

Inside the AMS

Mathematics Awareness Month, April 2009: “Mathematics and Climate”

The AMS, the American Statistical Association, the Mathematical Association of America, and the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics announce that the theme for Mathematics Awareness Month, April 2009, is **Mathematics and Climate**. One of the most important challenges of our time is modeling global climate. Some of the fundamental questions researchers are currently addressing are:

- How long will the summer Arctic Sea ice pack survive?
- Are hurricanes and other severe weather events getting stronger?
- How much will sea level rise as ice sheets melt?
- How do human activities affect climate change?
- How is global climate monitored?

Calculus, differential equations, numerical analysis, probability, and statistics are just some of the areas of mathematics used to understand the oceans, atmosphere, polar ice caps, and the complex interactions among these vast systems. Indeed, analyzing feedback effects is a crucial component of global climate modeling and often a significant factor in long-term predictions. For example, warmer temperatures cause ice to melt, exposing more land and water, so that more sunlight is absorbed instead of being reflected, in turn leading to more warming.

Mathematics, computer science, and other sciences are inextricably linked, and each is required to begin to solve the fundamental questions about Earth’s climate, particularly those concerning global warming. Moreover,



math and science are central to the development of both traditional and alternative energy sources and to the evolution of other strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change.

Mathematics departments can find a sample press release that can be adapted for public awareness activities on the Mathematics Awareness Month website, <http://www.mathaware.org>.

Each year the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics sponsors Mathematics Awareness Month to recognize the importance of mathematics through written materials and an accompanying poster that highlight mathematical developments and applications in one particular area.

—JPBM announcement from the
AMS Public Awareness Office

Deaths of AMS Members

G. C. BYERS, from Hancock, MI, died on January 19, 1996. Born on June 18, 1918, he was a member of the Society for 45 years.

CHARLES CHRISTENSON, from Moscow, ID, died on September 20, 2008. Born on September 17, 1936, he was a member of the Society for 43 years.

H. CORNET, from The Hague, Netherlands, died in November 2008. Born on June 21, 1923, he was a member of the Society for 35 years.

MICHAEL HERSCHORN, from Westmount, Quebec, Canada, died on March 2, 2008. Born on April 21, 1933, he was a member of the Society for 52 years.

JACK OHM, from Pensacola Beach, FL, died on May 24, 2008. Born on September 23, 1932, he was a member of the Society for 51 years.

NICHOLAS REINGOLD, from Somerville, MA, died on July 3, 2008. Born in July 1960, he was a member of the Society for 25 years.

JOHN ROBERT STALLINGS, from Berkeley, CA, died on November 24, 2008. Born on July 22, 1935, he was a member of the Society for 36 years.