

Notices

of the American Mathematical Society

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Editorial

A Look Ahead

The *Notices* reports on mathematics, education, the profession, and opinion, among other things, in addition to recording information about the AMS and its activities. It serves a diverse readership of 30,000, and each article strives to inform a large number of readers about some topic or event.

The number and scope of expository mathematics articles in the *Notices* have increased dramatically in the past three years. But there is still a need: Some measure of success will have been achieved when potential authors are as eager to accept an invitation to write an article for the *Notices* as they are to accept an invitation to give an AMS hour address. This state should not be hard to achieve, as an article in the *Notices* has impact on more people and more mathematics than an invited address does.

In keeping with the idea that each article in the *Notices* hopes to interest a large number of readers, the Editorial Board often urges an invited author of a mathematics article to think in terms of giving a kind of colloquium in written form and to keep in mind some particular "sizable target audience" while writing. Rarely can such an audience consist entirely of experts, and consequently successful articles in the *Notices* are bounded above in level—at approximately the level of the more widely appreciated of the AMS invited hour addresses. Ideally these articles include some history and provide a context for appreciating the mathematics. They lead to the frontier and illuminate interconnections between different areas of mathematics—with that sizable target audience still in mind. The *Notices* continues to seek expository articles that fit this description.

Concerning education articles, the *Notices* recognizes the importance of the viewpoints mathematicians bring to education from pre-school through graduate school. It wants to promote discussion among mathematicians and mathematics educators, and it seeks to inform its readers about mathematics education. In this spirit, the Editorial Board welcomes expository articles related to mathematics education on any level. Articles on education should be well written and well informed. They should be enlightening to a sizable number of readers. In order to prevent acrimonious debate, which inhibits serious discussion, negative comments should not be directed toward personalities, specific programs, or whole fields of inquiry.

The *Notices* reports about many things concerning the mathematics profession. Among these are pieces about the job market, faculty salaries, grant support for research, conditions for graduate students, notable achievements by individuals and institutions, backlogs in journals, and other items. In a future issue the *Notices* will begin an in-depth study of the cost of publishing from a number of points of view.

Opinion pieces are a valuable tradition in the *Notices*. Some readers have wondered in the past whether the views expressed in the editorial column are the views of the AMS. In order to resolve this confusion, the *Notices* henceforth will clearly delineate personal opinions from official positions. Editorials will be statements about the *Notices* or will be elaborations of policies of the AMS written by the Editorial Board or certain officials. Pieces that largely represent just an individual opinion will appear elsewhere: in an "In My Opinion" column, as on the facing page, or in the "Letters to the Editor", or in special pieces clearly marked as opinion items. In addition, the *Notices* continues its tradition that essentially everything other than advertising, certain lists, and information about meetings is signed by the author.

—Anthony W. Knapp

Not to Miss

ABET Changes

Over a period of several years, the accrediting process for engineering schools will be undergoing a substantial revision that may affect the mathematics profession in serious ways. Allyn Jackson reports in "Engineering Accreditation Board Issues New Criteria" on the nature of these changes, Mary Beth Ruskai comments on the opposite page on possible ways of dealing with these changes, and a "Communication" by Solomon A. Garfunkel and Gail S. Young considers the related problem of declining enrollments in mathematics courses.

—A.W.K.