

The Almagest

The bi-weekly newsletter of the Alma College Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Your trusted source for news.

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September 13, 2019



Welcome Dr. Lisa Kaylor

The Math & Computer Science department is delighted to welcome **Dr. Lisa Kaylor**. Dr. Kaylor is a new professor of mathematics.

As a new member of the Mathematics and Computer Science department, I would like to introduce myself! My name is Lisa Kaylor, and I am excited to be joining this department as an Assistant Professor of Mathematics. I received my Ph. D. this past May from Wesleyan University in Connecticut. Originally, I am from western Pennsylvania and obtained my undergraduate degree in 2013 from Westminster College, a small liberal arts school near where I grew up. My research interests include various topics in number theory. I have heard (and continue to hear) many wonderful things about the students of Alma College and look forward to engaging with you all in class or otherwise! ~ *Dr. Kaylor*



Welcome Dr. Scott Dexter

The Math & Computer Science department is also delighted to welcome **Dr. Scott Dexter**. Dr. Dexter is a new professor of computer science.

I was raised in Alma, and took my first college-level math and computer science courses here at Alma College. Since then, I've studied at Denison University (in Ohio) and the University of Michigan, and worked over 20 years as a professor of computer science at Brooklyn College in New York City. I have several different scholarly interests, and I really love to collaborate, so I'm looking forward to working with both faculty and students here. What I did this summer: besides moving, my wife, Amy, and I spent some time in London and Manchester—she teaches theater history at the University of Michigan, so she was gathering material for her next project (plays “starring” dogs in the 1800s), and I was looking at archival material from the first production of the play R.U.R. (which gave us the word “robot”). Ask me about the history of artificial humans! ~ *Dr. Dexter*



Fall Colloquium Schedule

Make room in your schedule for the Math & CS Colloquium. There will be six talks this term. Each talk begins at 4pm; location TBA.

- Sept. 19: **Dr. Brad Westgate** (Alma College)
- Oct. 1: **Dr. David Reimann** (Albion College)
- Oct. 17: **Dr. Steuard Jensen** (Alma College)
- Oct. 29: **Dr. Carl Lee** (Central Michigan U.)
- Nov. 13: **Dr. Garry Johns** (SVSU)
- Nov. 26: **Dr. Andrew Thall** (Alma College)

Taco Party – September 16th

All computer science and math students are invited to the annual taco party on **Monday, September 16th** at Dr. Thall's house. This is always a great time of fabulous food, perplexing puzzles, and deep dialogue. The party starts at 5:00 p.m., but feel free to come a bit later if you have a class that meets in the late afternoon. Dr. Thall's house is at **516 Fairlane Dr.**



First Colloquium – Thursday, Sept. 19th

Our first colloquium of the year will be a presentation by **Dr. Brad Westgate**, assistant professor of mathematics at Alma College. He will discuss his project studying the trajectory of a chess player's Elo rating. The Elo rating is a measure of a chess player's skill. Dr. Westgate has developed a statistical model to investigate how a chess player's rating increases/decreases across the player's career. The model can answer questions like: "At what age does a player typically reach his/her peak rating?" and "What is the probability a young prodigy becomes a world championship contender?"

Dr. Westgate will also discuss the emerging field of data science and opportunities at Alma for students interested in data science, using the chess project as an example.

"Forecasting Chess Player Elo Ratings"

Date: **Thursday, September 19th**

Time: 4:00

Place: SAC 113

Refreshments at 3:50.

Dr. Molina is the Department Chair

Dr. Robert Molina has assumed the role of Math & C.S. Department chair this year, taking over for Dr. Dai, who is on sabbatical for the year. Please see Dr. Molina about declaring a math or C.S. major or minor, or if you have other questions about the Math and C.S. Department.

Where's Maple?

Maple 2016, the computer algebra system used in all sections of calculus, is located in the following labs:



SAC 212: 17 mac desktops (C.S. lab)

SAC 117: 16 mac desktops & 20 laptops

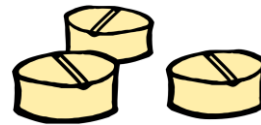
Kapp 160: 3 mac desktops & 10 laptops

Kapp 151: 8 mac desktops (P-Chem lab)

Puzzle of the Bi-week

You have contracted an extremely rare and potentially fatal illness. Fortunately, you have obtained some very rare pills that will keep you alive! Bottles marked A and B each contain 5 pills, and you must take exactly one A pill and one B pill each day for 5 days. If you alter this dosage in any way, then you will die!

Things go well for two days, but on the third day, after putting one of the A pills in your hand, you accidentally let two of the B pills slip into the same hand. To your horror, all three pills appear identical, and you can't distinguish the A pill from the B pills.



These pills are extremely rare and additional pills are unavailable. Is all hope lost? Is there a foolproof strategy to keep yourself alive?

A prize of **\$5.00** will be awarded to the 1st student who submits a correct solution to Dr. Molina.

Student assistant:	Brandon Hart
Faculty advisor:	Brad Westgate
Distribution:	Jackie Gage SAC 224

If you would like to submit an announcement or a short article, please send it via e-mail to Brad Westgate (westgatebs@alma.edu).



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