The Almagest

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

Volume 7, No. 11 March 16, 2015

Alma College
Alma, MI 48801

Senior Presentations Start on Tuesday!

The senior presentations begin on ***TUESDAY***, March 17th. Please show up and support your classmates. All presentations are held in SAC 113. They begin at 4:00 with refreshments at 3:50.

Tuesday, March 17th

Katie Krauss: *The Ballot Problem*

Justin Closs: *Computing with Infrared Photography*

Thursday, March 19th

Mallory Pruett: *Applications of Bayes' Theorem*

Tom Paron: *The Monty Hall Problem*

Tuesday, March 24th

Collin Lesko: *Cloud Storage and Internet Security*

Phil Ryskamp: *The Misaddressed Letters Problem*

Thursday, March 26th

Joonas Kotka: *Buffon's Needle Problem*

Emma Patmore: *Differences in Infinity*

Tuesday, March 31st

Ryan Malacina: *The Benefits of Open Source Software Both Today & in the Future*

Riley Kult: *Computational Psephology*

Senior Dinner on Tuesday, March 17th

Our annual dinner for senior mathematics and computer science majors will be held on **Tuesday, March 17th** at 5:30 in the Heather Room. Our dinner has always been a fun event with lots of good food, laughter, and reminiscing. So, please make sure you attend.

Fall Term 2015 Registration Is Here

It might be helpful to know what *upper-level* courses are offered next term and when they'll be offered again.

		Next time offered
MTH 210	*Multivariable Calc*	Fall 2016
MTH 310	*Linear Algebra*	Fall 2016
MTH 341	*Probability & Statistics 1*	Fall 2017
MTH 323	*Complex Variables*	Fall 2017
CSC 230	*Software Engineering*	Fall 2015
CSC 335	*Computer Graphics*	Fall 2017
CSC 420	*Operating Systems*	Fall 2017

New Time for Problem Solving

There's a one-credit, first-seven-weeks course that is hiding in the fall schedule of math courses. It's **MTH 180** (Problem Solving), and the course will meet on ***Thursdays*** from 2:30 to 3:50. Its main purpose is to prepare students for our big math competition that takes place in early November. So, if you have room in your schedule and an interest in solving math problems, please consider signing up for MTH 180.

The Math Club

The Math Club meets on **Tuesday evenings** at 9pm in DOW 132. All lovers of mathematics are encouraged to attend. Approximately 6π students showed up at 9:26:53am last Saturday to watch Prof. Sipka be pelted with pies. *See the photo on the next page.*

Pi Day Extravaganza

As any self-respecting mathematician knows, this past Saturday (3/14/15 at 9:26.53am) marked an extra special Pi Day, capturing 9 decimal places of the beloved irrational number. Celebrated by Alma College's Math Club with a variety of pi-themed games and treats such as a pi-athalon, Ultimate Frisbee, and delicious pie, this Pi Day was commemorated by mathematicians and fans of the never-ending number across America. Celebrations included a Pi-K race in Chicago, where bakeries also offered $3.14 pieces of pie, a dual celebration of Albert Einstein's birthday and pi at Princeton University with pie-eating and Albert Einstein look-a-like contests, pizza pie dough tossing at the San Francisco Exploratorium, and more. This year's applicants to MIT will even receive word of their acceptance at 9:23am Saturday. For those of you looking to extend the irrational exuberance, here are some fun pi facts.

1. Pi Day was officially recognized by the US House of Representatives in 2009.
2. The ancient Babylonians were some of the first to estimate the value of pi, approximating its value to 3.125.
3. An Egyptian scribe Ahmes recorded an even closer approximation of 3.141592 in 1650 B.C.
4. Even the Bible contains an estimation of Pi in 1 Kings 7:23 (it's 3 if you're interested).
5. The notation of π was not introduced until the 1700's. Before that, mathematicians used wordy descriptions such as "the quantity which, when the diameter is multiplied by it, yields that circumference."
6. Commanding a computer to calculate the last digit of Pi was used by Spock to defeat an evil computer in an episode of Star Trek.
7. π is the 16th letter of the Greek alphabet; p is the 16th letter of the English alphabet.

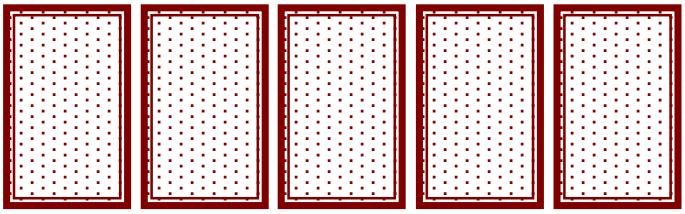
Facts courtesy of http://bit.ly/PAKHNE and http://bit.ly/1cnyROr . *Katie Krauss*

Math Team Set

On Saturday, March 28th, **Luke Bent**, **Jason McKelvey**, and **Dalton Potter** will be traveling to S.V.S.U. to participate in the *Lower Michigan Math Competition*. Good luck guys.

Puzzle of the Bi-week

Each card is covering up a positive number. The number written below each card is the ***product*** of all the numbers covered by all of the ***other*** cards. What numbers are covered up by the cards?



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

Student assistant:	Katie Krauss
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).