

About the Cover

Julia Robinson and Hilbert's Tenth Problem

This month's cover was suggested by Bjorn Poonen's article on undecidability in number theory. The images have been taken from George Csicsery's new documentary film *Julia Robinson and Hilbert's Tenth Problem*, recently premiered at the 2008 Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego. The right-hand images portray Julia's sister, Constance Reid, who narrates much of the film and who appeared at the premier. The left-hand sequence is taken from a film of Yuri Matiyasevich lecturing in the Soviet Union in 1970 on his solution of Hilbert's tenth problem, towards which Julia and colleagues had made decisive contributions. In the center are a selection of photographs of Julia at various ages, including one with Constance. The one at the bottom was taken very shortly before her death in 1985.

The one just above that was taken in her office in the "stat lab" of Jerzy Neyman during World War II. Elizabeth Scott, in her memorial of Julia (*Notices* 85 (1985), p. 739) tells a story about this period worth retelling.

Julia was by then married to Raphael Robinson, who had an appointment in mathematics; a university rule made it quite difficult for the mathematics department to employ both of them. Professor Neyman felt that Julie should be employed and encouraged to do research. He argued that statistics, although technically in mathematics, had a lot of autonomy in budget and appointments, including a "line item" for research assistant. Although I already held this position, he arranged that I should be moved to another research position to accommodate Julie's appointment. Fine, except that Personnel suddenly interfered, contending that the position, now that it had changed, should be under Personnel—in essence, out of research. Julie was asked to submit a job description of what she did each day, so she did: "Monday—tried to prove theorem, Tuesday—tried to prove theorem, Wednesday—tried to prove theorem, Thursday—tried to prove theorem, Friday—theorem false." Personnel withdrew.

Our thanks to George Csicsery for providing the images. His film (on DVD) is distributed by A. K. Peters Ltd. More information can be found at <http://www.zalafilms.com>. The *Notices* will publish a detailed review soon.

—Bill Casselman, Graphics Editor
(notices-covers@ams.org)