LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Add Impact Factors to Journal Backlog Report

Each year, in the month of November, the *Notices* publishes an article on backlog of important mathematical journals. We often need our work to be published in a certain time frame and this information becomes very useful to us in selecting a particular journal. I think that adding impact factors of journals to this article will enhance its value. Certain other analytics may also be added.

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Community Outreach a Moral Imperative

Community outreach is one of our greatest responsibilities as professional mathematicians. It is a moral imperative.

I began my involvement ten years ago when my math department at University of North Carolina Asheville reviewed our department goals and felt there was an opportunity for significant improvement in community outreach. I raised my hand to take on that challenge.

I cast a wide net for community partners, because math outreach is really a commitment to building community. After several months of planning, an informal group met on campus to talk about Asheville's math needs, to identify existing resources, and to look for opportunities to create new resources. Attending were math educators from the local school systems, from the community college, and from the private liberal arts school twenty minutes away. There were also representatives from the local hospital, the Chamber of Commerce, the YWCA, the youth prison, the Department of Social Services, and a local tutoring coalition. Colleagues from the math department, engineering, economics, education, and physics joined us, along with two members of the Chancellor's cabinet. We continued meeting quarterly for a year and a half. Many projects flowed from these discussions, including a math science partnership grant, a community Pi Run, math activity booths at street parties, making paper snowflakes at local businesses, starting a math leadership club in public housing, and much more.

By exploring how math connects to each of our organizations, we discovered that math literacy was more important to the whole Asheville community than any one of us realized separately. We thought it was crucial to make these connections more visible. In February 2008, we organized a Math Literacy Summit to be the vehicle for this message. We identified five themes for the summit that make the connections between math and daily life concrete: workforce development, personal finance, public health, social justice, and the arts. We ended up running the summit four times over the years, impacting hundreds of Asheville educators, parents, students, and business leaders.

Perhaps you have thought about math outreach and dismissed it as too much work. You would be right to think it requires effort, which needs to be around restructuring the expectations of our work environment and professional organizations. In every interaction, we have in our community, on and off campus, in the classroom and in the grocery store, we are unwitting ambassadors of mathematics as a subject and as a profession. We have an obligation to address our role as ambassadors. Most of us have little preparation for conversations about the importance of math and little experience building community relationships. The good news is that we can choose be intentional about this role as ambassadors.

Math outreach requires creativity, humility, and a professional framework that supports advocacy. Build outreach into your department mission. Train your graduate students in community engagement. In your curriculum, create opportunities for service-learning classes, community-engaged scholarship, public lectures, and a visiting program for public schools. Get started. We often claim math is important to everyone. Let us act like it.

—*Samuel R. Kaplan*
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Review of *Combinatorial Algebra...*

In his review of my book (*Bulletin AMS*, October, 2017), Laurent Bartholdi made two wrong attributions of results and theorems from my book. Since he made similar wrong statements before, I am sure that these are not misprints. Since this is a review of my book, one might get an impression that the book has wrong attributions too; hence I am writing this letter.

1. Bartholdi writes that Grigorchuk simplified an example by Aleshin. That is not true. The two groups, Aleshin's and Grigorchuk's, were constructed independently in two completely different ways. Moreover Grigorchuk had an uncountable set of groups. The fact that one of these groups is related (and commensurable) to the Aleshin group was discovered later by Merzlyakov. In my book,

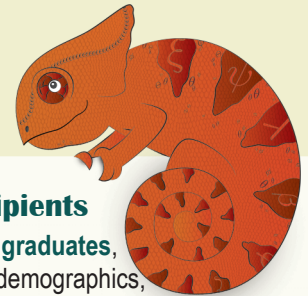there are correct references to Aleshin, Grigorchuk, and Merzlyakov.

2. Bartholdi writes that in my book, I present Adian's solution of the Burnside problem (existence of finitely generated infinite groups of bounded exponent). That is not true. First of all the problem was solved by Novikov and Adian (that is the order of authors of their paper), and second I present Olshanskii's proof of the Novikov-Adian theorem. I also mention that Olshanskii proved a weaker form of the theorem because his exponent is much higher.

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