

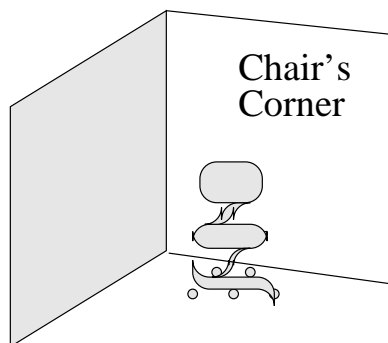
# Mathematical Sciences Alumni News

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Summer 2003

## Greetings!

A warm hello to all alumni of the Department of Mathematical Sciences at Northern Illinois University! Once again it is our pleasure to send you news from the past year—including notes you submitted to us concerning your whereabouts and doings. We invite your comments on this issue along with notes on your activities. And we wish you well in all your endeavors.



by Professor William Blair

## Chair's Corner

It has been a challenging and eventful year for Northern and the Department of Mathematical Sciences. Like all public institutions in Illinois and around the nation, we have been faced with budget cuts while at the same time enrollments have been increasing. With great celebration Northern opened its long awaited new Convocation Center last fall, and both the fall and spring commencement ceremonies were held with much pageantry in the new facility. With the reconfiguration of the schedule of graduation ceremonies, the department was no longer able to hold its traditional Commencement Brunch and Award Ceremony on the morning of graduation. This year a new tradition was initiated by holding a Reception and Award Ceremony on a Sunday afternoon in late April in the beautiful Clara Sperling Sky Room of the Holmes Student Center. This was a festive occasion for the award recipients, their families and friends, and members of the faculty. We celebrated the accomplishments of many talented and hard working students while enjoying

refreshments and a beautiful view of campus on a sunny spring day.

There has been great sadness this year as well. Professor Jindřich Nečas passed away in December. Professor Nečas was a first rate analyst of international reputation. He was one of the world's leading authorities on partial differential equations. He received his Ph.D. degree from the Mathematical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Czechoslovakia in 1957, and his Dr.Sci. degree from the same institution in 1966. Professor Nečas was the leading researcher and head of the Department of Mathematical Modeling of the Mathematical Institute of Charles University, Prague. He held visiting positions at Purdue University, and the University of Illinois, in Paris at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the University Marie Curie, at Nancy, Dresden, Bonn, Heidelberg, Pisa, Rome, Lisbon, and Moscow. He held a visiting position at Northern in 1989, and in 1991 he became a permanent member of our department. In 1997 Nečas received a Presidential Research Professorship, and since 2001, he held the title of Distinguished Research Professor.

Among his many awards is The Doctor Honoris Causa, which he received from the Technical University of Dresden in 1991. A volume of *the Czechoslovak Mathematical Journal* was dedicated to Nečas on the occasion of his 60th birthday. In 1999 there was an International Conference on Partial Differential Equations and Applications at the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic in honor of his 70th birthday. At this meeting he received a gold medal from the rector of the university. On the Czech Republic State Holiday, October 28th, 1998, Nečas received the State Order Medal for Merit from President Václav Havel in a ceremony at Prague Castle.

In addition to his prowess in research, his love and enthusiasm for mathematics was shared with his students and colleagues. Professor Nečas' sage advice was much valued, and his sense of humor was always welcome during tense committee meetings. His friendship is treasured by all of us.

Professor Robert Wheeler retired on June 30. Professor Wheeler has been a member of the mathematical sciences department for 31 years. Wheeler is a consummate professional: he is a truly superb teacher, a world-class mathematician, and a departmental and university citizen of boundless energy and vision.

Wheeler's research in functional analysis is very highly regarded in the mathematics community. His work is at the crossroads of functional analysis, measure theory, and topology.

Wheeler's teaching has received the highest recognition possible; he is a recipient of the NIU Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award and he was one of the first three faculty members named to a Presidential Teaching Professorship. His teaching philosophy puts the student and his/her needs first at all times. Although many of us thoroughly enjoy working with the best and brightest students, and enthusiastically devote much time to their development, no one is as willing to nurture struggling students as is Professor Wheeler. His patience is superhuman; his ability to encourage all students with their struggle to gain mathematical understanding is simply phenomenal. He is able to share his love of mathematics and learning with everyone. At the graduate level Wheeler has served as director of graduate studies and he has directed numerous Ph.D. dissertations, including our very first one in mathematics.

Wheeler has served with distinction on every major department committee. Beginning in 1998, he served the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as associate dean, and since 2000 he has been the associate provost. In both of these vital positions the college and university benefited from his extensive experience with curricular issues.

The university has been most fortunate to have someone with Wheeler's talent, integrity, leadership ability, and capacity for hard work. He is irreplaceable. We wish Professor Wheeler a long, happy, and productive retirement.

This summer the department has been very fortunate to receive a large donation from our colleague, Professor Clarence Hardgrove. The Clarence Ethel Hardgrove Mathematics Scholarship Fund has been established to provide scholarship support for undergraduate students majoring in mathematics at Northern Illinois University.

Professor Hardgrove is an internationally prominent specialist in mathematics education, who was a professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences from 1950 until her retirement in 1977. A native of West Virginia, Professor Hardgrove taught in various public schools for 14 years before becoming an instructor at The Ohio State University in 1948 while achieving her Ph.D. She holds the B.A. from Marshall University and an M.A. from West Virginia University. Professor Hardgrove was an outstanding teacher who was highly regarded by her students, and who was known for her high standards.

Hardgrove was already in the 1960s a strong advocate for reform in the teaching of mathematics through her work on the School Mathematics Study Group and the national Mathematical Association of America Panel on Teacher Training of the Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics. As part of the African Mathematics Program, which brought quality textbook material to the public schools in a number of African nations, she edited the Entebbe Mathematics Series, Primary One-Primary Six. She served as a vice president for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and she was the coauthor of a geometry text and of a modern mathematics text for the training of elementary education majors. Hardgrove developed mathematics courses for elementary education majors, and influenced many of them through her teaching of these courses, methods courses for elementary grades, and what it means to be a professional in education. In 1972 she was recipient of the Illinois Council of the Teachers of Mathematics prestigious Max Berberman Award for lifetime achievement.

Hardgrove was greatly instrumental in the development of the NIU Department of Mathematical Sciences, not only in mathematics education, but also in its attainment of increased stature in pursuit of the Ph.D. degree. She played a significant role in governance at NIU including a year of service as executive secretary of the University Council. Further, Hardgrove was a founder of the Faculty Fund scholarship program and has given major service to NIU and the mathematics department both as a member of the NIU Foundation Advisory Board and as an individual member of the Foundation.

This was the sixth year in which the *Huskie Telefund* has solicited donations on behalf of the department from our alumni. We greatly appreciate your generous contributions to our scholarship funds. Each year the number of contributing alumni and the amount of their contributions have grown. Your comments to the student callers about our department, its faculty, and its programs are passed along to us, and we find these to be encouraging and helpful. If you were not able to donate this year we hope you will consider helping in the future. We also appreciate your loyal support of our endowed scholarship funds, and your direct contributions to the department.

This is our 12th annual *Alumni Newsletter*. They have all been edited by Professor Linda Sons,

and I wish to thank her for producing another superb issue.

Let us hear from you. If you are in DeKalb, please stop by Watson Hall 320 and say hello.

## Summer Diaspora

The cost-saving measures instituted by NIU during the summer months involved the closing of DuSable Hall. Consequently, the Division of Statistics office was moved to Graham Hall for the summer, and faculty in the division were relocated in other parts of the campus. All graduate student offices, instructor offices, and classes scheduled for DuSable had to be set elsewhere on campus! So it is not strange for a mathematics class to be taught this summer in Wirtz or McMurry Hall. Some of our alumni may remember having mathematics classes in these buildings, but in recent years it has seldom been the case.

## Abel Prize In Mathematics

Did you hear the news? Now there is a prize in mathematics that parallels the Nobel Prizes. It has long been a sore point among many mathematicians that no Nobel Prize existed in mathematics. It seemed as if it gave the perception among the general public that mathematics was not as important as other subjects.

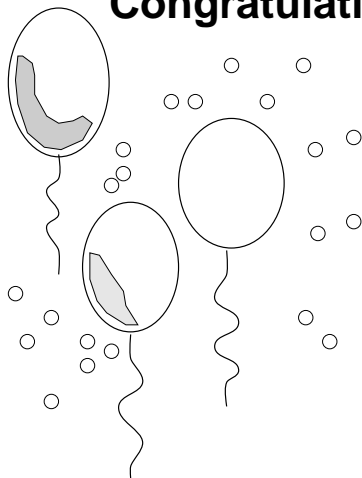
In early June at the University of Oslo, King Harald V of Norway presented the very first Abel Prize in Mathematics to Jean-Pierre Serre of the College de France in Paris. The prize is intended to be awarded each year and carried with it a monetary gift of \$816,000.

The name of the award commemorates the life and work of the 19th century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel. Most alumni will remember the term “abelian group” from their days of study of abstract algebra.

## 2002 Putnam Team

The NIU Putnam Team this year consisted of Dane Bell, Lucas Harris, and Stephanie Richter. The Putnam examination is a national competition administered by the major professional organizations of mathematics. NIU is proud to have a team each year who represent us well by practicing problem solving during the fall semester and taking the examination one Saturday in December.

## Congratulations!



## Congratulations to the New Doctoral Recipients

We congratulate the most recent recipients of the Ph.D. in mathematical sciences:

Joao Carvalho in December 2002, whose dissertation, “State estimation and finite element updating for vibrating systems,” was directed by Professor Biswa Nath Datta. Joao has a faculty appointment at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Jill Shahverdian in May 2003, whose dissertation, “The geometry of weak 2-cocycles,” was directed by Professor George Seelinger. Jill has taken a position as assistant professor at Quinnipiac University.

## New $\pi\mu\epsilon$ Members

The national honorary organization Pi Mu Epsilon is devoted to encouraging interest in mathematics. Members are students whose grades, and in some cases faculty recommendations, indicate they have strong interest in and talent for mathematics. Inducted in spring 2003 were Sara Carroll, Katie Hernacki, Abigail Pearson, Rebecca Stefanelli, Kathleen Varland, and Thomas Weichle. Welcome!

## Departmental Awards

The 25th annual departmental commencement ceremony was held on April, 13, 2003, in the Holmes Student Center Sky Room. At the reception Department Chair William Blair gave out the following awards:

The D. R. Ostberg Award, given for academic achievement to a continuing student, went to Lingju Kong.

The Stelford Prize, given to the graduating senior with the highest GPA in mathematics courses, went to Lucas Harris.

The Gail Masters Gallagher Memorial Scholarship, given to an outstanding student majoring in the mathematical sciences who will have junior class rank during the next academic year, went to Olga Iris Garcia.

The Dean's Award, given to a graduating senior for academic excellence and service, was awarded to Shannon Finlayson and Stephanie Richter.

The (departmental) Chair's Award, given on the basis of academic achievement and service to the department, went to Lucas Harris, while the Director's Award went to Robert Bell.

Certificates of Merit, given on the basis of academic achievement, went to Shannon Finlayson, Lucas Harris, Joseph Karlovsky, and Stephanie Richter (undergraduate students), and Bruce Atwood, Joao Carvalho, Amanda Mahmoud, and Jill Shahverdian (graduate students).

Honorable Mention Awards, given on the basis of academic achievement, went to Jennifer Camp, Shuman Chehade, Matthew Campbell, Nathan Kirschmann, and Karen Sample-Mangan (undergraduate students), Bethany Fenton, and Maureen Idasek (graduate students).

The Margariete Montague Wheeler Awards, recognizing the contributions of Professor Wheeler in mathematics education, were given in two groupings. The M. M. Wheeler Scholarship recipients were Christine Fleshman, Lisa Grilli, Sarah Harnden, and Mary Sue Noble. The M. M. Wheeler Teaching Award recipients were April Burmeister, Jennifer Camp, Jeffrey Danbom, April Finke, Shannon Finlayson, Paul Jewell, Nathan Kirshmann, Joseph Karlovsky, and Stephanie Richter.

## **Awards in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the University**

The Exemplary Student Teacher Award in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences went to Jennifer Camp and Steve Soszko.

## **MATH CLUB Activities 2002-2003**

The Math Club (student chapter of the Mathematical Association of America) sponsored activities throughout the year for those with an interest in mathematics outside the classroom. Two of the most popular meetings were the "First Year Teachers' Report" and the talk on "How to Always Win at Limbo."

The First Year Teachers' Report featured three of the mathematics education graduates of our program relating their experiences and delivering some tips on what to do and what not to do! The three panelists were Ben Commare, who graduated as an SAL in spring 2001, and student taught and taught at Belvidere Junior High School; Jennifer Osborne Howe, a fall 1999 graduate who student taught at Jacobs High School in Algonquin and is teaching at Waubonsie Valley High School; and Jane Mucci, a spring 2002 graduate who student taught at East Leyden in Franklin Park and is teaching at Naperville Central High School.

“How to Always Win at Limbo” was a highly entertaining talk delivered by Professor Edward Burger of Williams College. The talk was subtitled “You can sum some of the series some of the time, and some of the series none of the time . . . but can you sum some of the series ALL the time?”

Professors Richard Blecksmith and Christine Hurlburt once again served as faculty advisers to the club/chapter this year.

## ICTM Regional High School Mathematics Contest

Some 250 secondary school students, along with their teachers and coaches, from high schools in northern Illinois were on campus Saturday, February 22nd, 2003, for a regional contest organized by the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The 10 participating schools were Batavia, Round Lake, West Aurora, Geneva, Buffalo Grove, West Chicago, Rolling Meadows, Lake Zurich, Schaumburg, and Fremd.

A wonderful team of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members from the department supported the event and served as hosts. The contest committee was chaired by Professor Peter Waterman, who was assisted by Professor Eric Behr, Professor Douglas Bowman, Professor Dan Grubb, Professor Yoo Pyo Hong, Ms. Nancy Leifheit, Professor Anders Linner, and Ms. Cindy Stecher.

We hope to see many of those excellent students in the future as NIU mathematics students!

## The 18th Annual NIU Math Contest

Matthew Drury, a sophomore mathematical sciences major from Deer Park, Illinois, took first place and an award of \$75 in the 18th annual Northern Illinois University Department of Mathematical Sciences Math Contest, held on April 9. Michael Konrad, a sophomore mathematical sciences major from Lisle, Illinois, won second place and a \$50 prize; while Chevelle Gandsey, a freshman from Hampshire, Illinois, whose major is undecided, finished third to earn \$25.

As in previous years, the contest exam was open to all full-time undergraduate students at NIU. Each participant turned in solutions to a choice of six out of eleven problems. Freshmen and sophomores had fewer restrictions on their choices than did juniors and seniors.

Professor Harvey Blau supervised the contest. Problems on the exam ranged from high school level (“Prove that there are no two positive integers such that the difference of their cubes equals 74.”) to linear and abstract algebra (“Find all 2-by-2 upper triangular real matrices some power of which equals the identity matrix.”)

## **Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics 2003 Alumni Gathering**

The NIU Alumni Reception at the Annual Meeting of the ICTM at the Palmer House in Chicago will be held Friday, October 17, from 4, til 6 p.m. (just before the evening banquet). Look for the room number on the ICTM message board at the conference.

Last year's reception was well attended, and we look forward to even more attending this year's meeting because of the Chicago location. We hope to see **MANY NIU** alumni in October!

## **2003 Math Camp at NIU**

Once again students who have completed grades 8,9,10,11, or 12 were welcomed July 13-18 for a time to enjoy mathematics in a camp experience. Workshops, problem sessions, games and competitions, movies, and a day trip—besides NIU's great recreational facilities—all added up to a time of fun and learning! Throughout the days of the camp, camp participants were exposed to the beauty and diversity of mathematics outside the material standardly covered in secondary textbooks. Professor Richard Blecksmith directed the camp and encourages alumni to think of those they know who might be participants in the camp in 2004!

## **Zollman Elected to Office in RCML**

Professor Alan Zollman was elected in the spring to the office of vice president for research of the Research Council on Mathematical Learning (RCML). One of the oldest and most prestigious professional organizations for mathematics education research, the RCML seeks to stimulate, generate, coordinate, and disseminate research efforts to understand factors that affect mathematics learning.

## **Zollman Elected as Director of SSMA**

Professor Alan Zollman has been elected as a director of the School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA). This international association is one of the oldest mathematics and science organizations in the United States. Chartered in 1901, SSMA is dedicated to improving instruction in and between science and mathematics. Its primary work and publications address the needs of all those involved in science and mathematics teaching and learning.



# Good News

## New Promotions

Congratulations are in order for Zhuan Ye, who effective August 16, 2003, becomes a full professor in the department.

## Faculty Comings and Goings

Taking time out for sabbatical leave this past year were six members of the department. Professors Biswa Datta, Karabi Datta, Sien Deng, Y.C. Kwong, and Nader Ebrahimi each took one semester away from teaching duties to attend to scholarly activities, while Professor Carol Feltz took the full year for sabbatical scholarly work.

Professor Douglas Bowman joined the department this year as an associate professor. Professor Bowman specialized in Combinatorics.

Also new on the department staff in 2002-2003 were James Campbell, Shannon Dolan, Christine Leroux, and Cathy Poliak.

Visiting faculty in the department in 2002-2003 were Fahir Akyildiz, Liangwen Liao, Jiri Neustupa, and Gary Schwartz.

## Officers of the Department of Mathematical Sciences

Chair:	Professor William Blair
Assistant Chair:	Professor John Wolfskill
Undergraduate Studies Director:	Professor David Rusin
Graduate Studies Director:	Professor Bernard Harris
Applications Involvement Coordinator:	Professor Hamid Bellout
Director of the Division of Statistics:	Professor Sudhir Gupta
Coordinator of Teacher Certification:	Cynthia Stecher
Systems Manager:	Professor Eric Behr

## Web Page

Look for announcements regarding the latest activities in the department at the website [www.math.niu.edu/](http://www.math.niu.edu/)  
Also full of useful information is the page for the statistics division at [www.math.niu.edu/StatDiv](http://www.math.niu.edu/StatDiv)

## NEWS ACCORDING TO YOU

Each year we invite you to share news and comments. Here are some items we heard this year!

After completing their degree and teacher certification requirements, NIU graduates have accepted teaching positions in Illinois and elsewhere. Here's the list we have:

Paul Jewell will be at Geneva Middle School; Shannon Finlayson will be at Fremd High School; Jackie Gleixner will be at Crystal Lake Central High School; Kristin Holler will be at Lincoln Way East High School in Frankfort; Denina Porter will be at Proviso West High School; Amanda Mahmoud will be at Prairie State Community College; Shuman Chehade will serve in the Peace Corps in Africa; Jill Mergenthaler will be at Grayslake Community High School; Azra Haq will be at Hoffman Estates High School; Dan Lindahl will be at St. Charles East High School; Nathan Kirschmann will be at Byron High School; Matt Dunker will be at Crystal Lake South High School; Jeff Danbom will be at Naperville Central High School; Joe Karlovsky will be at Glenbrook South High School (Glenview); Jennifer Camp Jasensky will be at Glenbrook South High School; April Burmeister will be at East Aurora High School; Lisa Henning will be at Naperville Central High School; Steve Soszko will be at Adlai Stevenson High School; and Stephanie Richter will be at Kishwaukee College.

Congratulations and best wishes for a wonderful teaching career!

Other news:

Paul Jewell ('03) and Kathy became the proud parents of Nolan Martin in February.

Charity Heller ('02) became Charity Heller Prose in June 2003 as wedding bells rang.

Jennifer Camp ('03) also heard wedding bells in May 2003 and added the name of Jasensky.

Christina Bigham ('02) became Christina Bigham Meyer in June 2003 as wedding bells rang.

Christine Leroux ('00) joined in marriage Kris Klaus in December 2002. Kris works at Argonne National Laboratory and was a graduate student at NIU.

Denise Sweeney Biel ('92 and '95) reports teaching mathematics in the evenings at Schoosdale Community College in Scottsdale, Arizona, and enjoys being home during the day with daughter Alexia.

Thomas Kampmier ('66) notes that he retired in September 2002 and plans to do some substitute teaching in mathematics and physics in 2003 in the Rockford public school system.

Ron Pozzi ('69) is a mathematics teacher at Auburn High School in Rockford in their gifted program. He teaches trigonometry and analytic geometry with Calculus 1,2,3, and 4. The program allows the Calculus 3 and 4 students to get college credit at Rock Valley College. Ron plans to retire in a couple of years, but he is proud to have sent students to Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Amhurst, and other places as well.

Edward J. Ganshirt ('47) lives in retirement in Sycamore, Illinois, but reflects on a long career in teaching and administration. He taught mathematics and science at Burlington Township High School in 1947 and notes that the area schools consolidated in 1948. In the consolidated system Edward taught and then served as principal from 1952 until 1970. He then served in the Galen Elementary Schools from 1971 until 1983.

George Rivard ('68) reports retirement after 34 plus years serving as a Department of the Army civilian. He received an M.S. in professional management from the Florida Institute of Technology in 1977. Most of his government career was spent as a quality and reliability engineer for weapon systems. At retirement he was the director of Product and Industrial Base Readiness for the Operations Support Command and received the Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award for the period of July 1968 to September 2002. He was also inducted into the Ordnance Order of Samuel Sharpe by the United States Ordnance Corps Association. George resides in Moline

with his wife, Catherine, and has three daughters and seven grandchildren. His youngest daughter, Margaret, is currently a student at NIU.

## Alumni of 25 Years

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary of the Class of 1978. Here is a listing of the Class of 1978 and their current hometowns. If you can update some of the information, we would appreciate your help.

Harith H. Ahmad, Tallahassee, FL	Jeanne M. Ashburn, Naperville, IL
Julie Babenko, McHenry, IL	Nancy Bauer, Darien, IL
David H. Carter, Roselle, IL	Debbie A. Cernauskas, Downers Grove, IL
Thomas A. Cornelius, Rantoul, IL	Judy A. Craver, Libertyville, IL
Timothy E. Dolson, Palm Harbor, FL	Sister Maryann Dosen, Lemont, IL
Bruce A. Ellis, Monument, CO	Paul W. Flett, Forth Worth, TX
Linda J. Francis, Naperville, IL	Laura A. Gibson, Lake Bluff, IL
William D. Hamm, St. Charles, IL	Donna K. Heeter, Chicago, IL
James M. Heshelman, Metamora, IL	Mark W. Hilgers, Gilbert, AZ
Susan K. Hunding, Lake Zurich, IL	Bruce E. Keyzer, Rockford, IL
William J. Krauss, Elgin, IL	James M. Lajter, South Elgin, IL
David E. Lalond, Centralia, WA	Wayne J. Liesch, Wayne, IL
Celeste Lynch, South Holland, IL	Frances McAlister, Charlottesville, VA
Dennis M. Moore, Schaumburg, IL	Craig A. Morse, Naperville, IL
Peter C. Pankratz, Tega Cay, SC	Erik N. Paulsen, Salem, MO
Laurie S. Peltier, Irving, TX	Gerald L. Phillips, Libertyville, IL
Annabeth Propst, St. Charles, IL	Patricia L. Reed, Bolingbrook, IL
Barbara E. Rosin, Schaumburg, IL	Joan F. Tateyama, Laguna Niguel, CA
Kathy Thornton, Naperville, IL	Phuong Tri Uong, Houston, TX
Kevin K. Walker, Wheaton, IL	Paul J. Witt, Zephyrhills, FL
David W. Zaring, Danverns, IL	