

# AFTERMATH

## Texas A&M University – Commerce

Mathematics Department Newsletter Fall 2009 vol 23 no 1

Find us on the web at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/math/>

*Whoever despises the high wisdom of mathematics nourishes himself on delusion and will never still the sophistic sciences whose only product is an eternal uproar* Leonardo da Vinci

### Comings and Goings of Faculty

**Rick Kreminski** has left Texas A&M University- Commerce after 17 years of service to the Department of Mathematics, the College of Arts and Sciences, and Texas A&M University-Commerce. He took a job as Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics at Colorado State University - Pueblo. He and his family will be missed as they enter this new phase of their lives.



**Debra Newton** has joined the faculty as an ad-interim instructor, teaching various courses for first-year students. **Sarah Bunch**, a recent graduate of our Master's Degree program joins us as an adjunct for two evening classes this fall. In addition, **Leah Reagan**, an alumnus of TAMU-C continues to teach online courses for the department. In the area of Graduate Assistants, the department welcomes **Frances Luce** as a first-time instructor, and welcomes back **Josh Patterson** and **Eric Pleasant**. In addition, the MASTA grant (see below) adds to our staff **Maribeth Nottingham**, MASTA Project Coordinator, who comes to us from Curriculum and Instruction.

### Updates on Returning Faculty and Staff

**Stuart Anderson** has graciously stepped back into the position of Head of the Department for this year while the department searches for a new Head after the position was recently vacated by Rick Kreminski. In order to maintain a healthy balance, however, Stuart has continued to carefully plan his (rare) time off from duties at the office so that he might get away from it all. Scenic venues such as Broken Bow, OK and Oregon top the list of some of the interesting locations he has visited this year.



**Bill Aslan**, who accepted a teaching position here in 1967, has been testing the idea of retirement recently. However, the lure of the classroom draws him back each time. This summer, Bill, his wife Gloria, and son James went on a five-day Caribbean cruise to celebrate the start of their 43<sup>rd</sup> year as residents of Commerce. This was their first vacation since James was critically burned on November 19, 2008. Thankfully, James has recovered from his accident.

**Hasan Coskun** is working on four additional research papers in algebraic combinatorics, mathematical biology, and partial differential equations. He continues to review for AMS Mathematical Reviews and referee for Applied Mathematics Letters. In his free time, he served as a judge at the Second Annual International Sustainable World (Energy, Engineering & Environment) Project Olympiad, I-SWEEEP 2009, in Houston (<http://www.isweeep.org/>).

Hasan and his family are happy with the new house they purchased a few months ago to make their contribution in boosting the economy. He also continues to serve as a member of the Institute of Academic Studies in Dallas.



**Charles Dorsett** continues to publish numerous papers, primarily in Topology. He currently has three papers that are being reprinted, and four additional papers have been accepted for publication. In addition, he presented a paper "Set Sizes Characterized by Equivalences of Separation Axioms" at this year's meeting of the Texas Section of the MAA in Denton.

**Laurene Fausett** currently has a paper on matrices accepted for publication, an encyclopedia article published, and has recently published four additional articles, primarily on Neural Networks. In addition, she has had contracts awarded for two different books. Her continued work with students was apparent at this year's meeting of the Texas Section of the MAA, where she acted as the advisor for four student presentations on Neural Networks.

Laurene Fausett has also given two departmental seminars this year, and she was one of three members of the department designated as Outstanding Teachers of the Texas A&M system, based on student responses to an online survey.

**Eileen Faulkenberry** has received Tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor this past year. In addition to extensive grant work (see grant section below), she had an article accepted for publication in *Mathematics Teacher*. She presented at local, state, and national conferences including CAMT in Houston, and Research Council on Mathematics Learning (RCML) in Rome, Georgia.



**Thomas Faulkenberry** is engaged in research involving mathematical cognition and will be collecting data during the fall semester. The research will analyze the cognitive demands of various strategies for fraction problems.

**John Heath** is enjoying his 35<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at our institution. His oldest, J.P., still works in radio and broadcasts Rice baseball and A&M-Commerce football as well as local material in Lufkin. He and his wife, Lisa, live in Diboll, where she teaches English. His two youngest, Collin and Alex are still pursuing college degrees. John and his wife, Marilyn, are working on their 32<sup>nd</sup> year of marriage.

**Angie Hill** continues with the department as Administrative Assistant. She has been with us for 2 ½ years and says, “I love this family!!” She and her husband, Bryant, have finished the floor of our “big” porch but haven’t gotten the roof on yet. Bryant’s band “The Texas Breeze” is going strong and has “gigs” almost every weekend. Their daughters are doing great; Mandy is hoping to start work for TAMU-C soon and Mallory is closer to her degree as a Math 4-8 teacher. As for Angie, she’s now an official sophomore. She’s taking 10 hours this semester on top of working 40 hours for the department. Although she’s taken math courses through Business Calculus, we can’t quite convince her to convert to a math major. She’s worried about this semester’s course load, but the department knows she will be successful.

**Vanessa Huse** spoke this summer at The Ninth International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT 9) in Metz, France. The website for this conference can be found at <http://www.ictmt9.org/index.php>. Vanessa’s talk “Casting for Knowledge on Podcasting in Mathematics..” also turned into an international publication for her.

**Yelin Ou** and his wife Baifang Qin have just sent their son Maiqi off to attend Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. While Baifang is wondering how to adjust to the situation in which there is no kid around asking her for this and that, Yelin is trying to keep busy on the teaching and research fronts. With a 2<sup>nd</sup> award of Faculty Research Enhancement Project, he has two papers published in Science Citation Indexed math journals and three others submitted for publication. He continues to serve as a reviewer of Mathematical Reviews and Zentralblatt Math (European Math Union).

This year, Yelin has helped facilitate the arrival of a visiting scholar in Commerce. Zeping Wang, supported by his home university (Wenshan University in Yunnan, China), is expected to come in October and will work with Yelin on the geometry of biharmonic maps for five months. Note: The **Visiting Scholar Program** is a part of the Math Department’s initiative to extend international cooperation. The initiative seeks to enroll more international students and to have more international scholars work in Commerce.



**Lymeda Singleton** made several presentations at CAMT in July. She also presented at the NCTM national conference in Washington, D.C., in April: "Integrating the Day with Chocolate" for grades 3 - 8. In addition, the Singletons also spent the rest of the week sightseeing in D.C. in celebration of their 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Lymeda didn't teach summer school; instead, she averaged 10 books read per week (mainly murder mysteries, adventure and spy thrillers) and kept her 2-year old granddaughter once a week.

**Nikolay Sirakov** will be in his 6<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at TAMU-C. He has a happy life with his wife Dora, who is his vital source of support. They are both proud of the achievements of their daughter Nona, who follows in the footsteps of her father. Recently, Nikolay had a paper accepted to be published by the Springer Verlag series Lecture notes in computer science. In addition, to "help the family deal with emotions", he published a paper in the field of Human Emotions Recognition from images. Furthermore, Nikolay enjoys a successful research program with two graduate students.

This spring, Dr. Sirakov was invited to give research presentations at the Department of Mathematics - UT Arlington. From these visits, a joint research proposal to the Norman Hackerman Advanced Research Program was born. Dr. Sirakov is also working in cooperation with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University Wolverhampton UK. He participated in the submission of a proposal for "Digitizing Native American Archival Materials" to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

**KaSai Un** has started her third year teaching in the department. In addition to the Intermediate and College Algebra classes that she usually teaches, KaSai is currently exploring courses in math education. KaSai gave a talk at the April Texas MAA meeting ("Preparation of graduate teaching assistants as college instructors in mathematics at Texas A&M University - Commerce") and was invited to speak at Eastfield College in Mesquite for their NSF-STEP Guest Lecture Series (in April) and Dallas PREP Career Awareness Speaker Series (in July) with the topic of "Modern Applications of Mathematics".

**Pamela Webster** begins her 11<sup>th</sup> year as a faculty member with a recent rank change to a relatively new title at TAMU-C: Assistant Professor (Professional Track). While she continues to perform research with alumnus **Heather Allen** and faculty member **KaSai Un**, Pamela remains active in making presentations at conferences such NADE, MAA, and CAMT.

Dr. Webster was on the writing team for the MASTA grant and is currently on the teaching team. She is also currently doing contractual work in the area of math education. In addition, she received a Teaching Excellence Award from the Texas A&M System. In her free time, she continues to ride and jump horses, as well as furthering her interests in SCUBA diving.



## **Retired Faculty**

**Dale Bedgood** has spent a rather quiet year with his wife, Betty, in that they did not travel much. This has been a special year for them as they celebrated their FIFTIETH Wedding Anniversary. The occasion was planned by their children Jennifer and Scott and included only family. The ones traveling the greatest distance were Betty's brother and his wife from Stone Mountain, GA. The event was held at a steak house in north Dallas and the evening included many surprises and cherished moments. Several from the group recalled humorous and witty events and occasions that occurred in their fifty years together.

The Bedgoods stay very busy as their lives are filled with activities almost on a daily basis. They are both active in adult Sunday School departments at their church; Betty teaches a young adult couples class and Dale is the director of a senior adult department. She is active in the auxiliary of the local hospital and is a regular volunteer. Dale occasionally tutors a child of some of their young friends, and enjoys it greatly.

**John Davenport**--It is hard to believe that John is beginning his 4th year of retirement. Time is passing much too quickly. This past year, John gained a new grandson and lost an appendix (We thought he had outgrown any chance of appendicitis!). Since his retirement, his grandchildren count has grown to four(three boys and a girl), and he enjoys his time with them tremendously. John's wife, Donna, is still working long hours at her job at Crosstex Energy in Dallas while he "holds down the fort" in Rockwall. They have enjoyed many Ranger baseball games this season, and have had the opportunity to do some traveling.

**Jack Lamb**--After attending 40 consecutive meetings of the Texas Section from 1969 to 2008, Jack retired from that activity. He was given a plaque for this achievement at the 2008 meeting held at Tarleton in Stephenville where he also gave a paper on "The 1089 Puzzle in Other Bases." Keeping in tradition, Jack took pictures of the meeting and posted them on a web site. The address is <http://www.vvm.com/~jmlamb/texsec08.htm>

Jack and Mildred entertain themselves by chasing their four grandchildren. Tristan (12) is in the seventh grade this year. He is on the swim team and has won some medals at swim meets. While Matt (25) works for Acer Electronics and is in the Army Reserve, his son Zander started the first grade this fall. Two granddaughters, Kristen and Kathryn, are in 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> grades respectively. Daughter, Brenda, teaches math at Belton High School. Daughter, Margaret, is still a stay-at-home mom. They just got back from a trip to England. Margaret has become quite the world traveler. She has been to Alaska, Hawaii, Singapore, Paris and England. Next, they plan to visit her husband's sister and brother-in-law in Australia.

**Howard Lambert** and wife Freda are enjoying retirement. They have a travel trailer and like traveling and camping. They have just returned from a two month trip to Helena Montana, to visit their son, Kirby and his wife Becca. He is the Outreach and Interpretation Program Manager for the Montana Historical Society. Becca works in the photo archives at the Society. Their daughter , Kim Lambert, lives in Denison, TX. and is a Speech therapist. The Lamberts have two granddaughters, Rachel Stephenson is an In-flight Attendant for Southwest Airline and Ragan Stephenson is a Physician Assistant practicing in Plano, TX

**Vance Underhill** and wife, Ann, celebrated their first wedding anniversary on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Also, they recently visited Brenda and Italo **Simonelli** on a trip to Ann's place near Baltimore.

### **Departmental Grants/Outreach**

**Mathematics and Science Teacher Academy (MASTA)** – A Math and Science Teacher Academy for undergraduate and graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce – was established this fall. The academy is for students pursuing degrees in math and science. The goal is for 50 students to attend the academy, which started in September. The academy is made possible by a \$685,000 grant by The Higher Education Coordinating Board. Project directors are **Eileen Faulkenberry** and Gil Naizer, Curriculum and Instruction faculty. Other faculty involved in the grant are **Pamela Webster** of the mathematics faculty, Cheri Davis, Assistant Director of the A&M-Commerce Planetarium, and Mark Reid, Curriculum and Instruction faculty.

The students will attend a class once a month and an online class once a month along with courses necessary for their degrees. "This innovative partnership with the university and public schools will not only serve to stimulate the interest of students in the region to pursue careers in science and math and to effectively prepare them to succeed in these areas, but will prepare a new generation of scientists for today's workforce needs," said Dr. Allan Headley, A&M-Commerce dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The academy faculty will use innovative professional development models with the students, such as lesson study models for professional development, problem-based learning, and inquiry-based learning.

The funding for the two-tuition for some courses in their students will also receive a portion of the academy, stipend their classrooms.



**Math Mania (See Page 8)**

year grant will pay students' degree plans. Each of the laptop to assist with the online for attending, and materials for

**“Project P.H.O.N.E.”** - Podcasting for Health Occupations and Nursing Education (\$149,000) – is a Carl D. Perkins State Leadership grant directed by **Dr. Vanessa E. Huse** and Dr. Maribeth L. McAnally. “Project P.H.O.N.E” seeks to answer the transition needed for community college faculty to enter the digital world with course content presentation. Teams of faculty from ten Texas community colleges will gather on the Texas A&M-Commerce campus on October 16 and 17 to begin podcasting their knowledge into new types of presentations for their college courses.

Traditional students in today’s classrooms are digital learners needing active engagement in the digital world. At the training session, faculty teams will explore podcasts, vodcasts, and screencasts using a variety of resources. Participants will receive their choice of an iPhone, iTouch, or iPod in addition to a flip video. Instruction in the creation of podcasts, vodcasts, and screencasts will focus on the use of Audacity, Camtasia, Snag-It, MovieMaker, and Jing. Upon completion of the conference, participants will return to their campuses to begin the creation of productions to be used in their classroom and posted on the grant website for others to view as examples. In addition, each team will host a training session on their own campus to further disseminate their knowledge to colleagues.

**The Advanced Research Project Grant** (\$108,000) funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has received a “continue” evaluation. **Hasan Coskun** continues as the director of the grant. Last year, three graduate and one undergraduate student were supported to participate in the project. The research resulted in a joint journal article that is ready to be submitted. For this academic year, some more graduate research assistants and undergraduate student workers are expected to join the project forming a larger research group in applied mathematics.

**Teacher Quality Grants** – Once again, the mathematics department has received two Teacher Quality grants; this time for a two-year period each. The Teacher Quality Professional Development grant is funded from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the U.S. Department of Education. “Preparing for Algebra” (\$240,000) was authored by **Eileen Faulkenberry**. **Thomas Faulkenberry** serves as the co-director. “Measurement in the Middle Grades” (\$170,000) was granted for the Athens area and was authored by **Vanessa Huse**. Maribeth McAnally serves as the co-director.



**New Math Skills Center Computers**

## Mathematics Clubs and Other Student Activities

After six years of dedicated service as advisor to the Math Clubs, **Pamela Webster** asked to step down from the position and **Eileen Faulkenberry** has taken over as Math Club advisor. Eileen Faulkenberry states: Our Math Clubs are going strong!

The clubs had 14 students attend the MAA meeting at UNT in Denton. Six students gave presentations, and eight participated in the Calculus Bowl. Our team won third place for the state in Calculus Bowl! We had 12 students attend the CAMT conference in Houston in July. **Dr. Faulkenberry, Mrs. Singleton, and Dr. Webster** also attended the conference and made presentations.

The math clubs started a new fundraiser during the Spring semester: Pi a Prof. The students voted for the professor they wanted to receive a pie by making donations in the professor's jar. **Dr. Anderson, Dr. Aslan, Dr. Faulkenberry, Mr. Faulkenberry, Dr. Fausett, Mr. Heath, and Mrs. Singleton** were the brave souls who volunteered to participate in the fund raiser. Faulkenberry was the winner (or loser, depending on how you look at it.)



For Homecoming 2008, the departmental student workers (**Whitney Stewart and Christina Vega**) put a great deal of effort into transforming the departmental windows for both Homecoming and Christmas. In fact, for Homecoming last year, the department won an award for Overall Best Window. We also continue to receive wide-spread praise for inventive window paintings during Christmas.



**Lymeda Singleton** has been active in creating and sponsoring student activities. She continues as the departmental sponsor of the Problem of the Week competition. In addition, she was the co-sponsor last spring and continues as the sponsor this year of Math Mania, a professional development for pre-service elementary and middle school certification majors. This fall, she has doubled the number of offerings to twice a month: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. OR 1 - 3 p.m. in Bin 329. In-service teachers are also welcome. The sessions are usually self-paced centers. Contact Mrs. Singleton for the topics scheduled. (Also see picture on page 6.)



Math Mania



## **Math Skills Center and Developmental Mathematics**

The **Math Skills Center** continues to thrive! Students use our services regularly and often grow attached to a particular “favorite” tutor that they find who explains things in just their language. Over the summer, the Math Skills Center received all new computers for the computer lab, complete with flat screens. Although we are still working out a few “bugs” with the new systems and the Deep Freeze program, the computers are significantly faster than our old ones. We plan to use and enjoy them!! (See picture on page 7) In the meanwhile, the Math Skills Center continues to serve students in math courses through Calculus I. Approximately 15 tutors work with students in this area. Tutors must know how to work with MyMathLab (the online homework program used for Intermediate and College Algebra). The Math Skills Center also houses the Ellison Letter Press, used in the Math Elementary Education courses; many die cuts are available for both student and alumni use.

The **Developmental Mathematics Program** is currently working on adding project-based learning to the curriculum. A pilot program is being run this semester to work out some of the logistics. The Intermediate Algebra course no longer has a Supplemental Instruction (SI)-style workshop attached. Instead, we are implementing occasional voluntary workshops for both Intermediate Algebra and College Algebra, to address special topics that need attention from the students. Topics include items such as factoring and calculator use.

## **Foundation and Scholarship news**

We are most thankful for friends of the department who over the years have helped countless students with their mathematical careers. Working with two other departments on campus, we are now able to assist some of our students who are currently teachers; this is in addition to our ability to help needy undergraduates. Recipients of scholarships since our last newsletter are:

- Flavius Kortik (**Cecil Wright Scholarship**)
- Douglas Boney (**Hoyle and Ann Julian Scholarship**)
- Derek Fort (**James, Gloria and Bill Aslan Scholarship**)
- Miranda Ripple (**John and Elaine Yznaga Scholarship**)
- Joslyn Miller (**John and Elaine Yznaga Scholarship**)
- Lauren Crowe (**Rachel Lafferty Excellence**)
- Sara Portillo (**Rachel Lafferty Excellence**)
- Douglas Boney (**Rachel Lafferty Excellence**)
- Antony Petrov (**W.W. “Bub” Taylor Scholarship**)

Recipients of late fall 2009 scholarships including the **Dale and Betty Bedgood Scholarship**, the **Dennis Grantham Graduate Mathematics Scholarship**, and others, will be listed in the next newsletter.

If you wish to make contributions to any of these funds, you may call the Department at 903.886.5157 or the A&M-Commerce Foundation at 903.886.5712

# Homecoming Brunch

The twentieth annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Brunch (formerly Breakfast) will be held at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 10, 2009 in the (new) Sam Rayburn Student Center, Room 213C. **Please send in your reservations by October 2, 2009.** The cost is FREE(!) to alumni, special friends of the math department, and their guests – but only if we know ahead of time (for catering purposes).

Please RSVP at 903.886.5157 or

via email to [Angie\\_Hill@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:Angie_Hill@tamu-commerce.edu)

## Let Us Hear From You

We would like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or TAMU-C, we are interested in what has happened in your life since you left campus. If you have a story about a favorite professor, we would like to hear that, too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included in the next *Aftermath Newsletter*.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (for our files): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Year Graduated: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news that you would like to share:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Please send to the address below:***

**Mathematics Department  
Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**P.O. Box 3011, Commerce, TX 75429-3011**

or via email to [Angie\\_Hill@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:Angie_Hill@tamu-commerce.edu)