

MSCS



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

March 6, 2009
Volume 37, No 12

This Week's Colloquium

Title: **Modeling Forest Carbon Uptake at Multiple Scales**

Presenters: Dr. John Zobitz, Augsburg College

Date: Tuesday, March 10th

Time: 1:30 pm

Location: SC 188

About the talk: A key research area in environmental science and climate change research is to understand the interaction and coupling between forests and the atmosphere. Large-scale efforts address this question through state-of-the-art instrumentation at multiple spatial and temporal scales, leading to rich datasets of information. Mathematical modeling can be used to integrate all these different measurements to provide a comprehensive picture of forest carbon uptake.

This talk will present work modeling forest carbon uptake at a high elevation subalpine forest in the Rocky Mountains. In addition recent results will be discussed that showcase the rich opportunities for mathematics in environmental science.

About the speaker: Dr. Zobitz grew up in northern Minnesota and graduated from St. John's University. He obtained his PhD from the University of Utah, specializing in the area

of mathematical biology. He currently teaches as an Assistant Professor at Augsburg College. Dr. Zobitz enjoys being back home and enjoying the outdoors: biking, snowboarding, and camping.

Pi Day Festivities

Come celebrate Pi with pie! You're invited to St. Olaf's Annual Pi Day Celebration this upcoming Saturday, March 14. Come recognize one of our favorite irrational numbers with all things Pi(e) related, including Pi(e)-tin tossing, Pi carols, Pi decorations and most importantly, eating Pi(e)...Mmmmm! The festivities begin at 1:59 (and 26 seconds) PM on Saturday, March 14 down in Regents Hall 150. So come join the fun and celebrate Pi!

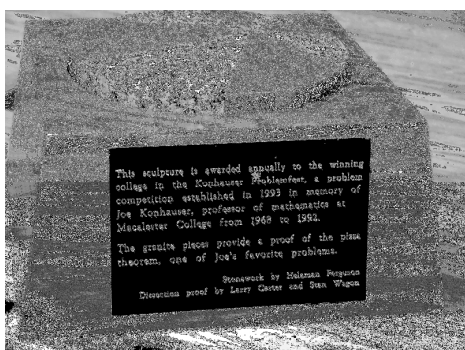
Konhauser Win!

A St. Olaf team of **Nathan Clement**, **Thomas McConville**, and **Charles McEachern** came home with first place in this year's Konhauser Problemfest, which took place this past Saturday, February 28, at Carleton College. They placed ahead of fourteen other teams for St. Olaf's second win in three years.

The Konhauser Problemfest is an annual problem-solving competition, started in 1993 in memory of Joe Konhauser, a professor at Macalaster College who was also an active

problemist, posting nearly 700 Problems of the Week at Macalester over a 25-year period.

The Konhauser brings together teams from several local colleges, including Macalaster, St. Olaf, Carleton, Gustavus Adolphus and University of St. Thomas. Teams consist of three people who work together to solve problems during a three hour session in the morning. The problems are graded during lunch and prizes awarded immediately following. One of the prizes includes the trophy shown below: the granite pieces on the wooden base provide a proof for the “pizza” theorem.”



(The Konhauser trophy – look for it around the math department!)

Game Night

Calling all game enthusiasts! There will be a game night next week on Wednesday, March 11, starting at 6:45 PM and running for a little over an hour (or maybe longer). Come to SC 188 for fun and games. Feel free to bring your own games if you have a favorite to play.

Problem of the Week

Let P be a point on the parabola. The normal line to the parabola at P will intersect the parabola at another point, say Q . Find the coordinates of P so that the area bounded between the normal line and the parabola is a minimum.

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, March 13, 2009.

About the MAA

Math majors should consider investigating the resources and opportunities available through the Mathematical Association of America (or MAA). The MAA started as a small association to publish a monthly math journal and has since grown to an international organization that not only publishes 3 peer-review journals but offers talks, workshops and other resources for mathematicians. Their mission is to be a professional society focusing on math that is accessible to undergraduates.

What are some of the MAA’s resources? Go to www.maa.org to check out the MMA digital library or columns like NumberADay or MinuteMath. The MAA website also contains links especially for students (click on the “students” link in the box labeled “Community”), including career ideas and resources, conferences/meetings, summer programs, graduate school and much more. Also check out the MAA’s many publications, including the College Math Journal and Mathematics Magazine which are available in the Science Library and contain articles accessible to undergraduates. Copies of Math Horizon, another MAA publication, are put outside Donna Brakke's office (SC 210) when they arrive; feel free to read and enjoy!

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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.