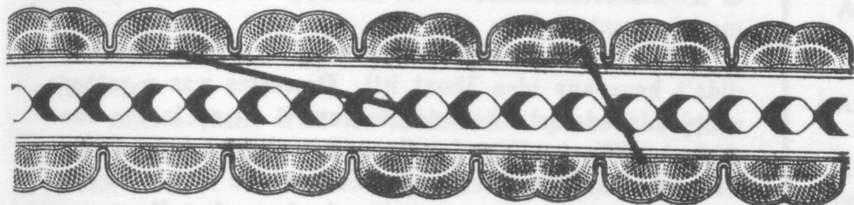


How did you celebrate Galois' birthday? (Oct 25, Happy 173rd).

math NEWS



Volume 36 Number 6

Friday, Nov. 2 1984

Math Society General Meeting

On Thursday October 25th, the first general meeting of the math society in recent history resulted in the first changes to the most recent math society constitution.

After a brief report by the President of the Math Society, and acceptance of the most recent budgets, the constitutional amendments were made.

The first amendment, allowing off stream executives recognition, passed with little debate. The second amendment, to hold executive elections for co-ops on the spring term the preceding fall, did not pass as easily. The dissenting views expressed by Cary Timar, clarifying his mathNEWS comments, and Rob Ferguson, defending the constitution he wrote, stimulated a fairly provocative debate.

Phil Beale, student rep to the Standings and Promotions Committee, described how the status of the regular student is changing. In the future, regular students will have to petition to be able to study on campus over the spring.

Cary brought up the fact, that with the convoluted streaming for some programs, teaching for example, co-op students could easily be on campus in the spring without being here the previous fall. Fourth year students are allowed to vote in the election, although they won't be around in the spring. (*XEditor's Note: There are already plenty of students (eg. all the Frosh) who did not get to vote on the current executive, and there are those not here (eg. Class of '84) who did vote.*)

The advantages of the proposed amendment were put forward by several people. They included increased inter-stream communication, better planning and continuity for the spring, and perhaps the telling point a longer lead time for events at the start of the term.

After an procedural hiccup, the vote was taken, substantially in favour of the motion.

Following the meeting, the rumoured pizza was consumed, with the help of several profs and grad students.

Ross Morrissey
Math Society President
Chair, General Meeting

Engineering Week

For those who didn't realize it Engineering Week started yesterday (November 1) and lasts until November 10th. Who cares, you might ask. Well, there are a number of events that math students could enter. These events are:

Saturday, November 3rd, 6:00 p.m., BOAT RACING (Five people per team, sign up in mathSOC, mens' and womens' mathTEAMS have done well in the past ...)

Tuesday, November 6th, 12:30 p.m., BARREL RACE at the CC (Our defending champs Kevin, Nelson, Stewart, and Vic will be there; get four friends together for a team ...)

Wednesday, November 7th, 12:30 p.m., BED RACE at the CC (mathSOC needs people to help out on this event!)

Thursday, November 8th, 12:30 p.m., PROF TRIKE RACE at the CC (Con your Calculus prof into entering!)

Friday, November 9th, 12:30 p.m., TUG-O-WAR at the SCH quad (Historically, mathTEAMS have won this several times ...)

Friday, November 9th, 4:00 p.m., HAVENGER SCUNT in the Orifice (Sign up today to join Math's first team!)

For more information check at the Orifice or the mathSOC office. So sign up and participate or at least show up and watch the engineers lose!

Pre-Registration Ends Today

That's right! This is the last day on which students can pre-register for courses in Spring '85! If you haven't done so, go to the Math Undergrad Office or see your advisor **now**.

On Zeke's Side

This article is in response to a letter of Craig Eisler's which appeared in the October 26 issue of the Imprint. I'm responding via mathNEWS because i suspect the Imprint will be buried with other responses.

Craig, your narrowmindedness astounds and disgusts me. Please join those of us in the 1980's.

I read the Imprint regularly and have found Zeke Gerard to be both entertaining and pertinent. I find in his column the words of an individual trying to promote a harmonious relationship between people. I say 'people' because i cannot differentiate between "straight" types and "gays" in my view of the human race. My views recognize people as individuals first.

You are apparently trying to disrupt his important work and diminish the badly strained harmony between all people. You are the "infection in the very soul of mankind." It would seem that his work is necessary and will continue to be necessary as long as there are people such as yourself—dreadfully afraid and confused by the differences among people.

If you believe he is only preaching "about the joys of their deviation" you are sadly blind to his work. Perhaps you will feel no differently about what i have to say, but i feel a need to express it. At the very least you need not be frightened of me—i'm neither "one of them", nor one of what you call "normal human beings." My situation is my own business but you would do best to recognize me as an impartial observer.

The lesser form of love, which a large majority of people seem satisfied with, is both natural and healthy. It can easily be reached by any two mature people of either gender. It is a relationship between one mind-heart-soul and another mind-heart-soul. It is independent of one's body, the least significant part of an individual and the part which defines his/her gender. There are advantages and disadvantages to this popular form of love but its existence is undeniable and natural.

A natural and all-too-common side effect of this type of love is sex. People tend to make a big deal of this side effect, often believing it plays a more direct role in love than it actually does. The term "make love" has only recently acquired its physical interpretation. There is of course nothing wrong with sex between any two individuals, when it is a part of a loving relationship.

You, Craig, appear to have confused love and sex. I don't like anyone to flaunt their sexuality either, whether it be heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality or asexuality. But this is not what Zeke or GLOW are doing. Zeke is promoting love and harmony among people and i like that.

In conclusion then, the most easily followed advice i could give you, Craig, is to try not to categorize people. View people as individuals capable of a wide spectrum of emotions. When you can do this, then you can see a loving homosexual relationship for what it is—a loving relationship between two individuals—just the same as a loving heterosexual relationship.

Apologies to Zeke (whom i haven't had the pleasure of meeting) if i've misinterpreted his intentions.

dan schnabel

Is Reality Subjective?

In reply to the distinguished doctors Ernie and Bert, I find it necessary to clear the waters regarding the true meaning of existence. All of this rigmarole about perceptions of happenings isn't getting us any further than watching television. Let us return to the simple question of the nature of existence. We shall discuss whether it has meaning next week.

We must start with Descartes. (Hey, I'm a poet and didn't have any idea about it!). Descartes was a rather simpleminded fool who tried to sum it all up in the one sentence: "Cogito Ergo Sum", or, in real English, "I think, therefore I am." This sounds so impressive that it carries conviction. So much conviction, in fact, that Descartes was never found after that fateful day when he was offered a toke and declined, saying "I think not." (The reliability of the witnesses to this mysterious event remains in question.)

It is important, though, to recognize this apparently self-contained motto as a syllogism with an unstated major premise, to wit:

Major Premise: A non-existent object cannot think.

Minor Premise: I think.

Conclusion: Therefore, I am.

When put this way, Descartes' slogan is obviously trivial. Compare with, "I weigh 170 pounds, therefore I am."

Since nothing useful is to be found at this level, we must search deeper. Descartes was apparently trying to answer the question, "How do I know that I exist?" To this, "Cogito, ergo sum" isn't a bad reply, although it will not withstand critical examination. After all, if I seriously doubt my existence, must I not also doubt my thinking? To put it another way:

Q: How can you be sure that you exist?

A: I think.

Q: How can you be sure that you are thinking?

A: I can't, but I do think that I think.

Q: Does that make you sure that you exist?

A: I think so.

This should make it clear that Descartes went too far. He ought to have said, "I think I think, therefore I am." or possibly, "I think I think, therefore I think I am, I think."

Obviously, even such watered-down versions are unacceptable. From a humanistic point of view, you do not really exist unless others are aware of your existence. We might then proclaim more correctly: "I stink, therefore I am."

Dr. Oscar

P. S. Parts of this argument are, of course, shamelessly plagiarized. In accordance with the spirit of plagiarism, I make no apology, nor do I name my sources.

Science

By Dave Barry

[Reprinted without permission from the Minneapolis TV Dispatch column, "Foolin' Around", Nov. 28, 1982.]

Today's Scientific Question is: Just what the heck is Life, anyway?

Answer:

Ancient Man tried for thousands of years to explain Life. Ancient Man would do anything to avoid honest work. Ancient Woman would yell at him: "Don't forget to make pointed stones to stab the saber-tooth tiger with" or "Don't forget to migrate to North America" and he would say "I can't right now, dear, I'm trying to explain Life".

Over the years, man came up with many explanations for Life, all of them stupid. In fact, when you get right down to it, almost every explanation Man came up with for *anything* until about 1926 was stupid. I bet kids would be able to get from kindergarten through high school in about 35 minutes if we stopped making them memorize all the drivel Ancient Man came up with about the gods and goddesses and why the moon goes through phases and so on.

Anyway, Modern Science, using all the sophisticated analytical tools at its disposal, has discarded all the myths and come up with a definition that covers *all* forms of life:

Life is anything that dies when you stomp on it.

SMART CELLS: What do you say we evolve into a higher form of life?

DUMB CELLS: Sounds good to us.

SMART CELLS: Fine. We'll be the brain. You be the sphincter.

And so they crawled out on land. Then they started adapting to the environment, according to the law of the Survival of the Fittest. For example, if the climate was very hot, the animals without air conditioning died. If the climate had daytime television, the animals without small brains died. And so on.

By this definition, the amoeba, the mango, the frog, the squirrel, the bear, the begonia and many lawyers are forms of Life. But this just begs the question: Where does Life come from? And how can the mango, which clearly has some value, be related to the lawyer?

Modern Scientists explain all this with the Theory of evolution. They say that at one time the earth was nothing but a bunch of slime and ooze, sort of like Bayonne, New Jersey. Then lightning struck some chemicals and formed one-celled creatures (am I going too fast here?), which floated around for several million years until the smart ones decided to organize the dumb ones into higher forms of life:

NOTE: Some people, particularly religious personnel, dispute the Theory of Evolution: they say God created all Life all at once. I have done a lot of research on both theories, and I firmly believe the evidence supports the theory that anybody who supports either

theory gets a lot of nasty mail, so I'm staying the heck out of it. And I'll stand by my position.

Life as we know it today falls into two categories: Plants and Animals. Plants are divided into three subcategories: Green Vegetables, Yellow Vegetables, and Weeds. Animals are divided into six subcategories:

Animals You Can Eat: cows, turkeys, porks, bolognas, veals, zucchinis, tuna fish

Animals You Can Sit On: horses, certain turtles

Animals That Can Knock Over Your Car: rhinoceri, soccer fans

Totally Useless Animals That Would Have Ceased To Exist Thousands of Years Ago If Not For Greedy Pet-Store Owners Who Prey On Unsuspecting 8-Year Olds: hamsters, gerbils

Animals That Are Easily Impressed: dogs

Animals Whose Sole Goal in Life Is To Wait At The Bottom Of Sleeping Bags And Sting Or Bite People To Death: scorpions, snakes

Animals That Are Not Easily Impressed: cats

You'll notice this list does not contain insects. This is because insects are *not* animals: insects are *insects*, and their sole reason for existing is to be sprayed by poisonous substances from aerosol cans. Oh, I know you've heard a lot of ecology-nut talk about how you shouldn't kill insects because they're part of the Great Chain of Life and birds eat them and so on, but I say go ahead and kill them. If necessary, we can do without birds, too.

The Real Complex Masthead An important ability for anyone with responsibilities is delegation. This week I delegated editorial control to a shady character with no eyebrows, and we got EngSuck on the cover page. But not for very much longer... I must keep control, or divest myself of responsibility. Thanks to all who helped, and to Tom and Dan, too. Thanks to Barb for helping me to change into my costume, I've shaved since. AECT vN



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FeedBack

GridWord, Profs, Coathangers

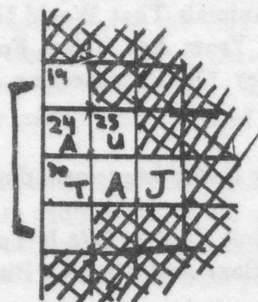
Quiche, More Quiche, Yet More Quiche

About the last Gridword:

The solution is a proof by counter-example.

The answer must be unique, since it was derived from a predetermined solution, and is checked by a 1-1 Boolean letter comparison.

Now, 19 Tallwise has no clue, therefore to prove uniqueness it must be unique, given the information existing inside the word.



However, in the two available positions, we can fit M,E or L,E or M,S; therefore neither position is unique, hence the solution is not unique, hence the Gridword cannot be solved

Kevin Picott

To The Editor:

Of late, the educational system has become very concerned about the number of high school graduates from whom the basic concepts of the English language have utterly and inexplicably escaped. Hence the "ELPE" was created. Now that the system is adequately protected from illiterate students, will someone please protect the students from professors who:

- a) do not enunciate well
- b) cannot speak English
- c) abuse grammatical norms
- d) cannot write legibly
- e) expect you to learn the material as fast as they explain it to you.

The Silver Eagle

Mr Eagle, if you're as concerned as you sound, why not take professors aside and tell them what is wrong? Most profs appreciate the feedback and will perhaps try to do something about these problems, rather than waiting to hear about it through the course evaluations.

Dear Mary Kelly,

Your simplistic and simpleminded approach to the problems of abused coathangers outrages me. At first I thought it was possibly a case of well-intentioned ignorance, but having read your "day in the life of a coathanger" I realized this was not the case.

Having been a coathanger for many years I can say that your article was both biased and unjustifiable. While rumours of such horrific treatment of coathangers have al-

ways circulated and are occasionally true, your treatment of such rumours as being commonplace fact is totally unjustified. Even if such events were commonplace, I would be forced to oppose your stance that relief agencies are of any real help. The real struggle of coathangers is not against isolated cases of brutality, but against the capitalist system of ownership of coathangers, which not only permits but in fact requires such oppressive acts to perpetuate both the system and the wealth of the owner (at the expense of the owned). To think that real change can occur without complete rejection of this capitalist system is simpleminded and dangerous. It is your complacent and apathetic attitude that permits such atrocities to occur. The only way to truly 'save the coathangers' is to join the 'Hangers Revolutionary Front Against Capitalist, Imperialist and Fascist States. Only through violent and merciless rebellion can coathangers truly be free. As you have demonstrated, lesser acts will only bring about repulsive acts of oppression by capitalist owners. The imperialist tendencies that are a natural result of the capitalist system have bent more 'hangers out of shape than is describable in this short letter. The fascist discrimination between plastic and metal 'hangers (also a product of the capitalist system) and other such groups is perhaps less noticed, but just as dangerous to the well-being and unity of all 'hangerdom. The only solution is rebellion. I call upon all coathangers everywhere: issue the battle cries **Hangers of the World Unite, Reject Imperialist and Fascist Domination**. Send your donations to: Coathangers Liberation Party of Canada, The Closet, 3rd Floor MC.

Dontaffalotoff Branes

Since writing this letter Dontaffalotoff has undergone a successful operation to become a very nice nine-function circuit board, currently in use in a PC somewhere in the Engineering buildings.

Dear Doctors:

It has come to my attention, after perusing my favourite weekly, sometimes bi-weekly, peripheral, that a conflict exists concerning the food of real numbers. An *a priori* proof of the fact that said real numbers do not eat quiche has been published (Vol. 36, #5, p.8); yet it is also said that a *posteriori* sensory evidence contradicts this (Vol. 36, #4, p.6). *Was ist los?*

Is it simply a matter of one view or the other being objectively false, or can personal opinion have something to say about the matter? Perhaps both views are partially correct—only some real numbers refuse to partake of quiche. In that case, which ones? Would an inductive proof be more applicable to this dilemma than a proof by contradiction? What does this controversy have to say about the relative merits of *a priori* and *a posteriori* reasoning? I eagerly await your comments.

Yours originally,
Center of Gravity

A Gazeteer of Programming Languages

Simple

Simple is an acronym for Sheer Idiot's Monopurpose Programming Linguistic Environment. This language, developed at Hanover College for Technological Misfits, was designed to make it impossible to write code with errors in it. The statements are, therefore, confined to *begin*, *end* and *stop*. No matter how you arrange the statements, you can't make a syntax error.

Programs written in *Simple* do nothing useful. They thus achieve the results of programs written in other languages without the tedious, frustrating process of testing and debugging.

Slobol

Slobol is best known for the speed, or lack of it, of its compiler. Although many compilers allow you to take a coffee break while they compile, *Slobol* compilers allow you to travel to Bolivia to pick the coffee. Forty-three programmers are known to have died of boredom sitting at their terminals while waiting for a *Slobol* program to compile.

Valgol

From its modest beginnings in Southern California's San Fernando Valley, *Valgol* is enjoying a dramatic surge of popularity across the industry.

Valgol commands include *really*, *like*, *well* and *y*know*. Variables are assigned with the *=like* and *=totally* operators. Other operators include the California Booleans, *fersure* and *noway*. Repetitions of code are handled in *for - sure* loops. Here is a sample *Valgol* program:

```
like y*know (I mean) start
if pizza =like bitchen and
  b =like tubular and
  c =like grody**maz
then
  for I =like 1 to oh maybe 100
  do wah - (ditty**2)
  barf(1) =totally gross(out)
  sure
like bag this problem
really
like totally(y*know)
```

Valgol is characterised by its unfriendly error messages. For example, when the user makes a syntax error, the interpreter displays the message:

gag me with a spoon

Lithp

This otherwise unremarkable language is distinguished by the absence of an "S" in its character set. Programmers must substitute "TH". *Lithp* is said to be useful in prothething lithth.

C-

This language was named for the grade received by its creator when he submitted it as a project in a graduate programming class. *C-* is best described as a "low-level" programming language. In general, the language requires more *C-* statements than machine-code instructions to execute a given task. In this respect it is very similar to *COBOL*.

Laidback

Historically, *Valgol* is a derivative of *Laidback*, which was developed at the (now defunct) Marin County Center for T'ai Chi, Mellowness, and Computer Programming, as an alternative to the intense atmosphere in nearby Silicon Valley.

The centre was ideal for programmers who liked to soak in hot tubs while they worked. Unfortunately, few programmers could survive there for long, since the centre outlawed pizza and RC Cola in favour of bean curd and Perrier.

Many mourn the demise of *Laidback* because of its reputation as a gentle and non-threatening language. For example, *Laidback* responded to syntax errors with the message:

Sorry man, I can't deal behind that

Sartre

Named after the late existential philosopher, *Sartre* is an extremely unstructured language. Statements in *Sartre* have no purpose; they just are. Thus *Sartre* programs are left to define their own functions. *Sartre* programmers tend to be boring and depressed and are no fun at parties.

Dogo

Developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Obedience Training, *Dogo* heralds a new era of computer-literate pets. *Dogo* commands include *sit*, *stay*, *heel*, and *roll over*. An innovative feature of *Dogo* is "puppy graphics", a small cocker spaniel that occasionally leaves deposits as he travels across the screen.

Thanx

Thanks are due to the Imprint, Esther Michael at the Arts Library, the Archives Office, and others who helped us out by sending badly needed on-campus mail envelopes. Now **mathNEWS** subscribers can receive this paper (nearly) every week in some recognizable form. (If you really want to help us out some more, send the envelope you get **mathNEWS** in *back* after you get it.)

Tom Ivey, Subscriptions

LookAhead

A glance at upcoming events

Math Events	
Nov. 2	Late Show Road Trip
Nov. 3	Big E & Special K Contests
Nov. 10	Mathsoc Wine & Cheese !
Nov. 14	Pink Day
Nov. 18	Grey Cup Party (Fed Hall!)
Nov. 24	Vanier Cup Trip
Fed Flicks	
8 pm. in AL116 Cost: \$1 feds, \$2 others	
Nov. 2-4	Top Secret
Nov. 9-11	Indiana Jones & The Temple of Doom
Cinema Gratis	
starts 9:30 pm. in the CC	
Nov. 7	Marathon Man
Nov. 14	The Hunger Just a Gigolo
Computers in Education Brown-Bag Seminars	
All lectures at 12:30 - 1:30 in CPH 3385	
Nov. 5	Personal Computers for Process Control
mathNEWS dates	
Nov. 4	mathNEWS articles deadline
Nov. 5	mathNEWS production night, MC3038.
Nov. 9	Next mathNEWS available
UW Arts Centre	
Call Humanities Theatre Box Office at 885.4280 for more info	
Nov. 2	Five Good Reasons to Laugh
Nov. 3	Potato People
Nov. 21	Solid Gold Bach
DCS Courses	
Free! One to three one-hour lectures; contact DCS to register.	
Nov. 5,7,8	CMS Part I
Nov. 12,13,15	Introductory GML
For Co-ops Only	
Nov. 8	Pick up job ranking forms.
Nov. 9	Interviews end.
Nov. 9	Ranking forms due.
Nov. 20	Placement Results posted

Special Guest
Editor's Maasthead
-----+-----
Megathanks to a
terrific production
crew, cast of
contributors, extras
and props.

Specifically:
Sam (we'll get your
stuff in next week);
Tom Ivey (all purpose,
ever ready type guy,
all knowing and all
doing); the Center
of Gravity (proof-
reading, general activities,
being "attractive" (grav-
itationally); Jane Roberts
(charming company),
Doctor Who editorial

scarf, proof reading, general activities);
Paul (typing, general, contributions); the BIG
GUY (forcing I/O, correcting ROSS and being
the big guy); Barb (proof-reading); John
O (layout, contributions and more);
Thanks also Marcel Kahnt (More review);
CO6, D. Braes, the Silver Eagle and Kevin
Picott, and the warped mind who combined
to give a double duty feedback; Dave
Barry (Science (funny stuff - keep it up));
Dr. Oscar (Putting muppets in their place);
Ross Morrissey (a President with a
pen);
Thanks to Gary (guy gives a new meaning
to homogeneous) for letting me have this
kind of fun again.
Now, why would Paul go home to do vacuuming?
Hi Deb, Hi Rob, Hi John, ~~Hi Mea~~....
Oh! Hello to you to Julia.

dan schnabel III

Teachers

As seen by a teacher

Teachers is a movie that advertises itself on its soundtrack, when that is likely the weakest part of the movie. Sure, the songs aren't bad, but the strength of the movie is Nick Nolte as a loud-mouthed teacher who has a big heart underneath it all. What starts out as total anarchy (also known as Monday) grows to be a question whether the job of the teacher is to present lessons on various topics and hope that the bulk catch on, or to actually concentrate on trying to make sure that everyone gets the lessons, not only on Math and English, but on life, self-esteem, and the world around. Judd Hirsch, as the, well, they never really did say what his role was, but he ran the school because the principal had as much on the ball as the Governor in Benson, well, anyway, he represented the latter view in a way that made me proud to be a teacher who prefers the former view.

Richard Mulligan, playing a lunatic imitating a teacher, gave perhaps the best performance insofar as he was able to present lessons with which the students could not only identify, but take part, and in the process, learn. While all of this is going on, the school board is facing a lawsuit for having let a student graduate who was functionally illiterate, which runs through the story and provides the impetus for the question of just what is going on here. The point that forces the confrontation arises when Nolte accuses Hirsch of letting the same situation develop with another student while his mind is caught up in the pressure of the lawsuit. It is not an indictment of the education system, if that is what you are after, but an indictment of all of us who, when we approach education, view it merely as the presentation of lessons in Math or English. I would rate it as a "should try quite hard to find the time to get out and see it", as it is worth it.

Marcel Kahnt