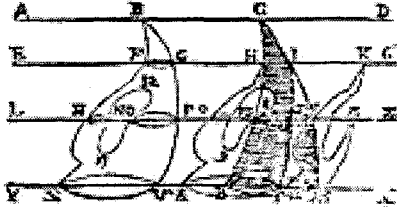


**BULLETIN**

**CSHPM**



**SCHPM**

November/novembre 2002

Number/le numéro 31

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Canadian Society for History of Mathematics  
and Philosophy of Mathematics

Société canadienne d'histoire et  
de philosophie des mathématiques

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ISSN 0835-5924

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Founded in 1974, the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Mathematics / Société canadienne d'histoire et de philosophie des mathématiques (CSHPM/SCHPM) promotes research and teaching in the history and philosophy of mathematics. Officers of the Society are:

*President:* **Glen van Brummelen**, Bennington College, VT 05201, USA, gvanbrum@bennington.edu

*President:* **Len Bergren**, Math Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, CA, bergren@sfu.ca

*Vice-President:* **Robert Bradley**, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY 11530, USA, bradley@adelphi.edu

*Secretary:* **Pat Allaire**, Dept. of Math., Queensborough C.C., Bayside, NY 11364 USA, pallaire@qcc.cuny.edu

*Treasurer:* **Roger Godard**, Kingston, ON K7M 1Y6, CA, godard-r@rmc.ca

*Archivist:* **Amy Shell-Gellasch**, Dept. of Mathematical Sciences, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY 10996-1905, USA, aa7423@usma.edu

### Members of Council

**Amy Ackerberg-Hastings**, Rockville, MD 20851, USA, aackerbe@erols.com

**Hardy Grant**, Ottawa, ON K2A 2J8, CA, hgrant@freenet.carleton.ca

**Israel Kleiner**, Dep. of Mathematics and Statistics, York University, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3, CA, kleiner@rogers.com

**Adrian Rice**, Randolph-Macon College, Dept. of Mathematics, Ashland, VA 23005, USA, arice4@psu.edu

The Society's Web Page ([www.chspm.org](http://www.chspm.org)) is maintained by **Robert Bradley**, Adelphi

University, Garden City, NY 11530, USA

The proceedings of the Annual Meeting are edited by **Antonella Cuppilari**, School of Science, Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, Erie, PA 16563, USA, axc5@iusb.edu

*New Members are most cordially welcome; please contact the Secretary.*

### President's Message

To begin with a confession, I should say that I had been somewhat dreading taking on the job as President. I quickly learned, however, that the Past-President and officers had so well organized things, and the present officers were so dedicated, that the Society almost runs on automatic pilot. We are indeed fortunate to have the officers we do, and they have made my job much easier.

One of the things I would like to do as President is to help develop a good working relationship with the Canadian Mathematical Society. There are a number of benefits that I think would accrue to us from this. In line with this I am happy to say that the CMS has accepted my suggestion about a history of math plenary speaker at its Winter Meetings for next year in Vancouver. As a result, they have invited Tom Archibald to address the 400 or so CMS members who attend these plenary sessions. This will do much to increase our visibility in a community that should, at the very least, be aware of our existence.

I also attended the recent meetings of the Canadian Mathematical Society in Ottawa where, with Tom Archibald, I met with Christiane Rousseau, the President of the CMS, and the other members of the CMS Mathematics Advancement Committee. We spoke to them about ways in which we might

help them achieve their aims of advancing mathematics in Canada and in which they might help us in ours. We made two main suggestions, the first being that our Society be given Observer status at the meetings of their Board and the second being that we take an active role in promoting sessions on the history of mathematics at meetings of the CMS. Tom and I were both very heartened by their enthusiastic response to both ideas. They told us that we should now regard ourselves as having Observer status and we would be welcome to send such a person to the CMS Board meetings in Edmonton in June. Tom and I both feel this is a good beginning and, since he is currently on the CMS Board, he has agreed to represent us at that meeting.

The Mathematics Advancement committee also seemed very receptive to our suggestion that one of the things the CSHPM could do for it is to provide the same level of professional expertise in vetting, and perhaps organizing, history sessions that number theorists, algebraists, etc. provide for sessions in their areas. Tom and I both believe that this kind of interaction with the CMS can only enhance the profession of the history of mathematics in Canada, and it seems as if it's something we should be doing. I am currently taking on the job of organizing sessions for the meetings of the CMS that SFU is hosting in Vancouver next December.

The CMS also asked us if we would consider meeting with them occasionally. I stress the last word, since it is not my intention to change the fact that most of the time we meet as we have in the past. In any case, this issue - as well as the details of the other two issues - is something that our own Council will need to discuss. I have already initiated an email discussion with my fellow council members on this issue, with a view to having some motions to bring to our

AGM when we meet in Halifax this year. If you have any thoughts on any of these matters, I or any other council member would be delighted to hear from you.

Although it is early in 2003 I hope your thoughts are turning to the end of May and our Halifax meetings. I hope all of you can attend and enjoy the program and special session that Chris Baltus and Tom Archibald are planning. I look forward to meeting all of you there, but in the meantime have a very Happy New Year.

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, May 25, 2002

The meeting, with 32 members in attendance, was called to order at 1:00 pm by Glen Van Brummelen, President.

1. Representatives of HSSFC visited the meeting, soliciting suggestions and offering assistance. They announced the locations for the next several meetings of HSSFC:

**2003** Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia

**2004** University of Manitoba

**2005** University of Western Ontario

**2006** York University

**2007** University of Saskatchewan

2. Jim Tattersall, Chair of the Nominating Committee announced the results of the election for the CSHPM/SCHPM Executive Council for 2002-2004. Twenty-three paper ballots and 20 e-mail ballots were cast. The final tallies are:

President	J.L. Berggren	42
Vice-President	Robert Bradley	42
Secretary	Pat Allaire	41
Treasurer	Roger Godard	41
Councilor	Amy Ackerberg- Hastings	41
Councilor	Hardy Grant	42
Councilor	Israel Kleiner	42
Councilor	Adrian Rice	41

3. The Secretary amended the minutes of the May 2001 Annual General Meeting as printed in the May 2002 Bulletin to delete an internal note in the item on the proposed dues increases. Motion: To approve the minutes as amended. Carried.
4. The President announced that there is a total of \$3500 available in travel funds.
5. Treasurer's Report: (Robert Thomas)
  - Correction to the Treasurers Report as printed in the May 2002 Bulletin: Replace the semicolons by minus signs in the Surplus/deficit in 2 places on page 6.  
Motion: To approve the corrected financial statement. Carried.
  - Robert noted that expenses exceeded income in 2001. This situation will be partly remedied by our charging members for the Proceedings.
  - The Treasurer provided a notice of motion to amend the Constitution to permit the Executive Council to determine which two of its members are to be signing officers. The formal motion will appear in the November Bulletin.
  - The Treasurer spoke of the purpose of the Ken May fund as being to fund the annual invited lecture. Although there is not enough in the fund to generate sufficient income at this time, he recommends that, nevertheless, the annual invited lecture be called the

Kenneth O. May lecture, effective this year. A motion was made to that effect. Carried.

6. President's Report: (Glen Van Brummelen)

Glen presented the memberships with the alternatives to be considered in planning for a joint meeting with BSHM:

- Time of year: Winter is difficult because of conflicts with Joint Meetings and the short intersession period in Canadian universities. Late July (suggested by BSHM) is the best time for obtaining on-campus housing in England.
- Year: 2003 is too soon, 2004 is not acceptable to BSHM, 2005 is most likely
- One meeting or two: If the meeting with BSHM is held in 2005, it is reasonable to have our regular annual meeting as part of HSSFC in addition, in part because of the convenient location of University of Western Ontario.
- Location: Cambridge, Greenwich, Oxford?

Discussion with BSHM will begin immediately.

- Next years meeting will be May 30-June 1, 2003, at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Amy Shell-Gellasch is the new Archivist. She will sort and organize the existing documents. As she determines which items (e.g. Bulletin issues) are missing, she will inquire of the membership. If anyone has relevant photos, Amy requests that a description be sent to her before mailing the photo.
- Individual papers from the Proceedings will be made available on-line to

members. Since the Proceedings is an internal document, a “gatekeeper” is required. Glen Van Brummelen will serve in this capacity.

- The Council recommended establishing a category of Undergraduate Associate in the Society, to heighten awareness of history of mathematics among undergraduates. These students would receive the Bulletin, on-line access to the Proceedings, and an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting, but would not count as “members” for assessment by HSSFC. Cost to the association is minimal, that of mailing the Bulletin. Perhaps 10-30 students will be involved. It was decided that faculty recommendation will be required. Motion: To establish the status of Undergraduate Associate as described. Carried.
- Rob Bradley provided an update on the new HOMSIGMAA (History of Mathematics Special Interest Group of the MAA). He described the HOMSIGMAA as complementary to the Society, although there is no formal connection; the former is more geared to teaching, while we are more research oriented. A philosophy of mathematics SIGMAA has been in preparation for some time, but the potential organizers declined to join with the history of mathematics SIGMAA. The HOMSIGMAA will hold its meeting at the Joint Meetings in January.
- The Proceedings book project may bifurcate into 2 separate volumes, one of scholarly papers (being worked on by Greg Moore for Springer) and the originally planned volume designed as a secondary resource for upper level undergraduate math courses.
- The President thanked session general session organizer Amy Shell-Gel-

lasch, local arrangements coordinator and Ken May session organizer Craig Fraser, numerical session organizer Roger Godard, keynote speaker Ivor Grattan-Guinness; session chairs Craig Fraser, Rob Bradley, John Glaus, Ed Sandifer, Hardy Grant, Pat Allaire, and Amy Shell-Gellasch; Executive Council members; Bulletin editors Tom Drucker and Sharon Kunoff; Proceedings editor Michael Kinyon; Webmaster Rob Bradley; the incoming Council.

7. Secretary’s Report: (Pat Allaire) Pat reported that there are 199 paid members for the year 2002.
8. Bulletin Editors’ Report: (Tom Drucker) Tom paid tribute to Sharon Kunoff who is retiring as an editor of the Bulletin. Eisso Atzema will assume the responsibility for the mechanical aspects of production and will investigate the feasibility and desirability of on-line production.  
Tom requested that members submit articles for future issues of the Bulletin as early as possible.
9. Proceedings Editor’s Report: The President reported that we are seeking a new editor for the 2002 Proceedings.
10. Webmaster’s Report: (Rob Bradley) Rob reminded the membership that because Adelphi University hosts the website at [www.cshpm.org](http://www.cshpm.org), the only cost to our organization is \$16/year to register the domain name. This arrangement, however, precludes on-line payment of membership fee.
11. Old business: none
12. New Business: none

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.

## Book Review

*Studies in History of Mathematics Dedicated to A. P. Youschkevitch* Edited by: Eberhard Knobloch, Jean Mawhin, and Serguei S. Demidov Proceedings of the XXth International Congress of History of Science, VOL XIII

*Studies in History of Mathematics Dedicated to A. P. Youschkevitch* is, like any conference proceedings, a compilation of papers based on talks presented at the twentieth International Congress of History of Science held in Lige, France in July 1999. Adolf Youschkevitch (1906-1993) contributed to the history of mathematics and science for the better part of a century. His over four hundred scholarly works span most branches of eighteenth century mathematics. The first article in the proceedings, written by Pierre Dugac, gives a broad overview of Youschkevitch's work.

The papers included in this volume are diverse, very diverse. First off, if you wish to hone your language skills, this is the book for you. The thirty-four papers are split almost equally between French and English, with a handful of German thrown in for good measure. The authors represented in this volume span the globe; from Brazil to Russia, Greece to Japan. In fact, only two of the authors are from North America (one each from the United States and Canada.) This diversity is wonderful, yet has its drawbacks. Many of the English language papers are translated by the authors themselves. The result is that many of these translations are poor, and at times confusing for the reader. (I also found a few too many typographical errors for a volume of this level.)

The diversity of the papers also means that the topics covered and the style of presenta-

tion is likewise diverse. To give a brief taste of the topics covered, the volume is broken into six sections: In Memory to Adolf P. Youschkevitch, Mathematics as a Cultural Strength, From Antiquity to the Classical Period, Probability Theory and its Applications, Mathematics in the 19th Century, and Mathematics in the 20th Century. The papers range from works that are written at a very high scholarly and philosophical level, which assume a vast body of knowledge in a specific field on the behalf of the reader, to those written in a broader style and provide enough background information to make them accessible to anyone with a general background in the history of mathematics or science. For this reason, there is most likely an article or two in this volume for everyone interested in the history of mathematics or science. However, very few will find several papers accessible to them.

I would like to close by mentioning three of the papers that I found enjoyable and that may be of interest to a wider audience. For those interested in early work in pedagogy and mathematics history, Sergio Nobre's Christian Wolff (1679-1754) and his contribution for the Mathematics Education is a very interesting article. In particular, Sergio focuses on Wolff's ideas on teaching methods and his evaluation of some early texts.

The Neapolitan School. Studying Pure Geometry in the Period of the Revolutions by Massimo Mazzotti is a wonderful read, mixing cultural and political history with the history of mathematics and science. For those of you that heard Massimo's talk in Toronto this spring, you are familiar with his work and enjoyable delivery, which comes through in this paper.

Finally, our own Roger Godard contributed a very nice piece entitled History of the least squares method and its links with the prob-

ability theory. This is a piece that provides good background as well as depth, and would be accessible to every one from students to scholars.

*Amy Shell-Gellasch, Archivist*

## Financial Statement

The following financial statement covers the period 5/28/2002 through 10/26/2002. The American and the Canadian accounts of the society each have their own column. The numbers listed are in American and Canadian dollars respectively.

	US Acc.	CA Acc.
<b>Credits</b>		
dues/subscr.	389.50	1275.17
HSSFC grant	-	250.00
May fund	-	40.00
TOTAL	389.50	1525.17
May fund		40.00
<b>Debits</b>		
Travel	1875.00	497.42
IHPST	-	64.16
Bulletin	368.96	-
HSSFC	-	935.84
TOTAL	2243.96	1497.42
NET	-1854.46	27.75
Balance	3939.16	5466.78
May fund	-	40.00

### To our members:

After consultation with the Federation of Social Sciences and Humanities, Canadian Airlines will offer a discount for airfares to the meeting. You should check the registration guide in January. Also I am pleased to say that we were able to reimburse totally requests for expenses of our members, which will not necessarily happen for future

meetings. In the future we strongly encourage our members to seek financial help from their institutions or the Government. Also I suggest that we transfer \$500CDN to the May Fund into bonds.

*Roger Godard, Treasurer*

## Web Note

In late 2000 I decided to organize all my papers and books on Medieval Islamic mathematics, so I wrote up a bibliography arranged by topic. I told Len Berggren that I had done this, and he responded, "I think there would be a lot of interest in your bibliography, especially once you've got a version of it that you're happy with." He suggested also that I put it on the web.

Well, I would only be happy with it if it were in some way comprehensive, so I set about finding all sources I could on my topic. I had to restrict it somehow, so I concentrated on works written in western European languages since 1950. Even now I still have a number of articles and books to enter, but it is nearly complete—or as complete as I am willing to make it.

I have put together an online bibliography of medieval Islamic mathematics available at

<http://facstaff.uindy.edu/~oaks/Biblio/Intro.htm>

So far 987 articles and over 250 books are listed by topic. I have restricted myself to works published since 1950 in western European languages. Reviews are also included.

Mathematics in medieval times included more or less the topics of the ancient quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. I have included all these,

as well as related fields like geography, astrology, algebra, etc. (Music is so far very underrepresented.)

Let me know if you have any comments or suggestions.

*Jeff Oaks (oaks@windy.edu)*

## HomSIGMAA News

### Report from Baltimore

The newly formed MAA Special Interest Group for History of Mathematics got off to a good start at the Baltimore AMS/MAA joint meeting with two panel discussions and two special sections. Victor Katz, Edith Mendez and Eisso Atzema organized a two-part session on incorporating history of mathematics in the classroom, featuring (among others) Dick Jardine, Rob Bradley, Sarah Mabrouk and Janet Beery with talks on their respective courses in history of mathematics, David Pengelley on the Basel problem, and Stephanie Cawthorne (Marymount College) with an interesting talk on Cayley's color groups.

Danny Otero and Amy Shell-Gellasch organized a session on the History of Mathematics in the Americas. The talks in this session focussed primarily on Latin and South America. Sergio Nobre prepared a paper on The History of Mathematics in Brazil: a general view starting from the arrival of the Portuguese to the present, which was read by Amy Shell-Gellasch. Elizabeth C. Rogers spoke on Mathematicians of the Colonial Period of Latin America, Thomas E. Gilsdorf on the Mathematics of the Ña Ñu (the Otomíes), Edward San-difer on Mathematics and the Military in the early Spanish colonies, and Bruce S Burdick on Three Examples of Mathemat-

ical Reasoning from the Printed Works of Peru in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. North of the border we had Eileen F. Donoghue with Early Twentieth Century Historians Look at Nineteenth Century Mathematics in America: A Comparison of the Views of Florian Cajori and David Eugene Smith. The organizers expressed the hope after the session that it would lead to continued interest and more scholarship in English on the areas in question.

A panel discussion organized by Victor Katz and Eisso Atzema on truth in history of mathematics drew a huge crowd on Wednesday morning. The three panelists were Joe Dauben (CUNY), Fernando Gouvêa (Colby College), and Anthony Piccollino (Montclair State University). The second panel was organized by Walter J. Meyer (Adelphi University), Jack Winn (SUNY at Farmingdale), Joseph Malkevitch (York College). Panelists were Philip J. Davis (Brown University), Carl C. Cowen (Purdue University), Harold M. Edwards (NYU-Courant Institute), Gilbert Strang (MIT). Kenneth Hoffmann (MIT) could not make it because of a family emergency.

Both panels will have a follow-up at next year's meeting in Phoenix in the form of HomSIGMAA session on the same topics.

### Officers

The membership committee of the Special Interest Group in History of Mathematics of the Mathematical Association of America has counted the ballots for new officers and the following individuals have been unanimously elected.

**David Zitarelli** Chair

**Eisso Atzema** Membership Coordinator



**Program Coordinator** Glen van Brummelen

**Electronic Resources Coordinator** Rob Bradley

**Secretary/Treasurer** Amy Shell-Gellasch

As the charter stipulates these people have been elected for terms of 3, 2, 2, 3, 2 years respectively.

*The Nominating Committee*

*Fred Rickey (fred-rickey@usma.edu)*

*Florence Fasanelli (ffasanel@aaas.org)*

*Dan Curtin (curtin@nku.edu)*

For further information on the above and most everything else relating to HomSIGMAA, see the official HomSIGMAA website at <http://www.maa.org/HOMSIGMAA> (address is case insensitive), maintained by Rob Bradley.

## **Web Review: Digital Libraries and gallica.bnf.fr**

The World Wide Web is quickly revolutionizing the way we entertain ourselves, shop for merchandise, and even socialize. In our role as teachers, it's also changing the way we present our course material and interact with our students. There is also great potential for the web as a resource for research. Admittedly, the web abounds with half-truths, legends and outright hoaxes, which our students too often accept at face value when researching their papers. However, there is an ever-increasing supply of research material of the first rank available free for the browsing.

Digital Library is the accepted jargon for describing a collection of books, articles, manuscripts and/or images made available

in digital form over the World Wide Web. More and more major libraries in Canada and the USA are digitizing portions of their collections, including the US National Archives & Records Administration and the Library of Congress, as well as a large number of major research universities. There is even a professional association of Digital Libraries, with a website at [digilib.org](http://digilib.org). In the Spring 2000 newsletter, I wrote about the Cornell Digital Library ([cdl.library-cornell.edu](http://cdl.library-cornell.edu)) and their impressive collection of mathematics books. In this column, we take a virtual trip across the Atlantic to visit the Digital Collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF). (I'm grateful to Fred Rickey for bringing this site to my attention, as a source of Euler's *Introductio* on-line.)

The BNF began digitizing its collection in 1996, and launched Gallica, a free on-line server giving access to the ever-growing digital collection, in October 1998. When Gallica was young, the focus was primarily on the 19th century, but more recently, with the launching of Gallica 2000, the collection spans the entire period from the medieval through the early 20th century. The collection includes tens of thousands of digital images (prints, portraits, photographs and maps) and tens of thousands of printed volumes. Only a small fraction of these volumes are available in fully searchable, text-based mode, but the entire collection is well-organized under the Gallica interface, and certainly easier to search than a collection of paper-and-ink volumes in a bricks-and-mortar library.

To access Gallica, point your browser to [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr). The digitized books are to be found mostly under Recherche on the navigation bar, but you will also want visit Découverte for such things as the as digital images, dictionaries, and timelines. When you

do make your way to Recherche, you'll find a fairly typical search interface, allowing you to search by author, subject, or words in the title. You can also browse the collection by subject. Additionally, there is a general search (Recherche libre), giving you full access to the text-based documents, as well as to the titles, tables of contents, and other basic information from the much larger collection of volumes whose contents were scanned as images. A general search on calcul différentiel, for example, brings 111 hits; (a subject search on the same phrase gives only 9). Fortunately, the system does not seem to require exact matches on accents; I used the simple vowels in all of my searches.

For the historian of mathematics, this site is a treasure trove. You can find Descartes's *Géométrie* among his 39, the complete works of Lagrange and Cauchy, and almost two dozen entries by Poincaré. And lest you think that the mathematical collection is limited to French authors, you will find Abel, Barrow, Euler and Galileo, to name just a few. There are also European editions of Greek, Arabic and Indian mathematical works. However, the collection is far from exhaustive: the *Canon mathematicus* is the only entry for Viète, there is nothing by l'Hôpital, Lacroix's *Traité* is limited to the first two volumes of the first edition, and although there are 7 entries for Poncelet, the *Traité des propriétés projectives des figures* is not included.

Nothing about this on-line experience can compare to a real visit to the bricks-and-mortar BNF (and dinner in a Paris bistro after a long day in the stacks), but a visit to Gallica, and to other digital libraries like it, may change the way you think about research.

## Proceedings Wanted

Amy Shell-Gellasch is still looking for the following materials for the CHPM's archives: Program and abstracts for the meetings of 1999 & 1990. She also would like to locate copies of the *Proceedings* of 1990, 1995, 1997, 1998, & 1999. If you have any of these and would like to part with them or would be willing to copy them, please contact Amy at aa7423@usma.edu.

## The International Commission for the History of Mathematics (ICHM): An Introduction and a Call to the International Community of Historians of Mathematics

### Introduction to the ICHM

The International Commission for the History of Mathematics (ICHM) is an inter-union commission joining the International Mathematical Union (IMU) and the Division of the History of Science (DHS) of the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS). The ICHM is comprised of representatives of some fifty-five nations those nations internationally in which the history of mathematics is taught and/or actively researched and is governed by a ten-person Executive Committee. The complete list of ICHM members, as well as the names of the Executive Committee members, appears quarterly on the back cover of *Historia Mathematica*.

The ICHM has these international aims: first, to encourage the study of the history of mathematics, and, second, to promote a high level of historically and mathemat-

ically sophisticated scholarship in the field. It works to realize these goals in a number of ways. Perhaps first and foremost, it oversees its official journal, *Historia Mathematica*. Founded in 1974 by Kenneth O. May, *Historia Mathematica* publishes original research on the history of the mathematical sciences in all periods and in all cultural settings.

The ICHM also engages in a variety of special projects and regular activities to promote and encourage the history of mathematics. The two most recent special projects are the updated, CD-ROM version of *The History of Mathematics from Antiquity to the Present: A Selective Annotated Bibliography* edited by Albert C. Lewis and produced by the American Mathematical Society in 2000 and the book, *Writing the History of Mathematics: Its Historical Development*, coedited by Joseph W. Dauben and Christoph Scriba and published in the fall of 2002 by Birkhuser Verlag. Both represent the combined efforts of several dozen historians of mathematics internationally. The latter, in particular, traces the history and methodology of the history of mathematics in different countries throughout the world. The book also contains appendices that provide invaluable and hard-to-obtain biographical information on key scholars of the history of mathematics in addition to exhaustive bibliographical information.

Among the ICHM's regular activities, four are of particular importance. First, the ICHM sponsors or co-sponsors scientific symposia at the International Congresses of the History of Science, at meetings of national history of science and mathematics societies, and at other conferences. Most recently, it co-sponsored (with the Institute for Mathematics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Institute for History of Natural Sciences (CAS)) an International

Colloquium for the History of Mathematics at Northwest University in Xian, China, 15-18 August, 2002. This colloquium, held as a satellite conference prior to the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM) in Beijing, focused on the three general themes of Transmission and Transformation of Mathematics: East and West, Mathematical Thought in the Twentieth Century, and Mathematics in China. Second, the ICHM awards, once every four years on the occasion of the International Congress of the History of Science, the Kenneth O. May Medal, to historians of mathematics for outstanding contributions to the history of mathematics. The most recent recipients of the May Medal, Ubiratan d'Ambrosio (Sao Paulo, Brazil) and Lam Lay Yong (Singapore), were announced in Mexico City in August 2001. Ubiratan d'Ambrosio received his medal in Mexico City, while Lam Lay Yong officially received hers at ICM-2002 in Beijing on the occasion of another ICHM-sponsored meeting, the International Symposium on the History of Chinese Mathematics held at the Beijing Science and Technology Museum. The next May medallists will be announced in Beijing in 2005. Third, the ICHM maintains a website at

<http://www.math.uu.nl/ichm>

which it hopes will come to serve the international community of historians of mathematics as a source of current information on upcoming conferences and symposia as well as on other information pertinent to members of the field. Fourth, the ICHM maintains World Directory of Historians of Mathematics. These last two activities prompt the present call to historians of mathematics internationally.

## Call to the International Community of Historians of Mathematics

The ICHM is currently engaged in producing an updated, electronic version of the World Directory of Historians of Mathematics, the third edition of which came out in paper form in 1995. The problem with the paper version, of course, was that it was already obsolete at the time of its printing. The electronic, web version of the Directory will be maintained as an up-to-date database of practitioners in the field at the ICHM's website. In order to get this database up and running, however, the ICHM needs your help. Please visit the ICHM website and fill out the questionnaire you will find there. It asks for such basic information as your name, address, e-mail address, and primary and secondary areas of research interest within the history of mathematics. Please also spread the word to other historians of mathematics, encouraging them to do the same. If you or your colleagues do not have easy access to the web, then please write to the ICHM Secretary, Jan P. Hogendijk, at [hogend@math.uu.nl](mailto:hogend@math.uu.nl) or at Department of Mathematics, University of Utrecht, P. O. Box 80.010, 3508 TA Utrecht, The Netherlands for a hard copy of the questionnaire. (Once the database is relatively complete, the ICHM will supply on request, although most likely at a small fee a hard copy of the Directory for those without easy web access.)

Relative to conferences, symposia, and news of the profession, please send announcements with complete details on dates, locations, speakers, topics, contact people, etc. to the ICHM Secretary. Please plan also to make the ICHM website one that you visit regularly to keep abreast of activities in the field.

We can only gather this information and

make this website successful with your help. Please help the ICHM fulfill its aim of creating a true, international community of historians of mathematics.

*Karen Hunger Parshall*  
*Chair, Executive Committee, ICHM*

## Meeting of the CSHPM/ SCHPM Executive Council

*May 24, 2002,*

*Toronto CA*

Present:

Pat Allaire, Rob Bradley, Tom Drucker, Roger Godard, Hardy Grant, Alexander Jones, Amy Shell-Gellasch, Jim Tattersall, Robert Thomas, Glen Van Brummelen (presiding)

The minutes of the May 2001 Executive Council meeting were approved.

## Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. **Treasurer's Report:** Robert Thomas will suggest to the membership that the Constitution be amended to permit the Executive Council to determine which two of its members are to be signing officers.

He will suggest that the annual invited lecture be called the Kenneth O. May lecture, effective this year.

Ken May Fund: The present investment, approx. \$3000, came due in January. Robert has reinvested into a new CD.

The Secretary noted that we have received a few unsolicited donations to the Fund and suggested that a line be added to the membership form to encourage donations.

2. **President's Report:** Glen Van Brummelen will note the following:

- Next years meeting of HSSFC will be at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The possibility of CSHPM/SCHPM meeting jointly, in the UK, with BSHM was discussed. However, because BSHM is not receptive to meeting with us in 2004 and there is insufficient lead-time to plan properly for 2003, the Council will recommend to the membership that we postpone such a meeting until 2005. The membership will discuss whether to meet with HSSFC as well. Should the membership decide on a meeting in England, the present Council will urge the incoming Council to begin planning immediately.

- Individual papers from the Proceedings will be made available on-line to members. Since the Proceedings is an internal document, a gatekeeper is required. Glen Van Brummelen will serve in this capacity.

It was suggested that we consider publishing the Proceedings on a CD rather than in paper form. Since the editorship will be changing hands beginning with the 2002 Proceedings, the idea will be deferred. Glen will attempt to recruit a new proceedings editor from among the membership.

- The President suggested establishing a category of Undergraduate Associate in CSHPM/SCHPM, to heighten awareness of history of mathematics among undergraduates. These students would receive the Bulletin, on-line access to the Proceedings, and an invitation to attend the Annual Meeting, but would not count as members for assessment by HSSFC.
- Rob Bradley will report to the mem-

bership on the SIGMAA in History of Mathematics.

- The Proceedings book project may bifurcate into 2 separate volumes, one of scholarly papers (being worked on by Greg Moore for Springer) and the originally planned volume designed as secondary resource for upper level undergraduate math courses.
- HSSFC has provided a grant of \$250 for Sundays joint session with CSHPS.
- Amy Shell-Gellasch has assumed the role of archivist for the Society.
- A theme is needed for next years meeting. Maritime Mathematics was suggested.
- Extra copies of the 2002 Proceedings are available. It was decided that members may buy them for \$20 (CAN) or \$16 (US). New members joining at the meeting will receive a copy gratis.
- The Secretary and the Webmaster will make brief reports to the membership.

3. **Bulletin Editors' Report:** Tom Drucker will report that Sharon Kunoff is stepping down as a co-editor of the Bulletin. Eisso Atzema will take over as production editor, while Tom continues as literary editor.

4. **Other Business:** We are still searching for a new logo.

The meeting was adjourned.

*Pat Allaire, (secretary)*

## Myth Identification in the Mathematics Classroom

One of the best-attended sessions of all those involving the history of mathemat-

ics at the meetings in Baltimore in January 2003 was that devoted to the role of truth in the history of mathematics, at least when it comes to the mathematics classroom. Over the last decade or two, the notion of writing across the curriculum has had its effect on some mathematics courses, which now include something more than just problem-solving to give the students practice in mathematical exposition. At the symposium in Baltimore one of the issues that came up was the notion of truth across the curriculum. While one might think that is a notion we could take for granted, there is plenty of evidence that is not the case.

The difficulty is deciding what to do with stories that fall in the well-found category (*se non è vero, è ben' trovato*). They catch the students' attention, they are easily remembered, and they are generally discredited. If the main purpose of including the stories is to produce greater interest on the students' part and possibly to tempt them into following a mathematical career, there is a temptation to argue that the sin involved in perpetrating such myths is at worst venial. One could argue that it is not much worse to offer such canards than it is to entitle an account of set theory 'The Joy of Sets'.

Fernando Gouvêa offered a stern rebuke to this complacent attitude, although he did it without the self-righteousness into which some critics of myth easily fall. His argument was that the role of the mathematics educator is not limited to producing mathematicians or even those interested in mathematics. One of the responsibilities of every instructor at every level of education is to try to inculcate in students a sense of the importance of the truth. It is easy to pass along legends under the guise of history, but then it is much harder to get the students who are the audience for such stories to take

seriously one's protestations about the importance of getting at the truth in one's discipline.

This consideration tells equally in mathematics itself and in the subject's history. Mathematicians are not inclined to accept an 'anything goes' policy with regard to the standard of truth in their discipline. There is plenty of room for disagreement about where mathematical truth comes from, but students in lower-level courses are not encouraged to produce just any number as an answer for a problem, nor are those in upper-level courses allowed to call any collection of words and symbols a proof. Dragging in certain kinds of stories because they are entertaining may be a good way of telling a joke, but they should not be presented as history. Presenting them as such is like taking steps in a proof that one knows cannot be justified but that one expects the student will not be able to identify as fallacious.

Historians of mathematics are also bound to keep some kind of standard for truth before the minds of students. There are many examples of stories whose authenticity is difficult to verify, having once been heard over coffee from a now-deceased eminent member of the mathematical community. It would be a shame to lose all such anecdotes, but they come with a certain kind of pedigree. Few students are going to want to hear all the details of the pedigree along with the story, but they should not be allowed to forget that evidence matters.

'What is Truth?', asked jesting Pilate and many others since Francis Bacon wrote his essays. The volume of the philosophical literature on the subject of truth continues to grow, without there being much agreement on whether the issue is even one of importance or triviality. What the panel in Baltimore brought to the attention of all those

present was that it is not enough just to use myths as a recruiting tool for mathematicians. One has to recall that, contrary to the occasional appearance, mathematicians are human beings. That surely is a reminder that historians of mathematicians should not need. When one turns to the mathematics classroom, however, one can be tempted to leave one's historical responsibilities aside. Eisso Atzema and Victor Katz deserve the community's thanks for having organized a session devoted to so crucial an issue, and the discussions that started there should continue.

*Tom Drucker*

## New Members

*Congratulations to the following new members who have joined the society since our last Bulletin. We look forward to your contributions.*

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## From the Editor

An apology is due to the members of the Society who have had to get through the winter holidays without the 'fall' issue of the Bulletin for company. One of the editors had become dangerously dependent on his co-editor for reminders about deadlines and her retirement did not serve as enough of a reminder that a semester could easily slip by without an issue's coming out. This

has resulted in an unhelpful delay in the appearance of a number of items (especially advertisements for the Baltimore meetings, which had been submitted in timely fashion, and the call for papers). The editor responsible can request forgiveness and offer the usual sureties that it will not happen again.

What makes this assurance easier to offer is the impressive way in which Eisso Atzema has stepped into the position formerly occupied by Sharon Kunoff. Eisso's name occurs elsewhere in this issue for his involvement with the Special Interest Group in the History of Mathematics in the MAA. In addition to his technical expertise in desk-top publishing, he has a wide range of linguistic competence, which makes proofreading texts in other languages no burden at all. We still may not be accepting articles for publication in German, but we can make sure that each Fehler is caught is before it gets into print.

Speaking of articles for publication, a deep apology is owed to Barnabas Hughes. He submitted an excellent article on 'The Trees of Fibonacci' (a pleasant change for those who are used to thinking just of his rabbits), and did so with plenty of time for it to appear in a fall issue to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Liber Abaci. Due to the need to pack up his office, this editor managed to misplace the disk at the time of putting together the current issue. As a result, the article will be appearing in the spring issue to commemorate the 801st anniversary of the Liber Abaci. Even while we note that 801 is the product of 9 and 89, it's a matter of regret that the appearance was delayed.

After all these apologies, there should be some room for looking forward to the spring and to Halifax. The program will have a great deal of variety and offer a good deal of philosophical content. Some members of

the Society seem to get to certain cities only when they have the excuse of a meeting to take them there. Let's hope that everyone who has not seen the maritime surroundings of Halifax will use the meeting and the subject of the special session to justify travelling thither, even if not invariably by water.

The next issue of the bulletin will be appearing after an unwontedly short interval. As a result, if you are thinking of submitting any kind of item for that issue, anything from an explanation of how you came to love the history of mathematics to poetic effusions about Euler, it would be helpful not to defer sending it in. With Eisso Atzema's hand on the tiller of production, the other editor should be able to keep his eyes fixed on the calendar.

### About the Bulletin

The *Bulletin* is published each May and November, and is co-edited by Tom Drucker (drucker@mail.uww.edu) and Eisso Atzema (atzema@math.umaine.edu). Material without a byline or other attribution has been written by the editors. Les pages sont chaleureusement ouvertes aux textes soumis en français. Comment and suggestions are welcome, and can be directed to either of the editors; submissions should be sent to Tom Drucker and Eisso Atzema at the above e-mail address, or by snail mail to Tom Drucker, Department of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI 53190.