

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## Please keep politics out of the *Notices*

Dear Editor,

I have just read the first pages of August 2019 *Notices*. I know we do not live in a vacuum. But I appeal to you to keep political articles and letters out of the *Notices*.

*Sincerely,*  
Frank Okoh  
Wayne State University  
Detroit, Michigan

(Received August 8, 2019)

## RIP for MathJobs at UC system

In regard to Abigail Thompson's depressing but helpful and interesting account of the UC system's decision not to allow the use of MathJobs, there is actually another tool of resistance that Professor Thompson doesn't mention.

Many non-math departments use Academic Jobs Online (AJO). AJO is "MathJobs for the rest of them"—it's built on the same system and looks and functions identically. At the University of Oregon we were told that we all had to switch to a commercial personnel management system for hiring, but we successfully pushed back against this requirement by approaching HR and the administration as a group of departments using AJO and MathJobs. We made the same arguments as the ones that Professor Thompson outlined. I suspect if the Math department had tried this alone, it would not have worked, but by having a group of departments that included most of the science departments, and that probably accounted for over half of the academic hiring on campus, we were able to prevail. At least for now.

Of course the scale of one moderately sized university (University of Oregon) is quite different from the scale of the entire UC system, and no doubt that was also a factor.

—Hal Sadofsky  
University of Oregon

(Received July 25, 2019)

## Swinnerton-Dyer memorial

As an eternal nit-picker, I was bothered by two things in the generally very enjoyable collection of notes about the late Sir Peter.

In the bibliography, he is sometimes called Swinnerton-Dyer P. and sometimes as Swinnerton-Dyer HPF. The latter form mystified me until I realized that HPF was your short form of H. P. F. The inconsistency irked me, but worse was the fact that nowhere do you give his other names (his full name was Henry Peter Francis Swinnerton-Dyer).

Then Alexei Skorobogatov refers to his subject's "nobility" and it has some importance in his note because he was impressed by the man's unpretentiousness, his "pleasant and benevolent manners." But nowhere have you said anything about this nobility. I had to look it up. Apparently he was a baronet, which is the lowest you can get and still be of the nobility. You are not a lord, only a knight, but it is hereditary. Anyway why couldn't you have mentioned somewhere about his baronetcy?

I have spent three years in England but do not know the fine points; however, I am very aware that the British are extremely conscious of rank. It is therefore interesting to know that he was Sir Peter from birth, and not just from some mathematical honor. I don't even know whether or not your collection mentions that he was FRS or that he was Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University. Nor do I know whether that is enough to be called "Sir" but I think not. He was entitled to "Sir" after being honored as KBE in 1987, even if he had not already been "Sir" when he succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1975. It is incorrect, and might in some circles be considered insulting, that you nowhere refer to him as "Sir" until the headline of Skorobogatov's note.

If you were to publish this letter, I would probably be called out and corrected by some of your British readers, which is OK. But I think that these things should have been part of your job as Editor.

Thanks for tolerating my criticism.

—Martin C. Tangora  
University of Illinois at Chicago

(Received August 7, 2019)

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\*We invite readers to submit letters to the editor at [notices-letters@ams.org](mailto:notices-letters@ams.org).