2006 of **Dr. Don Bardwell**, **Dr. Scott Beslin** was promoted to department head in July 2006.

In August, we hired **Dr. Michael Gray** as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. Dr. Gray received his Ph.D. in May 2006 from Baylor University.

August also marked the beginning of the third full year of our graduate program. The

Master of Science in Community/Technical College Mathematics (MCCM) degree is now virtually entirely online. (Submitted by Brian Heck)

Southeastern Louisiana University

At Southeastern Louisiana University the following personnel actions we taken.

Dr. Alan Cannon was promoted to Full Professor.

Dr. Timothy Hudson was promoted to Full Professor.

Dr. John Lewallen was promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure.

Southeastern Louisiana University will host the AGILE: Algebraic Geometry In Louisiana---East conference on Saturday, October 7, 2006. More information on schedule, titles and abstracts, etc., will be added to the web site, <http://www2.selu.edu/Academics/Faculty/zteitler/math/agile06.html>

For any questions, please contact the organizers:

Z. Teitler at zteitler@selu.edu

or A. Vitter at vitter@math.tulane.edu.

This conference brought together people interested in algebraic geometry from Louisiana and surrounding areas and was held in early October.

Dr. Zach Teitler was invited to and participated in the national Project NExT this past summer and is continuing his year as a NExT participant.

Dr. Beth Gray and **Mr. John Hoover** retired from the department after many years of service to the university.

Dr. Randy Wills won the MAA Distinguished Teaching Award for the LA/MS Section.

The department hired **Ryan Dutsch**, **David Faul**, **Robert Rioux**, and **David Simon** as full-time instructors. (Submitted by Kent Neuerburg and Randy Wills)

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Faculty Items: **Ping Ng** is a new assistant professor. **Diane Fisher**, **Becky Grieg**, and **Sue Juang** are new instructors. **Charles Anderson** and **Robert Sidman** have retired. **Barbara Gonzalez** and **Ryan Dutsch** have resigned. **Sophia Jang** received approval for tenure in the spring.

In May, the department hosted a workshop, "Mathematical Content Courses for PK-8 Teachers," organized by **Kathleen Lopez** and sponsored by a grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund Program. **Pat Jones**, **Lee Price**, **Vic Schneider**, and **Kathleen Lopez** were presenters. **Roger Waggoner** was in charge of refreshments and paperwork.

Vic Schneider was the principal investigator for a LaSIP sponsored summer program for grades 4-8 teachers. **Lee Price** also worked on the project, along with **Mary Lou Jumonville** from the Episcopal School of Acadiana, and **Cat McKay**. Several one-day follow-up sessions are planned for the coming year. Fourteen of the participants are currently enrolled in "Topics for Mathematics Teachers" for graduate credit.

Becky Greig was a member of an NCTM delegation of thirty mathematics teachers from the U.S. who spent nearly two weeks of September in China, as part of the People to People cultural exchange initiative. The team visited Beijing, Guijin, and Shanghai, meeting with Chinese mathematicians and visiting the equivalent of elementary and middle schools.

In September, **Kathleen Lopez** chaired the seventh annual LaMsMATYC Conference, which was held on campus. Six of the ULL mathematics faculty presented talks.

Four more mathematics majors and two biology majors have joined the undergraduate math/biology project being administered by **Azmy Ackleh** and biologist **Susan Mopper**. By the end of the current academic year, all of the new mathematics and biology courses created for the project will have been taught at least once. The project has NSF funding through 2010.

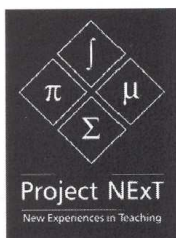
Enrollment in graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses once again showed an increase from the previous year. (Submitted by Roger Waggoner)

University of Southern Mississippi

There were two new Southern Miss faculty members who joined the department in August 2006. **Haiyan Tian** came to us from the University of Wisconsin-Stout where she was an assistant professor. She earned her Ph.D. degree in mathematics from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in May 2002. Her research centers on applied mathematics. **John Perry** came from North Carolina Wesleyan College where he was an assistant professor. He received his Ph.D. in mathematics from North Carolina State University in 2005. John's research area is in algebra. (Submitted by Wally Pye)

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| <p>Mark your calendars! LA/MS Section Meeting March 1 - 3, 2007</p> |
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SPONSOR A PROJECT NEXT FELLOW



Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is looking for Individuals, Departments, Universities, MAA Sections, Organizations, Businesses to sponsor a Fellow(s) for a year plus program that helps new and recent Ph.D.s in the mathematical sciences make the transition from graduate student to full-time faculty.

Sponsorship means:

Professional development
Recognition among recent Ph.D.s
Opportunity to become active in the profession
Job enhancement and support
Electronic networking
Collegiality
Teacher enhancement

through **N**ew
Experiences in
Teaching

COST:

\$2500 per Fellow

Fellows attend workshops at three national meetings and network electronically with peers and mentors. Their institutions pay the travel costs; sponsorship pays the program costs.

For additional information on this opportunity, please contact:

Chris Stevens, *Director*, Project NExT Program, MAA
 STEVENS@SLU.EDU

Lisa Kolbe, *Development Specialist*, MAA
 lkolbe@maa.org
 202-293-1170