MATHEMATICS & COMPUTER SCIENCE

Logical Times

"News You Can Count On"

Denison University Fall 2008

Busy, busy Summer

We had several very busy students this past summer and it was never more evident than during the Summer Science Poster Session on September 11. Presenting during this session were: Neal Barcelo ('10) and Nick Legg ('09) with their research project entitled *The Performance Cost of Visual Machines in Compute Clusters*, Sam Behrend ('09) with *A Math Classic: The Tale of Three Links*, Zack Goldman ('10) with *Game Theory and Social Networks* and Yu-San (Sami) Sun ('10) with *Automated Tools for Reasoning in Computer Science Courses*.

Pi Mu Epsilon Conference

Drs. Crown and Ludwig took several students to Miami University for the Pi Mu Epsilon Fall Conference on September 26. After a few minor hitches, or should we say jumps, the crew made it home safely. It seems that during the course of the evening a certain dependable department fellow forgot one very important thing about driving with your headlights on – turning them off when you park your vehicle. Isn't that right, Sam?

Faculty and Student Talks

We've had a really busy semester so far with many varied and interesting topics being presented during our bimonthly FaST Talks. At our welcome back talk, the department treated everyone to Chipotle and we were entertained by our Pi Mu Players. Then, at the end of September, Dr. Havill talked about the effect Computer Science has had on the field of microbiology.

In October we had OSU Graduate Student Matthew Lang talk on the challenges of designing maximal software. In two separate presentations at the end of October and the beginning of November we heard from Sam Behrend, Neal Barcelo, Nick Legg and Zack Goldman on the research they did over the summer.

Big plans are in the works for next semester; keep your eyes and ears open!

Dr. Art Benjamin, Mathematician and Magician
February 12-13, 2009

Dr. Mark Ward '99
March 26-27, 2009

Pumpkin Carving Contest

The 3rd Annual Pumpkin Carving Contest was held on Friday, October 31. Although entries were fewer this year, we still had some great pumpkins in the contest. The first place pumpkin was submitted by the team of Sam Behrend and Joanna Kreiselman and entitled *Fundamental Theory of Halloween*. Second place was taken with *X ∞ & 8 X Infinity* submitted by Linggi (Amy) Sun and Qinyi (Jane) Zhang. The third place winner from the team of Rui Li, Yige Li, Beidi Qiang was entitled *Pumpkin Pirate*. Each member of these teams received a $10 Chipotle gift card. Thank you to all teams who entered the contest.

Fundamental Theory of Halloween
Sam Behrend and Joanna Kreiselman

X ∞ & 8 X Infinity
Amy Sun and Jane Zhang

Pirate Pumpkin
Rui Li, Yige Li, and Beidi Qiang

Cartman
Josh Buell and Shaun McFall

Math !
Corey Ackerman, Erica Evans & Katie Leight

Imaginary Pumpkin
Nick Legg

What We Learned in Game Design Class
Neal Barcelo, Bryce Pioske & Joe Paat

Front row: Neal Barcelo, Bryce Pioske, and Joe Paat.
Back row: Sami Sun, Josh Buell, and Shaun McFall.

ACM Programming Contest

On October 31, Dr. Feil took a group of six students to the ACM Programming Contest held at Youngstown State University. The team of Josh Buell, Shaun McFall and Sami Sun earned 3rd Place on site. Congratulations guys!

MATH 210-02 Pictured left to right: Chao Pei, Vaidyanathan Prashant, Jane Zhang, Patrick Calderhead, Katie Leight, Bryce Poiske, Erica Evans, Jacob Shafter, Corey Ackerman, Zach Goldman, Nathan Zakahi, Sami Sun and Joe Paat.

Students Help Fight Hunger

Dr. Ludwig did an interesting thing in class in November. He challenged all his students in Math 210 to each bring in one item to donate to the Homeless and Hungry Drive that was held on campus. Not only did everyone bring in at least one item but they brought in close to 60 pounds of food. Way to go!

Congratulations!

Dr. Havill and his wife Beth welcomed their third child on Monday, November 17. Caroline Lynn will join big brother Nicholas and big sister Amelia. Mommy and baby are doing great.

Things I learned at Denison that helped me in graduate school

by David Nassar, Class of 2007

After one year of graduate school, it is clear that a lot of my past experiences in the Denison Math and Computer Science Department have helped me drastically in my studies at The University of Akron. After seeing an old Denison professor (he's not that old) at a math conference, he said it would be nice for me to write a short list of things that were helpful to me for an article in the math newsletter. So here goes:

1.) The ability to speak about mathematics. The myth that mathematicians' best social interactions occur with their feet was dispelled for me at Denison. Learning to speak well (good eye contact, moving around the room, engaging your audience, using props, etc.) is invaluable no matter what your future holds. Take the lessons learned from Denison to heart; they serve you well whether it be in a teaching assignment in the future, presenting your research, or in interviews for other jobs.

2.) Computer science. If you are 'merely' a math major, and think that computer science isn't worth the time, then reconsider. I had no idea how important computer programming skills were to everyone in graduate school. Depending on the math discipline you intend to study after Denison, you may be doing lots of programming just to solve the math problem at hand. If I had not had any experience with programming, 'learning how to write code' would have taken my focus off of the demanding 'figuring out how to solve the problem.' If nothing else, take introduction to CS. If you have the time, definitely take more. I'm very glad I had the chance to learn programming while there was time to ask questions.

3.) The math help room/tutoring. When I came to graduate school, they put me head-first into a teaching assignment. It's not terrifying; they gave me plenty of guidance, but the advantage of having already 'taught' people in the math help room was invaluable. The experience of tutoring lets you lean how other people learn, and how to best explain something to a student having trouble with the subject matter. Taking tutoring seriously was extremely helpful.

4.) LaTeX. It's hard to recall why I as angry to 'tex up work; it turns out it was *not* a professor's plot to waste our time after all. I am so glad that I know how to write in LaTeX – and nobody paid me to say that – it's true.

5.) Asking questions. Ask questions about the stuff you don't understand in class. The whole reason you are in class is to learn, and if you don't understand something, the only way a professor will know is if you ask (obvious, I know). In graduate school I've seen many people under the false impression that not asking questions makes you seem smart. It's much smarter to ask the question in class or during office hours than to be questioning how to do something at test time. Moreover, asking questions about undergraduate Calc III materials is easier than when you are in graduate school and it is assumed you fully understand it.

Upcoming Events

Dec. 6 Putnam Mathematics Contest

Science Holiday Party

Dec. 17 Sundae Study Break – 2nd floor Olin Hall