
Inside the AMS

Council Approves Collection Mechanism for Weisfeiler Investigation

At its meeting in April 2001 the AMS Council endorsed a funds collection mechanism to support the investigation of the 1985 disappearance in Chile of the mathematician Boris Weisfeiler. The mechanism, called the Boris Weisfeiler Legal Fund, was set up by the Committee of Concerned Scientists.

Weisfeiler was a professor of mathematics at Pennsylvania State University when he disappeared in Chile during a hiking trip in January 1985. Further information about his case may be found in "Letters to the Editor" (this issue, page 680, and the January 2001 issue, pages 7–8). Information is also available on the Web site of the Committee of Concerned Scientists, <http://www.libertynet.org/~ccs/>, and on the Web site <http://weisfeiler.com/boris/>.

Tax-deductible contributions can be made by writing checks payable to the Committee of Concerned Scientists, with an indication on the check that it is for the Weisfeiler Fund. They should be mailed to: Mrs. Dorothy Hirsch, Executive Director, Committee of Concerned Scientists, 53–34 208th Street, Bayside, NY 11364.

—Joel Lebowitz, *Rutgers University
Chair, AMS Committee on Human Rights of
Mathematicians*

AMS-AAAS Media Fellow Chosen

This year the AMS is again participating in the Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellowship program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). This program places graduate students in internships in major media organizations for ten weeks during the summer. The purpose of the program is to improve public understanding and appreciation of science and technology and to sharpen the ability of the fellows to communicate complex technical issues to nonspecialists. RAPHAEL (RAFE) JONES, a graduate student in mathematics at Brown University, has been awarded a fellowship for the summer of 2001 through the sponsorship of the AMS. He will spend the fellowship at Discovery Channel Online.

—Elaine Kehoe

AMS Web Page on Authoring Software

The AMS has created a Web page for the exchange of information on authoring software for mathematics. The purpose of the page is to serve as a forum for discussion and comparison of various authoring software tools and also as a central resource for links to software and information available on the Web.

\TeX has become the language of choice for writing and publishing mathematical research. But software evolves rapidly, and there are continual innovations in authoring

software that mathematicians use. New initiatives such as the mathematical mark-up language MathML could bring further rapid changes that mathematical authors need to know about.

The aim of the AMS Web page on authoring software is to provide a place where users can find out what software is currently available, which software other authors have found most useful, how to get particular software or fonts, and how to achieve various effects with current software.

The URL for the page is <http://www.ams.org/tools/authoring-software.html>. Comments and contributions may be sent to authoring-software@ams.org.

—Allyn Jackson

AMS Game Show Produced in Rhode Island

In celebration of Mathematics Awareness Month, the AMS game show “Who Wants to Be a Mathematician?” was presented on the campus of Rhode Island College on April 25.



The second production of the event (the first took place at the Joint Meetings in New Orleans in January) drew ten high school students and one eighth-grader from around Rhode Island as participants. As in New Orleans, AMS public awareness officer Michael Breen guided students through a series of mathematical

questions. Questions asked of each contestant increased in difficulty, and each correct answer led to progression up a list of prizes ranging from a graphite calculator (a pencil) to the top prize, \$2,000 in cash, donated by the AMS.

Jonathan Goulet, from Classical High School in Providence, was high-achiever for the day, the only contestant to win the top \$2,000 prize. On his way to the top, Goulet made use of all of his “lifelines”. Patterned after the popular television show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?”, the AMS version offered these lifelines: Ask Your Teacher, 50-50, Ask the Audience.

The other students who took part in the Rhode Island game show were: Bryan Cole, Bishop Hendricken High School; Jeremy



AMS game show host Mike Breen with high-scorer Jonathan Goulet of Classical High School, Providence, RI.

Gordon, Exeter-West Greenwich High School; John Hawley, Toll Gate High School; Tom Howard, Cumberland



Left to right: Mike Breen, Jonathan Goulet, AMS Executive Director John Ewing.

High School; Alanna Hughes, Providence Country Day; Chris King, Ponaganset High School; Alexander Marcus, The Wheeler School; Emilie Pressman, Lincoln School; Elizabeth Toher, LaSalle Academy; and Nathaniel Walker, Burrillville High School.

The AMS Public Awareness Office plans to organize more appearances of the “game show” in 2002. Plans are under way to put on the game at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego and in Rhode Island to celebrate Mathematics Awareness Month next year.

—Sandra Frost

2001 Arnold Ross Lectures

On April 3, 2001, the AMS partnered with the St. Louis Science Center to present the twelfth annual Arnold Ross Lectures for high school mathematics students. Over 125 students and teachers came to hear this year’s invited speakers, Mary Ellen Rudin (University of Wisconsin) and John H. Conway (Princeton University). Rudin’s talk was entitled “What is Topology?”, and Conway spoke on “Tangles, Bangles and Knots”.

The Arnold Ross Lecture Series was started in 1988 by Paul J. Sally of the University of Chicago. In 1993 the lectures were named after Arnold E. Ross, emeritus professor of the Ohio State University, in honor of his many contributions to developing the mathematical talent of high school students (see the interview with Ross in this issue of the *Notices*). The lectures have been held in Boston (1988), San Diego (1990), Chicago (1992), Columbus, Ohio (1993), Minneapolis (1994), Houston (1995), College Park, Maryland (1996), Boston (1999), and Berkeley, California (2000).

Information on the 2002 Arnold Ross Lectures will be posted on the Web page <http://www.ams.org/meetings/ross-lect.html>.

—Allyn Jackson