

MSCS



Mess

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

February 27, 2009
Volume 37, No 11

This Week's Colloquium

Title: **Oles at the World Health Organization**

Presenters: Participants of Statistics 285, Global Health and Biostatistics

Date: Tuesday, March 3rd

Time: 1:30 pm

Location: SC 188

About the talk: Global Health and Biostatistics is an interim course that sends Oles from the Hill to Geneva, Switzerland where they are assigned to projects within the World Health Organization and perform research and analysis for the month of January. This week's colloquium will consist of project summaries from participants in this year's course. Students will discuss results from three different projects: HIV in older individuals, foodborne disease mortality, and detecting faulty immunization data.

Well-Deserved Recognition: Tenure and Promotion in the MSCS Department

This week the department rejoiced to receive confidently expected (but no less welcome) good news about two of its members. Hence

the clink of champagne glasses (the contents were non-alcoholic, of course) some Mess readers may have heard around SC 210 last Wednesday.

The celebrations centered on **Tina Garrett**, who was tenured and promoted to associate professor and on **Jill Dietz**, who was promoted to full professor. Tenure and promotion are not handed out lightly. The roads to both, as faculty readers well know, are long, drawn-out, and arduous. We're delighted with the results. On behalf of the **Mess** and its readers, **congratulations to both Jill and Tina!**

MSCS Department Recital

The n-th Annual MSCS Recital will be held at **7:00pm on Wednesday, April 8th** in the lounge of Ytterboe Hall. This is one of THE big social events within MSCS. The word "recital" hardly begins to convey the feel of this amazing experience. Imagine tables of good food (from faculty, not from a food service). Imagine a room full of people of all ages, from young children to, um, more senior faculty, milling about enjoying each other's company in a fun, relaxed setting. Imagine Tina Garrett telling bad jokes in a dog suit. Imagine Steve McKelvey trying, yet again, to get through a short flute tune without blowing it. Imagine your favorite professor being mercilessly parodied by woefully unappreciative students.

Imagine your most talented classmates performing truly remarkable pieces of music, poetry and theater. Imagine discovering an important aspect of a friend or teacher that is usually hidden during class time and office hours.

All these experiences, and more, may await you at the MSCS recital. All who consider themselves to be friends of the MSCS Department are welcome to attend and/or perform at this event. If you have a talent, big or small, that you'd like to share, please do so. It's a kind audience.

So, set aside a couple of hours on the evening of April 8th for the MSCS Recital. If you'd like to talk about performing, please contact Steve McKelvey (mckelvey@stolaf.edu).

Joint Math Meetings – BSM Reunion

Besides lectures, posters and books, the Joint Math Meetings are a way for mathematicians to meet up, talk and network. One particular subset of these mathematicians is former participants of the Budapest Semesters in Mathematics program. These program alumni met up during a Budapest Semesters in Mathematics reunion at the Joint Math Meetings to say hello to old friends, reminisce and talk about future plans.

There were a wide variety of alumni at the gathering—working mathematicians, current graduate students, and a large number of undergraduates recently applied for graduate school in mathematics and awaiting acceptances. Several St. Olaf students were in attendance from multiple years, including Nathan Clement, Christina Koch, Charlie McEachern, and Thomas McConville.

The reunion will go on next summer—there is a Budapest Semesters in Mathematics 25-year anniversary celebration and reunion planned for the summer of 2010 in Budapest. If you are a Budapest Semesters in Mathematics alum or know someone who is, start spreading the word.

The Budapest Semesters in Mathematics programs was started by St. Olaf and continues to be administered by the college. It brings students from throughout the United States to Budapest, living in the city and taking math courses (in English) for a semester or year. The program is a great opportunity to study abroad and earn classes towards the math major. If interested, check out:

<http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/math-old/budapest/> or talk to any Oles who have been part of the program—they would be happy to talk about it.

Problem of the Week

Let $\{x_i\}$ denote any finite sequence with the following properties: 1.) $x_i \in \{-2, 1, 2\}$ for all i ; 2.) $\sum_i x_i = 29$; and 3.) $\sum_i x_i^2 = 59$. If $M = \max\{\sum_i x_i^3\}$ and $m = \min\{\sum_i x_i^3\}$, then determine M/m .

Send your solution to this week's problem to Prof. Gower (SC 222, gower@stolaf.edu) by Friday, March 6, 2008.

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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.