1007-57-232   **Jesse Johnson*** (`jjohnson@math.ucdavis.edu`), Mathematics Department, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. *Locally Unknotted Spines of Heegaard Splittings.*

I will describe a recent result concerning the local properties of Heegaard splittings, namely that under reasonable conditions, the spines of the handlebodies of a strongly reducible Heegaard splitting will intersect a closed ball in a graph which is isotopic into the boundary of the ball. I will then discuss how this may be related to the stabilization problem for Heegaard splittings and, if time allows, discuss the proof. (Received February 22, 2005)