

The Almagest

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

Volume 4, No. 4

October 24, 2011

Alma College
Alma, MI 48801

Mathematics Colloquium

Tophier Goggin graduated from Williams College in 2002 with majors in Math and Chemistry. He then shifted gears to go to law school at Notre Dame, where he eventually graduated number one in his class. He is now back in Alma as "Mr. Small Town Lawyer," but also teaches part-time in our math & c.s. department while announcing high school football and basketball on the radio. He'll talk about how his math background both gave him an edge in law school (including examples of simple algebra problems that caused his classmates to hide under their desks) and still comes in handy in law practice and his many other day-to-day endeavors.

Random Walk?

How to Take Your Math Major to Law School and Announce Football in Your Spare Time

Presenter: **Mr. Topher Goggin**

Date: **Monday, October 31st**

Time: 4:00

Place: SAC 216

Refreshments at 3:50.

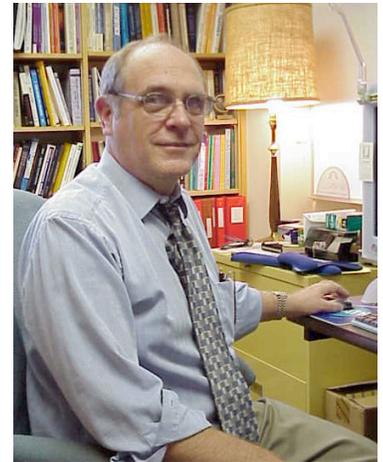
Computer Science Club

The Alma College Chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is now up and running! Computer Science majors and minors, New Media Studies students, and anyone with a passion for technology are invited to join us for exciting discussions about the tech world and lots of fun events. Coming soon, keep an eye out for Hacking Competitions and TED talks! Meetings

are every **Tuesday** at 6:30 pm in SAC 214, or visit ac.acm.org for more info! *Ryan Lennox*

Focus on Faculty: Dr. Mel Nyman

Thirty-one years ago, Dr. Melvin Nyman joined the teaching staff at Alma College. Born and raised on a farm near Big Rapids, Dr. Nyman is a graduate of Big Rapids High School in Big Rapids, Michigan. After high school, Dr. Nyman stayed close to home and pursued a chemistry major with a minor in mathematics at Ferris State. Once he was finished, Dr. Nyman took two years to get his master's degree from Michigan State University. Upon receiving his master's, he went back home and started teaching math at Ferris for two years until returning to East Lansing to complete his Ph.D. with an emphasis on advanced calculus and real analysis.



Although he has been published about 18 times in math journals about teaching math, grading trends, and modeling seaweed, Dr. Nyman still finds time to spend time with his wife, whom he's been married to for 46 years now, and to spoil his six grand-children (a hobby that he really enjoys). Along with family time, Dr. Nyman has a wood shop in his back yard and tinkers with carpentry in his free time. He also loves to cycle (about 800 miles this past summer) almost as much as he loves teaching calculus and linear algebra, classes he would love to see more faces in. *Jon Young*

Math Club

Some of us are interested in starting a math club at Alma College, and we were hoping that you would be interested too. We're going to have a meeting this **Wednesday**, the 26th at 7:30 in SAC 216 to discuss when we should have regular meetings and talk about what we want our math club to do. I hope to see everyone there!

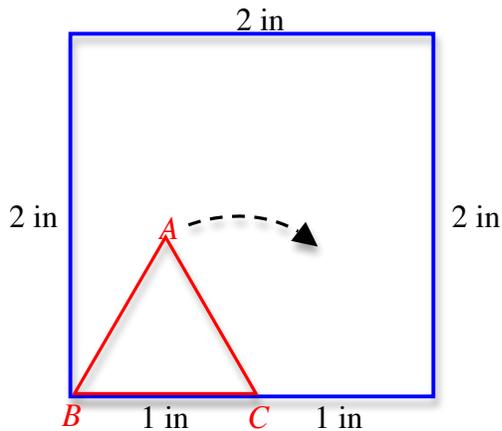
Ian Rhynard

Last Call for MATH Competition

If you enjoy solving math problems, then please consider participating in the 17th annual MATH Challenge, held on **Saturday, November 5th**. The MATH Challenge is a *team-oriented*, 3-hour exam consisting of ten interesting problems dealing with topics found in the undergraduate math curriculum. Teams consist of 2 or 3 students, and you'll take the exam on campus from 9:30 am to 12:30. You may form your own team or you can simply be placed on a team. Before the exam, you'll be provided with a "hearty breakfast" of waffles, bagels, donuts, and juice. If you're interested, please contact Professor Sipka. By the way, all participants will receive a *cool t-shirt*.

Solution to Previous Problem

If the triangle is rotated until the corners *A*, *B*, and *C* have returned to their *original positions*, what is the **total distance** travelled by the point *A*?



First year student **Charlie Stack** once again was the first to submit a correct solution. He claimed his prize of \$2.00 and leapt for joy. Charlie found that the total distance vertex *A* travels until it returns to its original position is $20\pi/3$ inches.

Alex Hegedus also submitted a correct solution.

Problem of the Bi-Week

The following equations are written in a special code where each digit represents some other digit. Your job is to break the code, assuming that each of the following equations is true in base ten arithmetic.

$$4 + 3 = 4$$

$$7 + 8 = 62$$

$$12 + 8 = 23$$

$$0 - 9 = 1$$

$$50 + 9 = 54$$

$$11 \times 1 = 55$$

A prize of **\$2.00** will be awarded to the **FIRST** student who provides a correct solution. See Prof. Sipka.

Math Help Hours

Monday through Thursday: 7-10 pm

SAC 216

Student assistant:	Jonathan Young
Faculty advisor:	Tim Sipka
Distribution:	Deb Smith

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