

Allegheny Mountain Section of the Mathematical Association of America

Allegheny Mountain Newsletter

From the Chair: John Thompson, University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown

Greetings from atop the Laurel Highlands.

As we look forward to January's Joint Mathematics Meeting in Washington D.C., the officers have been busy planning the Allegheny Mountain Section's Annual Spring Meeting. This year we will be heading to Wheeling Jesuit. The campus is very nice and easily accessible so I hope to see many of you there. There will be sessions for student talks as

well as faculty talks. We are anticipating excellent invited talks from Colin Adams of Williams College, Tom Hull of Western New England College and Betty Mayfield from Hood College. Additionally, a problem session (with prizes!) specifically for student is being planned. So mark your calendar for April 3-4, bring your students, and plan to participate in this exciting celebration.



John Thompson of Pitt-Johnstown, Section Chair

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Calls for Nominations and Awards

Each year, the Section elects members to serve as officers, as well as choosing outstanding members for various awards. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find detailed calls for nominations for both these items, but do please take the

time to consider whether you know someone who would be a good leader in the Section, or who is deserving of one of the awards.

The break between semesters is often a good time to give some

careful thought to recommending colleagues for these opportunities.

From the Governor: James Sellers, Penn State University



James Sellers of Penn State, Section Governor

Greetings from “Happy Valley,” Pennsylvania. I want to start by officially thanking John Bukowski for his excellent service over the past three years as our section’s MAA governor. I really appreciate all that John did for us as a section as well as his willingness to help me with my transition as the present governor.

Last July, I had the privilege of attending my first MAA Board of Governors meeting. It was a truly enjoyable experience. A great deal of work was accomplished, and MAA President Joe Gallian did a masterful job of running the meeting in an efficient and productive manner. I was especially impressed with the reports shared by the organization’s financial leadership. They have made a wealth of information available to MAA members at <http://www.maa.org/treasurer/>. If you are interested in the MAA’s financial details through the year 2007, please check out that webpage. I also learned at the board meeting about a new website launched by the MAA called MAA Math Classifieds at <http://www.mathclassifieds.org>. If you have not visited this site or directed your students to it, please do so.

The Madison MathFest was a great success with 1400 registrants and lots of great speakers (including numerous student speakers – just ask Lyn Miller!). One of my biggest highlights of the meeting was enjoying dinner with a number of fellow section members and executive committee officers. This is becoming a bit of a tradition for a number of us in the section, and I would love to see this grow into a significant annual event at MathFest, one that members in other sections will envy and/or emulate.

I hope many of you are planning to attend the Joint Mathematics Meetings to be held in Washington, D.C. in January. I am thrilled to be able to attend the meetings this year, especially given their relative proximity to our section. There’s a lot going on at the Joint Meetings, so please strongly consider attending. I also hope to see many of you at our section’s annual meeting which is to be held in April at Wheeling Jesuit University. Check out our section’s website at <http://www.maa.org/alleghenymtn> for a great deal of information about the meeting. The plenary speakers include Colin Adams, Tom Hull, and Betty Mayfield. Please consider attend-

ing and bring a colleague or some students from your institution!

I close with an exhortation to get involved in our section. Volunteer to help at the section level (there are lots of jobs to do) or give a contributed paper talk at the upcoming section meeting. Consider ways that you can get students involved in section or national meetings. Nominate someone for a national MAA committee (or let me know if you want to be nominated for a specific committee). And last but definitely not least, nominate a colleague for one of our section’s teaching, service, or mentor awards. (More details can be found at our section’s website.)

If I can be of assistance to you in any way, please feel free to contact me. I hope to see you at an upcoming meeting!

Section NExT News

John Bukowski, Juniata College

Allegheny Mountain Section NExT is our local version of Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching), a professional development program of the MAA for new or recent Ph.D.'s in the mathematical sciences. Fellows of the program meet to discuss all aspects of the profession, especially those related to the teaching and learning of undergraduate mathematics. Our group of Section NExT fellows meets twice each year for workshops – in the fall, and at the spring section meeting.

This past April, at the 75th Anniversary Section Meeting in Pittsburgh, we met to discuss the topic of undergraduate summer programs. We had a panel of five presenters who shared their experiences with various summer programs. Tami Lakins (Allegheny College) and Lyn Miller (Slippery Rock University) talked about the George Washington summer program. Pam Richardson (Westminster College) and Allegheny College student Becky Egg spoke about their experiences with the Summer Mathematics Program at Carleton College. We also had Joe Previte (Penn State-Erie) to speak about his department's REU.

Then, on September 20, we met once again in Pittsburgh for a workshop on “Writing and Projects in Mathematics”. Barbara Faïres

(Westminster College) talked about assignments in a discrete math course, a liberal arts math course, and a capstone course. Carolyn Cuff (Westminster College) talked about projects in statistics classes, and Beverly Michael (University of Pittsburgh) discussed collaborative group projects. Counting the presenters, there were 27 people in attendance this fall, including a group of eight enthusiastic new NExTers: Shelly Bouchat and Tom Wakefield (Slippery Rock); Neyda Abreu, John Tolle, and June Strohm (Penn State-DuBois); Jessica Deshler (West Virginia U.); James Vopal (West Liberty State College); and Noah Salvaterra (Thiel College).

In April, Barbara Faïres stepped down from her role as Co-Coordinator of Section NExT. We thank her for all the work she did for Section NExT since she helped to create it in 2000. While we are sad that Barbara is no longer involved in leading us, we are thrilled to welcome back Tami Lakins as a Co-Coordinator. Tami was also involved in the founding of the group eight years ago, and we are happy to have her back!

It is worth noting that the Allegheny Mountain Section has five national Project NExT Fellows this year! They are Carey Childers (Clarion), Jessica Deshler

(West Virginia), Jennifer Gorman (Gannon), Sharon McCathern (Grove City), and Noah Salvaterra (Thiel).

We already have plans for the Spring Workshop to be held in conjunction with the section meeting at Wheeling Jesuit University in April. We are very excited that Tom Hull (Western New England College) will present his very popular “Origami Geometry Workshop”. Unfortunately, due to the “hands-on” nature of this workshop, we will limit the size of the group to 30 and restrict participation to Section NExT Fellows. More information on this workshop will be available in the Spring newsletter!

Section NExT thanks the Executive Committee of the Section for its financial and moral support. We also thank individual members of the Section who supported us with a voluntary contribution at the section meeting.

Information about Section NExT can always be found at our website, <http://faculty.juniata.edu/bukowski/next/>. Questions and suggestions regarding Section NExT should be directed to John Bukowski (bukowski@juniata.edu), Tami Lakins (tlakins@allegheny.edu), or Beverly Michael (bkm@pitt.edu).

ORIGAMI GEOMETRY WORKSHOP

for Section NExTers at
Spring 2009 Meeting!

*Tami Lakins returns as
Co-Coordinator.*

Scenes from the Spring Section NExT Workshop



Joe Previte of Penn State-Erie (Behrend) speaking about hosting an REU at Behrend



Pam Richardson of Westminster College describing her involvement with Carleton College's summer program



Lyn Miller (left) of Slippery Rock University and **Tami Lakins** (right) of Allegheny College, describing their work as faculty for George Washington University's summer program for women



Student **Becky Egg** of Allegheny College sharing her experiences from the Carleton College summer program

Section NExTers getting ideas



Call for Nominations for 2009 MAA Allegheny Mountain Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics

Nominations for the 2009 Allegheny Mountain Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics are now being solicited. The Allegheny Mountain Section Selection Committee will choose one of the nominees for the Section Award. The awardee will be honored at the spring meeting of the Section and will be widely recognized and acknowledged within the Section. The awardee will also be the official Section candidate for the national MAA Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. There will be at most three national awardees, each of whom will be honored at the national MAA meeting in January 2010 and receive a \$1,000 check and a certificate.

Anyone is entitled to make a nomination, but nominations from chairs or MAA liaisons in departments of mathematical sciences are especially solicited. For this reason, this call for nominations is sent to both department chairs and MAA liai-

sons so that the responsibility for nominations can be shared between them.

We urge you to submit a nomination if you have someone eligible and qualified in your department in order that your candidate has an opportunity to be considered for the Section Award and, if so selected, also for the national award. Even if not selected this year, it is an honor for someone to have been nominated, your department will have demonstrated its commitment to excellence in teaching, and the work done in preparing a nomination folder for your candidate is not wasted since your candidate can be nominated again in a future year. Self-nomination is not permitted. In addition to discussing this memo with your colleagues, preferably at a department meeting, please post it in a prominent place in your department.

Eligibility

Please consider nominating a deserving colleague. The deadline for nominations is

February 2, 2009.

- College or university teachers assigned at least half time during the academic year to teaching a mathematical science in a public or private college or university (from two-year college through teaching at the Ph.D. level) in the Allegheny Mountain Section of the MAA. Those on approved leave (sabbatical or other) during the academic year in which they are nominated qualify if they fulfilled the requirements in the previous year.
- At least five years teaching experience in a mathematical science
- Membership in the Mathematical Association of America



Antonella Cupillari of Penn State
Erie—The Behrend College

2008 Recipient of the Allegheny Mountain Section Award for Distinguished Teaching

Call for Teaching Nominations (continued)

Guidelines for nomination

The nominees should:

- Be widely recognized as extraordinarily successful in their teaching*
- Have teaching effectiveness that can be documented
- Have had influence in their teaching beyond their own institutions**
- Foster curiosity and generate excitement about mathematics in their students.

To nominate someone for this award, please see the [full instructions](#) (on the Section website) for completing a nomination packet. The [Nomination Form](#) can be found [here](#). Please follow all instructions precisely to assure uniformity in the selection process both at the Section and national levels.

If a file on a Section awardee significantly exceeds the prescribed limits (as stated in the instructions), it will not be considered for a national award and will be returned to the Section.

Please send three copies of the nomination packet to

[James Sellers](#)

Department of Mathematics
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

Materials must be received no later than **February 2, 2009**. Nominations for someone from another Section should be sent to the Secretary of the nominee's Section. The Section Selection Committee will select the Section awardee and communicate its selection to the national MAA secretary no later than March 1 so that the national Committee can then make its selections. We look forward to your participation in this exciting MAA venture of taking substantive action to honor extraordinarily successful teaching. We want to see such teaching recognized at all post-secondary school levels. We depend on you to help us identify those who merit such recognition.

* "teaching" is to be interpreted in its broadest sense, not necessarily limited to classroom teaching (it may include activities such as preparing students for mathematical competitions at the college level, for example, the Putnam Prize Competition or the Mathematical Contest in Modeling, or attracting students to become majors in a mathematical science or to become Ph.D. candidates).

** "influence beyond their own institution" can take many forms, including demonstrated lasting impact on alumni, influence on the profession through curricular revisions in college mathematics teaching with national impact, influential or innovative books on the teaching of college mathematics, etc.

Allegheny Mountain Section Service Award: Call for Nominations

The list of previous award winners can be found on the Section web site.

The criterion for the Annual Allegheny Mountain Section Service Award is a consistent record of excellence in service to the section over a period of time. In this context "service" is interpreted in a broad sense to include holding office, coordinating contests, organizing sessions, acting as a panelist, speaking at sessions, acting as the coordinating host for a meeting, or participating in any other activity that contributes to the well-being of the organization.

George Bradley serves as Chair of the Service Award Committee. Any member of the Section is welcome to forward nominations to him by **March 15, 2009**. His contact information is as follows:

[George Bradley](#)
Department of Mathematics
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282



Don Platte of Mercyhurst College

2008 Recipient of the Allegheny Mountain Section Service Award

Allegheny Mountain Section Mentor Award: Call for Nominations

Since the year 2000 the Allegheny Mountain Section of the MAA has awarded the Distinguished Faculty Mentor of Undergraduate Mathematics Students Award. We are soliciting nominations for this award from now through **March 20, 2009**. A nominee should have made significant contributions to the development of undergraduate students in mathematics as scholars. This includes, but is not limited to, encouraging student participation in MAA activities and advising stu-

dents who make presentations at the Section meetings. Please send your nomination with a description of how the nominee meets the criteria to:

[Lyn Miller](#)

Department of Mathematics
Slippery Rock University
229 Vincent Science Hall
Slippery Rock, PA 16057-9989



Rich Marchand of Slippery Rock University

2008 Recipient of the Allegheny Mountain Section Mentor Award

More Section Photos



Former Juniata student **Matthew Katz** (now pursuing graduate studies at Penn State University) in Madison, Wisconsin, for MathFest 2008—Matt won an MAA Outstanding Presentation Award for his talk “The Many Tilings of a $2 \times n$ board.”

Congratulations, Matt!

Jodi Haponski of Clarion University also spoke in the MAA Student Talk Sessions.

Section First Vice Chair **Rick Brazier** (left) of Penn State—DuBois, along with former PSU_DuBois student **Derek Seiple** (center, now pursuing graduate studies at the University of Arizona), and former Section member **Bud Boman** (right, now in the EPADEL Section) at MathFest 2008. The trio won a prestigious Carl B. Allendoerfer Award for their article “Mom! There’s an Astroid in My Closet!” See <http://mathdl.maa.org/mathDL/22/>, the MAA Writing Awards home page, for further details.

Congratulations, gentlemen!





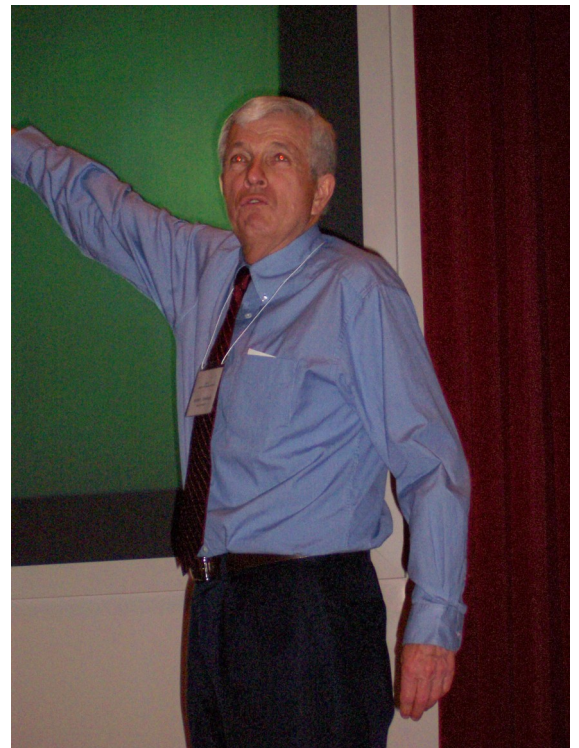
Invited speaker and MAA President-Elect **David Bressoud** (Macalester College) at the Spring 2008 Section meeting.



Invited speaker **Art Benjamin** (Harvey Mudd College) and friends at the Spring 2008 Section Meeting



The Section's commemorative brick at the new MAA Carriage House meeting facility—If you're visiting MAA Headquarters during the Joint Meetings, see if you can find it!



Invited speaker **David Zitarelli** (Temple University) at the Spring 2008 Section Meeting