

# MAA Graduate Student Newsletter

Mathematical Association of America  
www.maa.org



## Inside this issue:

- The two-body problem.
- Apply to be a Project NExT Fellow.
- MAA Math Classifieds—the newest way to apply for jobs in mathematics.
- Excerpts from MAA articles.

## Over 5000 Mathematicians Expected in San Francisco

The city by the bay is the site for the 2010 Joint Mathematics Meetings, January 13th–16th. Most events will take place at the Moscone West Center with the Marriott San Francisco serving as the Headquarters Hotel.

Highlights of the Meetings include an MAA Short Course on Exploring the Great Books in Mathematics, an AMS Short Course entitled “Markov Chains and Mixing Times”, and Invited Addresses by David T. Kung (ST. Mary’s College of Maryland), Amie Wilkinson

(Northwestern University), and Lenore Blum (Carnegie Mellon University).

A quick survey of Paper Sessions show an AMS Special Session on *Voting Theory*, an MAA Invited Paper Session on *The Mathematics of Origami*, and MAA Contributed Paper Sessions on *New and Innovative Ways to Teach Linear Algebra* and *My Most Successful Math Club Activity*.

Specifically for graduate students there is the Welcoming Reception



Wednesday evening. The events start in earnest Thursday with the panel *Finding a Research Topic and Thesis Advisor*. Following that is a panel discussion on *What I Wish I’d Known When Applying for Jobs*. As always, there is the Student Hospitality Center, a place to relax between all the happenings.

As before, the MAA is

**December 22 is the deadline for registration for the Joint Meetings!**

## MathFest a Big Hit with Graduate Students

Portland, Oregon was the site of MathFest this past summer. The Rose City was host to a record number of mathematicians from August 6th–8th.

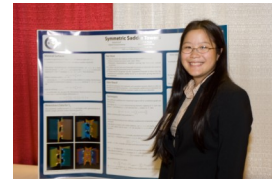
On top of great talks, there are many events and activities especially

for graduate students.

The kickoff was a reception for graduate students giving them a chance to meet and mingle. The annual *Graduate Student Poster Session* is continuing to grow. There was also David Mander-

scheid’s session *How to Apply for Jobs*. For the second year in a row a session was held for graduate students to practice giving their “interview expository talk”. After the talk, each speaker then had a private, casual discussion

## Pictures from MathFest



*NExT Fellows are matched up in a peer and mentor network.*

### Project NExT Deadline Looms

Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching) is the MAA's highly successful program for new and recent PhD's in the mathematical sciences. The program covers all aspects of a career: teaching, research/scholarship, service, and balancing life inside and outside academia.

NExT Fellows are matched

### MathFest (continued)

with a professor and an undergraduate to help improve the speaker's performance.

New this year was a workshop by Aaron Luttmann and Rachel Schwell entitled *What's the Story: A*

up in a peer and mentor network. Special events for participants are held at MathFest and the Joint Mathematics Meetings. MAA sections also run Section NExT during the Section's meeting or at other times during the year. Topics covered have included the following:

- Using writing in the teaching of mathematics

- Alternative methods of assessment
- Creating successful grant proposals
- Preparing future K-12 teachers of mathematics

Applications for the 2010-2011 Fellowship Year are due by April 2010. For more information on Project NExT, visit their web page at

<http://archives.math.utk.edu/projnext/>.

All this and more will be going on August 5th-7th, 2010 in Pittsburgh, PA. For students presenting posters or taking part in the expository talk session we expect to have a limited amount of travel grants available.

### JMM (continued)

maintaining a wiki page for the meetings, The wiki page contains the overall schedule along with a daily schedule of events. In addition, there will be other pages discussing things to see and do in San Francisco along with travel and hotel arrangements. There is also a facebook group for the meeting simply entitled Joint Mathematics Meetings.

The wiki can be found at [www.jointmathmeetings.org](http://www.jointmathmeetings.org)

## MAA Math Classifieds, a no fee job site

The Mathematical Association of America is the home of MAA Math Classifieds, a new online job site for math students whether at the Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD level.

The site, available through the MAA Online, will be more than a listing of want ads.

Job candidates will, for free, be able to fill out an anonymous resume telling possible employers about their education, interests, and job requirements. Seekers can also peruse the ads put up by employers and electronically apply for positions. Jobs can be sorted by type, keyword, or location.

Employers, for a small fee, will place their advertisement and be able to search through resumes. This will enable them to find the perfect match and contact the prospective employee.

Jobs will be listed from throughout the United States and beyond. They will be in

industry, teaching, university (tenure-track and postdoctoral) and include full-time, part-time, and summer jobs.

So keep an eye on the MAA homepage ([www.maa.org](http://www.maa.org)), and join in on MAA Math Classifieds to see where you can go.

## Excerpts from Articles You May Have Missed

The MAA publishes three journals (The American Mathematical Monthly, Mathematics Magazine, and The College Math Journal), one news magazine (MAA FOCUS), and one magazine (Math Horizons). These contain articles which will interest you as a student, teacher, and a mathematician.

Here we wish to highlight some recent articles.

*A good mathematical joke is better, and better mathematics, than a dozen mediocre papers.*  
-J.E. Littlewood

### Teaching Time Savers: Using Checklists in Project Assessment

In my undergraduate teaching, I have used a variety of individual and group projects to provide students with opportunities to explore relevant topics not explicitly discussed in class. Some topics dig deeper into course concepts, while others examine areas which extend the class syllabus.

Over the years, these projects have provided students with experience in researching topics and communicating technical analysis in oral and written fashions. Project reports, however, have been a considerable challenge to assess, especially

given their qualitative aspects. I have found this challenge becomes less formidable when I describe in checklist form the areas of emphasis of my evaluation.

(Teaching Time Savers is a regular column appearing in MAA FOCUS. This article was written by George Ashline of Saint Michael's College.)

### A Survey of Euler's Constant

The mathematical constant  $\gamma = 0.5772156\dots$  known as Euler's constant, is not as well known as its cousins  $\pi$ ,  $e$ ,  $i$ , but is still important enough to warrant serious consideration in the circles of applied mathematics,

calculus, and number theory.

Our aim in this article is to present a survey of  $\gamma$  that is both manageable by, and enlightening to, those who favor mathematics at the undergraduate level. To try and follow in the footsteps of the big boys  $\pi$  and  $e$  is quite a chore, but this brief historical description of  $\gamma$  and colorful portfolio of applications and surprising appearances in a multitude of settings is both impressive and mathematically educational.

(This article was written by Thomas P. Dence of Ashland University and Joseph B. Dence of St. Louis, Mo. It appeared in the October 2009 issue of Mathematics Magazine.)

## Help With The Two-Body Problem

The Two-Body Problem concerns two committed professionals, whether or not married, who are trying to find employment matching their education and interests within a close geographic area. The following list of web sites is from an article on the two-body problem written by Edward Aboufadel of Grand Valley State University.

[www.physics.wm.edu/dualcareer.html](http://www.physics.wm.edu/dualcareer.html)

[www.insidehighered.com/career/seekers](http://www.insidehighered.com/career/seekers)

[www.phds.org/jobs/the-two-body-problem/](http://www.phds.org/jobs/the-two-body-problem/)

[www.sigmod.org/record/issues/0306/D9-C2.two-body.pdf](http://www.sigmod.org/record/issues/0306/D9-C2.two-body.pdf)

[www.stanford.edu/group/gender/ResearchPrograms/DualCareer/DualCareerFinal.pdf](http://www.stanford.edu/group/gender/ResearchPrograms/DualCareer/DualCareerFinal.pdf)