



**Louisiana/Mississippi Section
of the
Mathematical Association of America**

NEWSLETTER—FALL 2008
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**LETTER FROM TOMMY LEAVELLE—LA/MS
SECTION CHAIR**

Dear Section Members:

As this year's chair of the Louisiana-Mississippi Section of the MAA and on behalf of the Mathematics Department at Mississippi College, I would like to invite every member of the section to come to the section meeting March 5-7, 2009.

As in previous years, we will begin with the integration bee for students on Thursday night. On Friday morning we will have activities for section NExT fellows and their mentors as well as the student team competition. We are currently planning to have the president of Pi Mu Epsilon as the speaker for the student luncheon. In addition we have invited David Bressoud, the incoming president of the MAA, to be our plenary session speaker. His scheduled topic is "Calculus as a high school course" and we will follow with a panel discussion involving calculus teachers at all levels. There will also be general sessions, student presentations and a banquet. If you have a topic that you would like to see at the meeting, please email me at leavelle@mc.edu with your suggestions. We hope to make this our best section meeting ever. More details about preregistration and hotels will be on the section web site as they become available. We look forward to seeing you in March.

Tommy Leavelle

LETTER FROM THE SECTION GOVERNOR

Colleagues,

This report marks the halfway point in my term as your governor and I have enjoyed serving as your representative thus far to the national organization. I continue to be amazed by the number of programs and services offered by the MAA and yet how little I knew about these until serving on the Board of Governors.

A special congratulations is in order to Judith Covington who was selected to serve as the Governor-at-large for Teacher Education by the Board of Governors at its Mathfest meeting. She starts her term following the Joint Meetings this January and will allow our section two representatives for the next three years. We are proud of her fine work with NExT and look forward to her continued involvement through this new position.

Speaking of the national meetings, I was happy to again host an informal section dinner at Mathfest with about eight of us getting together for something mediterranean at Parthenon-Gyros in Madison. Plans are to again meet somewhere for dinner at the Joint Meeting in Washington. I'll send out a note sometime in December with time and location information. If you have any suggestions in either regard, please send me an email at travis@mc.edu and I'll look into it.

Many of the items being discussed by the Board of Governors focus around the work of several strategic planning working groups. At the last Joint Meeting, the Working Group on Governance presented a report which presented numerous recommendations being considered including many which involve national by-law changes. Many of these changes revolve around committee restructuring. We continued to consider parts of their report at the recent Mathfest meeting. I'm not certain how this will affect the rank-and-file members but it should at least make it easier to navigate the committee list on the web site. Connie Campbell has served as an integral part of this committee

Another strategic focus is being studied by the Working Group on Membership. Individual

members most certainly will be affected by their recommendations in several ways and include a suggestion that the dues structure be simplified and based solely on income level. This would eliminate student memberships as an explicit choice although they could still join at the lowest income level. Another suggestion is to eliminate individual undergraduate memberships altogether and have student membership handled through each mathematics department using bulk subscriptions of Math Horizons. Under this plan, advisors would submit a list of email addresses of those students receiving the magazine and that would be it. The idea of creating MAA Fellows is being thrown about as a way to encourage professional involvement within the association. If you have any comments on any of these issues, please let me know so I can pass them along at our next meeting.

A new focus dealing with the association's journals, periodicals and online publications is being studied by the Working Group on Periodicals and Communications. I serve as a member of this group and we held our first meeting in Madison. One of the topics we are considering revolves around the use of online vs print media. All of the MAA journals that you subscribe to are available in electronic form and can be accessed online via the MAA web site. However, very few members make use of this feature. This group also will consider requests being made for new MAA journals and whether the journal selected with membership can be from a wider list of choices or from no choice at all. With the advent of Harvard's new policy requiring its faculty to allow the university to make their scholarly articles available free online, the MAA must consider how its publications remain competitive in the midst of this opensource movement. If you have any ideas to share regarding these issues, please let me know as soon as possible since we are currently discussing many of these between meetings.

Breakout sessions were held at the Board of Governor's meeting to discuss the work of the Working Group on STEM issues (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). The working group collected opinions regarding "communication, articulation, teacher preparation and support, and measurement and assessment". The work of this group will apply to many of us as we offer service courses within these areas. Please share any of your opinions/suggestions within

these areas and I'll gladly pass them along to this committee.

Within our section, I am delighted that the committee selected R. D. Anderson to receive the section's Meritorious Service Award. As most of us know, he was a valuable member of both the national MAA as well as our section. He will be missed. The executive committee is looking into long term ways we can honor Dick's service to the association.

I hope to see you at the Joint Meeting starting January 4, 2009 in Washington, DC. Please let me know if you are planning to attend so I can look you up there. Also, the section meeting will be held on the Mississippi College campus March 5-7, 2009. I am delighted to have the meeting at my home institution and am looking forward to all of the program features being planned by section chair Tommy Leavelle.

I continue to be amazed by the resourcefulness and talent of the member of our section and am once again grateful to serve you. Please let me know how I can be helpful.

John Travis
LA/MS Section Governor

SECTION NExT

Are you a new faculty member within the first three years of beginning full-time employment with teaching responsibilities at the college or university level? Do you have any new faculty members in your department? New faculty need to be Louisiana-Mississippi MAA Section Next Fellows! Designed for new college and university faculty holding a masters or doctorate in the mathematical sciences, Section NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is a two year professional development program that addresses the full range of faculty responsibilities including teaching, scholarly activities, and service. Each year at our Spring Section Meeting, Section NExT sponsors a program for fellows in which the needs and concerns of new faculty can be openly discussed with a regional network of mathematicians.

Among the topics featured in the program are:

- information on current trends and innovations in undergraduate education.
- how to establish collaboration and interaction between people from the many different kinds of institutions in our section, including private colleges, state universities, liberal arts colleges and community colleges.
- activities to encourage the participation of new faculty and their students in the programs of the LA/MS Section of the MAA.

In addition, the Section NExT Program matches participants with mentors from similar institutions.

The online application (see <http://sandbox.mc.edu/~travis/maa/application.html>) consists of a short personal statement and a letter of support from the department chair. Section NExT fellows will be required to attend the spring section meeting for each of the next two years. *National NExT fellows are encouraged to participate in the Section NExT activities, as well!*

Questions? Contact Jenna Carpenter (jenna@coes.latech.edu), Coordinator of the Section NExT Committee, or check out the Section website at: <http://maa.mc.edu/next/> Deadline for receipt of applications for the 2007-2008 Section NExT Fellow selection is December 15, 2008.

Outstanding Teaching Award

The Outstanding Teacher Award Committee seeks nominations for 2009. 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 6, 2009. Please send applications to:

Dr. George Cochran
Dept. of Mathematics
LSU
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-4918

cochran@math.lsu.edu
(225) 578-1619

NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECTION

Delta State University

A summer mathematics institute for middle grade teachers was held June 2 – 27, 2008 on the campus of Delta State University. The program was funded by a grant under the No Child Left Behind Act administered by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. Participants received 6 hours of graduate credit for MAT 532 Special Topics in Mathematics—Integrating Algebra and Geometry. The focus of the institute was algebra and geometry content for grades 4-8 with appropriate connections, assessments, teaching techniques, and manipulatives used in all sessions. The thirteen teachers who participated taught in public schools in the Mississippi Delta. The grade levels ranged from 4th (seven participants) to 12th. In addition to elementary, 7th and 8th grade math, the subjects represented were Transitions to Algebra, Pre-algebra, and Algebra I. The institute was led by **Dr. Leslie Horton** and Ms. Lauren Zarandona.

In February 2007, the Department of Mathematics hosted the Seventh Annual Mathematics Tournament. Over 108 high school students from seventeen schools attended the tournament and competed on the written test and the team competition. The Department is

looking forward to hosting the next tournament which will be on February 27, 2009.

The Department of Mathematics successfully submitted a grant proposal for the redesign of college algebra at Delta State. This grant is funded through Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning and the National Center for Academic Transformation. The redesign model will be piloted in the spring semester of 2009, and full implementation is expected in the fall of 2009.

(Submitted by Clifton Wingard)

Louisiana State University – Alexandria

Dr. Jules Doucet was granted tenure last spring.

(Submitted by Syrous Marivani)

Louisiana State University – Shreveport

The Department of Mathematics at LSUS has hired two new tenure-track Assistant Professors this year.

Dr. Zsolt Lengvarsky arrives after several years as Assistant Professor at Claflin University. In his Ph.D. dissertation, Zsolt investigated independent sets in lattices. His general research interest lies on the discrete side of mathematics with occasional excursions in the land of continuity. Zsolt has a background in statistics and computer science and enjoys teaching courses in those areas, as well as pure mathematics.

Dr. Curtis Wesley received his Ph.D. in 2008 from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, focusing in the field of biomathematics. His primary interests are in epidemiology and population modeling. He is currently researching the disease dynamics of Hantavirus, which is carried in wild rodents. In upcoming years, Dr. Wesley will be assisting **Dr. Carlos Spaht** in the LaPrep program.

Dr. Wesley's wife, **Huilan Jiang**, will also be assisting as a lecturer at LSUS. She is from

Shanghai, China, and graduated from Texas Tech University with a Masters degree in Statistics. She also has a Masters degree in Management Information Systems from Texas Tech University.

LSUS professor **Dr. Judith Covington** was appointed to serve on the editorial panel of *Mathematics Teacher*, a publication of the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics. During Mathfest, Judith was elected as a governor-at-large representing teacher education. Her term will begin in January 2009, and she will serve for three years. She has also been appointed to serve on the MAA-NCTM Committee on Mutual Concerns.

LSUS professor **Dr. Paul Sisson** is now serving concurrently as Dean of the LSUS College of Sciences and as Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (and Professor in the Department of Mathematics). A few years ago, Paul served the dual roles of Chair in the Department of Mathematics and simultaneously as Chair of Computer Science, so he has successfully juggled two offices before. (This has not, however, stopped proposals to have Paul cloned.)

\$1 million endowed chair for Carlos Spaht's LaPREP. In November of 2007, LSUS Professor **Carlos G. Spaht II** was honored in Washington, D.C. by the Carnegie Foundation and the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education as The 2007 United States Professor of the Year for his work with his long-running program LaPREP (the Louisiana Preparatory Program), an enrichment program for high ability middle and early high school students. This year, American Electric Power's Foundation has awarded a gift of \$600,000 to LSUS, to which the state will add \$400,000, to establish an endowed chair for LaPREP.

(Submitted by Richard Mabry)

Louisiana Tech

Dr. Ruth Ellen Hanna, Academic Director for Mathematics and Statistics, retired after more than 40 years of teaching and service.

Dr. Bernd Schroeder is taking over as Academic Director.

Dr. Galen Turner was promoted to Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. He now holds the title of Maxfield Professor of Mathematics and Statistics. He has also been selected as this year's recipient of the University Senate Chair Award.

Dr. Jenna Carpenter was promoted to Associate Dean for Administration and Strategic Initiatives.

Dr. Bernd Schroeder published the text **Mathematical Analysis - A Concise Introduction** with J. Wiley and Sons.

(Submitted by Bernd Schroeder)

McNeese State University

We have **Dr. Paul Bender, Ms. Thilagavathi Murugesan, Ms. Karen Beauxis, Ms. Kristin Stewart** and **Mr. David Edwards** as new faculty members this semester.

Fall 2008 is our second semester of Math 113 College Algebra redesigned. Under this redesigned course, the students are required to attend two 50 minute lectures and required to spend minimum of 2 lab hours/week in the Math lab. We have a lab with 88 computer stations. Faculty are at the Math lab to monitor students work and undergraduate Math education, Math and Engineering students are used as lab assistants.

A Bachelor's degree in Math Education is now offered from the Math department. We have 28 Math Education majors in the department. The Math Ed program is attracting more students each semester.

We are offering dual enrollment Math 113- College Algebra courses this Fall semester at 11 different high schools in Jeff Davis and Calcasieu Parish.

(Submitted by Thilagavathi Murugesan)

Mississippi University for Women

We have a new faculty member, **Dr. Joshua Hanes**, who graduated from Ole Miss. **Dr. Tristan Denley** was his advisor.

We will be hosting a Sonya Kovalevsky High School Mathematics Day on October 7 for high school girls and their teachers.

We were successful with our course redesign proposal for Intermediate Algebra and College Algebra, so we are starting work on that project. This grant is funded through Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Learning and the National Center for Academic Transformation.

(Submitted by Dorothy Kerzel)

Northwestern State University

We have two promotions to report this year. **Dr. Kathy Autrey** was promoted to Associate Professor, and **Mark Thompson** was promoted to Assistant Professor.

(Submitted by Frank Serio)

Southeastern Louisiana University

Southeastern Louisiana University welcomes two new assistant professors. They are **Linhong Wang**, Ph.D. from Temple University, whose area is ring theory, and **Gary Walls**, Ph.D. from Univ. of Utah, whose area is group theory.

Scott Champagne, who has an M.S. from LSU is a new instructor.

We have implemented a new course delivery format for College Algebra and Intermediate Algebra using the "Roadmap to Design" format. Students spend two hours per week in classroom lecture, with the third hour replaced by a three-hour computer lab. Students use the MyMathLab software to complete their homework, quizzes, and exams.

(Submitted by Randy Wills)

Southern University at Baton Rouge

The Department of Mathematics at Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, LA (SUBR) is proud to have played an integral part toward the recent completion of the doctoral program by two of its graduates. Dr. Carla Cotwright-Williams graduated with a Masters of Science degree in Mathematics from SUBR in August 2002, and in 2006, she earned her Ph.D. in Mathematics from the University of Mississippi. She was a presenter at the 2006 Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Antonio and the 2007 National Association of Mathematicians (NAM) Granville-Brown Session of Recent Doctoral Recipients in the Mathematical Sciences. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Hampton University.

Even more recently, summer 2008, Dr. Crystal Joseph has proudly joined the rank of those with terminal degrees after matriculating at Florida A&M University. Prior to obtaining her doctorate, she completed one Masters of Science degree in Mathematics at SUBR in the spring of 1996 and a second masters, MED, in Student Personnel from the University of Florida in the spring of 2004. Dr. Joseph received her doctorate in Educational Leadership.

(Submitted by D. L. Clark)

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The new faculty members at ULL are:

Christina Eubanks-Turner, Assistant Professor. Christina has returned to Louisiana after receiving Ph.D from the University of Nebraska. Her research field is commutative algebra. She is a Project NeXT fellow.

Christy Sue Crouch, Instructor. Christy Sue is a Texan with an M.S. from UL Lafayette.

Jimmy Kimball, Instructor. Jimmy is from Pineville, LA. He recently completed his Ph.D requirements at Texas A&M, with a dissertation in coding theory.

Stanley (Andy) Parkerson, Instructor. Andy is from Lake Charles. After stints of high school

teaching in Lake Charles and Florida, Andy returned to McNeese and earned an M.S.

Promotions, Retirements, and Resignations

Wayne Andrepont will retire at the end of the current semester.

Sophia Jang resigned in the spring and accepted a position as Associate Professor at Texas Tech University.

Kathleen Lopez was named as Assistant Department Head, effective in January of this year.

Lee Price will leave her faculty position and become Assistant to the Dean of Sciences, beginning in January of 2009.

Our new assistant professors last year, **Daniel Davis**, **Mihai Giurcanu**, and **Maciej Niebrzydowski**, all received Board of Regents grants giving them support for travel and summer research work. **Arturo Magidin** and **Ping Ng** also have Board of Regents funding.

Azmy Ackleh's NSF supported math/biology program for undergraduates continues to thrive. He also has NSF funding for his own research, USGS funding for a project at the National Wetlands center, and is co-PI on a large project to study patterns of alcohol consumption by college students. The latter project is supported by NIH.

Kathleen Lopez and **Lee Price** were recipients of a Board of Regents grant to redesign one of the undergraduate mathematics courses required of students in the College of Business. The project includes creating new classroom materials and incorporating the technology of a new "smart classroom."

The Department's annual Lloyd Roeling Conference is scheduled for October 10-12. Fifteen speakers will give talks on various topics in applied analysis.

While the total mathematics enrollment at ULL decreased by epsilon (11) from the Fall of 2007, enrollments at the upper levels showed a healthy increase. The graduate program continued its steady growth.

Ratinan Boonklurb and **Zach Denton** have been named as winners of the department's

annual Rhodes Outstanding Teaching award for graduate students.

(Submitted by Roger Waggoner)

University of Mississippi

Dr. Tristan Denley has stepped down as department chair in order to take on his new role as Senior Fellow of the University's new residential college. **Dr. Iwo Labuda** is serving as interim chair.

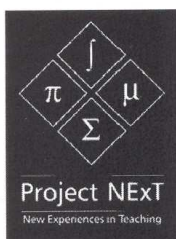
Congratulations to **Dr. Sunil Mathur**, who has been granted tenure and promoted to the position of Associate Professor.

The department welcomes three new Assistant Professors this year. **Dr. Micah B. Milinovich** (Ph.D., University of Rochester, 2008) Dr. Milinovich's research is in Analytic Number Theory, especially the theory of the Riemann zeta-function, L-functions, and multiplicative number theory. **Dr. Erwin Miña-Díaz** (Ph.D., Vanderbilt University, 2006) comes to us from a postdoctoral position at Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne. His research interests are in approximation theory and orthogonal polynomials. **Dr. Sandra Spiroff** (Ph.D., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2003) joins us after two years as an Assistant Professor at Seattle University. She previously held a VIGRE Postdoctoral Assistant Professor position at the University of Utah. Her research is in Commutative Algebra, focusing particularly on the behavior of maps on divisor class groups and Chow groups determined by hypersurface sections.

(Submitted by Laura Sheppardson)

<p>Mark your calendars! LA/MS Section Meeting March 5 - 7, 2009</p>

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
 STEVENSC@SLU.EDU

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