



# Louisiana/Mississippi Section of the Mathematical Association of America

NEWSLETTER—FALL 2010  
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## LETTER FROM LAURA SHEPPARDSON—LA/MS SECTION CHAIR

Dear Section Members:

I invite you all to join us here at the University of Mississippi for the 2011 section meeting February 24-26.

I encourage you to bring your students, both graduate and undergraduate. As in the past, activities will begin with the student Integration Bee on Thursday night. The student team competition will be held on Friday morning. This will be followed by a luncheon for students and their faculty advisors. Student paper sessions will be conducted on Friday afternoon, with prizes to be awarded for best undergraduate and graduate student papers.

Our main sessions will kick off on Friday afternoon with a keynote address from Dr. Paul Zorn, incoming MAA President. Contributed paper sessions will follow. The Section NExT program continues this year with activities on Friday morning. Further scheduling details and registration information will be posted on the web site as they become available.

Friday night's banquet features the second annual Anderson Lecture, given by Dr. Keith Devlin. You may recognize Devlin as "the Math Guy" on NPR. Fundraising for this lecture series honoring Dr. Richard (Dick) Anderson is currently underway. Please consider making a contribution to help support what we expect to be a vibrant and interesting series. Details can be found on the section web site.

As always, if you are interested in serving on a committee, or if you have suggestions for the meeting or other section activities, please contact me at sheppard@olemiss.edu. I look forward to seeing you in Oxford in the spring.

Laura Sheppardson

## GOVERNOR'S REPORT

It was good to see several of you at Mathfest the first of August. As your new Governor, I had the opportunity to participate in a great Orientation Session presented by the MAA Staff, along with the Board of Governors Meeting. Both were very informative and highlighted the MAA's wide range of activities and initiatives. They also helped me understand how I can best represent our Section, as well as serve the overall organization. We are fortunate to have a second Governor in our section! Judith Covington (LSUS) serves as the MAA Governor-at-Large for Teacher Education.

The MAA is guided by an excellent strategic plan. The Board of Governors selects three areas of the plan each year to study for possible improvements, updates, etc. Our own John Travis (Miss. College) is a member of the Strategic Plan Working Group on Periodicals. The other two focus areas this year are MAA Books and SIGMAAS. Financially, the MAA is in good shape, guided by the wisdom of MAA Treasurer (and SLU alum) John Kenelly and the rest of the Investment Committee. The MAA has several funded projects, including an NSF-funded study on successful calculus programs and a grant to allow the MAA to become the host for the WeBWorK open source online homework program. Also, the MAA is now offering e-memberships.

When I attend a national meeting I am reminded of the many contributions by our LA/MS MAA members. In addition to her Governor duties, Judith Covington serves as a co-Director of the national Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) Program, as well as on the Council on Outreach Programs and the Committee on the Mathematical Education of Teachers. John Travis also serves on the Committee on Technologies in Mathematics Education. Frank Serio (NSU) is a member of the Committee on the MAA/Department Liaisons and Roger Waggoner (ULL) serves on the Committee on SIGMAAS. Of course MAA Associate Executive Director Michael Pearson (formerly at Miss. State) does an outstanding job of overseeing programs and services for the MAA. I am a member of CRAFTY (Curriculum

Reform Across the First Two Years) and the Committee on Consultants. If you would be interested in serving on a committee at either the national level or within our Section, please email me! Not only does it provide you with an opportunity to contribute to the organization but you will gain new experience and expand your network in the process!

We are looking forward to a great year in the Section. Many thanks to Leigh Ann Myers (NSU) for agreeing to serve as Coordinator of our Section NExT Program this year. Section Chair Laura Sheppardson is putting together an excellent Section Meeting at Ole Miss in Oxford, MS, February 24 – 26, 2011. Keith Devlin has agreed to serve as the Anderson Lecturer this year and MAA President-Elect Paul Zorn will be our plenary speaker.

Don't forget that the Joint Math Meeting this year is in New Orleans, January 6 - 9, 2011 (yes, the dates have changed from the originally published dates of Jan. 5 – 8). If you are planning to attend, we will continue John Travis' tradition of meeting for dinner one evening as a Section. Watch for my email if you are interested in joining us. As always, I would welcome any comments or suggestions that you might have for new initiatives or ways that the Section and national organization can serve you better. Feel free to email me at [jenna@latech.edu](mailto:jenna@latech.edu) or call me at 318-257-2101.

Jenna Carpenter  
LA/MS Section Governor

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## JOINT MATH MEETING

As many of you know, the Joint Math Meeting will be held in New Orleans January 6 - 9, 2011.

If you are giving a talk at this year's meeting, please email John Travis, [travis@mc.edu](mailto:travis@mc.edu). He will be posting a list of presenters from our section on the section website.

Check out the list online before heading to New Orleans to see who all is giving a talk!

## OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

The Outstanding Teacher Award Committee seeks nominations for 2010. 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://sections.maa.org/lams/distinguished/index.php>

Completed applications must be received no later than January 28, 2011. Please send applications to:

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Louisiana Tech University  
Ruston, LA 71272

email: [jenna@coes.latech.edu](mailto:jenna@coes.latech.edu)  
phone: (318) 257-2101

## 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://sections.maa.org/lams/next/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 Leigh Ann Myers ([myers@nsula.edu](mailto:myers@nsula.edu)), Coordinator of the Section NExT Committee, or check out the Section website at <http://sections.maa.org/lams/next/>.

Deadline for receipt of applications for the 2010-2011 Section NExT Fellow selection is December 15, 2010.

## Anderson Fund and Lecture

The Louisiana/Mississippi section of the MAA honors the life and work of section member Dr. Richard "Dick" Anderson, Boyd Professor at LSU and former President of the MAA (1981-

1982), through a lecture series held during the annual section meeting each year. The series was inaugurated during the 2009 meeting held at Mississippi College in Clinton with a video on the "Life and Legacy of R. D. Anderson". The first lecture associated with the series was given by Ezra "Bud" Brown during the 2010 meeting at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. We are pleased to announce that Keith Devlin will deliver the second Anderson Lecture at the 2011 meeting at Ole Miss in Oxford. Individuals and groups interested in making a gift toward the endowment of the Anderson Lecture series should contact the Anderson Fund Committee Chair, Dr. Jenna Carpenter, at [jenna@latech.edu](mailto:jenna@latech.edu). Gifts of \$1000 or more carry with them the designation of Founding Member. The fund has grown to approximately \$5000. The goal is to raise \$25,000 or more to support the annual lecture series.

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## NEWS FROM AROUND THE SECTION

### Delta State University

**Dr. David Hebert** and **Dr. Lee Virden** have each been awarded tenure and have also been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of Mathematics.

**Dr. Clifton Wingard** was named Chair of the Department of Mathematics.

During the month of June, twenty teachers from grades 4 – 12 from ten different schools in the Mississippi Delta region attended the 2010 Number Sense/Algebra/Geometry Institute held at Delta State University. The institute was led by **Dr. Leslie Horton**, and it was funded by No Child Left Behind through the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning.

(Submitted by Clifton Wingard)

### Louisiana State University – Alexandria

After 15 years at LSUA and seven years as department chair, **Tommy Awtry** has taken a dean's position at Tarrant County College in Texas. **Nathan Ponder**, a native of Ruston, LA, is the new chair at LSUA. **Tanya Lueder** and **Carolyn Smith** have joined the faculty as instructors. The department is saying goodbye to Oakland Hall this year as it prepares to move into LSUA's new Multipurpose Academic Center.

(Submitted by Nathan Ponder)

### McNeese State University

Over the past year we have had two faculty members leave and two more take their place. **Dr. Anne Dye**, retired after 28 years with the Department. **Dr. Alex Scorpan** moved on to a job at Mathematical Sciences Publishers in Berkeley California.

Joining the department are **Ms. Rachel King** and **Ms. Lara Guidroz**. Ms Guidroz received her Bachelor Degree from McNeese in 1999 and a Master of Statistics from Louisiana State University in 2003. She taught at LSU in Alexandria for the past 7 years and is happy to return home.

Ms. King received her Bachelor of Science in 2009 from McNeese and her Master of Science in Mathematical Sciences also from McNeese in July of 2010. Ms. King is our "Itinerant" instructor racing across Southwest Louisiana every day teaching dual enrollment classes in regional schools.

We hope for many years together with our new faculty members and miss Dr. Dye and Dr. Scorpan already.

(Submitted by Lenny Ornas)

## Millsaps College

Millsaps College welcomes **Dr. Emlee Nicholson** to the Mathematics Department. A graduate of the University of Mississippi, Emlee came to us from Winthrop University in South Carolina.

**Dr. Connie Campbell** has had her book *Introduction to Advanced Mathematics: A Guide to Understanding Proofs* published by Cengage Learning. Coincidentally, on the same day she learned that she and her research team had been awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) Transforming Undergraduate Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), Phase 2, grant. It is entitled "Research-Based Video for Developing Mathematical Thinking Skills in Proof Writing and Problem Solving."

(Submitted by Gayla Dance)

## Mississippi State University

**Hyeona Lim** and **QiQi Lu** were granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor. **Robert Banik** was a Lecturer in the department and is now an Instructor. **Diane Daniels** has retired.

The first year of the Summer REU program was a success. **Dr. Gary Myers** and **Dr. Seth Oppenheimer** attended the final presentations and were impressed. This is a two year program, and will continue next summer. Special thanks to **Hyeona Lim** (PI), **Shivaji, Xingzhou Yang**, and **Haimeng Zhang** for their hard work on the program.

March 18th-20th, the Department of Mathematics and Statistics acted as host to the 44th Annual Spring Topology and Dynamics Conference. The conference was sponsored with an award from the National Science Foundation. **Paul Fabel** was the Principal Investigator and organized the conference locally. Conference proceedings are published annually in the fully refereed journal *Topology Proceedings* (<http://topology.auburn.edu/tp/>).

(Submitted by Seth Oppenheimer)

## Mississippi University for Women

**Bonnie Oppenheimer**, professor of mathematics at MUW, was named the HEADWAE Faculty nominee last February, the Lowndes County Postsecondary Educator of the Year in May, and the Mississippi Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2010 College/University Teacher of the Year in October.

MUW faculty and staff hosted another Sonia Kovalevsky High School Mathematics Day on October 15. Ninety high school girls and fifteen teachers from seven schools attended the all day event. Sessions included biographical information on Sonia Kovalevsky and the history of "pi". A competition exam was given with MUW scholarships awarded to the top seven students. Lunch in MUW's cafeteria was followed by attending two smaller sessions from the list "Mathematical Challenges", "Garden Math", "The Game of Go", "Land Use Analysis and Water Quality Impacts", and "Flexagons". The faculty enjoyed an opportunity to work with high school students and interact mathematically with them. We hope that we provided a positive experience to these young girls.

(Submitted by Dorothy Kerzel)

## The University of Louisiana at Lafayette

**Leonardo Mihalcea** has joined the department as a Visiting Assistant Professor. Leonardo received his Ph.D from the University of Michigan. His main research interests are algebraic geometry and algebraic combinatorics.

**Kathleen Lopez** has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

**Azmy Ackleh** will become Department Head in January of 2011. **Roger Waggoner** has become somewhat of an expert in catching hard-head catfish, and is considering a new career as a fishing guide. He will remain with the department while he considers this option.

**Azmy Ackleh** is the PI on an NSF grant which is funding a study of the effects of the BP disaster on Gulf mammals.

**Kalimuthu Krishnamoorthy** is co-PI on a new \$1.4 million NIH grant.

**Ross Chiquet**, a UL Lafayette Instructor and Northwestern St. alumnus, received his Ph.D at our December commencement.

Graduate students **Jake Lennon** and **Pei Zhang** are the winners of this year's departmental award for outstanding teaching. **Christine Gorton** won this award several years ago.

The department's graduate student enrollment once again increased.

(Submitted by Roger Waggoner)

Mark your calendars!



The 2011 LA/MS section meeting  
will be hosted by  
the University of Mississippi

February 24-26, 2011