

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

Juniors: Time to think about an REU

Have you ever contemplated doing graduate study in mathematics or computer science? Would you like to “test the water” and see if grad school might be the right thing for you? If you’re a *junior* wrestling with these questions, then please consider applying for a summer REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates). This is a great opportunity to spend 7 or 8 weeks of the summer working on some interesting project in mathematics or computer science. And to make it even more attractive, you’ll receive a stipend of approximately **\$2500** in addition to free room and board. There are numerous REU’s dealing with a wide variety of topics such as mathematical biology, knot theory, statistical genetics, cryptography, machine learning, actuarial science, combinatorics, and graph theory. For more information, check out the following web site: www.ams.org/employment/reu.html

Visit Auto-Owners Insurance

Auto-Owners is hosting an Information Technology & Actuarial Career Opportunity Day on **February 4th, 2011**. The company is inviting all juniors, seniors, and recent graduates majoring in Computer Science, Information Systems, Actuarial Science, Mathematics, and Computer Engineering to come and see how their degree is utilized in the insurance industry.

Location: 6101 Anacapi Blvd. Lansing, MI

Date: **Friday, Feb. 4, 2011**

Registration: 9:30-10:00

Event: 10:00-2:00 (Free Lunch)

Letters of Recommendation

At this time of the year many students ask professors to write letters of recommendation. If you’re planning to do this, here are a few helpful suggestions.

1. Ask professors who know you well academically. They will be most able to identify your strengths and weaknesses, to compare your abilities to those of your peers, and to defend your natural ability despite that low grade you may have received in a course.
2. Make an appointment with each professor to discuss your application. Simply leaving a note or sending an e-mail is discourteous and dangerous.
3. Give your professors ample time to write the letter. I like to have at least two weeks to complete the task.
4. Provide your professors with a short and informal résumé. This may include a summary of your grades, goals, honors or awards, math related activities (*e.g.* R.E.U.’s), and any relevant work experience.

Important Dates for Seniors

Seniors: please mark the following dates on your calendars.

January 28: Topic of your presentation is due.

February 5: MFAT 8:30 a.m.

March 11: Your paper is due.

March 15: Presentations begin!

Math for America

Are you interested in teaching middle-school or high-school math? Then you might want to consider the Math for America teacher fellowship program. Here is a quick overview:

Five-year fellowship program in NYC, LA, San Diego, Salt Lake City, DC, and Boston. The first year is spent full-time at a university (Columbia, NYU, or Bard College in NY) earning a masters degree in secondary math education, and the next four years are spent teaching in that city.

Full scholarship and living stipends for all five years.

Large network of support, career development meetings, help with job placement, etc.

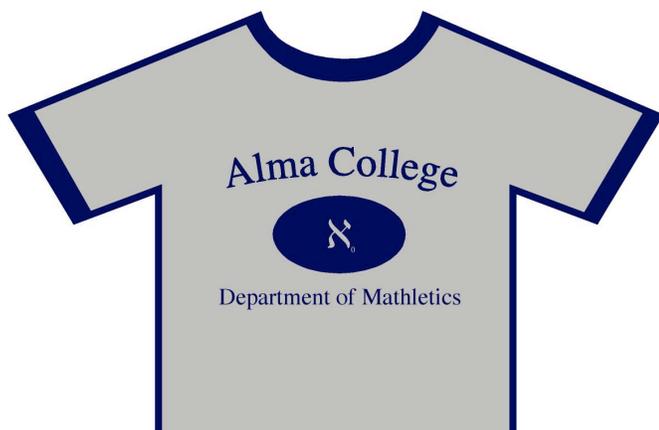
The deadline for applying is fairly soon. For more information, visit the Math for America website:

<http://www.mathforamerica.org/home>.

T-Shirts for Sale

I'll be placing an order for the t-shirt shown below on **Friday, February 4th**. If you'd like me to order one for you, please let me know before that date. The shirt is gray with navy blue trim around the neck and sleeves. The cost is \$10.

Prof. Sipka



Mathematical Miscellany

“If you want to inspire confidence, give plenty of statistics. It does not matter that they should be accurate, or even intelligible, as long as there is enough of them.” – Lewis Carroll

Puzzle of the Bi-week

What is the *last* digit of the following sum?

$$2^{2011} + 3^{2011}$$

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).