

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION TO INFORM MEMBERS ABOUT SOCIETY ACTIVITIES. THIS FIRST ISSUE COVERS SOME OF THE PROGRAMS OF THE NEW PUBLIC AWARENESS OFFICE AND THE WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE.

## Hyman Bass on Outreach

In a recent interview AMS President Hyman Bass emphasized the importance of public outreach by the Society. "I'm a firm believer in outreach efforts. It's really vital to make the public aware of how omnipresent math is in our lives. Most of us don't realize how incredibly useful mathematics is. Sometimes mathematicians themselves have a hard time believing how useful it is."

On March 21 Bass (along with presidents of the American Chemical Society, American Physical Society and Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology) testified before the House Appropriations Committee to advocate for increased funding of the NSF—"the unique sanctuary for the support of basic long-term research." The testimony went well. "The most important message was that these four organizations were sitting there together making a concerted statement. Mathematics doesn't need to be given a privileged place, but the environment for support of basic science needs to be brought into balance, which is not now the case. It's important that some of our strongest allies—Rita Colwell is a striking example—are coming from the life sciences.

"I urge members to write to their Congressmen in support of the NSF, and I feel very deeply that this is an argument not just for mathematics or science but for what the country needs."

**Read more** *Presidential Views: Interview with Hyman Bass* in **Notices**, March 2001 at [www.ams.org/notices/200103/comm-bass.pdf](http://www.ams.org/notices/200103/comm-bass.pdf).



## "Colwell has set a new priority for the NSF, and it's not life sciences, but mathematics."

An interview with NSF Director Rita Colwell appeared in the **Los Angeles Times** article *Math Push Adds Up for Chief of Science Foundation* on March 8. Colwell, a biologist, recognizes and unabashedly declares that the biological, social and behavioral sciences "are ready to explode with huge databases [and] we need to develop new mathematical thinking to make use of that wealth of information ... Mathematics is so soul-satisfying. There's such enormous beauty in mathematics..."

The mathematical community is fortunate to have such an influential advocate for funding of mathematics research as well as such an enthusiastic champion for mathematics as a pursuit. This article provided excellent visibility for mathematics and the profession.

**Read more** Visit the NSF Mathematics and Physical Sciences website at [www.nsf.gov/home/mps/](http://www.nsf.gov/home/mps/).



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

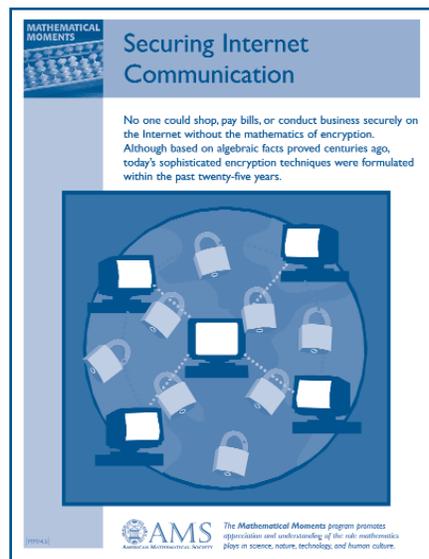
Public Awareness Office

Washington, D.C. Office

Epsilon Fund

## AMS Establishes New Public Awareness Office

Public Awareness Officers Mike Breen and Annette Emerson work with the media, scientific societies, institutes, universities, and museums to promote awareness of mathematics and to publicize meetings, events, prizes, and AMS programs. Here are some of the major activities to date.



DESIGNING AIRCRAFT  
 DECIPHERING DNA  
 STORING FINGERPRINTS  
 INVESTING IN MARKETS  
 CREATING CRYSTALS  
 SEEING THE WORLD THROUGH FRACTALS  
 EXPERIMENTING WITH THE HEART  
 SECURING INTERNET COMMUNICATION  
 MAKING MOVIES COME ALIVE  
 LISTENING TO MUSIC  
 DESCRIBING THE OCEANS  
 ROUTING TRAFFIC THROUGH THE INTERNET  
 TRACKING PRODUCTS  
 FORECASTING WEATHER  
 MANUFACTURING BETTER LENSES

### Mathematical Moments

The AMS has launched a series of informational flyers designed to promote appreciation and understanding of the role mathematics plays in science, nature, technology, and human culture. NSF Director Rita Colwell is using these flyers in presentations to scientists in other disciplines and to Congressional budget committees.

These introductory “snapshots” can be used as teaching tools, informational handouts for funding, or to promote awareness of mathematics to the media, colleagues and the general public.

**Read more** Download **Mathematical Moments** pdf files and submit ideas at [www.ams.org/ams/mathmoments.html](http://www.ams.org/ams/mathmoments.html).

### Publicity for the Joint Mathematics Meetings (JMM)

The Public Awareness Office hosted a press room at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in New Orleans. Articles generated from presentations at JMM 2001 appeared in *Science*, *Science News*, *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), *The Economist*, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Two 2000 AAAS-AMS Media Fellows, Kathryn Leonard and Mary Ann Saadi, also attended the Meetings and reported on some of the sessions. All of the participating societies benefited from the publicity.

**Read more** JMM highlights at [www.ams.org/ams/jmm2001-highlights.html](http://www.ams.org/ams/jmm2001-highlights.html).

### Discoveries and Breakthroughs in Science (DBIS)

The AMS collaborates with the American Institute of Physics to contribute toward the production of this series of video news segments.

Each month, 60 subscribing stations receive twelve, 90-second video spots showing how recent advances in science impact consumers.

The role of the AMS is to seek out and define story ideas that highlight breakthroughs in and applications of mathematics. We invite AMS members to contact us at [pa-office@ams.org](mailto:pa-office@ams.org) with proposals.

A story that appeared in the *New York Times* on two mathematicians who used combinatorics to schedule XFL football games became the source for a DBIS segment.

**Read more** The **DBIS** program description and sample videos are at [www.aip.org/dbis](http://www.aip.org/dbis).

### Math in the Media

This website, edited by Tony Phillips (SUNY at Stony Brook), shows the range and quality of articles on mathematics that appear in the general media and in popular science publications such as *Science*, *Nature*, *Discover*, and *Science News*. The Public Awareness Office gathers the articles on math and forwards them to Tony. He writes and illustrates what's new in math. Sherry O'Brien, AMS Webmaster, helps to format the monthly "magazine."



What trends does Tony see in math in the popular media? "Much more interest in mathematicians as people than ever before. High-profile movies: *Good Will Hunting*, *Pi*, and—coming soon—*A Beautiful Mind*, and Broadway plays: *Breaking the Code*, *Proof*. I think this will help a lot to make young people aware of math as a career, and an exciting one."

**Read more** See current and archived issues of **Math in the Media** at [www.ams.org/new-in/math/](http://www.ams.org/new-in/math/) and Tony's **Featured Column** at [www.ams.org/new-in-math/cover/](http://www.ams.org/new-in-math/cover/).

### Who Wants To Be A Mathematician

In this game 10 students qualify for a chance to be in the "hot seat" facing Mike Breen and a series of pre-calculus questions with multiple-choice answers. The questions get harder and the prizes better (culminating in the Grand Prize of \$2000 from the AMS). **Who Wants To Be A Mathematician** players and audience had a great time at the Joint Mathematics Meetings in January and at Rhode Island College in April.

**Read more** A brief write-up about the fun and games at JMM in New Orleans is at [www.ams.org/ams/jmm2001-highlights.html#whowants](http://www.ams.org/ams/jmm2001-highlights.html#whowants).

### Contact with the Press

An increasing number of journalists and project researchers are contacting the AMS as an information source about prize-winners, demographics of mathematicians, perspectives on math education, the mathematics behind timely topics (such as elections), meetings, historical facts and figures. Sometimes we act as liaison, connecting researchers and writers with the right specialist.

"Who would be able to tell me about the math behind voting?"  
"Donald Saari, the University of California, Irvine."

The writers are grateful to the AMS for the assistance, and we are grateful to them for doing thorough research and fact-checking for publications and projects that the mathematical community and the general public will see.

**Read more** We post summaries of articles in **Math Digest** at [www.ams.org/new-in-math/mathdigest](http://www.ams.org/new-in-math/mathdigest). A compilation of articles mentioning the AMS is at [www.ams.org/ams/ams-in-the-news.html](http://www.ams.org/ams/ams-in-the-news.html).



## Washington, D.C. Office

The primary goal of the Washington office is to develop effective government relations to advocate support for mathematics. Sam Rankin and Monica Foulkes have increased AMS involvement with other scientific organizations to gain crucial visibility for mathematics in Washington. They identify and communicate regularly with congressional proponents for science in order to get the NSF's budget approved. Sam is now chair of the Coalition for National Science Funding.

### Keeping You Informed

Sam and Monica inform AMS Committees on Science Policy and Education about current issues of concern by emailing alerts. They alert members about major happenings and decisions in D. C. by posting news on the AMS website and in **Notices**. Many times these alerts have resulted in contacts by mathematicians with their members of Congress at crucial times during the budgeting process. For instance, AMS members played a role in the drafting of bills concerning mathematics education introduced by Congressman Vernon Ehlers and Congressman Rush Holt.

### Special Events

Each year the office sponsors a congressional luncheon to which members of congress (and their staffs) come to hear about a small piece of mathematics. The office also invites department chairs to briefings, and arranges focus groups for NSF representatives and an annual Department Chairs Workshop at the Joint Mathematics Meetings.

### Town Meetings

The office also arranges Town Meetings in congressional districts, hosted by local mathematicians, and arranges meetings for AMS members with their congressional representatives in Washington or in their home district. Past Town Meetings were held in Princeton, NJ and Cambridge, MA.

**Read more** News alerts, how to communicate with Congress, and budget and policy reports are at [www.ams.org/government](http://www.ams.org/government).

For more information about the AMS Washington, D.C. Office activities and how you can become involved, contact Sam Rankin, Director, AMS Washington Office, 1527 Eighteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20036; tel: 202-588-1100; fax: 202-588-1853; email: [smr@ams.org](mailto:smr@ams.org)



## Epsilon Fund Update

AMS Member contributions to the Epsilon Fund will help support the Young Scholars programs this summer. For many years, successful summer programs for talented, enthusiastic high school students have provided a crucial first experience in mathematics. Such programs are constructed and driven forward by one or two dedicated professional mathematicians who have both the vision and the energy to carry out such a project. But creating and sustaining such programs is increasingly difficult. The AMS has created the Epsilon Fund to provide help to such programs.

The 2001 Young Scholars Programs receiving grants from the AMS are: All Girls/All Math (University of Nebraska); Mathcamp; Michigan Math & Science Scholars; Mathematics Scholars Academy (Oklahoma State University); Hampshire College Summer Studies in Mathematics; PROMYS (Boston University); University of Chicago Young Scholars Program; and the Ross Mathematics Program (The Ohio State University).

“Thanks for the Epsilon Fund support of the Michigan Math and Science Scholars Program this year. We intend to use ALL of the grant for scholarships for the mathematical aspects of the camp.”

—**Daniel M. Burns**, *University of Michigan*

“Thank you very much, American Mathematical Society, for your continued support of PROMYS.”

— **Glenn Stevens**, *Boston University*

**Read more** For information about the **Epsilon Fund** and to make contributions, see [www.ams.org/development/epsilon](http://www.ams.org/development/epsilon).