



POMSIGMAA Newsletter

Fall-Winter 2015

Greetings from the Executive Board of POMSIGMAA, the Special Interest Group of the Mathematical Association of America for the Philosophy of Mathematics. If you have items to include in the newsletter – interesting events coming up in the philosophy of mathematics, for instance – please contact our new Public Information Officer, Kevin Iga, kevin.iga@pepperdine.edu.

Results of POMSIGMAA election

In the elections just concluded, Carl Behrens was elected Chair-Elect, Bonnie Gold was elected Program Director, and Kevin Iga was elected Public Information Officer. Congratulations to all three, who take office after the winter Joint Meetings. Thank you to all who cast your ballots, and to our Past Chair, Dan Slougher, whose term ends after these meetings. *We'd like to get more POMSIGMAA members involved in the SIGMAA – please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Executive Board if you're interested in getting involved. We don't want it to be a small closed group! But if no one volunteers, it ends up that way. So please consider getting involved: it doesn't take a huge amount of time.*

POMSIGMAA at JMM 2015

Since there wasn't a newsletter this past summer, just a note that at last year's joint meetings POMSIGMAA sponsored a contributed paper session, "Discovery and Insight in Mathematics", organized by Dan Slougher and Bonnie Gold. The topic drew enough interest from contributors that we had two sessions, with a total of 11 speakers (though one had to withdraw due to illness). Matt Jones, of California State University Dominguez Hills, gave the POMSIGMAA Invited Address, "Mathematical Authority and Inquiry-Based Learning."

POMSIGMAA at MathFest 2015

MathFest 2015 was the celebration of the Centennial of the MAA. Due to the historic nature of the meeting, it was joint with the Canadian Society for the History and

Philosophy of Mathematics, and the British Society for the History of Mathematics. POMSIGMAA and HOMSIGMAA helped organize the sessions that ran throughout the meeting. In particular, there was a special session on the philosophy of mathematics on Thursday afternoon, with 5 speakers scheduled (although one did not appear), followed by the POMSIGMAA Invited Address given by John Burgess, of Princeton University, on "What are mathematical objects, and who cares?" See our web page for more information on these talks.

Upcoming POMSIGMAA activities

POMSIGMAA at JMM 2016

At JMM 2016 in Seattle, Washington, January 6 – 9, POMSIGMAA will have a contributed paper session on the morning of January 7 on "Using Philosophy to Teach Mathematics", organized by Carl Behrens and Dan Sloughter, with seven scheduled speakers. Then, late that afternoon we will have our usual reception and business meeting, followed by our Invited Address by your humble (?) current Public Information Officer, Bonnie Gold, speaking on "Is school mathematics 'real mathematics'?"

Abstract: One objection mathematicians often have to the work of philosophers of mathematics is that they don't ever discuss "real" mathematics. Many philosophers don't know mathematics beyond the school level (arithmetic and geometry); or if they know any advanced mathematics, it's often logic or set theory, which one can argue are somewhat anomalous. I've been interested for many years in trying to answer "what is mathematics?" by looking at topics that are on the boundary - some would say they're mathematics, others would say they're not really mathematics. So I'd like to consider one such topic: is school mathematics "real mathematics" (as in David Corfield's *Towards a Philosophy of Real Mathematics*, or as what each of us means by the term)?

Activities at future meetings

MathFest 2016 will be in Columbus, OH August 3-6, 2016. Stewart Shapiro, of the Philosophy Department at Ohio State, has agreed to be our invited speaker. Date and title to be announced soon on our web page.

The 2017 joint AMS/MAA meetings will be in Atlanta, GA January 4-7. We are proposing a contributed paper session on "Do Mathematicians Really Need Philosophy?" (proposed by Carl Behrens), and have not yet invited a speaker – so if you have any suggestions, please contact our incoming Program Chair, Bonnie Gold, bgold@monmouth.edu.

See the Activities and Upcoming Events page at sigmaa.maa.org/pom/PomSigmaa/POMactivities.html for updates.

Other events of interest to the Philosophy of Mathematics Community

The Institut Henri Poincaré in Paris is currently running a regular [Seminar on Epistemology and History of Mathematical Ideas](#), with several upcoming talks having a significant amount of philosophical content: on January 27, 2016, Michel Serfati on the topic "*Symbolisme et invention en mathématiques. Le schéma de 'permanence - extension'*"; on February 3, Axelle Hadjoui on the topic "*Écrire la mathématique*"; on February 10, Pierre Lochak on the topic "*Quelques considérations historico-philosophiques sur la césure continu/discret.*"

The CSHPM/SCHPM will be holding its 2016 Annual Meeting at the [University of Calgary](#) in conjunction with the [2016 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences](#). The meeting will be held Sunday through Tuesday, May 29-31, 2016. The Special Session topic for the meeting will be "Mathematics and Logic in the 19th and 20th Centuries." The Kenneth May Lecturer will be Dr. Jamie Tappenden (Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan). The [Call for Papers for the 2016 Annual Meeting](#) is now available. Please note that the deadline for submission of paper titles and abstracts is February 1, 2016.

Other news of interest to the Philosophy of Mathematics Community

Since POMSIGMAA was started, two new organizations devoted to the philosophy of mathematics have been started. One is the Association for the Philosophy of Mathematical Practice, APMP, with web page <http://institucional.us.es/apmp/index.htm>. It had its third international meeting November 2-4, 2015, at the Institute Henri Poincaré in Paris, France. The other is the Philosophy of Mathematics Association (PMA), with web page <http://philosophyofmath.org/>. It usually meets along with the Midwest PhilMath Workshop.

From Satish Bhatnagar, University of Nevada, Las Vegas: The ***Converging Matherticles: Mathematical Reflections, Volume II*** was published in June, 2015. The first volume was published in 2010. A total of seventy-seven Reflections written through 2012, are distributed over three sections: Teaching Prism, Contemporary Scenarios, and Assortment of Reflections. They are drawn from classrooms to conferences to general observations. The following Reflections have a touch of 'deeper' thinking: Broccolis, Carrots and Mathematics; A 4-dimensional Calisthenic; Culture Affects Creativity; Humanizing Mathematics; Mathematics and Religion; A Slice of Relativity-Science-Divinity; A Mathematical Touch; A Truce with a Book. The paperback, in 6"x9" size, has 246 pages, and is available from Trafford and Amazon.

Communications

Please be sure that the e-mail address the MAA has for you is current. We send out a newsletter once a year, but beyond that all communication is electronic. To receive communication about upcoming events and elections, but not be on the list serve, contact our incoming Public Information Officer (Kevin Iga, kevin.iga@pepperdine.edu).

Finding POMSIGMAA's Web Page

As of 2011, POMSIGMAA's web page moved to the MAA's site. The page is sigmaa.maa.org/pom and can also be accessed from the MAA's homepage by clicking on SIGMAAs.

Current Officers of POMSIGMAA:

Chair (through 1-17, then 1 year as past-chair) Thomas Drucker, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, druckert@uww.edu

Past Chair (through 1-16) Daniel Slougher, Furman University, dan.slougher@furman.edu

Program Director (through 1-16) Carl Behrens, Alexandria, VA, behrenscarl@yahoo.com

Secretary (through 1-18) Mike Scudder, MicroTools, Inc., Simsbury, CT, scudder_mike@yahoo.com

Treasurer (through 1-17) James Henderson, Penn State University, jrh66@psu.edu

Public Information Officer (through 1-16) Bonnie Gold, Monmouth University, bgold@monmouth.edu