

Anniversaries

With this issue, the *Notices* completes fifteen years of publishing in its current format. For perhaps as many as half our readers, this is the only format they've ever known: features, communications, and commentary "...providing a lively and informative magazine, which contains news about mathematics and mathematicians as well as information about the Society and the profession." Or so reported and recommended the 1993 Committee to Review Member Publications, or CRMP, a recommendation the AMS Council adopted in August of that year. Older readers probably still refer to the current format as the "new" *Notices*, although the CRMP's term of art was "enhanced *Notices* of the American Mathematical Society", or "eNAMS". Even in 1993, this could have been a sly reference to an electronically delivered "e-NAMS" (the Society's online services were known as e-math at the time). Or perhaps not: the same CRMP report referred to an "improved Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society", or "iBAMS"; surely they weren't making a clairvoyant hint about a journal for touchscreen cellphones.

Actually the report is hardly prescient. Virtually none of the ideas for eNAMS contents that the CRMP attached to their report made it into the new *Notices*. And nowhere in the report is there discussion of the graphics which have become emblematic of *Notices* articles. But by the time the first enhanced issue of the *Notices* appeared, in January 1995, most of the present format had fallen into place. In fact the features appearing in that issue are not so different from those appearing in this one, including a memorial article and an expository mathematical article. And there was a "Letter from the Editor", where Hugo Rossi announced "The *Notices* shall continue to publish information about the profession and the mathematics community along with articles of general interest. But we shall also begin to regularly publish informal, discursive articles about mathematical research: new developments, trends, assessment, history; the analog for these articles is that of the discussion in the tearoom preceding the colloquium lecture (not the lecture!)."

I believe Hugo's vision has been realized, but it wasn't easy. Lots of effort went into convincing mathematicians who had the insight to write such articles to actually do so, and much editorial effort went into revising and editing submissions into the ultimately published articles. In the end, something has emerged as the paradigmatic *Notices* article. However difficult the qualities of that may be to articulate precisely, readers know what it means when they read one, and authors know what it means when they write one. Fortunately, there are many authors willing to make the attempt.

This was not always the case. Hugo's "Letter from the Editor" notes the difficulty mathematicians have in writing informally and the challenge in getting them to try. I've been a member of the *Notices* Editorial Board (NEBO) since it began in 1994, and I know the effort my predecessors

as editor had to put into soliciting articles. Indeed, there was sometimes an impression in the mathematical community that one had to be invited to write for the *Notices*. That was never the case—the *Notices* has always welcomed submissions from readers—and as editor I have come to rely on such submissions. Luckily, good ones have been sufficiently abundant, with many excellent ones on topics I never anticipated. And to be fair, the *Notices* Editorial Board, including myself, as well as officers of the Society, have continued to solicit articles when something of interest arises.

With this issue, I complete my second, and final, term as editor of the *Notices*. This means I've been editor for 40 percent of the issues since the current format was adopted, a sobering statistic I never noticed until preparing this letter. That it was a pleasure goes without saying; so does forgoing any assessment.

Beginning with the January 2010 issue, Steven Krantz will be *Notices* editor (see the article by Elaine Kehoe in this issue). Among all his other achievements, Steve served on the 1994 inaugural NEBO, and he rejoined NEBO when my terms began. As he tells Elaine, some interesting new changes are coming up.

There is also some important continuity to be noted. The excellent AMS Production and Graphics Departments and Production Assistant Muriel Toupin will continue to maintain the quality and values the *Notices* is famous for. Managing Editor Sandra Frost and Deputy Editor/Senior Writer Allyn Jackson will continue to bring to the *Notices*, as they have since 1995, the professional skills and judgment that make the *Notices*, well, the *Notices*. To them, and to the rest of the staff, I am deeply grateful.

—Andy Magid