COMMENTARY

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Since July 2005 it has been my honor and my pleasure to be the Chief Editor of the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society*. This current issue of January 2024 will be the last issue for which I am Chief Editor. I note with some pride that a web search indicates that my term of 2005 to 2024 makes me the longest continuous serving Chief Editor of the *Bulletin* to date.

I give many thanks to the members and consultants of the Editorial Board over the past 19 years who have helped ensure that the *Bulletin* continued its goals to inform the mathematical community about current advances, directions, traditions, and ideas in broad areas of mathematics. I also thank Jennifer Wright Sharp and Peter Sykes of the AMS publications department whose work ensured the excellent presentation of each issue of the *Bulletin*.

A concept initiated by David Eisenbud, with the enthusiastic support of the previous Chief Editor, Donald Saari, is the *Current Events Bulletin* (*CEB*). This was inspired by Séminaire Bourbaki where mathematicians with strong expository skills speak on exciting developments concerning the work of others. These CEB lectures are delivered in an afternoon session at the Joint Mathematics Meetings each January, and articles based on their lectures are published in the *Bulletin* issue of the following January. We have continued this tradition every year. The current January 2024 issue contains four survey CEB articles discussing the work of the most recent Fields Medalists: Henry Cohn writes on the work of Maryna Viazovska, Andrew Granville writes on the work of James Maynard, Martin Hairer writes on the work of Hugo Dumil-Copin, and Christopher Eur writes on the work of June Huh. This current issue also contains a short article by Gui-Qiang Chen on the work of Cathleen Morawetz, which is preceded by the photograph taken when she was awarded the National Medal of Science in 1998.

The January 2006 issue of BAMS inaugurated the new covers. The venerable green covers made way for a different background cover for each issue. We chose images for the background "wash" that reflected historical documents, objects, and photographs connected with the mathematical world. A clear copy of the image is printed inside each issue. As you can see, the background image for this current issue is the Fields Medal itself, whose photograph we reproduce with kind permission of the International Mathematical Union.

For many years between 2006 and 2019 the covers and short, erudite "About the cover" articles were created by Gerald Alexanderson. He very generously allowed us to use material from his extensive collection of antiquarian mathematical books, documents, and objects. In total, Jerry produced about 50 wonderful cover images and articles for the readers of the *Bulletin* to enjoy.

Looking back to the origins of the *Bulletin*, we see that the first issue with a formal cover is the 1920 issue. The cover title, *The Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society*, is followed by the subtitle, *A Historical and Critical Review of Mathematical Science*. Now in the twenty-first century we introduced the "Mathematical Perspectives" section of the *Bulletin* which reflects the words in the subtitle of the 1920 cover. This new section includes short pieces that give personal views on different strands of the mathematical enterprise. Here are a few examples:

- The piece by Michael Atiyah addressed the question "Mathematics: art and science."
- The piece by Jeremy Avigard explored the question "Varieties of mathematical understanding."
- The piece by Karen Parshall provided a revisionist account concerning the American Mathematical Society and applied mathematics from the 1920s to the 1950s.

During my term as Chief Editor, the *Bulletin* published a number of memorial issues featuring the work of distinguished mathematicians who had recently died. We are very grateful to all the mathematicians whose dedicated work created such issues and memorial articles. The cover of each of these issues shows a photograph of the mathematician to whom the memorial issue is dedicated. Here are the names of the distinguished mathematicians whose memory we honored:

John Nash, Vladimir Voevodsky, Andrei Suslin, Maryam Mirzakhani, Elias Stein, Jean Bourgain, John H. Conway, Michael Atiyah, Harold Widom, Louis Nirenberg, Yuri Manin, Vaughn F. R. Jones.

Thanks to a generous donation, all the issues of the *Bulletin* from its inception to the present are now freely available on the Web to everyone at

`https://www.ams.org/journals/bull/all_issues.html?active=allissues`.

I encourage you to browse through this treasure trove which illustrates the vitality of diverse areas of mathematics and the stunning advances that have been made over the past century.

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