Notices

of the American Mathematical Society

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Editorial

Small Steps

The *Notices* is taking some small steps to make the information it contains better organized and more useful to readers.

Some of the changes affect the three monthly news columns "Mathematics People", "Mathematics Opportunities", and "For Your Information". Years ago the *Notices* had a column of personal items that reported promotions, new jobs, certain honors, and miscellaneous other information about its members. As the AMS membership grew larger, the reporting of this information became an unwieldy task, and eventually that kind of reporting was abandoned. In its place eventually was the column "Mathematics People", which has evolved to the point that it reports on national and international awards and honors in mathematics and certain other awards and honors that extend outside mathematics. This column also includes a list of death notices of AMS members, continuing a long tradition. "Mathematics Opportunities" lists information about fellowships, grants, competitions, and the like, while "For Your Information" includes news about other kinds of things—events, activities, the AMS, and related organizations. Announcements of conferences generally appear in the "Mathematics Calendar" rather than in "For Your Information". News of any kind that is proposed for inclusion may be sent to the managing editor, e-mail: `notices@ams.org`.

Apart from the evolution toward the current roles of the three news columns, one more change has occurred with these columns. Starting in 1999, seventeen selected mathematics institutes around the world will be offered space within "Mathematics Opportunities" throughout each year to describe their future programs and application procedures.

Annually the *Notices* has published certain lists of information prepared by the AMS staff. These include the lists of doctorates, of foreign visitors, of backlogs of research journals, and of a few other items. These lists will now be organized so they appear right after the three news columns.

The department "Reference" will continue to tell where to find the latest version of certain kinds of slowly varying information, such as lists of AMS officials and the list of current program directors in mathematics at the NSF. Changes for this section include the addition of a book list and changing the name of the section to "Reference and Book List".

In the recent past the *Notices* has published book reviews at the rate of approximately one per issue. The books that are reviewed represent a selection of the books that come to the attention of the editorial board and meet certain criteria, including the following: (i) The book must have mathematical themes and must hold appeal for a wide audience, including mathematicians and students. (ii) The book must normally be neither a textbook nor an advanced book of the kind that is reviewed by the *Bulletin*. (iii) In addition, except in unusual circumstances, the book must be less than two years old at the time of publication of the review.

The book list is intended to include for an interval of time any book that the editorial board knows about and is of the kind that the *Notices* reviews. Readers who learn of books that they think ought to be included on the book list are invited to bring these books to the attention of the managing editor.

One last change worth mentioning is in the way the bibliography is listed at the end of articles. Anyone who has ever written an article for an AMS journal knows that the AMS has its own conventions for what fonts to use in references. Article titles have been in italics, journal titles in roman, and so on. Most non-AMS journals, by contrast, put article titles in roman, journal titles in italics, and so on. The *Notices* has been faced with the problem that its articles do not contain just text and bibliographies, but they can contain annotated bibliographies, footnotes with references, footnotes with references and text, and references that are given in the text. The handling of references in the *Notices* thus has to be made consistent with the handling of titles in the text, and therefore the *Notices* departed from the AMS tradition with the January 1999 issue. Henceforth, references in the *Notices* will be in a form closer to that of most non-AMS journals throughout the part of the world that uses the Latin alphabet.

—Anthony W. Knapp