

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:	Combinatorics and RNA Secondary Structure
Presenter:	Jennifer Galovich
Date:	Tuesday, April 27 th
Time:	1:30 pm
Location:	SC 188

About the talk: Various combinatorial objects have been used to model RNA secondary structures. This talk will describe some of the known models, and introduce a new one which uses permutations. We give a complete characterization of those permutations which correspond to RNA secondary structures, describe some statistics on the RNA secondary structures and their relationship to well-known permutation statistics, and suggest some ways in which these statistics could be used by biologists to distinguish functionally different types of RNA. No previous knowledge of combinatorics will be assumed.

About the speaker: Jennifer Galovich comes to St. Olaf from the math department at St. John's University

Honors Day Friday May 1st

Honors Day will be celebrated on Friday, May 1 at 10:10 a.m. in Boe Chapel. **Lynn Steen**, professor of mathematics and special assistant to the provost, will give the address: "Adrift in a Sea of Numbers."

St. Olaf and the ACM

Attention to all computer science concentrators and their friends! St. Olaf is now home to an official chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) after receiving news this week that the chapter's charter has been accepted.

The ACM is a relatively new professional society, being founded in 1947 at Columbia University in New York, following the growth of interest in computing. Like many other scientific professional societies, the ACM is known throughout the world of computer science and aims to serve its members by providing resources that develop the science of computing, as well as professional development and a community among its members. The ACM's resources include various publications, conferences and an online digital library. For those interested learning more about the ACM, check them out on the internet at (<http://www.acm.org>).

The St. Olaf ACM chapter hopes to organize meetings, activities and lectures centered

around computing, to give students more opportunities to find out what computer science has to offer.

To celebrate the new charter, the chapter will be holding a party on Wednesday, April 29 at 7 P.M. in the Regent's Hall Link. Anyone interested in the activities of the chapter (or having some food) is welcome to come and find out more. If you have any questions, see the chapter's website at (<http://devel.cs.stolaf.edu/sacm/>) or feel free to contact this year's officers: **Todd Frederick**, chair; **Thomas McConville**, vice-chair; or **Mike Gesme**, treasurer-secretary.

Congratulations!

The Mess would like to recognize the significant achievements of two MSCS majors, **Chee Lee** and **Sarah Hendrickson**.

Chee Lee is a senior who recently finished in the Top 4 of the 2nd biennial Undergraduate Statistics Project Competition. The competition is meant to "encourage the development of data analysis skills, to enhance presentation skills, and to recognize outstanding work by undergraduate statistics students." (from www.causeweb.org/usproc/) This is not the first time a St. Olaf student has finished high in the rankings—alumni David Swanson and Nicole Novak won an honorable mention for their project in 2007. Chee's poster "Using random forest to predict a complete operon map of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis genome," based on research done during the summer 2008, will compete with three other posters for the top prize, to be announced in June.

Congratulations also to senior Sarah Hendrickson who was notified this week that she has been accepted for a Fulbright to Vellore India to do research at Christian Medical

College. She will be doing work at an established research lab there, studying tuberculosis diagnostic and treatment methods.

Congratulations to both Chee and Sarah and all the best for your future!

MAA Elections

While there have been applicants for some positions on the MAA executive council at St. Olaf, there are still some positions open. If you are interested in running for any position, but especially president or junior representative, please email **Jonathan Woolums** (woolums@stolaf.edu) as soon as possible.

Senior Bios

Heads up! Seniors, you will be featured in the final edition of the MSCS Mess. If you have not already done so, please email Mess editor Christina Koch (kochc@stolaf.edu) with a brief bio and your plans for next year.



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