

AFTERMATH

Plymouth State College Math Department News 2003

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Chair's Column – 2004 **by Jon Maatta**

It's spring again! It's time to recall the events of the year for another issue of *Aftermath*. I'm actually writing this on the first full day of summer. It seems that each year time passes so quickly, especially the month of May. As usual it was a very eventful year for the Mathematics Department and Plymouth State University. It all began with the official name change last summer. Shortly after that event, the Department welcomed twelve first-year mathematics majors. The fall semester is always an exciting one with students and faculty full of energy. These twelve students came together for what was the final mathematics major section of IAC. I think that most of our current majors would agree to the positive effect of this section. It allowed for students to meet fellow mathematics majors and form a common community. We will have to figure out another way to have our first-year students come together as a group. The president, vice president, and faculty advisor of the Mathematics Association of Plymouth (MAP), Megan Grubbs, Danielle Guynup, and me, are working on ideas to accomplish this in the fall. This academic year the Department was also blessed by having a wonderful core group of graduate students, led by Graduate Assistants Tricia Sears, Jeannie Snyder, and Jonathan Wixson.

The first semester was celebrated and finalized with what has become an annual event: The Mathematics

Department's Holiday Party. This was the fourth year for the party. The first three years, my wife Connie and I had the party at and our home. This was great fun but the event has become so popular that this year we chose to have it at the Frost Academic Commons. This is a much larger space and fun was had by all. The students of MAP helped decorate and setup the space. The evening included a dish-to-pass dinner and another rousing "Yankee Swap".

The spring semester always flies by and that really was the case this year. The Department was conducting a search for a full-time tenure track faculty member, so we were busy with the interview process and talks. In addition to the candidates, Dr Scott Evans of the Harvard School of Public Health (Dick's son and a PSU alumnus) spoke at a MAP sponsored talk: "What Do Biostatisticians Do?"

The end of the academic year was celebrated with the Annual Softball game and picnic, held this year at the Ferlands'. Oh, did I mention that the faculty won this year? (Yes, believe it or not!) The faculty survived another game with only minor bumps and bruises.

The sixth annual Mathematics Awards banquet brought the spring semester to a close. This banquet was the best attended of the six and seems to be an event that everyone looks forward to. Thanks goes out to MAP leaders: Nick Hurley, Joy Bowen, Jennie Judson, Phil Jones, Becky Harville, and also Megan and Danielle for all the work organizing and arranging the event this year. Special thanks go to Wendy Burnham for all her wonderful help with the Banquet and also the slide show, which has become a popular portion of the event. We

are talking about opening this event to alumni as a way for you to reconnection with old friends and faculty. Look for more information on this idea on our web-page (<http://www.plymouth.edu/math/index.htm>) And of course at Convocation and graduation, we celebrated the academic careers of our graduates. Congratulations and thanks are due to Jason Bickford, Jennifer Judson, Suzanne Kiefer, and Caroline Rand, who all graduated this spring.

Mathematics Department / University Issues

As I mentioned in the 2003

Aftermath, the biggest change occurring in the curriculum of the University is the move towards the implementation of the new General Education Program. The Department and members of our General Education Committee spent much time revising course offerings and our degree programs. Much work has been done, but much more work lies ahead as we move toward a fall 2005 implementation of the program. This fall will be the first semester of a three credit first year seminar course that eliminated the need for the old IAC course.

The name change has brought much positive change to Plymouth as more and more programs are being implemented and created. One initiative of the Department has been the creation of an Applied Mathematics / Statistics Center. The basic idea is to create a place where businesses, government agencies, and University departments can go for consulting on problems of a mathematical / statistical nature. The Department held a nation-wide search for a person who would have ultimately been the director of the center. We had many wonderful candidates but were unsuccessful due to changing circumstances of our final candidates. Our name change bodes well for our center since

more and more departments are creating graduate programs where students will have the need for statistical / mathematical help. This spring I had numerous sessions with a graduate student working on a multivariate statistical problem. It is these types of consulting opportunities that we hope to foster through the creation of the center. As the center takes shape, we hope that it will present opportunities for our students as well.

As always, a never-ending challenge for the Department is the recruitment and retention of mathematics students. This fall, fourteen first-year and transfer students are scheduled to join the Mathematics Department. This total is certainly the biggest group in recent memory and a very welcome addition. The job market continues to be very robust for mathematics majors. Mathematics Educators, thanks for your support and please continue to remind your students that mathematics at PSU would be a good choice.

The Changing Face of the Department

The Department continues to changes as more and more of the familiar faces retire. The most recent retiree is Dr. Paul Estes. Paul has been with the Department since 1971 (that's 33 years). Paul will continue to teach as an adjunct faculty in the fall.



A new young face has appeared: Barbara Boschmans and Brian Beaudrie are the proud parents of a baby girl born May 28, 2004 – Isabelle Anne Beaudrie!!

Alumni News (Lots!) by Ted Giebutowski

We got a postcard from Fred Short PSC '72. He earned a masters in Marine Biology at URI, then a PhD in oceanography from the University of Alaska. He has been a research faculty member at UNH in Durham for 20 years. He's married with three children and his wife Cathy works with him at UNH. Fred reads AfterMath with interest.

Jon Maatta got an e-mail from Tony Koschmann '02. He's in NY City now working as a Research Analyst at a company called Telerep, a television station representative firm. He analyzes Nielsen ratings for several client stations and then writes reports for their sales team based on the trends. He writes: " It's actually a nice mix of doing a bit of math, writing, and using the computer (and their specific programs)...."

And we got this from Fran Tishkevich '75: She's currently teaching Calculus and Statistics at Merrimack Valley High School in Penacook, and hopes to

finish her D.Ed. (Dissertation: "Teaching Math to College Students With Attention Deficit Disorder") soon. Tragically, this January she lost her son, David Gorgol in a snowmobile accident in Jefferson, NH. Our hearts go out to you, Fran.

Speaking of Merrimack Valley High School, Brendan Leetch ('02) is also teaching there (Algebra 2 Geometry and an introduction to algebra class called Algebra applications 2). In an e-mail to Dick Evans he writes: ". . . its going great. The other teachers are fun and my classes are going pretty well."

Dick also heard from Scott Laine ('02) who's giving it ". . .another go at Southbridge High School," enjoying teaching AP Calculus there, and applying to Applied Mathematics programs at WPI; U. Colorado, Boulder; and San Diego State U. Good luck to you, Scott.

And Laura Reynolds('90) e-mailed Dick with the news that she is changing schools, from Hampden Academy to Lawrence High School in the Waterville, ME area. She writes: ". . . they are taking a strong stand next year with their Algebra One program. They are requiring ALL students to take a two-year Algebra 1 Program . . ."

Eric Usinger ('89) e-mailed this May to tell Dick his school, Coe-Brown Academy has a mathematics position available. He writes: "We are currently looking for a new teacher for a position that opened up this year. Here at Coe-Brown we have lots benefits for new teachers the best being a very strong and supportive administration."

Bill Roberts got a long e-mail from James Ryan ('90) saying that he had been teaching in Alaska for a couple of years. He and his wife now live in Lubbock, TX, where they run a business taking care of 'folks who are mentally retarded.' He also

passed his good wishes and thanks to Dick and to Jack Barry.

And Roberta Cooke('03) in a June '03 e-mail to Dick (just missed the '03 issue!) wrote: ". . . I have gotten a job for the 2003/2004 school year. I will be teaching at Oxbow High School." After a July training session in SIMMS Level II, she was to teach three sections of General Math I and two sections of SIMMS Level II. She writes that this was the high school she graduated from and ". . . the staff is looking forward to me being on staff with them.' You *can* go home again!

I want to thank Bob Thompson ('79) at Fidelity for his continuing support for our actuarial students. He sent an e-mail last year announcing some last-minute positions available at his new company, and this year I contacted him to see if there were any positions likely to come up, as I had an actuarial student in my Advanced Calc II class graduating in May. He said yes, she interviewed and got the job.

Congratulations to Jennifer Judson, and a warm thank-you to you, Bob. Pat Seymour('79), at Liberty Mutual was also kind enough to offer his help (in an e-mail to me); Jennifer got the Fidelity offer before she had a chance to respond to Pat! So, thanks to Bob, Pat, and Eric Usinger for looking out for our graduates and offering this kind of help to our majors. Several others of you have, in the past, offered your help also; my thanks to you all.

And now it's picture gallery time: We (Paul) got a postcard from Kari Richardson('83) with a picture of her and her husband Mickey; it's at:



Also, Roxanne Wessels ('88) sent a picture to Paul of herself, Paul and her nephew Tim taken in conjunction with last year's Top Notch Triathlon, aka 'The Race to the Face' – the 'face' being the Old Man - which they entered as a team. Paul ran, Roxi swam and Tim was the biker. As for Roxi: "I'm a full-time CNA and a part-time night auditor. I really like both jobs so I'd have to say I'm happily employed. :)"



Mathematics Education News by Dick Evans

Middle School Math Grant

This past year the Mathematics Department and the NH-IMPACT Center at PSU submitted a grant to the NH State Department of Education entitled *Achieving Excellence in Middle School Mathematics Teaching and Learning*. The grant is a Math and Science Partnership grant in which PSU

worked with 12 middle schools from around the State. The grant was awarded to the Center and will have Drs. Barbara Boschmans, Brian Beaudrie and Dick Evans from the PSU Math Department working with middle school teachers to help them become “highly qualified” as required by the No Child Left Behind legislation. Dr. Fernand Prevost, one of the Co-Directors of the Center, will also be working with Barbara, Brian and Dick in delivering the courses. This summer we will be offering courses on Number Systems (June 28 – July 3), Algebra July (12 – 23) and Geometry (July 26 – August 6)). The materials we are using are ones created for middle school math teachers by UCLA and San Diego State University. We have 30 people signed up for all three of the courses.

As part of this project, we will also be hosting a Leadership Institute for partner school districts to train leaders from their schools to do professional development on their campuses. In the fall we will also be offering a course on Probability and Statistics and in the spring one on Calculus for Middle School Teachers. The grant also calls for a series of lectures by mathematicians and scientists and their use of mathematics in the jobs. The first speaker will be Dr. Scott Evans (PSU class of 1988) who is a Biostatistician at the Harvard School of Public Health. Scott will be speaking to the group about what a biostatistician does.

Other Summer Courses and Programs

This summer we will have Charles Lovitt returning to campus to offer two courses. One is entitled the *Art and Science of Mathematics Pedagogy* (July 12 – 16) and the second one is entitled *Using Maths300 to Build Better Math Lessons* (July 19 – 23). Mr. Lovitt is the former Director of

Mathematics for the Curriculum Corporation of Australia. This will be Mr. Lovitt’s seventh summer with us at PSU.

Also returning to the PSU campus for the third year will be Drs. Barbara and Doug Clarke from Monash University and Australian Catholic University of Australia. Doug and Barbara will be sharing the research they did with teaching primary students mathematics (July 12 – 16). Participation in this grant is partially funded by the Regional Alliance

We are also sponsoring a two-week workshop on Math Recovery, which is a program from Australia that seeks to help students in the primary grades catch up so that they can be on grade level while studying math. This is the second year that we have sponsored the program. The success of students who have been involved in Math Recovery is quite good and we hope that more schools will adopt the time and effort to help those younger students who may struggle with mathematics.

On August 3 – 5 we will be hosting a workshop for middle school teachers who use the MathThematics program. Teachers from all across the country will be joining us for the workshop, which will address issues surrounding the teaching of mathematics.

AWARDS 2004

by Paul Estes

GRADUATING SENIOR AWARDS

This spring at Last Convocation the department honored three graduating math majors for outstanding achievement in their degree programs. The kudos went to the following:

Steven Baldasty from Derry NH, BS in Applied Mathematics

Jennifer Judson from Groveton NH, BS in Actuarial Mathematics

Suzanne Kiefer from Laconia NH, BS in Mathematics Education

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT FELLOWSHIP

The Mathematics Fellow for fall 2004 will be **Casey Crouch** from Voluntown CT. This fellowship involves working in the Math Activity Center helping students with problems in Calculus and Elementary Functions. As the recipient of this award, Casey will receive a stipend which is credited toward his tuition.

MATHEMATICS SCHOLARSHIPS

For the second year in a row, **Joy Bowen** from Walpole NH won the Barbara Dearborn Mathematics Scholarship, awarded to the continuing math major with the highest GPA. Professor Dearborn's daughter Mitzi Dearborn again returned from Wisconsin to make the presentation.

We were able to award three Geneva Smith Scholarships this year. These scholarships were endowed by Jessie Smith in memory of her sister Geneva Smith, Professor of Mathematics from 1925 to 1967. The three recipients were: **Amanda Bagwell** from Riverside RI, **Kristin Noblet** from Narragansett RI, and **Wendy Wickman** from Center Ossipee NH.

Math Association News by **Jennifer Judson, Secretary, MAP**

The Math Association as a group this year arranged for some great things to happen. We got together over the summer in July to work at the NASCAR Winston Cup race in Loudon, NH with Donna Kelley. We also worked with her again in September to raise money for the association. We worked the whole day stubbing tickets and checking people as they came through the gates for the race. With

some of the money we raised at the races we bought embroidered sweatshirts for all the members of the association as well as one for our advisor, Dr. Jon Maatta.

We also, along with the members of the department, had a Christmas party on December 13, 2003. Our annual gathering has outgrown Dr. Maatta's home, so this year we had the party and Yankee Swap at Frost Commons here on campus. We had a great turnout and a wonderful evening of fun. One addition we made this year was our Spaghetti and Game Night. The students and some of the faculty got together for the night to play games, socialize and have fun.

This year's Banquet was a huge success at the Common Man Inn in Plymouth. It too has grown in the number of attendants; our turnout this year was close to 70 people including students, faculty, friends and family. The Math Association pays for all Math majors to attend, for it is a celebration in their (our) honor. The banquet consisted of a social hour, buffet dinner, and presentation of Mathematics awards for students with cumulative GPA above 3.0. We also gave out a plaque for this year's professor of the year: Dr. Keith Ferland, and commemorated Dr. Paul Estes on his retirement. New this year was a slide show; we collected pictures throughout the year and put them together for the slide show, which was set to music for a humorous and entertaining presentation.

All and all the activities we did with the faculty were a great success. We had a lot of fun outside the classroom with our professors.

Math Softball Update by **Keith Ferland**

I know it's been several years since I've mentioned our "annual" student-faculty softball game. Two reasons come to mind:

some years we didn't play because of weather and other years the faculty team did not perform at their usual high level of stellar play to warrant mention (i.e. we lost). However, this past May, we had perfect conditions (nary a cloud could be seen) and the faculty team played a flawless game with jaw dropping defensive plays and clutch hitting. Score: faculty 15, students 8. After the game, we celebrated with a cookout at the Ferlands' house.

As always, alumni are welcome (the students need help). We usually play the Friday of the last week of classes (the week before finals) around 5 PM, followed by a cookout. If you can make it for either or both, please come. Contact: ferl@plymouth.edu at the beginning of May for details.

Editorial Comments **by Ted Giebutowski**

Now for my usual 'wrap-up'. You will have noticed by the time you read this online, the biggest change in the delivery of *AfterMath*, namely, that it's not being 'delivered'! We tried, for a while, having people sign up on our web-site to receive it electronically, rather than through the mail; didn't work – mainly due to my inability to use 'webonics' to communicate to the PICOOWWR (person in charge of our web-site working right) what was wanted. Enter Wendy Burnham with suggestion: Send out a postcard announcing that the newsletter's latest issue is now on our web site and give the URL. Brilliant! Plus we save gobs of money.

You will have read the chair's column and seen that our incoming student enrollments are growing. Each of you (not just the math-ed people) can help us continue that growth by suggesting to any bright and curious young people that they consider a mathematics major at Plymouth.

They're all so web-savvy you need only give them the URL for our web site (or this newsletter, for that matter) and they can see what we do for our students.

Finally, although this will be the last issue of *AfterMath* that I edit, as I will be retiring at the end of the fall semester, it won't be the last issue the department puts out; we'll be selecting a new editor in the fall.

It's been a great experience getting these newsletters out, chiefly for the contact I've had with you, our readers. It's wonderful to see so many of you taking an interest in our students, offering advice and help in finding good jobs, offering to come to Plymouth and talk about your jobs, etc. The other members of the department have been a great help to me as well, writing articles and passing on alumni news as they receive it.

Let me single out one department member for special thanks: Wendy Burnham, our administrative assistant. How she has put up with all of the last minute changes I manage to come up with, I don't know, but I greatly appreciate her patience and efforts. Because of her suggestions, *AfterMath* is a better publication by far.

AfterMath was first published in the late seventies, sometime during my tenure as chair. Our beloved colleague, Barbara Dearborn, graciously agreed to do the editing: rounding up articles, pulling them together, and working with our (then) secretary, Lisa Pickel to get the newsletter out to our alumni. On Barbara's passing away, I volunteered to do the editing and have done so since. I've enjoyed it, and I thank you all for your kind comments along the way. It's been a pleasure serving you.

As always, typos, bloopers, etc. in this edition of *AfterMath* are all my fault.