

# The Almagest

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

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Alma College  
Alma, MI 48801

## Math Colloquium

Towers Watson is a leading global professional services firm that helps organizations improve performance through effective people, risk and financial management. **Megan Foster**, an Associate of the Society of Actuaries and an Alma College alumna, will discuss her role as a retirement actuarial consultant at Towers Watson. She will give an overview of the profession, including background on retirement plans, examples of consulting projects, and information for students interested in pursuing this career path. Please come and learn more about this interesting and rewarding career.

### *“Mathematics and Actuarial Consulting”*

Presenter: Megan Foster

Date: **Monday, October 18<sup>th</sup>**

Time: 3:40

Place: SAC 216

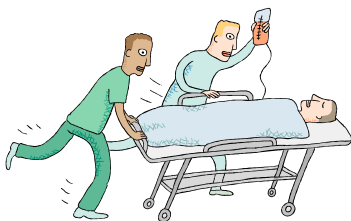
*Refreshments at 3:30.*

## Math Help Center Open for Business

Where can I go when I'm struggling with a math problem? Try the **Math Help Center**. It's a walk-in clinic for anyone wrestling with math problems. Just show up in **SAC 215**, and a capable math tutor will assist you. The hours are:

Monday, Tuesday, & Thursday: 7-10 pm

Wednesday: 8:30-10 pm



## Thank You

I really appreciated the nice turnout for Dr. Mark Bollman's talk on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for supporting our colloquium series and for contributing to a *culture of curiosity*.

## Presidential Debate Video...Really

Who should be the next president of the United States of Mathematics? Should it be the figure-eight knot, representing fresh new mathematics and the changes we believe in, or should it be the Euclidean algorithm, representing the needed stability that comes from the traditional roots of mathematics? You may be able to decide after watching the humorous debate between Colin Adams (figure-8 knot) and Thomas Garrity (Euclidean algorithm). We'll be showing this 45-minute video on **Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>**, at 4:00 in SAC 216. You'll laugh a lot, and you'll learn something about two important mathematical topics. And as always, there will be refreshments.



## MATH Challenge

Problem-solvers: *Your department needs you!* You are invited to participate in the 16<sup>th</sup> annual MATH Challenge, held on **Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**. The MATH Challenge is a 3-hour exam consisting of ten interesting problems. Teams consist of 2 or 3 students, and you'll take the exam from 9:30 to 12:30. Before the exam, you'll have a hearty breakfast. If you're interested, please contact Professor Sipka.

## An Interesting Theorem

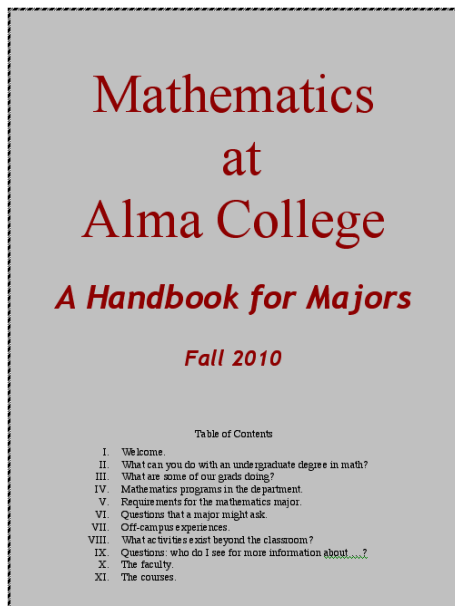
Here's a very interesting theorem that you're unlikely to find in a math text.

Theorem: *All positive integers are interesting.*

Proof: Assume that not all positive integers are interesting. Then there must be a smallest non-interesting positive integer. But wait, that's interesting. So we have a contradiction. ■

## Do You Have Your Handbook?

Don't go through life as an Alma College math major without a copy of the math handbook! This eight-page document holds the answers to every question you could possibly ask. You can get your copy from any mathematics professor.



## Solution to the Last Puzzle

The last puzzle asked you to determine the pattern within the table of numbers and fill in the last column. Well, there were actually three different patterns in the table, and they were written diagonally. One of the patterns was the Fibonacci sequence, which I've identified below.

1	3	7	3	11	13	13	19	19	55	<b>31</b>
2	5	2	7	11	8	17	17	34	29	<b>23</b>
3	1	5	9	5	13	15	21	23	21	<b>89</b>

## Puzzle of the Bi-week

If one-and-a-half woodchucks can chuck one-and-a-third cords of wood in one-and-a-fourth hours, how many cords of wood can one woodchuck chuck in one hour?



Student assistants: Matt Mansell =  $M^2$   
Stephen Sorensen =  $S^2$   
Distribution: Deb Smith  
Faculty advisor: Tim Sipka

*If you would like to submit an announcement or a short article, please send it via e-mail to Matt Mansell (11mgmans) or Tim Sipka (sipka).*