



POMSIGMAA Newsletter

Spring-Summer 2010

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 the Public Information Officer, Bonnie Gold, bgold@monmouth.edu.

Communications

Please be sure that the e-mail address the MAA has for you is current, and that it is the one you want to get information from POMSIGMAA via. We send out a newsletter once a year, but beyond that all communication is electronic. If you want to receive communication about upcoming events and elections, but not be on the list serve for discussions on the philosophy of mathematics, you just need to let the Public Information Officer (currently Bonnie Gold, bgold@monmouth.edu) know.

POMSIGMAA's Web Page has moved

As of this summer, POMSIGMAA's web page has moved to the MAA's site. This should simplify the transitions, as one Public Information Officer replaces another, as well as ensure a dependable home for it. The page is now sigmaa.maa.org/pom and can also be accessed from the MAA's homepage by clicking on SIGMAAs.

POMSIGMAA at the MathFest 2010

POMSIGMAA had its annual summer invited address and reception. The speaker was Wilfried Sieg, in the Department of Philosophy at Carnegie Mellon University. He spoke on "Structural Proof Theory: Uncovering capacities of the mathematical mind." For those of you who missed his talk, both the text of his talk and his PowerPoint slides are available as links from the POMSIGMAA "Activities and Upcoming Events" webpage.

Upcoming POMSIGMAA activities

January 6 - 9, 2011, Joint Mathematics meetings in New Orleans, LA

POMSIGMAA will have its annual business meeting, reception, and invited address, which will be given by Keith Devlin of the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University.

There will also be a contributed paper session, "Philosophy of Mathematics in Teaching and Learning", organized by Dan Slougher (dan.slougher@furman.edu) and Martin Flashman. **Deadline for submitting an abstract: September 21, at <http://www.ams.org/cgi-bin/abstracts/abstract.pl>.**

Description: Mathematicians tend not to think about philosophical issues while teaching. Yet we are making ontological and epistemological commitments in much of what we do in the classroom. Every time we use a proof by induction or contradiction, discuss the existence or non-existence of a mathematical object, or refer to the discovery or creation of some piece of mathematics, we are endorsing some philosophical view of our subject.

The focus of this session is on the recognition and use of the philosophy of mathematics in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Can we understand mathematics without a philosophical context? Papers are encouraged to address questions such as: What philosophical issues (such as the nature of mathematical objects, the method of mathematical proof, and the nature of mathematical knowledge) should be treated in a mathematics course? How? In which course(s)? In what ways does the consideration of philosophical issues enhance a mathematics, or mathematics related, course? What does a learner gain by contact with issues from the philosophy of mathematics?

Other papers of a philosophical nature will be considered for inclusion as time permits.

Activities at future meetings

August 4-6, 2011 MathFest in Lexington, KY

We do expect to have an invited speaker and reception, but not details are available yet.

January 4 – 7, 2012 joint AMS/MAA meetings in Boston, MA

POMSIGMAA has requested an invited paper session (we're hoping for a joint AMS/MAA session) for this meeting, given the large number of philosophers of mathematics in the Boston area; we are awaiting word.

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

Other events of interest to the Philosophy of Mathematics Community

October 23 - 24, 2010, the eleventh annual Midwest PhilMath Workshop (MWPMW 11), will be held at Notre Dame. More information should be available shortly linked to the department web page, <http://philosophy.nd.edu/>. As usual, the plan is to schedule a full day of talks and discussions for Saturday and a half day for Sunday. Also as usual, there will be a workshop dinner Saturday evening. If you would like to give a talk, you should email a pdf of your talk or substantial summary to Paddy Blanchette (blanchette.1@nd.edu), Tim Bays (bays.5@nd.edu), Curtis Franks (cfranks@nd.edu) and Mic Detlefsen (mdetlef1@nd.edu) by September 1st. as once again this year. Please contact the workshop manager, Mrs. Harriet Baldwin (baldwin.1@nd.edu), with any questions you may have concerning rooms, meals, etc. She has booked a block of rooms for the workshop. Since there are other conferences going on the same weekend, demand for rooms may be high and it would thus be a good idea to reserve a room with Harriet **as soon as possible**. Please also indicate to her whether you will be there for dinner Saturday evening, and let her know if you have any special dietary requirements. She can also point you to pertinent travel information, maps, etc.

November 27 - 28, 2010, a symposium to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* will be held at Trinity College, Cambridge (England). Principal speakers will be Robert Constable, Michael Potter, Mohan Ganesingalam, John Harrison, Randall Holmes, Ivor Grattan-Guinness, and Fairouz Kamareddine. As can probably be discerned from the list of speakers, this meeting is intended to address a broad range of interests: history, foundational mathematics, philosophy, type theory and mechanical theorem-proving. People wishing to offer talks - as well as people who might wish to attend or merely want more information - are encouraged to contact the organisers: Thomas Forster, tf@dpmms.cam.ac.uk, Peter Smith, peter_smith@me.com, and Nik Sultana, nik.sultana@cl.cam.ac.uk. The web page for the symposium is <http://www.srcf.ucam.org/principia/>.

December 4 - 5, 2010, [the Canadian Mathematical Society Winter Meeting](#) will take place at the [University of British Columbia](#) in Vancouver, British Columbia. The meeting will include a session on *History and Philosophy of Mathematics*.

Current Officers of POMSIGMAA:

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Chair-Elect (through 1-11, then 2 years as chair)

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