

AFTERMATH

Texas A&M University – Commerce

Mathematics Department Newsletter Fall 2011 vol 25 no 1

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To know, is to know that you know nothing. That is the meaning of true knowledge. --Socrates

Comings and Goings of Faculty and Staff

Unfortunately, the Mathematics Department was forced to say goodbye to the departmental secretary, **Angie Hill**, who took a job across campus, just this past month. Angie's new job has her working in the Provost's office, and while the department misses her tremendously, the opportunity for her to develop professionally is wonderful. We wish her well in her endeavors, and we hope that she will still stop by from time to time and enjoy a good, home-cooked meal in the department with us.

The department has several adjuncts who continue to work for us. **Lori Blagg** from Paris, TX is in her second year as an adjunct in the department, and she serves as a faculty member for **Project DREAM**. In addition, **Leah Reagan**, an alumna of TAMU-C, continues to teach online courses for the department. **Sarah Bunch-Morrison** continues to teach as an adjunct for two evening classes this fall. Sarah continues her job at Greenville High School, and was married to Tim Morrison over the summer. In addition, Sarah has recently received her certification to work with Gifted and Talented students.

In the area of Graduate Assistants, the department welcomes back **Aida Murtazina-Allen** and **Lacy Gaines**, for their second full year as instructors. The department also welcomes back teaching assistants **John Michael Melendez** and **Donna Holt**, who joined our department as teaching assistants in the Spring semester. Additionally, we welcome to our teaching team **George Swindell**, who has been a member of the department for several years, first as a tutor and then as a lab instructor. George is now pursuing his Master's degree and is teaching his first classes as teacher of record this Fall. Finally in the area of teaching assistants, it was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to **Muhammed Ozturk**, **Josh Patterson**, and **Eric Pleasant**, who are no longer working for us as Graduate Assistants because of their successful graduation from the Master's program. Congratulations, gentlemen!

Updates on Returning Faculty and Staff

Stuart Anderson spent the Spring and Summer semesters on a sabbatical to work on a history of mathematics project. Dr. Anderson has recently presented a paper, [From Babylonian Table Texts to Abstractions](#), for the Joint Mathematics Meetings of the MAA and AMS in New Orleans this past January. He also presented [The Rise of Greek Mathematics](#) at the Texas Section of the MAA, at the University of Texas at Tyler, in April.

Bill Aslan, who accepted a teaching position here in 1967, still speaks occasionally of retirement. However, the lure of the classroom draws him back each time. This summer, Bill, his wife Gloria, and son James took several trips.

Hasan Coskun has published several articles, submitted a few more, and continues to serve as an editor for five peer reviewed journals. He has reviewed many papers for mathematics journals and turned in external grant applications to NSF and NIH. In addition, Dr. Coskun has given several invited talks about his research in algebraic combinatorics and mathematical biology, as well as presentations on the use of technology in mathematics education in regional conferences and at university colloquiums. He continues to enjoy teaching undergraduate and graduate level courses with integrated technology components in the main Commerce campus and in the Metroplex Center in Mesquite.



Charles Dorsett continues for a second year to serve as Interim Head of the Mathematics Department. In addition, he has had three research articles accepted for publication and has submitted a fourth. He is hoping to see you at the Departmental Homecoming Breakfast on October 22, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. in the Sam Rayburn Student Center.

Eileen Faulkenberry continues to direct the Teacher Quality grant and the Math and Science Teacher Academy (MASTA) grant. Through these two grants, over 50 area math and science teachers are provided an opportunity to earn graduate credit as well as professional development hours. Dr. Faulkenberry also provided an extensive summer workshop for the math teachers of Sulphur Springs ISD through a grant that integrated technology and mathematics. The teachers received Promethean boards, iPads, smart pens, and other technology to assist in their instructional practices.

John Heath had cataract surgery last January and is able to see more clearly now. He is happy to have survived the “post tenure” review process which took place last fall and spring. He attended the Texas Section of the MAA in Tyler in April. He enjoyed a fun trip to Jackson, Miss., in June (first time in Mississippi), where his son J.P. was broadcasting the Conference USA baseball tournament for Rice University. He is heading into his 37th full-time year at “old E.T.” and quite happy he ended up here in the Fall of 1975 amongst the fine Mathematics faculty.

Vanessa Huse continues her work with Teacher Quality Grants (see Departmental Outreach/Grants). In addition, she remains active with the International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT).

Sandy Johnson rejoins the department as an ad-interim instructor for the year. She will be teaching a variety of first-year courses.

Yelin Ou and his wife Baifang have moved in their new house in Greenville since last October. Baifang is very excited and busy at her newly open Tea Harmony Café ----the first Boba Tea House in Rockwall!

In his research front, Yelin has 3 papers published, 2 accepted and 2 others submitted for publication. He continues to referee papers for some international journals and serve as a reviewer of Mathematical Reviews and Zentralblatt Math. Yelin went to China in the summer



to collaborate with colleagues there and will be giving an invited talk at the Annual Academic Conference of Chinese Mathematical Society in November. He continues to teach graduate and undergraduate classes and is also advising two undergraduate students on their honors theses. Yelin also continues to organizing the Math Department Colloquium.

Debra Newton continues with the faculty as an ad-interim instructor, teaching various courses for first-year students. In addition, she continues to work as a faculty member on the Project DREAM grant (see Departmental Outreach/Grants below). In particular, she participated in the project DREAM building projects for the Fall and Spring semesters last year and she taught in the Summer Bridge program this year. Debra also attended the national NADE conference in Washington DC. Finally, she was awarded a Teaching Excellence Award.

Lymeda Singleton kept busy this summer keeping grandchildren and attending professional development workshops on algebraic thinking for grades 3 - 8 at the state level in San Antonio and Richardson and the national level in Baltimore. Part of the national workshop includes continuing professional development through eWorkshops twice monthly. The year-long workshop is also part of the national research project "Research and Evaluation of the Algebra Readiness Interactive Institute," being conducted by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Mrs. Singleton continues to sponsor and coordinate Problem of the Week, Math Mania (professional development for preservice teachers K - 8) and the math clubs Alpha Gamma Alpha and Council of Teachers of Mathematics. This includes, of course, taking students to CAMT and the MAA (this year in Tyler, TX), and sponsoring our math club's Calculus Bowl team.



Calculus Bowl team
representing TAMU-Commerce
Douglas Boney, Jake Furnish, Kaci
Mohon
Val Schmidt, Erin Estep

Nikolay Sirakov is in his 8th year with A&M - Commerce. He is still reviewing for several top peer-reviewed International Conferences and Journals. In the past year, he has published peer reviewed papers on automatic skin cancer identification and automatic weapons identification using Ontology. He has also submitted three papers to the top journals in the field of Image Processing and Pattern Recognition. In his research, Nikolay collaborates with four faculty members and he supervises the research of three students.

Nikolay's daughter, Nona, continues to follow in the footsteps of her father. She is still in the Honor Programs in the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Computer Science at UT Austin. Nona spent the Summer of 2011 as an intern at the headquarters of Google, and right now she is writing a thesis in the field of automatic events recognition in a video.

KaSai Un went home to Macau this summer and was happy to learn that her brother stays cancer free after his treatment last year, and her brother also plans to get married this November. KaSai has received the Texas A&M University System Teaching Excellence Awards for both the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters. She enjoyed working with **Pamela Webster** on the **project DREAM** (see Departmental Outreach/Grants) grant as a faculty member for the self-paced class, the Service Learning Day, and the summer bridge program. KaSai gave a talk at the Texas MAA meeting in April in Tyler TX. The topic of the talk was about self-paced and self-accelerated developmental mathematics classes. In addition, KaSai has also worked with Pamela Webster to give a follow-up talk on CCRS: Continuing the conversation on the College and Career Readiness Standards at the CAMT conference in Grapevine, TX this July.

Pamela Webster begins her 13th year as a faculty member with multiple talks under her belt at the MAA Texas Section, CAMT, and various other conferences. In the classroom, she continues to teach Math Education courses as well as Freshman Success Seminars. She also presented at workshops for Bonham ISD and at the Region 10 Service Center through the Texas Regional Collaborative. While she continues to collaborate with alumnus **Dr. Heather Allen** and faculty member **Dr. KaSai Un** on talks and research, she is also excited to continue a major grant from the THECB (see Departmental Outreach/Grants).

Dr. Webster continued on the teaching team for the MASTA grant through the Summer term. She is also currently doing contractual work in the area of math education and serves as part of the A&M-Commerce team of the Faculty Initiative on College and Career Readiness Standards. In addition, she serves as faculty on the AVID grant with **Mrs. Wendy Gruver**, and she has begun work with **Dr. Matthew Elam** on the STEM undergraduate research grant. Together, they are working with four undergraduate students in the area of mathematics. In her free time, Pamela continues to ride and jump horses, as well as furthering her experience with SCUBA diving.

Retired Faculty

Dale Bedgood and his wife, Betty, celebrated their 52nd Wedding Anniversary. The Bedgoods stay very busy as their lives are filled with activities almost on a daily basis. Also, it is not unusual for department members to see them both at the Student Recreation Center, where they work out practically daily.

Archie Brock and his wife, Lela, celebrated their 54th wedding anniversary in September. At a recent gathering with the department, Archie took the opportunity to tell stories about the department. In particular, Bill Aslan stories were popular. In addition, Archie states, "I discovered the wood lathe after retiring in 1995 and I turn out a lot of wooden 'stuff.' It seems that pens and bowls take up most of my time, least they do if it isn't too hot outside. What a hot summer! That weather ran me into the house where I spent my afternoons putting together picture puzzles. I'm told that will help with old age memory problems and of course that is needed."

John Davenport has begun his 6th year of retirement. John and his wife, Donna, enjoy their time with their grandchildren tremendously. Also, they have enjoyed many Rangers baseball games this season, and have had the opportunity to do some traveling.

Jack Lamb--Jack and Mildred entertain themselves by chasing their four grandchildren. Tristan, Zander, Kristen, and Kathryn, lead active lives and keep their grandparents active with the chase.

Howard Lambert and wife, Freda, are enjoying retirement. They have a travel trailer and like traveling and camping. At a recent gathering with the department, Howard took the opportunity to assist Archie Brock with the straight lines for some Bill Aslan stories.

Vance Underhill and his wife, Ann, celebrated their third wedding anniversary on August 29th. The Underhills also attended a gathering with the department this past year, and seemed to be enjoying both each others' company and the company of the department.

Departmental Outreach/Grants

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 during the fall 2009 semester, and that grant continues in year three. The academy is for students pursuing degrees in math and science. All of the third-year participants are completing graduate degrees. Project directors are **Eileen Faulkenberry** and Gil Naizer, Curriculum and Instruction faculty.

Teacher Quality Grants – Last year, the mathematics department continued two two-year Teacher Quality grants. The Teacher Quality Professional Development grant is funded from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the U.S. Department of Education. One of the grants was authored by **Eileen Faulkenberry** and **Thomas Faulkenberry**. "Measurement in the Middle Grades" was continued for the Athens area and was authored by **Vanessa Huse**. Maribeth McAnally serves as the co-director.

Project DREAM, Developing Readiness for Everyone in Algebra and Mathematics, has continued to be funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for \$400,000 over two years. The grant is directed by **Pamela Webster** and co-directed by Wendy Gruver, Director of Student Assessment. A&M-Commerce is one of four four-year institutions in the state to receive such a grant, which is the first of its kind on campus. The grant allows students in Intermediate Algebra to receive expanded services and enhances the university's developmental mathematics program. Project faculty include **KaSai Un, Debra Newton, Lori Blagg, Lacy Gaines, Aida Allen, John Michael Melendez, Donna Holt, and George Swindell**. One of the activities for the Summer Bridge program included applications of math in baseball, and there was even a student field trip to a Rangers game.



Mathematics Clubs and Other Student Activities

Mrs. Lymeda Singleton continues to sponsor the math clubs Alpha Gamma Alpha and Council of Teachers of Mathematics. She was able to put together many wonderful events for our students in the 2010-2011 year, and meetings are underway for this year. Thanks go to **Dr. Stuart Anderson, Dr. Charles Dorsett, Dr. Pamela Webster, and Dr. Tom Faulkenberry** for their presentations to the math clubs.

The math clubs changed their new fundraiser during the Spring semester (previously Pi a Prof) to a Pi Day Pie Sale. Thanks go out to all of the math department faculty for their support of the Pi Day Pie Sale.

Dr. Sirakov took several students to the 8th Annual Texas A&M System's **Pathways Research Symposium** at West Texas A&M University, October 22-23, 2010. **Venkata Nagendra Raja Jadandhyam**, one of Dr. Sirakov's research students, was awarded **Overall Winner, Master's Level, as well as 2nd Place & 1st Place Winners in the Mathematics Discipline**. Another of his research students, **Surendra Chakrader**, was awarded **Master's Level, 2nd Place, Computer Science**, at the same research symposium, and a 2nd place at the Texas A&M-Commerce research symposium April 2011.

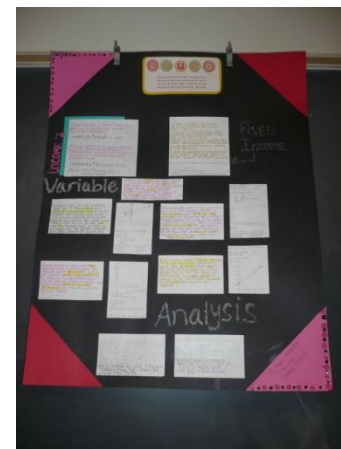
Math Skills Center and Developmental Mathematics

The **Math Skills Center** continues to thrive! Students use our services regularly and often grow attached to a particular "favorite" tutor who explains things in just their language. 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** has added project-based learning and service learning to the curriculum, in part thanks to Project DREAM. A pilot program was run during the Fall 2009 semester, where students participated in a Project Fair to present their projects to the department and the campus as a whole. In addition, we have implemented 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.



Thanks to Beth Smith for organizing the fundraiser and to Beth, Donnetta Allen, Kristen Miley, Erin Estep, Douglas Boney, James Yznaga, Christina Siler, Dr. Webster, and Dr. Ou who worked the booth and / or baked pies, cookies, and brownies to sell.



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.

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 Breakfast

The twenty-second annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Breakfast (briefly a Brunch) will be held at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, October 22, 2011 in the (new) Sam Rayburn Student Center, on the 2nd floor. **Please send in your reservations by October 19.** 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 Judy_Smith@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:

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