
Inside the AMS

Experimental “Current Events” Session at Joint Meetings

At the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Phoenix in January 2004, AMS president David Eisenbud is organizing an experimental special session on “Current Events”. The session will feature four expository lectures on topics at the frontier of mathematical research.

The format for the talks follows the model of the famous Bourbaki Seminars, in that mathematicians with especially strong expository skills speak on work not their own, and a written version of the talk is prepared beforehand and distributed at the session. But there are some novel features too. Each talk in the session will begin with a general, nontechnical presentation of the topic, lasting about twenty minutes. There will be a short break, and then the talk will continue with a more detailed presentation of how the topic is used in a particular setting.

For the session in Phoenix, the speakers and their lecture titles are:

Margaret H. Wright, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences: “The interior-point revolution in optimization: History, recent developments, and lasting consequences”

Thomas C. Hales, University of Pittsburgh: “What is motivic integration?”

Andrew Granville, Université de Montréal: “It is easy to determine whether or not a given integer is prime”

John W. Morgan, Columbia University: “Perelman's recent work on the classification of 3-manifolds”

The session will take place on Friday, January 9, 2004, starting at 1:00 p.m. For further details, consult the Web page for the Phoenix Joint Meetings, http://www.ams.org/amsmtgs/2078_intro.html.

—Allyn Jackson

Fan and Caldwell Scholarships Awarded

The AMS awarded ten scholarships to students attending programs for mathematically talented high school students held in summer 2003. Nine Ky and Yu-Fen Fan Scholarships and one Roderick P. C. Caldwell Scholarship were awarded. The scholarships are intended to cover the tuition for the programs.

The names of the students receiving Fan Scholarships, their high schools, their hometowns, and the programs they attended (in parentheses) are: RUTH DHANARAJ, Carmel High School, Carmel, Indiana (Stanford University Mathematics Camp (SUMaC)); MOHAMED DIMBIL, Westmont High School, Campbell, California (SUMaC, Stanford University); ANASTASSIA FEDYK, Albany High School, Albany, California (USA Mathcamp); MARIA GUIRGUIS, Brooklyn Technical High School, Brooklyn, New York (Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics); OLGA MANDELSHTAM, University High School, Irvine, California (SUMaC, Stanford University); JANE (JINGWEN) OUYANG, Francis Lewis High School, Fresh Meadows, New York (Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics); ELENA UDOVINA, Hathaway Brown High School, Shaker Heights, Ohio (Ross Mathematics Program, Ohio State University); VALERICA VULPE, Mircea Eliade Lyceum, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova (SUMaC, Stanford University); SHAMIKA WALKER, Judson High School, San Antonio, Texas (SWT Honors Summer Math Camp, Southwest Texas State University); and TINGTING XIE, Corona del Sol High School, Tempe, Arizona (PROMYS, Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists, Boston University).

Receiving a Roderick P. C. Caldwell Scholarship was TIFFANY KO, Terre Haute South Vigo High School, Terre Haute, Indiana (PROMYS, Program in Mathematics for Young Scientists, Boston University).

The Fan Scholarships are supported by the Society's Ky and Yu-Fen Fan Endowment. This endowment was established through a gift by Ky Fan and his wife, Yu-Fen Fan. Income from the endowment supports mathematics in

China and mathematically talented high school students in the U.S.

The Caldwell Scholarships were endowed by a gift from Winifred A. Caldwell in memory of her husband, Roderick P. C. Caldwell. The scholarships are part of the AMS Epsilon Fund, which supports programs for mathematically talented high school students.

—Allyn Jackson

AMS Participates in Celebration of von Neumann's Birth

In October 2003 various scientific groups held celebrations within Hungary to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of John von Neumann. Former AMS president Arthur Jaffe of Harvard University attended to represent the Society at the meetings and at the dedication of a commemorative plaque, jointly sponsored by the Hungarian and American Mathematical Societies. Jaffe also presented one of the mathematical talks at the event.

The celebration of John von Neumann's birth came as the culmination of an entire year dedicated to von Neumann's genius. Three overlapping conferences took place at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with a common program on Wednesday morning, October 15. The subjects of the scientific meetings were: scientific computation and dynamical systems, computers and computer science, and operator theory and mathematical physics.

President Ferenc Mádl of Hungary attended the entire Wednesday morning session, which was common to all three meetings. Jaffe made brief remarks, recalling that von Neumann lived half his life in the United States. Because von Neumann was the only modern scientist whose work engendered both Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, one could make the case that his influence on science, technology, and society was greater than any other mathematician in the twentieth century.

Jaffe also read excerpts from letters of greetings sent by David Eisenbud, president of the AMS, and Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences. He presented the originals to E. Szilveszter Vizi, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Later that day there was a dedication of a holographic portrait of John von Neumann, which stands prominently in the lobby of the Hungarian Ministry of Information Technology and Communication. The minister presented the first John von Neumann Awards to Marina von Neumann Whitman and to Charles Simonyi. Guests were given a tour of the exhibit on the history of the digital computer by the president of the computer society, Győző Kovács.

The dedication of the plaque took place at noon on Thursday, October 16. The large stone plaque was placed on the birth home of John von Neumann and was jointly sponsored by the Bolyai Mathematical Society (Hungarian Mathematical Society) and the American Mathematical Society.



Arthur Jaffe in front of von Neumann commemorative plaque in Budapest.

The von Neumann home is on the corner of a busy thoroughfare and a side street (which the police closed for the half-hour ceremony). Von Neumann grew up in a wealthy family. His birth house is an impressive four-story stone building with over twenty rooms, although today it is divided into a number of apartments. Remarkably, just a short distance away another plaque on a building commemorates the fact that John Kemeny lived there as a student and that he was the inventor of the Basic computer language.

The day was brisk but beautiful. There were three very short speeches: two in Hungarian, one in English. The event began with Kálmán Kovács, the minister for information technology and communication. Professor Imre Csizsár, president of the Bolyai Society, attended the dedication, but Professor Denes Petz, organizer of the meeting, gave the official greeting on behalf of the Bolyai Society. Jaffe spoke last on behalf of the AMS, emphasizing the importance of the public recognition of scientists and mathematicians to inspire a younger generation of students to pursue scientific careers.

The entire event received extensive coverage in Budapest, both by television and by the newspapers. Although the Hungarian president spent his entire Wednesday morning participating in the celebration of von Neumann's legacy, the American ambassador was absent from the meeting altogether. He sent his cultural attaché to the dedication on Thursday.

—Based on a report from Arthur Jaffe

Deaths of AMS Members

R. G. BARTLE, of Ann Arbor, MI, died on September 18, 2003. From 1976 to 1978 and 1986 to 1990 he was executive editor of *Mathematical Reviews*. He was a member of the Society for 54 years.

ECKEHART HOTZEL, retired, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft, Germany, died on September 28, 2003. Born on May 2, 1937, he was a member of the Society for 33 years.

GERHARD J. NEUBAUER, of the University of Konstanz, Germany, died on August 6, 2003. Born on May 21, 1930, he was a member of the Society for 40 years.

DONALD WESTERN, of Lancaster, PA, died on September 17, 2003. Born on May 7, 1915, he was a member of the Society for 61 years.