

MSCS



Mess

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Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science
St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057

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This Week's Colloquium

Title:	TBA
Presenter:	Jim Scott
Date:	Tuesday November 18 th
Time:	1:30 pm
Location:	SC 188

About the speaker: Jim is a native of southern Minnesota who, after graduating from Macalester College with a mathematics degree in 1996, hung a right turn on I-80 and didn't stop until he hit the west coast. After arriving in California, he worked as a computer programmer in San Francisco on the Y2K switch. Really. (Insert "Office Space" joke here). Jim finally got his act together and did something constructive when he went to the University of California, Berkeley to get his Master's degree in Public Health. After a brief stint as a tuberculosis outbreak epidemiologist, he returned to Berkeley and received an M.A. in biostatistics and a Ph.D. in epidemiology (ask me about it!). His research interests include causal inference, computational statistics, simulating the spread of infectious diseases, and statistical modeling. In his spare time he goes backpacking, hiking, and spends quality time with his wife, Kate, and his almost 3 year old daughter, Julia and 4 month old Benjamin.

Math Grad School Night!

Graduate students and Faculty in Mathematics will lead a panel discussion on Wednesday, November 18 on how to apply, get in, pay for and survive graduate school in mathematics. Come hear these students talk about their experiences and answer questions such as: What IS graduate school like? How do I pick a program? Are all programs pretty much the same? Will I be prepared? Will I like it? Will I survive? What can I do with a Masters or a Ph.D. in mathematics? Come to RNS 207 at 5:30 for food, drink and panel discussion. Contact Paul Humke or Tina Garrett with questions.

Math Film Festival 2008

The MSCS Department is sponsoring the second of two film-discussion evenings this Wednesday, November 19. Come to RNS 390 at 7:00 PM to see watch two short—**Whatchu Know 'bout Math** and **Just a Finite Simple Group of Order Two**—and our feature film, **Good Will Hunting**.

Will Hunting is a mathematical genius who's living a rough life in South Boston, while being employed at a prestigious college in Boston, he's discovered by a Fields Medal winning mathematics Professor who eventually tries to get Will to turn his life around but becomes

haunted by his own professional inadequacies when compared with Will.

Professor Garrett will explain the “impossible problem” and its solution after the film.

St. Olaf Academic Theme Event

Presenter:	Eric Jolly
Date:	Thursday, November 20, 2008
Time:	11:30 AM
Location:	Buntrock Commons Ballroom

The community is invited to join in an event celebrating the 2008-09 theme, *Science and the Liberal Arts*. Eric Jolly, president of the Science Museum of Minnesota, will be on campus to speak. All are welcome!

New Bio Reading Course

Interested in learning more about how mathematics is used in all areas of Biology, from health to forensics, from bio informatics to natural resource management? Want to get perspectives from lots of great professors from both the MSCS and Biology departments? Think it would be fun to spend a couple of relaxed evening hours each week (Thursdays) discussing ideas with like minded folks?

If yes, consider the 0.25 credit Bio 291D, Exploring Bio Math. Don't let the Biology listing or the number scare you. This course is meant for folks with one introductory college level (or advanced high school) Biology course and a past or concurrent enrollment in Calculus II (or equivalent). Of course, if you bring more to the table, all the better for us all.

This course will meet weekly from 7:00pm to 9:00pm on Thursday evenings. Each meeting will be centered around a reading, typically a journal article combining interesting issues at the interface of mathematics and biology, with two weeks spent on a single article. The point of the course is for biologists to learn about the power mathematics can bring to biological investigations and for mathematicians to learn

about some cool applications in biological settings. The discussion will be led by professors from both MSCS and Biology, including Steve Freedberg, Urmila Malvadkar, Steve McKelvey, John Schade and Anne Walter.

Please consider adding this tiny class to your spring registration. If you have any questions, please contact Prof. McKelvey.

Math T-Shirts

The MAA is doing t-shirts differently this year; in addition to trying to get them in before Christmas, we are also letting you place a preorder that will guarantee you a t-shirt of your chosen size when they arrive! This year's t-shirts will be green and feature the design "When in doubt, let $\epsilon > 0$." on the front and "St. Olaf Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science '08-'09" on the back. The cost will be \$10.00. If you want to preorder, email, mscs0809tshirtorders@stolaf.edu with your name, St. Olaf username, and size/quantity desired, by 8 PM, Tuesday, November 18th!

Problem of the Week

Let n be a positive integer. Prove that there exists a number divisible by 5^n that does not contain a single zero in its decimal representation.

Solutions to last week's problem are posted at SC 222. Send your solution to this week's problem to Prof. Gower (SC 222, gower@stolaf.edu) by Friday, November 21, 2008.

Editor-in-Chief:	Christina Koch
Faculty Advisor:	Katie Ziegler-Graham
MM Czar:	Donna Brakke
Problems Editor:	Jason Gower

If you would like to submit an article or math event to be published in the Math Mess, e-mail kochc@stolaf.edu.