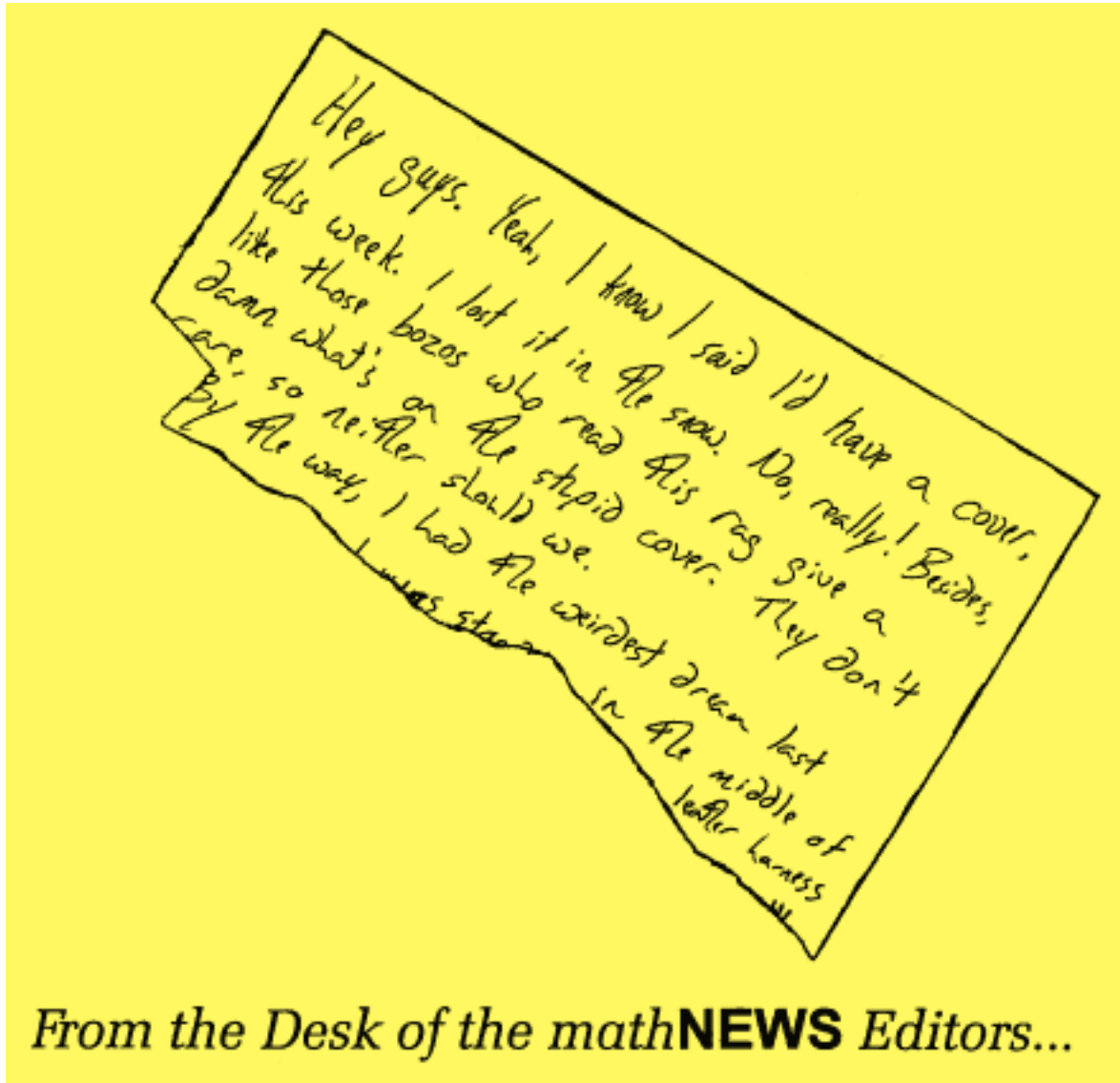


math NEWS

Volume 79, Issue 1

Friday, January 15, 1999



From the Desk of the math**NEWS** Editors...

From the Desk of the math**NEWS** Editors...

It Be Da VPF

Hi,

As part of this term's new MathSoc exec, I just thought I'd take this opportunity to make myself noticed. It's not every day that you get exposed to the glamour associated with the Vice-President Financial.

MathSoc's financial structure is changing a little this term. In the past, we have had three accounts: MathSoc X, MathSoc Y, and Novelties. We are phasing these out, in favour of a single consolidated account. This will reduce service fees considerably, and reduce the hassle involved with keeping the books. Less hassle is a very good thing.

Looking at the books from last term, I see that I have a tough act to follow. Neville Dubash has done quite an impressive job of keeping the books. Furthermore, MathSoc had a very successful Fall term. The final numbers indicate a profit of over eight thousand dollars. With all this extra money, we should be able to make some capital expenditures this term. Feel free to drop by the office with your suggestions on how this money can serve the student body.

Before the end of the month, I will have this term's budget prepared. I would like to remind club presidents/treasurers to submit their budget proposals as soon as possible. Otherwise, no money for you! I will likely present the budget at the January 27th council meeting. Analysts expect frenzied trading as investors await the budget announcement.

That's my report for this issue. I will try to keep you up to date on MathSoc's financial status this term. If you would like up-to-the-minute info, drop by the office anytime. Except between 12 and 1 on Wednesdays... that's Mike's special time.

VPF Mike Froh

lookAHEAD

mathNEWS

January 15	Issue #1 is snowed in
January 25	Issue #2 production night 6:30pm, MathSoc (MC 3038)
January 29	Issue #2 is snowed in, the good way.

Math Faculty

January 15	Course Add Deadline
January 22	Last day for 100% course refund
January 29	Course Drop Deadline
March 2	1B Info Night @ 7pm
March 2—6	Fall Term Pre-Registration

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Me Movie Guy

Howdy. My name is Mike. I'm known to the few who actually know me as "Texas Mike O'Shea". My official title on MathSoc is "Movie Guy". I was planning to tell you about the fine movies that we're gonna show this semester for your viewing pleasure at Movie Nights (which, if you haven't seen the posters, happen every Thursday at 7:00 in DC 1302). Unfortunately, my fellow movie guys (Mark, who prefers to be called "Movie Bitch", but that would only fulfill his perverse desires, so we're gonna stick with "Movie Guy" officially, and Blue, who prefers to be known as "Blue") and I are a tad disorganized at the moment. So instead, I'll tell you about the crappy movies that we WON'T be showing at Movie Night.

1. "Alligator 2: The Mutation". Featuring such classic lines as "Billy-Joe! Where's Billy-Joe? That alligator ate my brother!" Need I say more?
2. "Escape from New York". Okay, we actually showed this movie before (back when I was a movie guy during the summer term). I swear, I'd never seen it before then, and I took it on faith that it was good. "Pliskin? I thought you were dead!"
3. "Escape from L.A.". The sequel to "Escape From New York". Yes, we showed both of these movies at the same fiasco of a movie night. Featuring such classic lines as "You're Snake Pliskin? I thought you'd be taller!"
4. "Mortal Kombat". First off, lemme say that I loved this movie. I saw it three times in the theatre. If I've earned your eternal scorn for that, well, nuts to you. Unfortunately, very few other people share my enthusiasm for this movie. Some friends of mine rented it at my urging once, and threatened to beat me severely if I ever pick such a "fucking bad" movie again. Philistines.
5. "Titanic". Disclaimer: I haven't seen this movie. However, almost every guy I've talked to tells me that it sucks. And my 14-year old sister loves it, so that does it for me. Plus, it's 3 hours and 24 minutes long, and I have to stay up for the full movie night and get up for 8:30 classes the next day. No Titanic, dammit.

Okay, that list is long enough. My brain hurts, and I want food. I can give you a brief, semi-informative list of movies that we probably WILL show during the term before I stop. Antz, Water Boy, Saving Private Ryan, Ronin, Something About Mary, Clerks, Chasing Amy, and lots of other funky stuff. If you, the concerned math student and avid movie-goer, have any suggestions for what to show (or hey, even what NOT to show), send 'em to movies@mathsoc. Oh yeah. Mike Froh kicks ass.

That's it for me. Later.

"Texas Mike O'Shea"

Prez Sez

Hi. Have no fear, the snuggly one is here, and I'm feeling quite presidential. How ya all doing? I'm fine, I hope you all had fun vacations and are ready to get into a school mode again. Anyway I've got some stuff to say so here I go.

Graduating Students of '99, winter, spring, summer, or fall, all you gotta do is call MGC cause they'll be there, you've got a friend. Well you have a friend if you're graduating, and that friend is the Math Grad Committee. OK, I'm your friend, even if you're not graduating. Please be my friend. Why won't anyone be my friend?

There is a Faculty Council meeting on Tuesday, January 19, where we will be discussing, among other things, a Combined BMath/MMath, and the guidelines on Course Averages (from the now famous memo). If you have any opinions you wish to be expressed at that meeting, or you just want to discuss the issues, don't hesitate to find myself or the Interim VPA Matt Walsh, we will be representing the students of the Math Faculty at the above stated meeting.

In case you missed it above, Matt Walsh is the acting Vice President, Academic, why do we have an interim VPA you may ask? Because we are having VPA elections. On January 18 and 19, we will be having an election between Trevor Ray and Vincent Tseng (in alphabetical order). Come out and vote, flex your political muscles, convince us that you can make decisions and above all save the world from evil. Please note, neither candidate is actually evil, MathSoc does not wish to portray either of these people as Satan, MathSoc knows who Satan is, and MathSoc would never let Satan run in an election.

We have nominations open for some Class Rep positions: Actuarial Science, Accounting/Math Business, Computer Science, Math General, Math Interdepartmental (year 3/4), Pure Math, Math Teaching Option, Statistics, Officially Undeclared, and Combinatorics and Optimization. They are available outside the MathSoc office (MC3038). The nomination period closes January 19 at 4:30 p.m. Nomination forms may be submitted

to an office worker or to an exec in the Exec Office.

We also have nominations open for Vice President, Activities and Services (a two-term commitment). Those nomination forms are also available outside the MathSoc office (MC3038). The nomination period closes January 19 at 4:30 p.m. Nomination forms may be submitted to an office worker or to an exec in the Exec Office.

Office hours are fun. Office hours let you meet new and interesting people. Office hours will give you that feeling of accomplishment and contribution to your community that you've always longed for. No longer will you have to rely on your unnamed vices to supply your feeling of self worth, now you can find that happiness at MathSoc.

Cotton Candy can come 'cross Campus Cubed. Any of you who were here last term remember our wonderfully successful event of feeding sugar to hungry students at 2 cones for \$1. Well, we're doing it again. It's looking like we will be filling the MC with that great smell from all of our childhoods of Cotton Candy on Thursday, January 21. So look for the signs and tell all your friends (It was rumoured last term that people from the Laurier came to get some of our Cotton Candy). Incidentally, it should probably only be squared, since it is only the second time we are doing this event, but squared doesn't start with a c.

More nominations open: FEDS nominations are open for Councillors and Exec until January 15. Senate Math Seat nominations are open also until January 15. Go to the FED office in the SLC for more information.

Once again we shall attempt to beat the engineers at their own game. Last term our fabulous Mathie team placed second in a very competitive Engineering Scunt. So sign up (on the MathSoc office door) and help our team be the number one entry into this year's Scunt.

Stephen Snuggles Skrzydlo - The Grand Snuggler
President of MathSoc W99&F99

It Be Da PMC

Hello everyone and welcome back to this amazingly sunny and warm Winter term! The Pure Math, Applied Math, Combinatorics and Optimization Club (PMC) is, as always, cheerfully in MC3033 to serve your mathematical needs. Exec this term are Jim Nastos as Vice-President, Joel Kamnitzer as Treasurer, Suresh Naidu as Keeper of the Sacred Shoe / Lord High Ruler of the Mobius Box, and me as President. Filling appointed positions are Brenda Fine as webmistress and Stuart Pollock as Minister of War and Peace.

This term we are planning on having a lot of exciting talks – I'm hoping we can manage at least one a week. Watch the walls of MC for announcements of upcoming talks. I will try to post to `uw.pmc` and to `uw.talks` as well. We will also be getting subscriptions to various math journals again. We haven't finalized the list, but the current candidate list includes American Mathematical Monthly and Crux Mathematicorum. Members will be able to peruse the current issue in the office and take back issues home with them for further study if so desired.

Our library is also going to undergo some improvements, though this too is in a planning stage. Check out our excellent and improving collection of textbooks and other books that

are useful as secondary references. We are a good place to find answers to abstruse questions pertaining to mathematics.

We will also be hosting Short Attention Span Math Seminars — if you haven't noticed in prior terms, these are a collection of 20 minute talks by undergraduates about cool mathematical topics. These will probably be sometime in mid to late March. If you are interested in giving such a talk, please contact me.

This past Saturday we had a most excellent PMC Clean Up Party. Lots and lots of thanks to Disco Stu, Carolyn, Steve, So-roosh, Wai Ling, Skowronski, Brenda, Matt x 2. We had most excellent stew and hummus prepared by the Studly Lord Stu of Stew. St{u, ew} is usually hot... We also shared a steam cleaner with the CSC... YAY! Clean (er...) couches!

We have cheap pop (\$0.35) and juice (\$0.40) available for members.

And by the way, Mike Froh is The (non-unique) Man and Lord High Master of Defenestrations.

Sam Lisi,
PMC President
`pmclub@undergrad.math.uwaterloo.ca`
MC 3033, U(W) ext. 6139

Cynic's Corner

More Power To You

Computer Science tutor last term. *mathNEWS* Editor-in-Training this term. How DO I get myself into these situations? Too... much... responsibility!!! (On the other hand, nifty keys to tote around.) Okay, so, two lessons I've learned recently that I will impart to you now:

Firstly, avoid taking courses that seem to give you a schedule with all 8:30am classes. (They've done this to me before too...) It's too cold in the mornings to walk to the University. Also, make sure you know in advance what to do in the event of any possible bad schedule scenario or you'll wind up with only four courses. (Today's the last day to add a course! Try to get your life straightened out; I'm probably beyond hope.) I don't know, it all seems to make about as much sense as the late fees. Due in even before Christmas, not even a day of leeway when the University reopens in January - but even though I was in on time they didn't have my receipt ready until the second day of classes. You never know what to expect next. (Not that that's different than normal I suppose. Though me speaking on normality is dubious. Look at your wrist, can you see your pulse twitching rhyimically? If so, I'm somewhat normal.) But anyway, the cliché behind this ramble is that you have to go with what you have and try to make the best of it. The only other option is to do something different altogether. So there.

My second point is another common phrase, but one I've been considering more and more recently. It involves putting yourself in another person's shoes, and how we are all egotistical. (Yeah, you too.) An ego is not something we can deny, the only caveat is that we don't display it all the time (plus we have this concept of morality). So when something happens to us that we think is annoying or unfair, we get upset. How dare that idiot cut ME off? The nerve of that professor, giving ME a D! How could this person leave ME waiting here for so long? There are times when we want others to put themselves in our shoes. Why not the reverse? As soon as you get this sensation, stick yourself in the other person's shoes instead. Will it help the situation? Possibly not, but it's probably better than yelling at someone for five minutes about slow service when the problem is they're overworked. (Not to mention you hold up the line behind you.) Is it necessarily someone else's fault that something bad happened to you? Arguing may make you feel better; what about the other person? Think about it.

Naturally, all of that applies both ways. So try to grant people some slack (if policy allows). Or, to put this argument in mathematical terms, you can't be in a position of power if you don't have a solid base. (Nor is a single, stubborn base terribly powerful.) You have to look at the root of the problem. There, now I've segued back into your regularly scheduled calculus lecture (assuming it fit your schedule). Good luck, enjoy, and remember that teachers are people too.

Greg "hologrami" Taylor

*prof*QUOTES

"Document or Die! I don't mean I'll kill you; you'll probably kill yourself."

Vasiga, CS 241

"Put ball in box, kiss doggie."

Vasiga, CS 241

"There should be a casino option for STAT 230. We could gamble for marks."

Chipman, STAT 230

"If you want to get cute, you are increasing your opportunity to introduce errors."

Schellenberg, MATH 239

"Anyone who uses R as a symbol for Thursday is mentally deficient."

Goodman, AM 250

"Take this sheet with you...on vacation...in case someone on the train asks you if you know what Boltzmann's constant is... and you can say, `Why yes!'"

Goodman, AM 373

"I don't like π either...it takes too long to write out."

Goodman, AM 373

"If you were my psychologist, that's what I would have told you."

Zorzitto, MATH 138

"There are certain things people commonly attribute to God. He's all powerful. He's all good. He's all-American."

DeVidi, PHIL 200B

Top 10 CS 342 Pick-Up Lines

10. My adoration is an unbounded buffer.
9. Please, won't uYield to my charms.
8. Nothing can interrupt our love...it's atomic.
7. Time to get busy-wait.
6. I know you want to enter my critical section.
5. Don't starve my distinguished member function.
4. You're at the top of my priority queue.
3. There ain't nothing micro about my coroutine.
2. Baby, you've got a mutex on my heart.
1. uCin to my Soul.

Steve Forrest

The End is Near

(This is not about Y2K)

Many, many (okay, four) years ago, the *mathNEWS* website was launched with little fanfare, in the (at the time) relative obscurity of the World Wide Web. *mathNEWS*' previous online presence consisted of Postscript files downloadable via gopher (remember gopher?).

Much has changed, of course, since those early days. The Internet, and *mathNEWS*' website along with it, have exploded both in size and in popularity. Okay, so maybe "explode" is a bit of an exaggeration as far as *mathNEWS* is concerned, but "*mathNEWS/w³*" has over the past four years entertained and informed thousands of readers from all over the world.

Creating and evolving the *mathNEWS* site has been an interesting and rewarding challenge these past four years. This term, however, presents me with the greatest challenge yet: assuring *mathNEWS*'s online future. Soon will come the time for me to move on to a better place (i.e., graduate), and so **the search is on** for a new *mathNEWS* webmaster.

We're looking for someone who'll take *mathNEWS* into the next... Uh, nevermind the clichés. Here's the deal: putting each issue of *mathNEWS* on the Web is *mostly* automated. However, the nature of *mathNEWS* articles, HTML, the Web, and computers in general, or—alternatively—the fact that our automation scripts suck, is such that this process can't be *completely* automated. In other words, "webifying" *mathNEWS* requires that buttons be pushed, and pushing those buttons requires a real, live, and at least semi-conscious person. That's where you come in.

Of course, running the *mathNEWS* website involves more than just pushing buttons to put up each issue. Designing and re-designing the site is the most interesting part of the job—and also the most difficult. *mathNEWS* isn't just text; graphical (pictures), interactive (games, puzzles), and multimedia (none yet, but it could happen) content also make up the student newspaper we know and love. Making decisions about how such content is to be presented, and implementing those decisions, is an important—and fun—part of publishing *mathNEWS* on the Web.

Finally, you may be asking, "What's in it for *me*?" Recognition, fame, and popularity, for one. In limited quantities. In *very* limited quantities. One somewhat more tangible upshot is that it looks good on a résumé. Employers, especially (in *Dilbert* parlance) PHBs ("pointy-haired bosses"), seem unhealthily infatuated (and believe me, I know all about unhealthy infatuation, but that's another story...) with the Web and the Internet in general. Mention that you run a website and they'll be lined up with job offers; speak the mantra "Web content publishing" and they'll double your salary...

"Where do I sign up?" you ask. Any of the following will do:

- E-mail me: vtluu@uwaterloo.ca
- E-mail the *mathNEWS* editors: mathnews@undergrad.math.uwaterloo.ca
- Come by the *mathNEWS* office;, or come out to a *mathNEWS* Production Night, and speak with a *mathNEWS*ie in person.

Oh, and I guess I should mention the *mathNEWS/w³* URL:

<http://www.mathnews.uwaterloo.ca/>

Viêt-Tâm "*mathNEWS* Web guy" Luu

Snuggles Sez

It's like Simon Sez, but kinkier. No really, this is where I say stuff that I shouldn't say as President. So I would like to officially say that this article is only representative of my personal views and reflects in no way upon MathSoc's views or the views I have as President. In fact the opinions expressed below don't even really represent my views, they just represent what I find funny. Now after all of that I can begin my first rant.

I'm a little upset. It seems that my Thompson Twins have left me. If you read my articles last term you would recall that I talked about them a lot, unfortunately they are on work terms now. Ah well, I hope they have fun and I'll just have to come and visit so I can play in the summer. Speaking of things of last term I need a new Unofficial Slogan. Hmmm, I think something that goes with my eye candy theories would be appropriately inappropriate. If anyone has any ideas for a good one come and tell me, and if you don't know my eye candy theories come and ask me. Basically I think eye candy is good. If you don't know what eye candy is, sit on the steps of Hagey Hall (the mystical magical land of the Artsies) for an hour, you'll see it. Incidentally for those of you that missed last term's articles, read them, find them on the web page. I think my articles were damn funny. In fact, due to my short attention span, every so often I reread them, and laugh. Hehehehe, Batman, hehehehehe, balloons.

Something else that has been getting on my nerves. That whole millennium thing, who the fuck cares what some Pope (that would be Gregory) decided about some calendar (that would be the Gregorian calendar). The world won't end in the year 2000 for the simple reason that it didn't end in the year 1000 (bad logic = good logic, by definition). You know what else makes me just a little peeved? (Incidentally it also pisses off Mike Froh, and since Mike Froh kicks ass, I'll bitch about it). The new millennium starts in 2001, not 2000. Because we didn't start in year 0, we started in year 1. We didn't start in year 0 because if we did then none of the computers would have been working back then (they would all be doing functions with zero and that would screw things up).

OK, I'm tired of bitching, let's talk about something good. Tickle Me Elmo is a dirty dirty toy. Maybe it's just me. Ya, it's probably just me. It just has so many dirty applications. OK, it's an awesome toy, it's very entertaining and fun to play with, actually, that describes the perfect person in my eyes, entertaining, fun to play with, and a toy. Everyone is a toy, you just need to know how to play the game. I win, you lose 1-0.

Mmmmmmm, frosh. You know what I like about frosh, I keep getting older, they stay the same age. OK anyone who can assemble a machine gun gets an 'A' from me.

I like traffic lights, I like traffic lights, even when they're pink. Rant, rant, lalalala, rant, rant lalalala.

You know what, "It's good to be king."

This article was brought to you by 2 certain letters of the alphabet who entertained me today. You know who you are.

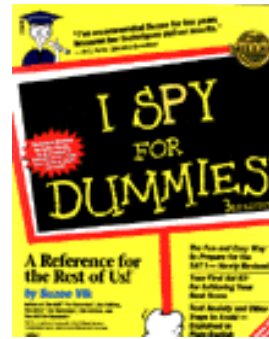
Stephen S. Skrzydlo

Snuggles' brain doesn't live here anymore,
please go to the next Exec.

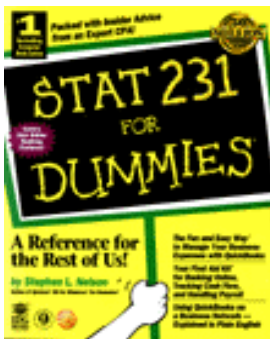
New Dummies Books



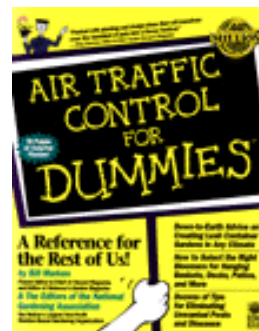
Make sure you keep breathing. It is recommended that you only stop breathing with the consent of a physician.



If your opponent spies something that is the colour "sky blue," be sure to guess the sky.



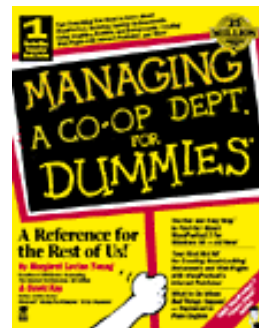
If the class starts making sense, immediately discontinue attendance.



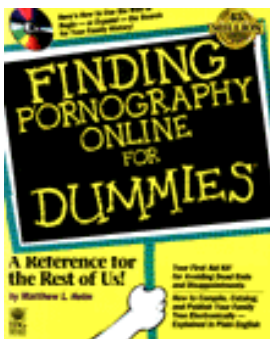
If a 747 disappears from your radar screen, take a coffee break and get the intern to cover for you.



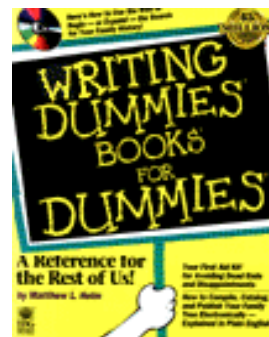
Asking a john if he is a cop will not prevent you from being arrested.



If employers complain about receiving too many resumes, reduce the number of resumes that students are allowed to submit. If students complain, threaten to raise the co-op fee.



Often, typing in a random bunch of letter between "w w w ." and ".com" will yield a porno site.



If your book ends up being a little short, add some cartoons.

Everything One Needs To Know in Life Can be Learned by Reading *mathNEWS*

This column is tradition. What can I say? In my own little world I have the illusion that these words will make you all want to seek out the issues of last term, learning more things to enrich your lives. (My world is a strange one.) In all seriousness though, you should try to track down *mathNEWS* Issue 500 (the first one of last term). It's "the largest, longest and heaviest issue of *mathNEWS* ever published". So lots of history in that, plus up-to-date tidbits from former editors. A few tips from that issue include:

1. Not even twenty years ago, *mN* was put together with items such as a Photon printer, daisy wheels and hot wax.
2. You should take other people more seriously than you take yourself, particularly when you are supposed to be leading them.
3. When travelling to Korea, stay off the streets (or go to Japan where they can drive).
4. If your love of math wanes, take a break, and try your hand at easier problems.

But of course there were more issues all through last term which contained both items of wisdom and handy trivia questions. So more things to look for in Volume 78 include:

1. How languages, routines and cultures differ in different countries.
2. The National Post may make a good supplement to frequent newspaper readers. [5]

The Rhetoric of Corruption

I was just leafing through the online version of the OED the other day, semi-randomly you might say, when I came upon the word "volunteer". The third definition thereof is: *One who voluntarily offers his services in any capacity; one who of his own free will takes part in any enterprise.* Now, you'll excuse me if I sound naive if I take this to mean that there isn't supposed to be substantial remuneration for these activities. I only think that spending \$782.53 on an end of term party which includes booze and a hot tub for less than eighty people and a further \$1688.75 on shorts for all of the above because they were so kind to "volunteer" with the society is a little excessive. I'm no mathematician but that's almost two and a half thousand dollars. By my rough calculations, that would be about 8% of the society's expenditures for the past term.

You see, I'm a little upset about this. I've let myself get caught up in the society's rhetoric in the past and don't feel that the reasons put forth are of any value. I've been told that, except for a little while in the recent past, the society has always (whatever this may mean) given gifts to and held a party for its volunteers. To this I reply that change isn't always bad and certainly not something to shy away from. I applaud the kind folk who decide to become class reps, office workers, directors or to help out with the MGC. Spending that much money on

3. The real most random number is 87, if it's not 14. [7]
4. Some teachers in central Russia got paid in vodka. [3]
5. There do exist women who sometimes do the asking out. [7]
6. A 50 cubic foot van may get awful gas mileage. [6]
7. Change is Inevitable. [2]
8. Brian Fox was not offered the job to manage the Los Angeles Dodgers. [4]
9. Being related to a famous person should not entitle one to special treatment. [6]
10. There can be many differing opinions on both subjects and opinions. [6/7].
11. 413 is not the number 6. [5]
12. *mathNEWS* is your friend in good times and bad times. [2]

And those of you who remember Square One TV should also have a look around for issues of last term... but don't forget to continue to read and contribute this term too! The journey of 1500 words begins with but a single sentence. You may already be a winner! Some assembly required. Batteries never included. But it (often) never hurts to try.

Greg "hologrami" Taylor

them is absurd and a form of nepotism (replace the idea of nephew with that of friend).

The next argument put forth is that if we didn't value our volunteers, they wouldn't do anything for the society. I value the society's volunteers. I just don't think that these people, a large number of whom sit on council, should be allotting themselves that money. In certain circles, such actions are frowned upon. Even the kind folk who represent us in the House of Commons have reduced the number of shoeshine stands they have. Perhaps we should take away some of our perks too.

"It's not our fault," they cry, "how were we to know that the shorts we bought for \$15/pair were quoted in American dollars and not our poor undervalued pesos?" I've been reading up on my classics (yes, yes I have!) and it would seem that with the concept of democratic government comes that of responsibility for your actions. So, this term, I'm choosing not to use the photocopiers, I'm not going on any ski trips that the society may organise, nor am I signing out a locker. I've decided to take back my \$10.50 and read the online version of *mathNEWS*. It's kind of like not eating Nestle chocolate bars or buying gas from Shell. I won't claim to have achieved social consciousness, but I'm putting my money into institutions that I am not ashamed of. The society hasn't made that list this year.

Justyna Berzowski

AM I A FAILURE?

So there it was. After weeks of waiting, the envelope arrived. And there it was, staring at me with a cruel glare and a foul stench that can only be associated with failure. 42. Calculus. Damn.

Oh sweet fortune that sends me a sinus infection on the weekend before four of my finals. I was a mess. It hurt to be awake, let alone think. I walked around in a daze, saying incoherent things to my roommates, and trying to study. Now, I hate (as friends and especially my mom will testify) taking medicine or going to the doctor or stuff like that. But I soon realized that I was seriously ill.

So off I went to Health Services, where I waited for an hour. But when the doctor saw me, I didn't want to act like it was a big deal, because, well for one, I didn't want to make it more than it was, and also, I was again starting to think, I don't need to see a doctor. I'm ok. So I tried to make it like it was no big deal. Even now, I'm thinking that I'd better delete that last sentence, I'm making too much of a big deal of it. But I was really sick. Anyway, because of my attitude, my infection was diagnosed "slight to moderate" which is an understatement, no, a travesty, perhaps even a crock of...

In any case, that was my fault. The doctor told me I needed antibiotics. I refused. The doctor told me I should go get an X-ray in some city. I laughed and went back to CLT.

I had four more exams; there was no way I could delay and write nine the following term. So I wrote them all, and performed poorly in them all. But of course, Calculus, my weaker subject, I failed.

I wasn't really shocked, just let down. I know I could've passed. And the thing is, we don't even need Calc 3 any more. I took it because I thought, "if it used to be a core course, it must've been important" and "I can handle it" and "I like physics and calc is important for physics so..." I didn't want to cop out because I find Calc hard. All the more reason to take it.

The first feeling I had when I walked in that class to take it again was "I can't do this." There were only second year students, some of which were my frosh. And we were learning everything I already knew. I felt awful. I wanted to tell everyone to make sure they never have to retake a class 'cause it feels like shit. If I only I'd passed, if only I'd passed, if only... G—d, another four months of Calculus.

So I went to see my former prof. And I was told there is "little hope" seeing as how I did so badly and my doctor's note says "slight to moderate". Then I was told things like I didn't hand in several assignments (I handed them all in) and that I should've retaken MATH 138. And I remembered how negative my prof had always been about my taking this course. Every time I asked for help, I was given the feeling that I shouldn't be asking, that my question was dumb. It was very discouraging to ask for help and get a response that I should drop the course. I specifically said I was sticking with it, so why not help me?

But don't get me wrong. Failing the course was all my fault. I could've made better choices to avoid failing. Perhaps it was unavoidable because of my illness, but otherwise, all the blame is mine.

But now I think, "you know, failing Calculus wasn't all that bad." I realized that the whole term I hadn't worked as hard as I wanted to, and so I did poorly. It was a tough lesson, and I'm learning it now. Failing a course is not the end of the world.

No one thinks any less of you, your friends don't abandon you, your family doesn't disown you. I've always tried to think, "it's no big deal if I fail." But I'm not used to failing. So all in all, it sucks that I failed, but since I can't change that now, I'm trying to look at my situation as a learning experience. At the very least, I'll learn more Calculus (yahoo).

So what is Calculus like right now? It has to be the most poorly scheduled course in the history of UW. Not only is it on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, (sounds ok right?) it's in a different room each of those days! How the hell am I supposed to remember that? And why, pray tell, am I taking Calculus in the freakin' PAS building when there are History, Engineering and AHS courses taught in the Math building? But it gets better. Our little hole in the uglier-than-MC PAS building has only two blackboards. They weren't designed for 50 minutes of theorems and proofs. So the prof has to wait for us to finish copying. And then he plays musical blackboard so we can see the previous board. But we can't see it anyway 'cause the lighting is so poor. It sucks for everyone. The prof I'm sure is frustrated, and the students, who regularly ask to see the previous board and are straining to see what is written in that half-lit dungeon frequently are obviously not satisfied as well. Aren't there any alternatives? And should Math students get priority over classes in MC? Seems strange to me.

So here I go, trying my luck again with Calculus. It doesn't bug me anymore. I am going to kick some Calculus ass!

Jesse Bergman

Are Universities Worth It For Geeks?

Forbes says no...

There appeared an article in Forbes magazine about geeks and college education. If you care, you can read this article at www.forbes.com/penenberg/. The author, Adam Penenberg, cites an example of Waldo Jaquith, who became a successful web designer, and from what we can only assume has quite a lot of money, without spending a minute in a college or university lecture hall. The point of the article seems to be that (computer) geeks should not waste time in universities.

As a kind of a geek student in what probably is one of the geekiest schools in North America (no flames about this, just accept it), I strongly object to this kind of attitude from a major publication like Forbes. The point of university is not to learn technical skills. Talk to a lot of CS majors and they will tell you that majority of learning gets done on workterms. The point of higher education is to be able to learn how to learn. I have to give some credit to Forbes for pointing this fact out, while applying it only to Liberal Arts. This is where a grave mistake is made. Unless you are one of those people who are here just to get a piece of paper that says you got a math (or whatever) degree from University of Waterloo, you are here for an education. And education means more than just tech courses that teach us dead programming languages, and useless specification languages (no flames about THAT either).

Education means solving problems of really strange kinds. If that doesn't mean anything, education means surviving a summer term in Village without going on probation. Those who skip these experiences will eventually crash because of inability to solve these kinds of problems.

Luckily a great deal of other computer geeks disagree with Forbes' article. (thank you slashdot.org). Nevertheless, there exists just as vocal a number of geeks who seem to miss the point of higher education. The still seem to think that university should be just like high school – a place that gives you tangible skills. Skills that one can measure. Well it's just not so. The skills I plan to learn (and have already learned) are not something I can catalogue. I learned general principles of life that will come in handy at some time in the future.

Anton Fedorenko

Spermatikos Logos #1

Hi, everyone, and welcome back to another exciting issue of *mathNEWS* and another term of Logos with yours truly. Okay, maybe it's not so exciting. There's snow everywhere, and you have to dig your way out of your back door every morning. Not to mention the lovely walkways we have on campus. As a matter of fact, these very walkways have inspired me to write this week's Logos. There were SO many places around campus that were transformed into an obstacle course over the holidays, that I got a little more creative with them. Okay, so maybe some of them aren't that believable. YOU try your hand at writing the Logos. (Free pizza, anyone?)

So now that you're up to your waist in snow (oh, what wonderful packing-snow), just lie back, make a few snow-angels in the field by the CS sculpture (or whatever it is), and have some fun with this week's logic problem.

This Week's Puzzle – Winter is Fun, Part I: OOPS!

Winter can also be very painful, as these five people discovered last week at U(W). They each had an accident, which led to some sort of injury, on a different day of the week, and each in a different place on campus. Can you figure out each person's first name (all start with the letter J), last name (one is Smitherson-Jones), location on campus (nearest building), type of accident (one was caused by an icy pathway), and the day of the week each person was injured (M,T,W,R,F)?

1. The five people who were injured are: Jim; Davidson; the person who tripped up a flight of steps; the person who was injured on Tuesday; and the person whose accident occurred near the Dana Porter Library.
2. Smitherson-Jones was injured outside the MC before the person who got into a snowball fight near the Optometry parking lot (not Vansicle).
3. Jedediah, who is a little guy, was blown off the edge of a hill by a strong wind the day after Jodie had her accident.
4. Ms Vansicle had her accident before the person who was injured outside the Psychology-Anthropology-Sociology building.
5. Popodopolous was injured on Thursday. He was not wearing orange.
6. Jodie's accident (not at Dana Porter) happened before Vansicle's.
7. Jan was injured when she slid down a treacherous icy pathway, after Julianne (not Ms Davidson) had her accident.
8. The person who accidentally walked into a frozen lamp-post with their tongue was injured the day after Kent had his accident outside the Grad House, and sometime before the incident at the PAS.
9. The event at Optometry occurred before Jan's injury.
10. The tumble up the steps occurred before the accident at Dana Porter, which was before the snowball fight.

Wow! How do I submit my answer?

Submit your solution to the **BLACK BOX** or through email to mathnews@undergrad.math.uwaterloo.ca by January 25, 1999. One correct entry will receive a fabulous prize!

Gigi Garbett

mathNEWSquiz #1

Snow and Winter are here!

Hi, everybody! Welcome back to school! I hope everybody's doing well, and I hope that your courses are sorted out. After a twenty-month hiatus, Disco Stu is back to help out with *mathNEWSquiz* (and other *mathNEWS*-related things). John Swan will be your other squizmaster this term.

Song Lyrics

One point each for the title, artist, and theme

1. "Across the River Styx, out of the lamplight
His nemesis is waiting at the gate"
2. "But now I feel such emptiness within
For the thing that I want most in life's
The thing that I can't win"
3. "The sun no longer sets me free
I feel there's no place freezing me"
4. "Don't be a naughty Eskimo
Save your money, don't go to the show"
5. "Police them come an' now they blow down me door,
One him come crawl through, through my window"

Buffalo, New York

1. On Dec. 31, a legendary newscaster retired from WKBW. Name him.
2. In what county is Buffalo situated?
3. To the nearest foot, what is the elevation of Buffalo?
4. By what name is the NBA team formerly called the Buffalo Braves currently known?
5. In what arena did the Buffalo Sabres play before Midland Arena, and what was its capacity?

Places colder than Hell, MI

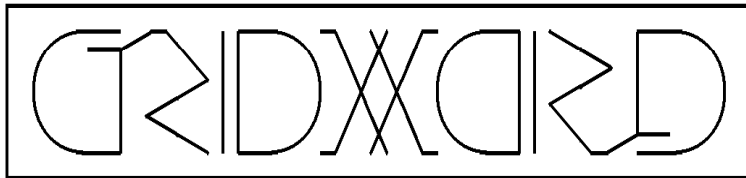
1. Who is the current president of Kazakhstan?
2. What is the most western city in Canada?
3. For what is Hubert Wilkens of Great Britain known?
4. What is called "Seward's Folly"?
5. What is the Spanish name for the Falkland Islands?

I'll Take "Winter Wonderland" For 300, Alex

1. "Jack Frost" stars Michael Keaton as blues musician and failing father. By whom was the movie written?
2. What Canadian musical comedy group released an album named "Christmas Turkey" in December 1997?
3. What is the coldest city in the United States (excluding Alaska)?
4. What is the largest glacier on Earth?
5. About which Olympic-gold-medal-winning snowboarder was the phrase, "Way to go Ross, you smoked them all!", coined?

Good luck, everyone. You can submit your answers to the **BLACK BOX** on the third floor of the math Building, across from the comfy Lounge. Alternatively, you can email your answers to scepollo@undergrad.math.uwaterloo.ca. The cut-off time for submissions is 6:30 on Monday, January 25.

John Swan
"Disco Stu!" Pollock



gridCOMMENTS

• Well, this is first-time GridMaster Derek here with a cryptic conundrum to perplex, astound, and amaze you. Well, frustrate you at the very least. I've never written so much as a Word Search before, but hey, I've also never babbled like an idiot in *mathNEWS* before. I won't let things like inexperience and gross general incompetence hold me back! Submit solutions in the usual place; do well and I may deign to acknowledge your pitiful existence next issue!

By the way: This is, after all, *mathNEWS*, so be warned that a couple of the clues are a bit perverted! Sensitive people can avert their eyes and insert the name of their favourite Care Bear instead.

Derek Kisman

mastHEAD

Hello, everyone, and welcome to a new issue, a new term, and a new year of wholesome *mathNEWS* goodness. We're finally done the big 25th anniversary celebrations which you missed out on. That was some party! What does the 26th year of *mathNEWS* hold? Maybe we'll finally start working on that T-Shirt.

After last term's conversion from Latex to Pagemaker, making *mathNEWS* is now criminally easy. We nearly finished this issue Monday night. This is a big improvement over the old days when we used to be nearly started on Monday nights. Big thanks to Richard for spearheading this conversion, who's on a co-op term in sunny San Diego this term. Lucky bastard.

Speaking of editors, we've roped Greg Taylor into *mathNEWS*-editor-training starting this term. We kinda figured that *someone* should be editor this fall.

We had lotso people here working on this issue; hopefully they'll come back for the next one. Here's a list of their names, along with their answer to the question *If Canada and the U.S. combined their currencies into one common currency, what would it be called?* Gigi Garbett (The Pizza), Steve Forrest (The Souvlaki), Viet-Tam Luu (Overvalued), John Swan (The American Peso), Stuart Pollock (Something I wouldn't want to coin), Derek Kisman (Little kiddie Washingtons romping around the palace), and Anton Fedorenko (Lots of girls for me).

Chadwick Severn (The American Dollar)

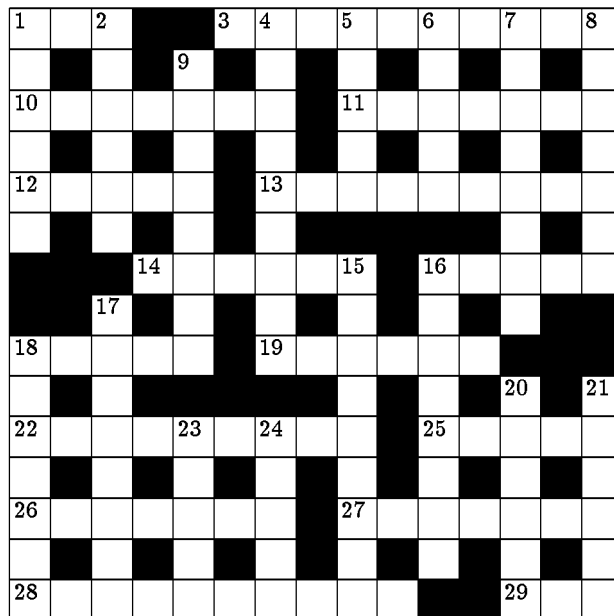
Matt Walsh (Dollar. Duh.)

Greg Taylor (Bucking the trend)

Math Thoughts

There she stood, tall, proud, sinuous. Her lashes were curved, he buttocks with an eye-catching bend. Oh, she was beautiful. She enabled me to see my functions in a whole new way. Oh, my gorgeous integral.

Paul Royston



Grid Clues (Cryptic)

Across

- Clean oneself, but in reverse (3)
- Word, after some pain, secured in opposing grants (10)
- Conceive of gain (7)
- Ach, Cole wrecked something in the ear (7)
- Originated pointers to the audience (5)
- Trim waist in figure (9)
- Heard enemy intended to rouse (6)
- Frigid, without the French youth (5)
- Classical stuff up the yin-yang? (5)
- Fluttering heart and thundering head is a danger (6)
- Dope Juan is involved in a "West Side Story" number (9)
- Counter of delay! (5)
- Sickens up, reels with disgust (7)
- Zero writing for "humble" Wilbur's speech? (7)
- Weakling, with wit past any stranger (10)
- You audibly ram partner (3)

Down

- Edge away from curb, donning brown cloth head-covering (6)
- Be a fool, and signal fire (6)
- Waste pores vent exhausted resources (9)
- Waste plants number 100; activate half (5)
- Cults with oral sex (5)
- I fell to a deviant brand of oral sex (8)
- Without regard, seed and water plants (7)
- Explosive overhaul follows if upset (8)
- Cut bothers dust devils (9)
- GreedCo: a stingy, concealing, drifting movement (8)
- Mad painter frames river turtle (8)
- Candy, Rod, Gump all confused (7)
- During millennium, Pi refined for the authority in ball's area (6)
- Gear up! Storming country's capital (6)
- St. Nick's feeling lateral extremities in delight (5)
- Star enamored somewhat with scene (5)