Some advice for new math majors:

We solicited some responses from our seniors to the question “What advice would you give to a new math major?” Here are the results:

If you are having trouble, form a group!

Get to know other math majors, and don’t be afraid to get help from the professors.

Listen to Rock’n’Roll while completing homework, it Helps!!!

Procrastination is the kiss of death.

Become good friends with the people in your math classes because in the upper level classes you will spend the majority of your time working on those classes with these people.

Get to know people in your classes because working with others makes your life easier and makes classes more enjoyable.

Don’t wait until your work piles up and it’s too late before understanding the material covered in class. The professors in the Math department are extremely resourceful and more than willing to help.

**HRUMC-XI**

Eight students and two faculty members went down to Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts for the Eleventh annual Hudson River Undergraduate Mathematics Conference.

After a broken defroster fan and an hour wait at the Peru Quick-Stop, we were on our way. Four hours later, we were in Chicopee, Mass. Professors Morrow and Northshield called it an early night. The eight students also went to bed early – early in the morning that is – all were safe in bed by three a.m. We were all up for a delicious continental breakfast and then registration at Mt. Holyoke College.

After the plenary lecture on “Dynamical Systems of the Nervous System: Do Rhythms Help Us Think?” by Nancy Kopell of Boston University and a nutritious free lunch, students Don Kaupelis, Victoria Lu, and Ben Palmer presented a talk “Fixed Points”. During the next session, students Amanda McNeil, Diana LeBarron, Anna Gadway, and Ryan Gerstung presented “Mathematical JEOPARDY!” – a mathematical version of the popular game show and Professor Northshield presented a talk on “Farey sequences”.

On the way back to Plattsburgh, we delighted to the singing of Rock oldies and hip-hop standards by students with occasional solos by students including assistant driver Pat Parker. We also stopped for a delightful and exotic dinner at “Panda Number One” in Glens Falls. A great time was had by all.

Some quotes by students who attended:

“The HRUMC was a great experience. There were a wide range of topics discussed and I really learned a lot. Being able to present research to fellow mathematics majors was an equally enjoyable and rewarding experience.”

“It’s always rewarding to share Math experiences and ideas with students from other schools”

“The Math conference was a great opportunity to meet other math majors from different colleges, bond with fellow peers, and enjoy a great learning experience.”

“Just because it’s a school trip doesn’t mean you can’t have fun!!!”

“A good experience to see what the math students of neighboring colleges are working on, and there is even the potential to learn something.”

“The trip overall was an educational experience. I really enjoyed listening to the other talks. I thought everyone from Plattsburgh State did well with their presentation. I had a really great time.”

“Music+Math=A mentally stimulating experience”

Special thanks to the College Foundation for their financial support for this trip!

**Best Wishes to Prof Hofer for his retirement!**

We will miss him! Luckily he will still be teaching the honors calculus course for us.

**A Math Joke**

There was this magnificent mathematical horse. You could teach it arithmetic, which it learned with no difficulty, algebra was a breeze, it could even prove theorems in Euclidean geometry, but when you tried to teach it analytic geometry, it would rear back on its hind legs, kick ferociously neigh loudly and make violent head motions in resistance. The moral of this story is that you can't put Descartes before the horse.

A man is like a fraction whose numerator is what he is and whose denominator is what he thinks of himself. The larger the denominator, the smaller the fraction. ~~~Tolstoy
Alumni News

Jessica Kuby writes: “I am still working as an actuarial analyst at a car insurance company in Boston but I am hoping to find a new job in Albany within the next few months. I am going to grad school for my MBA part time and I want to transfer to SUNY Albany when I move”.

Jeffrey Mortelette writes: “Currently, I am teaching on the Apache Reservation in Arizona and taking classes in the summer towards my certification and masters. I teach seventh and eighth grade math, which is fun. My girlfriend and I have applied to a prep school in New Hampshire. We thought it was out of our league until we got a phone interview. Surprisingly we made it to the final interviews and they are flying us out there for the interviews next weekend! It seems like a great job. For the summer break, we are going to Sweden. My girlfriend has a cottage in northern Sweden. We will be spending our time renovating the house, fishing and camping.

Megan Paddock writes: “The University of New Hampshire is great I am really enjoying working on my Masters at the moment, and I am planning on applying to the Math Ed Doctorate program when I have finished my Masters. Last semester I took a topology class and an algebra class, I really enjoyed the topology class so I decided to take my second course in topology this semester, along with real analysis, and linear algebra. I found out the first day of classes in September that I received a Teaching Assistantship, so I am going to school for free and getting an OK paycheck every other week, which is very nice. Last semester was OK, but this semester is great... I have my own pre-calc class with only 20 students and they are all doing very well. The math grad students here are actually a very close group, we are all very social, not at all the type of people I expected to be working on their Math doctorates, which I know sounds incredibly judgmental but, in fact they all say the same thing.

Chris Pavone writes: “I’m still plugging away out here in Santa Barbara just finishing up my third year [in the Ph.D. program at UCSB]... two more to go. I’ve finished all my exams and am beginning research. My advisor and a couple other guys invented this cool way of describing the spectrum of a self-adjoint operator on a Hilbert space; its called the spectral scale. I am working on that, and I am hoping I can extend their results this summer. Here is a link to my website where you can find (under research) the paper I am reading on the spectral scale: http://www.math.ucsb.edu/~pavone/ Other than school I’ve been doing a of surfing and hiking. I am teaching differential equations right now and I have 108 students in my class”.

Leon Lashway writes: “I am doing well, I am still with my girlfriend of over four years now, we live in Durham, NC and are finally getting married this September fourth. In August of 2002, I was hired at Baseball America, a baseball magazine company that produces a bi-weekly published baseball magazine. I am the financial administrator of the company.

Faculty Search

The math department successfully completed a search for a new assistant professor. Joining us next year will be Greg Quenell. Greg was an undergraduate at Harvard and completed a Ph.D. at the University of Southern California. Greg has a lot of teaching experience including several years at Oberlin College and at Mt. Holyoke College. His field of research is Spectral Theory of Graphs.

Nothing is more fruitful – all mathematicians know it—than those obscure analogies, those disturbing reflections of one theory on another; those furtive caresses, those inexplicable discords; nothing also gives more pleasure to the researcher.

~~ André Weil

How can it be that mathematics, being after all a product of human thought independent of experience, is so admirably adapted to the objects of reality?  ~~Albert Einstein

To be happy you must have taken the measure of your powers, tasted the fruits of your passion, and learned your place in the world.  ~~Santayana

Problem

Last issue’s problem was for you, the referee, to decide (fairly) which team is to kick off in a football game. You have two coins; one fair, the other not (an unfair coin is one whose probability of coming up heads is some number \( p \) not equal to ½). The answer is to toss both together; the chance that they are both the same is the same as the chance that they differ.

Here’s a variant: you now have one coin, possibly unfair. How do you, the referee, use that coin to fairly choose a team to kick off?

Please submit your solution to Prof. Northshield. The first and/or best solution will permit you to choose a prize from the ‘big box’o’prizes’ in Northshield’s office.

I tell them that if they will occupy themselves with the study of mathematics they will find in it the best remedy against the lusets of the flesh.  ~~Thomas Mann

H ave A G reat S ummer!

Closing Credits

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