

# Notices

of the American Mathematical Society

**EDITOR:** Anthony W. Knapp

**ASSOCIATE EDITORS:**

Robert M. Fossum, Susan Friedlander (*Forum Editor*), Martin Golubitsky, Victor Guillemin, David Jerison, Susan Landau, Andy Magid (*Opinion Column Editor*), Judith Roitman, Mary Beth Ruskai, Mark Saul

**CONTRIBUTING EDITORS:** Hyman Bass, Steven Krantz, Hugo Rossi

**SENIOR WRITER and DEPUTY EDITOR:** Allyn Jackson

**MANAGING EDITOR:** Sandra Frost

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:**

Muriel Toupin, Anne-Marie Epp

**PRODUCTION:**

Leda Black, Lori Nero, Donna Salter, Deborah Smith, Peter Sykes, Maxine Wolfson

**ADVERTISING SALES:** Anne Newcomb

**SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:** Subscription prices for Volume 45 (1998) are \$300 list; \$240 institutional member; \$180 individual member. (The subscription price for members is included in the annual dues.) A late charge of 10% of the subscription price will be imposed upon orders received from nonmembers after January 1 of the subscription year. Add for postage: Surface delivery outside the United States and India—\$15; in India—\$36; expedited delivery to destinations in North America—\$35; elsewhere—\$70. Subscriptions and orders for AMS publications should be addressed to the American Mathematical Society, P.O. Box 5904, Boston, MA 02206-5904. All orders must be prepaid.

**ADVERTISING:** *Notices* publishes situations wanted and classified advertising, and display advertising for publishers and academic or scientific organizations.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Letters to the Editor, Forum pieces, articles, and reviews may be sent to the editor by e-mail at [notices@math.sunysb.edu](mailto:notices@math.sunysb.edu), by fax at 516-751-5730, or by postal mail at P.O. Box 333, East Setauket, NY 11733. Electronic submissions are preferred. Correspondence with the managing editor may be sent to [notices@ams.org](mailto:notices@ams.org).

**NOTICES ON e-MATH:** Most of this publication is available electronically through e-MATH, the Society's resource for delivering electronic products and services. To access the *Notices* on e-MATH, use the URL:

<http://www.ams.org/notices/>

Those with VT100-type terminals or without WWW browsing software can connect to e-MATH via Telnet (<telnet://e-math.ams.org>; login and password are "e-math") and use the Lynx option from the main menu.

[*Notices of the American Mathematical Society* is published monthly except bimonthly in June/July by the American Mathematical Society at 201 Charles Street, Providence, RI 02904-2213. Periodicals postage paid at Providence, RI, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address change notices to *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, P.O. Box 6248, Providence, RI 02940-6248.] Publication here of the Society's street address and the other information in brackets above is a technical requirement of the U.S. Postal Service. All correspondence should be mailed to the post office box, not the street address. Tel: 401-455-4000; e-mail: [notices@ams.org](mailto:notices@ams.org).

© Copyright 1998 by the  
American Mathematical Society.  
All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.  
The paper used in this journal is acid-free and falls within the guidelines established to ensure permanence and durability.

## Editorial

### About Covers

Mathematical images can and do play a role in advancing mathematics for specialists and in advertising mathematics to nonspecialists. Each era has produced its own images—from the Platonic solids of ancient Greece to the regular planar tilings of fourteenth-century Moorish Spain, to the intricacies of plant phyllotaxis (based on thirteenth-century Fibonacci sequences), to the nineteenth-century Bravais lattices (now the province of crystal chemistry), to the two-color tessellations popularized by M. C. Escher and the aperiodic Penrose tilings, and to the striking computer-generated twentieth-century images of the Lorenz attractor and the Mandelbrot set.

This issue of the *Notices* is the 38th in the new series, and with it we have the 38th cover image. The images have ranged from the mundane (pictures of the cities where AMS national meetings are being held) to the mathematically more interesting: geometry, DNA knots, chaos, tilings, and neural nets. The *Notices* is always on the lookout for attractive images that are about or related to mathematics—and better yet—for images that are coupled to a *Notices* article. Suggestions for cover images can be sent to Sandra Frost ([smf@ams.org](mailto:smf@ams.org)) at the AMS or to me ([mg@uh.edu](mailto:mg@uh.edu)).

This month's cover is a joint effort with Robin Wilson, who writes the "Stamp Corner" for the *Mathematics Intelligencer*. Robin has collected many stamps related to mathematics and mathematicians during the twelve years he has been writing this column. We have chosen a few of these stamps from a number of countries as a small pictorial celebration of mathematics history.

—Martin Golubitsky for the Editorial Board

## Not to Miss

### The Demise of the Young Scholars Program

A major emphasis of today's mathematics education reform effort is encapsulated in the phrase "mathematics for all". Raising the general mathematical level of all students is an important goal. Another important goal is giving highly mathematically talented students the inspiration and challenge they need. The demise of the Young Scholars Program at the National Science Foundation, which supported efforts such as the Ross Program at Ohio State University, shows that in the competition for funding for educational programs those aimed at the mathematically talented can easily lose out. The feature article by Allyn Jackson describes how the Young Scholars Program was eliminated for reasons having little to do with the success or effectiveness of the grants it supported.

—Anthony W. Knapp

## It's All Greek to Me

*The following item is reprinted from The New York Times:*

A television review on October 27 about that night's *Nova* program titled "The Proof", referred imprecisely to what was being proved. It was Fermat's Last Theorem, not the Pythagorean theorem. Fermat's last theorem states that the equation  $x^n + y^n = z^n$  has no solution when  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  are positive whole numbers and  $n$  is a whole number greater than 2. When  $n$  equals 2, the equation has many solutions and is known as the Pythagorean theorem: in a right-angle triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.