

Chair's Corner



On February 14, 2008, our campus experienced an horrific act of violence. As a result of the shootings in Cole Hall, five students and the shooter lost their lives, and many others were wounded. This tragedy affected the lives of everyone on campus. I am particularly proud of the courageous response of our students, staff members, faculty and administrators in the face of this terrible event. We wish to thank all our alumni and friends for their messages of sympathy and support. While these events will never be far from our minds, we must not-and will not-let them deter us from our mission of teaching, research and service. The phrase "*Forward, Together Forward*," taken from the Huskie fight song, captures the spirit on campus.

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Professor Emeritus John A. Ewell III on July 21, 2007. Professor Ewell received his B.S. degree from Morehouse College, where he was a classmate of Dr. Martin Luther King. He received his Ph.D. from UCLA in 1966 under the direction of Professor Ernst Straus. He was a member of the faculty at Northern Illinois University from 1973 until his retirement in 1998. His research was in number theory and he continued to publish during his retirement. Professor Ewell had an abiding interest in the history of mathematics, and he enjoyed sharing his interests in conversations with his students and colleagues.

He was 79 and living in Knoxville, TN, at the time of his death.



John Ewell at CAARMS in 2003

Professor Mohsen Pourahmadi of the Division of Statistics has been named one of the three NIU Presidential Research Professors for 2008.



Professor Pourahmadi is internationally recognized for his research in the areas of prediction theory, time series analysis, and longitudinal data analysis. Professor Pourahmadi is the seventh member of the Department of Mathematical Sciences, and the second member of the Division of Statistics, to receive Northern's highest recognition for outstanding research.

As has been our custom in recent years, the department hosted a Reception and Award Ceremony on a Sunday afternoon in late April in the Skyroom of Holmes Student Center. This was a festive occasion for the award recipients, their family and friends, and members of the faculty. We celebrated the accomplishments of many hard-working students while enjoying refreshments and a beautiful view of campus on a sunny spring day. Attendance was so large that the Skyroom was filled to capacity. Again this year the May commencement ceremonies were held in the spacious new Convocation Center.

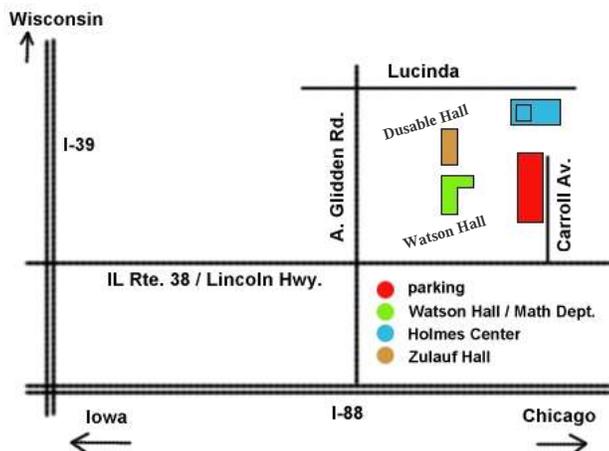
This was the 11th year in which the *Huskie Telefund* has solicited donations on behalf of the department from our alumni. We greatly appreciate your generous contributions to our scholarship funds. Each year the number of contributing alumni and the amount of their contributions have grown. We especially appreciate your support during the current times of very tight budgets.

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.

This is our 17th 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.**

William Blair
July 9, 2008



Officers of the Department of Mathematical Sciences

Chair



Professor William Blair



Assistant Chair
Professor John
Wolfskill

Director of Undergraduate Studies



Professor Zhuan (John)
Ye

Director of Graduate Studies



Professor Bernard
Harris

Coordinator of Applications Involvement

Professor Hamid Bellout

Director of the Division of Statistics



Professor Rama
Lingham

Coordinator of Teacher Certification



Cindy Stecher

Systems Manager



Eric Behr

EXEMPLARY STUDENT TEACHER AWARDS

Hearty congratulations to Christin Parker, who was named exemplary student teacher this spring by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at NIU. We are PROUD to have this student in our program!



Mathematics
and Science
Partnership
Project
funded by

the U.S. Department of
Education

The planning and the leadership teams of the four-year, MSP-funded project "Excellence in the Middle: Enhancing Mathematics Pedagogy with Connections in Science and Engineering" worked together in subgroups productively and effectively during the past year under the direction of Helen Khoury and Mary Shafer of the Department of Mathematical Sciences at NIU. This project partnered with Rockford Public School District (RPS #205).

Consistent with the positions taken by many professional organizations such as the NCTM, NARST, and NMSA just to name a few, this project is based on the position that excellence in the middle school mathematics classrooms is of utmost importance. With this in mind, a new Master of Science in Teaching (M.S.T) degree with specialization in "middle school mathematics education" was developed and approved at NIU. This new specialization will be housed in

our Department of Mathematical Sciences. The new master's degree specialization is intended for certified teachers who want to become highly qualified and effective in the middle school mathematics classrooms, and who have the potential of becoming teacher leaders. The graduate students will improve their mathematical content knowledge, their pedagogical content knowledge, their abilities to link research and practice in their classrooms, as well as their research-based understanding of the mathematical thinking of middle school students.

New graduate courses were designed for the program, and other existing graduate courses were revitalized. The new M.S.T specialization in middle school mathematics Education consists of 34 semester hours. It includes:

- (1) Two new required graduate courses in mathematics: MATH 526 and MATH 527;
- (2) Two graduate elective courses in the sciences, engineering, or mathematical sciences;
- (3) Two required graduate courses in adolescent educational psychology and in the improvement of instruction (EPS 508 and TICI 537)
- (4) Five required graduate research-based courses in the teaching and learning of mathematics (MATH 612; MATH 613; MATH 614; MATH 617; and MATH 696);
- (5) One required culminating exit capstone research-based project in which each graduate student will select action research questions, design a related study, collect relevant data, analyze, and report the findings.

The first cohort of school teachers from Rockford School District were just admitted as graduate students to complete the new master's degree specialization. The first year of implementation is planned to start in fall 2008 through summer 2009. Evaluation data will be collected and analyzed, and research reports will be written for dissemination purposes. For further information and related advice on this new degree specialization, you may contact: Professors Bernie Harris (harris@math.niu.edu), Helen Khoury (hkhoury@math.niu.edu), or Mary Shafer (shafer@math.niu.edu).

ICTM Regional High School Mathematics Contest

While preparations were well under way to host another ICTM Regional High School Mathematics Contest, the tragic shootings on campus on Feb. 14 made it impossible for those plans to be executed. The hosting had to be split between two locations, and was carried out with the excellent help of those in these locations and a cadre of NIU personnel. Special thanks to Professor Peter Waterman, Cindy Stecher, Eric Behr, and Nancy Leifheit for making arrangements for the contest to go on despite the circumstances.

FACULTY COMINGS AND GOINGS

Welcome

New to the faculty for the academic year 2007-2008 was Assistant Professor Edith Adan-Bante. Professor Adan-Bante earned her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in 2002 under Professor Everett C. Dade with the dissertation "Products of Characters and Derived Length of Finite Solvable Groups." She comes to NIU from a position at the University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Coast.

New instructors for the year 2007-2008 were Brian Veitch and Patrick Gordon. Both Brian and Patrick have a master's from NIU. Also serving as an instructor in the spring semester was Daniel Sarkisian, Ph.D., one of our former doctoral students, who was visiting for the primary purpose of research connections.

On sabbatical leave for fall 2007 was Professor Qingkai Kong, while Professor Joseph (Buck) Stephen was on sabbatical leave for spring 2008.

On personal leave for the full year were Professors David Rusin and Edith Adan-Bante. Also Professors Fred Bloom and Diana Steele were on personal leave for spring 2008.

Putnam Problems from Dec. 2007 Can you do them?

The 68th annual William Lomell Putnam Mathematical Competition was held on Saturday, December 1, 2007. Representing NIU in the contest were Ryan Anderson, Dave Drapa and Kimberly Dye. The faculty advisers for the Putnam team were Richard Blecksmith and Ilya Krishtal. Here are some of the problems participants faced.

- 1) Find all values of α for which the curves $y=ax^2+ax+\frac{1}{24}$ and $x=ay^2+ay+\frac{1}{24}$ are tangent to each other.
- 2) Find the least possible area of a convex set in the plane that intersects both branches of the hyperbola $xy=1$ and both branches of the hyperbola $xy=-1$. (A set S in the plane is called *convex* if for any two points in S the line segment connecting them is contained in S .)
- 3) A repunit is a positive integer whose digits in base 10 are all ones. Find all polynomials f with real coefficients such that if n is a repunit, then so is $f(n)$.
- 4) Suppose that a finite group has exactly n elements of order p , where p is a prime. Prove that either $n=0$ or p divides $n+1$.
- 5) Let f be a polynomial with positive integer coefficients. Prove that if n is a positive integer, then $f(n)$ divides $f(f(n)+1)$ if and only if $n=1$.



Departmental Awards

The 30th annual Award Ceremony was held on April 20, 2008, in the Holmes Student Center Skyroom. At the reception, Department Chair William Blair gave out the following awards:

Dean's Award

Brittany Debrauwere
Michael Murphy

Chair's Award

Cassandra Albracht

Director's Award

Jessica Bradley
Jin Lei

Stefford Award

Kyle Buehler
Andrew Fulks

M. M. Wheeler Scholarship Award

Dominica Blalock
Phoebe Blaustein
David Drapa
Robert Fantozzi

M. M. Wheeler Teaching Award

Cassandra Albracht
Ashley Clark
Brittany Debrauwere
Jeremy Hoffmann
Eileen Niedoborski
Samantha Schwartz
Joseph Singleton

M. M. Wheeler Teaching Award

Honorable Mention

David Appelman
Heidi Boehning
Denise Frank

D. R. Ostberg Award

Laura Kettner

Clarence Ethel Hardgrove Scholarship

Patricia Brummel
Elizabeth Gibble
Gregory Meena
Stephen Reilly
Eric Schumacher
Cara Wyrostek

Mertyn J. Behr Award

Robert Cappetta
Phillip Kisunzu

Carol J. Feltz Scholarship

Priya Kohli

Dale G. Jungst Memorial

Scholarship Award

Phoebe Blaustein
Robert Fantozzi
Paul Hoffma

Joseph C. & Marion E. Huber

Memorial Scholarship

David Bierowka
Megan Smith

Dorothy & Glenn Erickson Award

Alexis Rivera

Adam Slagell Scholarship

Bryan Crouch

Certificate of Teaching Excellence

Abigail Bailey
Kristen Campbell
Christine Leroux
Mohan Thapa

Certificate of Merit-Undergraduates

Cassandra Albracht
Kyle Buehler
Brittany Debrauwere
Andrew Fulks
Kevin Kurz
Michael Murphy
Saif Patel

Certificate of Merit-Graduates

Jessica Bradley
Robert Cappetta
Qiang Chen
Anthony Cosentino
Beibei Hu
Laura Kettner
Jin Lei
Haifeng Song
Brian Veitch
Qi Wu
Xuegang Xia
Daiyan Yang

Honorable Mention-Undergraduates

Kenneth Borre
Jason Bush
Mark Covalt
Janae DeBartolo
Justin Fulbright
Derek Jeanneret
Matthew Kacsos
Matthew Petitti
Jacob Zilliox

Honorable Mention-Graduates

Susan Ficken
David Gisch
Daniel Hall
Johnathan Mercer
Phillip Kisunzu

NIU Math Contest

Robert Beavers 1st place
Lu Li 2nd place
Elizabeth Gibble 3rd place

Roy Saunders Loses Battle with Leukemia

We were sorry to hear in January 2008 of the death of Roy Saunders. Alumni will remember him as a former professor of statistics. After leaving NIU, he worked in industry for over 10 years, and when he retired from industry in 2002, he opened up a couple of sandwich shops. He was living in Pennsylvania at the time of his death.

Math Club/ MAA Student Chapter/ Pi Mu Epsilon



Puzzle night and movie nights were once again part of the activity of the Math Club in 2007-2008. The sale of donated mathematics books and answers to old departmental final exams provided some funding for the group. A record number of undergraduates and graduate students motored to Charleston, Illinois, in the spring for the annual ISMAA meeting at which the featured speaker led attendees to do remarkable paper folding exercises and gave enthusiastic discussion as to the mathematics behind the workings. In May Professor Douglas Bowman dazzled those attending with a talk on "Outrageously Difficult Sudoku" before the initiation of the newest members of the NIU Pi Mu Epsilon chapter. Professor Richard Blecksmith has again served as an adviser to the Math Club during the year.



Professor Richard Blecksmith

Teaching Positions for 2007-2008 Mathematics Student Teachers

Fall 2007 student teachers:

John Dyer, Hersey High School
Justin Fulbright, Huntley High School
Steve Geuss, Woodstock High School
Eileen Niedoborski, Neuqua Valley High school (Naperville)
Christin Parker, Lincoln Way East School (Frankfort)
Danielle Steinway, Larsen Middle School (Elgin)



Spring 2008 student teachers:

Cassie Albracht, Plano High School (Plano, TX)
Ashley Clark, Lemont High School
Cole Davidson, Oregon High School
Julia Dawson, Kenyon Middle School (South Elgin)
Brittany Debrauwere, Barrington High School
Denise Frank, Sterling High School
Jeremy Hoffman, North Middle School (Aurora, CO)
Amy Levitsky, Aux Sable Middle School (Plainfield)
Samantha Schwartz, Danville High School
Joe Singleton, Plainfield Middle School (Indiana)
Sean Waters, Ashton Franklin Center High School
Jacob Zilliox, Glenwood Springs High School (Colorado)
Renee Straub, Thayer Middle School (Naperville)
Matthew Young, St. Charles East High School



23rd annual NIU MATH CONTEST

Three sophomore mathematical sciences majors received top honors in the 23rd annual Northern Illinois University Mathematics Contest, held this year on April 2. Robert Beavers (computational math), from Aurora, took first place. Lu Li (actuarial science), from DeKalb, came in second; and Elizabeth Gible (actuarial science),

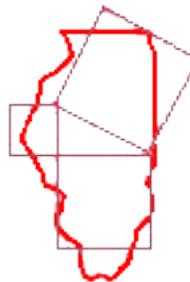
from St. Charles, was third. Awards of \$75, \$50, and \$25 are given, for first, second, and third place, respectively. The winners were recognized at the Department of Mathematical Sciences' Awards Ceremony and Reception on Sunday, April 20.

As in previous years, the contest exam was open to all full-time undergraduates at NIU. Each contestant turned in solutions to a choice of six out of 11 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 through calculus, linear algebra, and number theory.

For more information, contact
Harvey Blau (815-753-6772; blau@math.niu.edu)

ICTM



CALLING ALL MATH
TEACHERS!!!

Under the theme "Connections in the Mathematics Landscape," the 59th Annual Meeting and Conference of the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics is to be held October 16-18, 2008, in Peoria, Illinois. NOW is the time to aim to attend, so that you may grow professionally-sharing ideas with other teachers, making new friends, and renewing acquaintances with "old" classmates (like those you knew in MATH 410 and MATH 412). See you there?



Alumni of 25 Years

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary of the class of 1983. Here is a listing of the class of 1983 and their current hometowns. If you can update some of the information, we would appreciate your help.

Ms. Yusof Selama Abdullah, Lafayette, IN
Mrs. Jennifer L. Alves, Mundelein, IL
Ms. Valarie Bell, Haddonfield, NJ
Ms. Eliza Buyong, Phoenix, AZ
Ms. Patricia Louis Carone, Evanston, IL
Ms. Yichi Chen-Pierce, Woodinville, WA
Mr. Andre Jay Crittenden, DeKalb, IL
Mr. David James Darby, Huntley, IL
Mr. William J. Davidson, Byron, IL
Dr. Mary Beth Dever, Wheeling, IL
Mr. Khalidi Bin Duamin, Mc Lean, VA
Mr. William Felix Funk, Brocton, IL
Ms. Linda R. Gran, Barlett, IL
Mrs. Kathleen Gutowski (Gibson), Aurora, IL
Mr. Michael Patrick Hand, Naperville, IL
Mrs. Laurie L. Hoecherl, Sycamore, IL
Mr. Larry Arthur Kamin, Bristol, WI
Ms. Elizabeth Kapraun, Lake Zurich, IL
Mr. Robert Edward Kelly, Chicago, IL
Mr. Keith Allen Kuchar, Aurora, IL
Mrs. Kristi Lynn Macek, Frankfort, IL
Mrs. Leslie A. Matekaitis, DeKalb, IL
Mr. Fan Chin Meng, Chicago, IL
Ms. Latifah Mohamad-nor, Dekalb, IL
Ms. Siti Miria Mohd, Rockville, MD
Mrs. Maryagnes Moore, Marshall, AR
Mr. Louis Michael Muhr, Lake Zurich, IL
Ms. Maria Luis Ortiz-ahlf, Mexico City, MX
Mr. James L. Pazdan, Edison, NJ
Mr. Keith R. Peak, Barrington, IL
Dr. Daniel John Pierce, Woodinville, WA
Mr. Clifford Joseph Pilon, Normal, IL
Mrs. Wasilah Sabron, DeKalb, IL
Ms. Linda Rae Scholly, Elgin, IL
Ms. Kathleen Marie Senn, Huntley, IL
Mr. Jeffrey F. Stiegel, Lake Villa, IL
Mr. Ka Keung Tang, Barlett, IL
Mr. James Edward Thompson, Beaverdam, VA
Mrs. Gail Mary Triveline, Gurnee, IL
Mrs. Jeanne E. Valentin, Garden Prairie, IL
Mr. Andrew Wojciechowski, Campton, NH
Ms. Jerlang Yeh, Fremont, CA
Mr. Wan Zaini Zakaria, DeKalb, IL
Dr. Aklilu Zegeye, Herndon, VA

2008 ABEL PRIZE



Jacques Tits receives the Abel Prize from King Harald. John Griggs Thompson to the left with the prize. To the right: Kristian Seip, chairman of the Abel committee. (Photo: Heiko Junge/Scanpix)

Graduate Research Professor John Griggs Thompson, University of Florida, and Professor Emeritus Jacques Tits, Collège de France, have been awarded the 2008 Abel Prize "for their profound achievements in algebra and in particular for shaping modern group theory." In the prize citation, the Abel Committee writes that "Thompson revolutionized the theory of finite groups by proving extraordinarily deep theorems that laid the foundation for the complete classification of finite simple groups, one of the greatest achievements of twentieth century mathematics." In 1963, Thompson and Walter Feit proved that all nonabelian finite simple groups were of even order, work for which they both won the Frank Nelson Cole Prize in Algebra from the AMS in 1965. Thompson also won a Fields Medal in 1970. In the Abel citation for Tits, the committee writes that "Tits created a new and highly influential vision of groups as geometric

objects. He introduced what is now known as a Tits building, which encodes in geometric terms the algebraic structure of linear groups." The committee noted the link between the two winners' work: "Tits's geometric approach was essential in the study and realization of the sporadic groups, including the Monster." Tits received the Grand Prix of the French Academy of Sciences in 1976, and the Wolf Prize in Mathematics in 1993. The Abel Prize is awarded by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters for outstanding scientific work in the field of mathematics. The prize amount is 6,000,000 Norwegian kroner (over \$1,000,000 U.S.). Thompson and Tits received their prize in a ceremony in Oslo on May 20, 2008.

(Write-up courtesy of www.ams.org)



John Griggs Thompson and Jacques Tits are the 2008 Abel Laureates.
(Photo: University of Florida and Jean-François Dars/CNRS Images)

Former Department Member Wins Top Award From Mathematical Association of America



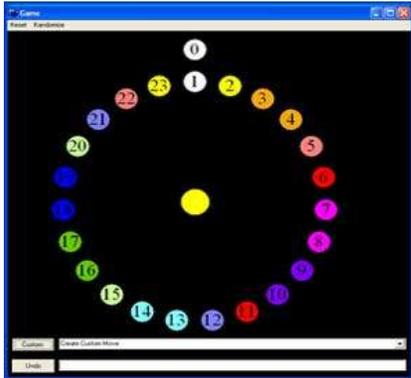
Lida K. Barrett, a former professor of mathematics and a former associate provost at NIU, received the Mathematical Association of America's prestigious Yueh-Gin Gung and Dr. Charles Y. Hu Award for Distinguished Service to Mathematics at the organization's annual meeting in January.

The prize honors distinguished contributions to mathematics and mathematical education. It is the association's most prestigious award for service.

In her time at NIU, Professor Barrett frequently taught sections of MATH 211 and attended department seminars. She served as associate provost at NIU during the 1980s and in a wide range of faculty and administrative posts at the University of Utah, University of Tennessee, Mississippi State University and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. She also is a former president of the Mathematical Association of America.

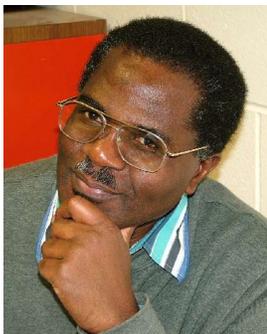
Puzzles Based on Sporadic Simple Groups

(Write-up courtesy of www.ams.org)



Igor Kriz (University of Michigan at Ann Arbor) and **Paul Siegel** (Pennsylvania State University) describe some mathematical puzzles that they've created in the article "Simple Groups at Play" in the July issue of *Scientific American*. According to the article, Kriz and Siegel felt the need to go beyond Rubik's Cube, which gives puzzle-solvers an intuition into group theory, and provide puzzlers some insight into sporadic simple groups. The puzzles can be played online at the *Scientific American* website.

Congratulations to our Newest Ph.D.



Warmest congratulations to **Phillip Kisunzu**, who was awarded his degree in May. Phillip's dissertation, "*Teacher Instructional Practices, Students Mathematical Dispositions and Mathematics Achievement*," was written under the direction of Professor Helen Khoury. External examiner for Phillip's dissertation was Professor Meg Meyer of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Having spent the past academic year at the University of Arizona in some postdoctoral work, Phillip will begin a position at the University of Illinois at Chicago this fall.

FIELD EXPERIENCE FOR THE APPLICATIONS INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT OF THE PH.D. DEGREE

Every student seeking a Ph.D. degree from NIU in mathematical sciences must spend a summer or a semester completing a field experience connecting mathematics with applications. Reports for this experience are written and presented in an ongoing seminar enabling all Ph.D. students to benefit from others' experiences as well as their own. Here is a list of those in this summer's field experience and the projects on which they are working.

Min Wang is spending his summer at Thoshiba Medical Research laboratory in Lincolnshire, Illinois. He is working on new algorithms for improving CAT scan images. This effort would contribute to better diagnosis by physicians.



Laura Kettner is an intern at Argonne National Laboratory, Mathematical

Science Division. She is collaborating with a group studying DNA, and her efforts are toward improving automated gene-location algorithms.

Susan Ficken is working at Argonne National Laboratory in the Decision and Information Sciences Division. Susan is applying agent-based modeling to studying problems arising from social sciences.

Katsuo Hisano is an intern at the Van Andel Research Institute, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Van Andel is a bio-medical research laboratory, and Katsuo is working with a group attempting to identify expression related to Parkinson's disease.



Zollman Becomes SSMA President

In November 2008 Professor Alan Zollman will begin his two-year term as president of the School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA). The international SSMA is an inclusive professional community bringing together researchers and teachers to promote research, scholarship, and practice to improve school science and mathematics and to advance the integration of school science and mathematics. Through a community of teachers, researchers, scientists, and mathematicians, SSMA seeks to (a) advance knowledge through research in science and mathematics education and their integration, (b) inform practice through the dissemination of scholarly works in and across science and mathematics, and (c) influence policy in science and mathematics education at local, state, and national levels.

Romae Cormier's violin becomes silent

Retired faculty member Romae Cormier passed away July 24, 2008, at the age of 80. Professor Cormier taught many sections of calculus and other lower division courses, retiring in May of 1996 after serving 40 years at NIU. Widely known in the DeKalb community, Romae was one of the oldest members of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra, playing violin in it since 1979. He is survived by his wife, Sue, and three sons: Ivan, Landall, and Darrin.



Project REAL Coming to a Close

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Professors Helen Khoury and Ellen Hines continued their Project REAL professional development activities with the middle school mathematics teachers at the Rockford Environmental Science Academy [RESA] in Rockford. This was the final implementation year for Project REAL, a U.S. Department of Education funded school-university-partnership project under the leadership of the College of Education at NIU. The professional development activities with the RESA teachers focused on helping RESA emerge as a Professional Development School, as well as on immersing the teachers of mathematics in experiences and related deep analyses of students' mathematical work to support instructional classroom-based decision-making.

Highlights of the year included the following: (1) a focus on supporting teachers to adapt, implement, and assess professional development activities for use with their own students, (2) a joint national presentation by three RESA mathematics teachers, Karen Brankin, Madelynn Johnson and Jane Pickett, and Professors Helen Khoury and Ellen Hines of our Department of Mathematical Sciences at NIU, titled, "Sustaining Our Professional Growth in the Mathematics Classrooms at RESA," given at the annual conference of the *National Association for Professional Development Schools* held April 10 – 13 in Orlando, Florida, and (3) participation of Professors Khoury and Hines in several classroom-based lessons at RESA, during which they enjoyed observing the many creative adaptations used by the mathematics teachers to accommodate a wide range of diversities within the classrooms.

Although Project REAL is drawing to a close, Professors Khoury and Hines have learned from and greatly value the collaborative relationships they have developed through their involvement with the project. They will continue working with RESA teachers on an informal, as-needed basis, and expect to maintain and cultivate these professional connections.

Two New Interdisciplinary Math & Science Partnership Programs

Professor Alan Zollman of our mathematics education group is working with two new programs connected with ISBE and the U.S. Department of Education (funded by NCLB, Title II, Part B, U.S. DOE).

The first program, *ITEAMS*, headed by Associate Dean Mansour Tahernezehadi of the College of Engineering and Engineering Technology, is novel initiative of aligning state education learning standards with the professional societies' standards to create a unique advanced degree, the Master of Science in Teaching in Engineering Education (MST-EE). ITEAMS members are from the College of Engineering (Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Engineering Technology, Industrial and Systems Engineering); College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Mathematical Sciences, Geology and Environmental Geosciences); the College of Education (Teaching and Learning, Literacy Education, Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations); NIU University Outreach; West Aurora School District 129; and Harlem School District 122.

The second Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnerships Program, *Bio-Teach*, headed by Jon Miller of NIU Biological Sciences, created a new Masters of Science degree in biology with an emphasis in biology teaching for middle and high school teachers. The interdisciplinary team members are from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Mathematical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Physics); the College of Education (Teaching and Learning, Literacy Education, Leadership, Educational Psychology and Foundations); NIU University Outreach; DeKalb Community Unit School District 428.

NEWS ACCORDING TO YOU!

David Spangler ('71; M.S. '73) is the author of "Mathematics Explorations: Detective-style Activities for the Real World," published by Good Year Books. He is editorial director for Stet Graphics, a publishers services company in Rolling Meadows, IL, that develops K-12 math books for publishers. In his "spare time," he teaches math classes and workshops through Active Math Workshops and National-Louis University. David and his wife, Bonnie, have three children-Ben, Jamie, and Joey.

Sheri (Cocciemiglio) and Gene Blome (both '92) reside in Round Lake Beach, IL, and welcomed their fifth child, Anneliese Marie in December 2006, born at home while her siblings Abigail, Jeremy, Maggie, and Evelyn slept! Gene is production manager at Sign-a-Rama in Buffalo Grove, and Sheri is a stay-at-home, homeschooling mom.



Ron Solum ('95) of Mundelein, IL, is an actuarial consultant for Hewitt Associates in Lincolnshire. He is a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and an Enrolled Actuary (EA).

Sean Savage ('67 and '69) of Wilmington, IL, retired in 2002 after teaching math/physics at Romeoville High School for 34 years. He has fond memories of his undergraduate time at the Castle (Professor Herrick) and the nearby library (study carrels), where studying long hours paid off! His wife, Karen, teaches kindergarten in Elwood, while daughter, Sara, practices law in San Francisco, and son, Michael, is an honors student at Providence High School in New Lenox.



David Kettlestrings ('06) and Caroline Jacobs ('07), both currently in the NIU Ph.D. program in mathematics, were married this summer after navigating through the June graduate exams.

Bonnie Kersten ('69, M.S. '72, and C.A.S. Secondary Ed. '76) is assuming a position as a mathematics teacher at Avery Coonley School (a private school for the gifted). Bonnie spent 2005 to 2008 as an instructor at NIU after retiring from 34 years of teaching at DeKalb High School of which nine years were as Department Chair. She has been a reader for the Advanced Placement Calculus Exam for ETS, Princeton, NJ, since 1993 and served as a Table Leader for the exam since 2001. Since 1996, she has also served as a faculty consultant for the College Board's Midwest Regional Office in Evanston, IL, presenting advanced placement workshops for high school calculus teachers. In her "spare time" she volunteers in the community--most recently as a worker in the gift shop at Kishwaukee Community Hospital.

John Diamantopoulos (Ph.D. '96) was recognized in April with a Circle of Excellence award at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, OK. John is an associate professor of mathematics at Northeastern and was cited for his service activities, including that he "consistently contributes time to service opportunities within the Department of Mathematics, the College of Science and Health Professions, the university and the Tahlequah community." Particularly noted was his work as chair of the Oklahoma-Arkansas Section of the Mathematical Association of America, his role as vice-president of the NSU Faculty Council, and his co-chairing of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life team at NSU. Congratulations John!

[Web Page](#)

Look for announcements regarding the latest department activities at the website:

www.math.niu.edu

Also full of useful information is the statistics division page at:

www.math.niu.edu/StatDiv



If you would like to see the newsletter in color, please visit:

www.math.niu.edu/alumni/

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