POM SIGMAA

Philosophy of Mathematics Special Interest Group of the MAA

Officers

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In this issue

From the Chair

Bonnie Gold, chair, POMSIGMAA

Greetings at the end of a very difficult year. Hopefully by this time next year, we'll all be much closer to our normal activities, but the next six months are expected to continue to be difficult. MathFest 2020, as you know, was cancelled, and the last January joint meeting that the MAA will participate in is going to be all virtual. One good decision they made was to have events on Mountain Standard Time, rather than east-coast time as originally scheduled. But there will be many fewer talks and events than there usually are, and disappointingly little philosophy of mathematics. In particular, there won't be a POMSIGMAA invited address – the first person we invited never responded, and by the time we would have moved on, the meeting had gone virtual. There will be a POMSIGMAA session, but unfortunately just two speakers, though those talks look interesting. And our business meeting will be virtual but prior to JMM.

One good aspect of the pandemic forcing us to interact virtually has been the availability of good talks on the philosophy of mathematics via Zoom and other online platforms. The Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Mathematics (CSHPM) has offered zoom talks every 2-4 weeks, and almost half of those have been philosophically oriented. (I've been sending out notices of them on our listserv, now on MAA Connect.) And the Midwest PhilMath Workshop this year was online (sponsored by the Philosophy of Mathematics Association), as was the Twelfth French PHILMAT Workshop (FPMW 12), November 5 – 13.

We've had several positive responses to holding the business meeting virtually, and so we will consider doing that permanently, which would allow members who normally don't attend national meetings to participate. And we are investigating having invited talks that way as well.

The AMS has offered that we can continue to hold our contributed paper sessions at JMM if we wish (but now they will be called AMS Special Sessions). Fortunately, AMS Special Sessions use the 30-minutes between talks framework that we've had to fight for in MAA contributed paper sessions (which are usually just 20 minutes apart). We are looking into proposing such a session and will discuss it briefly at the business meeting.

POMSIGMAA came through its review by the Committee on SIGMAAs with flying colors – we were commended on the fine job we're doing. But I hope to get started, once this infernal pandemic is over, with some of the items members have requested, such as an annotated bibliography.

My term as chair ends at the end of January, and Jeff Buechner will become the new chair (and I'll be "past-chair" for a year). I do plan to continue to be involved in POMSIGMAA.

Virtual Business Meeting

Since we can't hold our POMSIGMAA business meeting in person, and the rules at JMM this year say we can't hold a business meeting there at all because we don't have a guest speaker this year, the executive board has decided to hold the business meeting via Zoom. The information on how to do this is below. We chose the time to be reasonable for all US regions: it will be 1 p.m. Eastern time, which translates to 10 a.m. Pacific time, and of course, the middle of the country at relevant times in between. All POMSIGMAA members are encouraged to participate. Since the MAA will no longer allow us to hold business meetings at JMM, we may make this our permanent method of meeting. Hopefully it will allow POMSIGMAA members who don't attend the national meetings to participate in the direction of our SIGMAA.

When: Jan 4, 2021 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://maa.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcuf--vqD4iHtyVdCyqRpqIf2taoVX7MgdM

A Philosophy of Math guide to the Virtual Joint Math Meetings Online, January 6-9, 2021

POM SIGMAA will again be at the virtual Joint Math Meetings on January 6-9, 2021. We will not have an invited speaker this time, but we will have a contributed paper session.

Contributed Paper Session

Wednesday January 6, 2021, 2:15 p.m.-2:50 p.m.
MAA Contributed Paper Session on The Philosophy of Mathematics, in Memory of Reuben Hersh
Organizers: Jeff Buechner, Sally Cockburn, and Kevin Iga

2:15 p.m. EST   1163-I5-1156   Rachel Rupnow, Eric Johnson, Algebraists' Metaphors for Sameness: Philosophies, Variety, and Commonality.

2:35 p.m. EST   1163-I5-1276   Thomas Drucker, Why Is There a Question About Why There Is Philosophy of Mathematics At All?

In addition, there appear to be a number of sessions and talks that relate to philosophy of mathematics at the JMM. Without any guarantee of completeness, here are some we found:

Wednesday January 6, 2021, 9:00 a.m.-10:55 a.m.
MAA Contributed Paper Session on Incorporating Realistic Applications of Mathematics Through Interdisciplinary Collaborations, I

10:20 a.m. EST   1163-A5-221   Deborah C. Arangno, An Application of Mathematical Structures to a Philosophical Debate.

Saturday January 9, 2021, 8:00 a.m.-11:50 a.m., 1:00 p.m.-5:50 p.m.
AMS Special Session on History of Mathematics, II and III

9:00 a.m. EST   1163-01-682   Ellen Abrams, 'Logical Fate' and 'Intellectual Freedom': Cassius Keyser and the Humanism of Mathematics.

9:30 a.m. EST   1163-01-158   David E. Dunning, "Essentially Physical": Deduction, Writing, and the Reflexive Turn in Modern Logic.

4:30 p.m. EST   1163-01-919   Thomas Drucker, Bounded in a Nutshell of Straightedge and Compass.

CSHPM/SCHPM and BSHM joint meeting

The Joint BSHM-CSHPM/SCHPM Conference "People, Places, Practices" has been rescheduled for July 12-14, 2021. Additional details will be posted as soon as they are available.

New Website

POMSIGMAA has a new look to its website at http://sigmaa.maa.org/pom/ which should be more intuitive to navigate. The website will have upcoming events as well as abstracts (and slides, when available) from past talks.

Calendar of upcoming events:

Jan. 4, 2021: POM SIGMAA Business Meeting

Jan. 6-9, 2021: Virtual Joint Math Meetings

July 12-14, 2021: Joint BSHM-CSHPM/SCHPM Conference "People, Places, Practices", University of St. Andrews, Scotland.