

NEMATYC NEWS



Vol 15, No 1

Newsletter of the New England Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges

Fall, 2006

From the President Andrew Perry

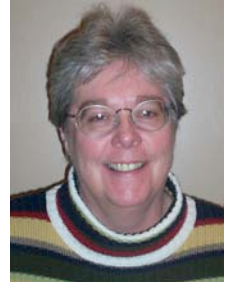


Welcome back!

These are exciting times we live in. (OK, no more bland clichés in this column, I promise.) It appears that the first of seven Clay Mathematics Institute (www.claymath.org) \$1,000,000 problems, the Poincaré conjecture, about the characterization of the three-dimensional sphere amongst three-dimensional manifolds, has been solved (in a sense) by the reclusive Russian mathematician Grigori Perelman. Amazingly, though, he's already declined the 2006 Fields Medal (the "Nobel Prize" for math). Many folks believe that he'll also turn down the \$1,000,000

Continued on page 3

From Your AMATYC Northeast Regional Vice President

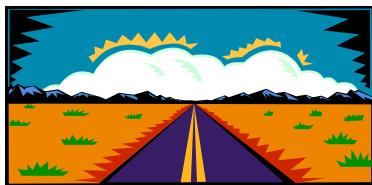


Maryann Justinger

Dear Colleagues,

I hope everyone has had a smooth semester start-up and is finding time to enjoy fall in our great region! Hopefully I will get to see many of you at the AMATYC Conference in Cincinnati. The conference will be held November 2nd through 5th. We are very excited about the unveiling of our *Beyond Crossroads* document and a special celebration is planned at the *National Underground Railroad Freedom Center* for Friday evening. In addition there are several sessions about standards based instruction along with our

Continued on page 4



Announcement & Call for Presenters

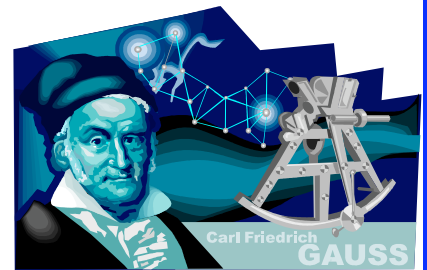
NEMATYC 2007

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS



**BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, APRIL 20-21, 2007**

Elaine Previte, Chairperson



☞ Call for Presenters for NEMATYC 2007 Inside
Also see the web site www.NEMATYC.org

NEMATYC'07

Expand Your Horizons!!

Come to Bristol CC on Friday and Saturday April 20, 21, 2007!

Consider giving a talk! Share your professional growth with your colleagues. You will find a call for presenters in this newsletter.



Consider coming to the conference! Share the professional growth of others – learn from your colleagues. Keep your chosen profession interesting, and keep yourself interesting to your students.

Elaine Previte
Conference Chairperson



Maryann Justinger, AMATYC Northeast Vice President, and **Jack Keating**, immediate past Northeast VP, compare notes at the Spring 2006 NEMATYC conference at Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH

NEMATYC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2006-2007

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From the President – continued from page 1

CMI prize. I have the deepest respect for someone with such a passion for mathematics over all else, a brilliant mathematician without an ego. A good book about another such fellow is “The Man Who Loved Only Numbers”, about Paul Erdős, (1913 – 1996).

Technology is advancing extraordinarily fast... can we take proper advantage of it as mathematics teachers? The possibilities are endless. For under \$50, one can get a modern internet-capable PC on ebay, and free software is available to do nearly anything one could ever want, mathematically or otherwise - at least, if you know how to look. If you haven't seen wikipedia recently (www.wikipedia.com), check it out. The scope is momentous, much greater than any printed encyclopedia that humankind has ever seen, and the quality is top-notch. The podcast phenomenon is taking off rapidly, and many podcasts do in fact concern mathematics. Can we harness this rapidly expanding technology monster for the benefit of our students? I don't have the answers. Perhaps we NEMATYC members can begin to answer these questions...

What you may not know, however, is that the newsletter (yes, the newsletter) accepts reader contributions. Surely there is something interesting that you know which is not common knowledge to all NEMATYC members... why not share it in a Newsletter note? Campus news, in particular, would be most welcome. Please send any materials to Phil Mahler at mahlerp@middlesex.mass.edu.

Speaking of news, we've got three (3) NEMATYC conferences in the works! We hope to start a new tradition with a fall dinner meeting on Friday, September 29 at 5:30 PM at Quinsigamond Community College (Worcester). This meeting features a very

modest registration fee to partially offset food costs and a very interesting speaker, Dr. **Stephanie Costa** from R.I. College. Dr. Costa is a recent mathematics Ph.D. whose research involves games and tournaments. Next spring, we'll have our regular Spring conference at Bristol Community College. Finally, we've decided to move out west for the 2008 conference, heading out to Springfield Technical Community College. Also, let's not forget AMATYC-Cincinnati, Nov. 2-5, 2006.

I wish everyone a successful fall semester, and hope to see you at the meetings.

Andrew Perry
NEMATYC President
Springfield College

Did you know... Superscript notation using Arabic numerals for positive exponents was introduced by Descartes in 1637. Newton introduced our modern notation for negative exponents in a letter in 1676. He wrote “Since algebraists write a^2 , a^3 , a^4 , etc. for aa , aaa , $aaaa$, etc., so I write ... a^{-1} , a^{-2} , a^{-3} , etc. for $\frac{1}{a}$, $\frac{1}{aa}$, $\frac{1}{aaa}$, etc.”

Dr. Samuel Johnson is credited with creating the first dictionary of the English language. But he also loved to study arithmetic, and did so to calm his nerves. “Let your boy learn arithmetic, dear madam,” was his advice to the mother of a rich young heir: “he will not then be a prey to every rascal which this town swarms with.”

From the Project Gutenberg Etext of Anecdotes of Johnson by Hesther Lynch Piozzi.

JOIN NEMATYC

Not a member of NEMATYC? Join by sending the \$5.00 annual membership fee, payable to NEMATYC, to Lois Martin, NEMATYC Treasurer, 25 Lydon Lane, Kingston, MA 02364

NEMATYC 2007



Send by
December 31

See You
There!!

BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, APRIL 20-21, 2007

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

THE CALL FOR PRESENTERS FORM IS INCLUDED WITH THIS NEWS-
LETTER AND IS ON THE WEBSITE, WWW.NEMATYC.ORG.

NEMATYC is pleased to announce its annual call for presenters for our Spring Conference, this year to be held at Bristol Community College in Fall River, Massachusetts. Our focus will be on expanding our horizons, and those of our students, through the mathematics we teach and the methodology we use when we teach.

Presentations are solicited on any of the following strands:

- Developmental Mathematics
- Precalculus
- Calculus
- Statistics
- Higher-level Mathematics
- Distance Learning
- Technology
- Critical Thinking
- Pedagogy
- Assessment
- Writing in Mathematics
- Service Learning
- Transfer and Articulation Agreements

From the Regional VP – continued from page 1

normal wide variety of Mathematics Education topics. For more information on the conference and AMATYC in general, visit the website at: www.amatyc.org.

This is an exciting time for AMATYC as we are looking at many changes and updates to the organization. The conference selection zones have been revised, the committee structure is undergoing changes and strategic planning is underway! If you are not a member yet, you can find membership information at the above website. We would love to have you join us

and help keep AMATYC as a leading national force in Mathematical Education.

If I can be of any help feel free to contact me.

I hope I'll get to see many of you in Cincinnati!

Maryann

AMATYC Regional Vice President
Maryann Justinger
Erie Community College
Buffalo, NY
justinger@ecc.edu

ANNOUNCING THE NEMATYC STUDENT MATH LEAGUE RECOGNITION AWARD PROGRAM

In spring 2007, NEMATYC will make its first Student Math League Recognition Awards. This award program was established at the spring 2006 business meeting to foster extra-curricular mathematics learning opportunities for students through participation in the AMATYC Student Mathematics League.

The top scoring student in the AMATYC Student Mathematics League Competition, in up to five schools in NEMATYC's primary service area (Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) will receive a \$100 Recognition Award. Any two-year college in NEMATYC's primary service area is

eligible to participate. Students must not have earned a two-year college or higher degree and must be enrolled at a qualifying institution and participate in the SML Competition.

After completion of the annual SML Competition, the name of the top-scoring student at each institution is submitted to the NEMATYC Board. The top five students from that pool receive the \$100 award; thus, only one award is made per school. In the case of a tie for top score within an institution, the prize will be shared within the institution. In the case of a tie score across institutions that creates more than five winners, those with the tie score will share the prize.

AMATYC Student Math League FAQ

- **How does a school register for the SML competition?** Register online by September 30, 2006, at <http://www.amatyc.org>.
- **What are the dates of this year's competition?** October 20 - November 4 and February 16 – March 10
- **Where can I get more information?** Phil Mahler has posted information and old exams at <http://sml.nematyc.info>.
- **What schools in NEMATYC's service area have participated in recent competitions?** Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Massasoit Community College, Middlesex Community College, Mount Wachusett Community College, Southern Maine Community College
- **How much work is it to moderate a team?** It can be as little as advertising and administering the tests, or you may want to hold practice sessions to help prepare your students.
- **Why should my school get involved?** It is a wonderful opportunity for your students, and those schools already participating are looking forward to additional competition.
- **How have NEMATYC service area schools performed in the competition?** In 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, Massasoit Community College captured first place in both the team and individual competitions in the Northeast Region. In 2005-2006, in its first year of competition, Middlesex Community College took the first place in the Northeast Region individual competition.

On a personal note, Massasoit Community College has seen an increase in the number of students pursuing bachelor degrees in mathematics since it began competing in AMATYC's SML. Further, many of those same former math team members are now adjuncts at Massasoit or are teaching mathematics in area high schools.

Lois Martin

Massasoit Community College

Back to Basics?

“New Report Urges Return to Basics in Teaching Math”...“Critics of Fuzzy Methods Cheer Educators’ Findings: Drills without Calculators” is the title of an article in the Wall Street Journal on Sept. 12. It refers to a new NCTM report *Curriculum Focal Points, A Quest for Coherence*. Want to learn more? Check out <http://www.nctm.org/focalpoints/>.

Honor a Colleague

With a Nomination for the AMATYC Teaching Excellence Award

Nominations are invited for the 2007 AMATYC Teaching Excellence Award. Given in odd-numbered years, the next awardees will be honored at the AMATYC conference in New Orleans in November 2007. Nominees must be AMATYC members whose primary assigned duties are delivering instruction in an associate degree-granting program. Members may nominate themselves. Good teaching is the main focus of the Teaching Excellence Award. Criteria for selection, nomination materials and a FAQ sheet are available on the AMATYC website, www.amatyc.org. Awardees receive a medallion from AMATYC and a \$500 check for professional development from Houghton Mifflin. Help AMATYC honor an AMATYC member from New England who has demonstrate teaching excellence. All nomination packets must be received no later than **Friday, December 8, 2006**. Don't wait until the last minute. Submit your nomination now! The 2007 Teaching Excellence Award Committee's Northeast region representative is **Steve Krevisky** (skrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu)

Join AMATYC, at www.amatyc.org, click on "Join AMATYC".

The **AMATYC Conference** this year is November 2-5, 2006, Cincinnati, Ohio. Register at www.amatyc.org. Of special interest – the unveiling of the new AMATYC standards document, *Beyond Crossroads, - Implementing Mathematics Standards in the First Two Years of College*.

NEMATYC 2006 was held at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, New Hampshire. For lots of pictures etc. go to the History link at www.nematyc.org.



Book displays



Hosts **Dave Cox** and **Alec Ingraham**



NEMATYC President **Andrew Perry** presented on 19th century mathematics textbooks.



The food and facilities were great!

From the Archives

NEMATYC Conference 0, 10, 20, and 30 Years Ago...



NEMATYC 1977 was held at **Mt. Wachusett Community College**, Gardner, MA on Saturday, April 30. **Paul Drowne** was coordinator for the 1977 Annual Spring Meeting. The cost was \$6.

The program featured **Stanley Bezuska**, Boston College as the keynote speaker, followed by *SHARING* by all participants. “Each of us uses various innovations to motivate students or to beautify or glamorize a particular unit. Whether these innovations are original or plagiarisms really doesn't matter. What does matter is that many of us would benefit from exposure to your “tricks of the trade.” We are all anxious to see those tidbits that work and may be new to us.”

NEMATYC 1987 was held at the **Community College of Rhode Island**, Flanagan Campus, Lincoln, Rhode Island; **Michael Latina** of CCRI chaired the conference on Saturday, March 7. The theme *Unsolved Problems -- In Mathematics And Education*. Fees: \$18 for Faculty. The program included a keynote, *Unsolved Problems And Insoluble Problems*, by **J. Morton Briggs**, URI. The presentations were *New Ideas For The Electronic Blackboard*, **Hank Harmeling**, NSCC; *Strategies For Success -- Thirteen Years Of A Math Lab*, **Ed Madonna**, CCRI; *An Experimental Gambling System*, **Dean S. Clark**, URI; *Has The Content Of Your Algebra Syllabus Changed In 20 Years?*, **Mary A. Cullen**, Mt. Wachusett CC; *Geometry In India*, **Gurchuran Bhalla**, Bronx CC; *Mathematics As A Creative Means*, **Barry Woods**, Unity College. In a letter to a few activists **Bob Yawin**, of Springfield Technical CC and long time NEMATYC contributor, suggested that NEMATYC needs “a treasurer to give our group stability and continuity.” This instigated meetings in which it was decided to offer this suggestion to the membership.

NEMATYC 1997 was held at **Massasoit Community College**, Brockton, MA on Friday and Saturday, April 11,12. The theme was *Surfing Towards 2000*. Vice president and program chair was **Kath Soderbom**. NEMATYC President was **Elaine Previte**, then of Dean College. The Friday banquet speaker was **Robert Rose**, President, Massasoit. The Saturday luncheon speaker was **Philip Mahler**, on *Three Topics*. Among the 21 presentations were *A Hot One in Seville*, **Steve Krevisky**, Middlesex Community - Technical College (Connecticut); *“You'll Like It, You'll Really Like It”*: *Statistics and the Academy Awards*, **Thomas Pandolfini**, **Joseph Alfano** Johnson & Wales University; *The Project Enhanced Classroom*, **Peter Rosnick**, **Lindy Gougeon**, **Peter Letson**, **Sue MacLeod** Greenfield Community College; *Minitab*, **Barry Woods**, Unity College; and *Alternative Delivery Systems for Introductory Algebra*, **Jack Keating**, **Lois Martin**, **Kath Soderbom** Massasoit Community College.

NEMATYC 2007 was held at **Bristol Community College**, Fall River, MA on Friday and Saturday, April 20, 21. The theme was *Expand Your Horizons*. Program chair was **Elaine Previte**. NEMATYC President was **Andrew Perry**. You were there...

From the Furman University Mathematical Quotations Server: Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) *Since you are now studying geometry and trigonometry, I will give you a problem. A ship sails the ocean. It left Boston with a cargo of wool. It grosses 200 tons. It is bound for Le Havre. The mainmast is broken, the cabin boy is on deck, there are 12 passengers aboard, the wind is blowing East-North-East, the clock points to a quarter past three in the afternoon. It is the month of May. How old is the captain?*

NEMATYC NEWSLETTER
Philip Mahler, Editor
Middlesex Community College
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The News is available in color at www.NEMATYC.org

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

AMATYC Annual Conference

- Cincinnati, OH – November 2-5, 2006

ATMNE Conference and NCTM Eastern Regional Conference

- October 19-20, 2006 – Magic in the Mountains, Killington, VT

NCTM Conference

- March 21-24, 2007 – Atlanta, GA

NEMATYC

- April 20-21, 2007 – Bristol Community College, Fall River, MA

MAA Conference (with AMS, SIAM)

- January 5-8, 2007 – New Orleans, LA

NE-MAA

- November 17-18, 2006 – Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

Visit www.NEMATYC.org

See you at

NEMATYC'07

April 20-21, 2007

Bristol Community College

Elaine Previte, Conference Chair

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