

Spring 2010 Seaway Section Governor's Report

I attended my second MAA Board of Governors Meeting on January 12, 2010 in **San Francisco**. MAA President David Bressoud presided over the meeting, which was the last for **Martha Siegel** as MAA Secretary. Barbara Faires is the incoming Secretary, and Paul Zorn is the MAA President-Elect.

Two major initiatives mentioned by Bressoud in his welcome were a new NSF-DRL REESE grant, *Characteristics of Successful Programs in College Calculus* and planning for the 100th birthday of the MAA in 2015.

There has been notable **growth in MathFest attendance**. 1516 people participated at MathFest 2009 in Portland, an 8% increase from 2008 MathFest attendance. MathFest 2010 will be held in Pittsburgh on August 5-7. There has also been a **steady increase in attendance at the Joint Meetings**. The total at the 2009 JMM in Washington, DC was 6965, a 5% increase from the 2008 JMM. **Surveys done by the Strategic Planning Group on Meetings show that the most common reason that people attend MathFest or the JMM is to connect with people they know.**

There was some discussion about the practice of **hosting MathFest at a conference hotel versus a university campus**. The consensus seemed to be that more members attend MathFest when the headquarters are at a "nice hotel", and that arranging accommodations and running the meeting are much more difficult on a campus. I'd be interested in Seaway Section members position on this issue. **Let me know** if you have a preference and I will pass that information on.

MAA Treasurer John Keneally reported continued improvement in the financial standing of the MAA. The portfolio had total value \$7.8 million on September 30, 2009 and the chart of total net assets is back on a growth curve. Complete reports are posted on the Treasurer's Section of the MAA website.

I took a personal moment with John to question why a non-profit organization "seems so concerned" with financial growth, and shared the feelings of a number of Seaway Section members that instead of building the national MAA coffers, it would be useful to us to have an **increased subvention** (allotment of money coming back to the Seaway Section from the national MAA) to assist in offering quality programs at our meetings twice a year. He seemed to hear the point. (I think his general overall response to my question was, "If mathematicians can't beat the market, who can?") I will look for ways to bring this up in other venues. Mary Shepherd (previously at SUNY Potsdam in the Seaway Section) works with the MAA's Audit Committee. Perhaps she can be a second voice with this message during meetings with the Treasurer, Budget Committee and Board of Governors. (Yes, I'm taking up the rallying cry begun by Luise-Charlotte Kappe, Joe Straight and Bob Rogers.)

The Budget Committee reported that the 2009 operating budget will come close to their forecast deficit of \$225,779. Looking ahead, the 2010 operating budget predicts a small deficit of \$37,559. The Governors voted to **increase all 2011 membership dues categories by 2%** over the 2010 rate except for student memberships (0% increase). This should help move the operating budget toward surplus while recognizing that many members are not currently receiving raises in salary.

The MAA Task Force on an Expanded **Website of Information for Highly Gifted Young Students and their Parents** proposed that the MAA seeks funding to host a meeting about highly gifted mathematics students. The goal of this meeting is to determine where such a website is best housed and by what means it should be supported and maintained. The meeting should involve MSRI, NCTM, AMS, AMC, the National Association of Math Circles, the Art of Problem Solving Group, Mathcounts, the Math Forum, etc.

Last fall I reported on the work from the Strategic Planning Groups on Sections, STEM Issues, and Periodicals and Communications. This January, the **Strategic Planning Working Group on Meetings** presented their report. Their main recommendations include:

- Keep registration fees as low as possible while covering the costs of the meetings.
- The Committee on Sessions of Contributed Papers should make sure that the list of CPS for a particular meeting represents the breadth of the MAA mission.
- In marketing our meetings, highlight the diversity (especially the ‘real math’ topics) of the Contributed Paper Sessions, the invited lecturers, and invited paper sessions.
- Continue the recent trend of having invited paper sessions at both meetings.
- Consider renaming the (non-general) Contributed Paper Sessions, to distinguish them from the General CPS and other AMS CPS.
- As the MAA website is revised, work with the Council on Professional Development and Meetings to select and organize meeting information.
- Continue and advertise the activities for both undergraduate and graduate students from MathFest 2009
- Continue to work closely with Project NExT to coordinate NExT summer workshops and MathFest.
- The Council on Professional Development and Meetings should act as the coordinating committee for each national meeting. The MAA should not establish new standing program committees for JMM and MathFest.
- The MAA should establish a new Committee on Invited Paper Sessions, and the Council should recommend a name and a formal charge for the MathFest Management Committee/MathFest Group and use it consistently.

The third cycle Strategic Planning Group on Publications will present their report at the 2010 MathFest in Pittsburgh. At that completion of this cycle, the Board of Governors will **study the reports from all Strategic Planning Groups, and begin to set priorities and make plans.**

Executive Director Tina Straley mentioned that funding for PMET and MathDL are both at the end of their grant cycles. Many MAA programs are funded by gifts and grants, including student travel grants, undergraduate research conferences, research experience summer programs for underrepresented populations, enrichment programs for middle school, high school, and beginning college students, and faculty development workshops.

It was noted that the phrase “MAA Online” is extremely out of date. Being online is now the expected norm. About **25% of new and renewed members are choosing e-membership. All members with electronic memberships now receive a ‘table of contents’ email as soon as each new journal issue becomes available online.** **The feature of having each of the three core journals is now an option with an e-membership.**

The MAA has switched to anniversary date memberships for most types of individual membership. You receive twelve months of MAA benefits beginning the day your order is processed. This greatly decreases the need for the MAA to hold excess journal inventory, and there will no longer be seasonal renewal campaigns.

A long-standing project is to **overhaul the MAA website.** Right now there are too many separate electronic components of MAA membership and involvement handled by different groups. The “all under one roof” MAA web management is coming “soon”, and this transition will be undertaken with **the goal of serving the Sections and SIGMAAs.**

(Aside: The MAA is in the process of “taking over” administration of **WeBWorK.** Congratulations to Arnie Pizer, Mike Gage and Vicki Roth (and colleagues) for their successful launch, development, promotion and recognition of WebWorK.)

Next the Governors will discuss Departmental Memberships and how they may be impacted by changing the benefits of student memberships. How **can being a Departmental Member of the MAA benefit a Mathematics Department?** Currently Departmental Memberships include a number of “free” student memberships which can be awarded annually in recognition of students. What’s the difference between having a Departmental Membership and an Institutional Membership to the MAA? If the periodicals all become available electronically, is there any reason to have either a Departmental or an Institutional Membership?

Check the MAA website for information on the Carriage House’s lecture series. **Stories on the lectures and interviews with audio excerpts are available through the MAA website. Video segments of the lectures are posted on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/maavideo>).**

Each issue of MAA Focus will include a poster to promote an MAA event or activity and other features designed to encourage readership of both the print and online editions.

A draft of the **revised MAA Bylaws** was presented by the Ad Hoc Committee on Bylaw Revision to the Board for comments. Major changes proposed are:

- **The role of the Board has significantly increased. The Board will elect council chairs, and one of its own members to the Audit Committee.**
- Whenever possible, omit specifying details, making it easier for the Board to make decisions without changing the bylaws.
- **The role of the Councils is greatly strengthened. Council Chairs will serve on the Board of Governors.**
- **Journal editors will not, by virtue of their position as editors, serve on Board; but the Chair of the Council on Publications will serve on the Executive Committee.**
- **The relationship of the Budget Committee, the Investment Committee, and the Audit Committee will be clarified.**
- **More will be said about the duties, responsibility, and administrative authority of the Executive Director.**
- **Efforts will be made throughout to anticipate and properly authorize electronic voting, electronic communication in committees, and the possibility of non-print journals.**
- **A single nominating committee with expanded responsibilities, chaired by the Past President, will be formed with the charge to balance the need for experience and competence against the tendency to repeatedly turn to the same people.**
- **Two new officers (Associate Secretary and Associate Treasurer) have been introduced.**

The Board of Governors will review a revised draft of Bylaws at MathFest 2010.

Last but not least, the MAA continues to engage in **public policy issues**, especially on the need for STEM, particular mathematics, majors and the need to reach out to and retain minority students. The MAA Math Alert includes links to specific appropriations bills and conversations, should you wish to be in touch with your representatives in Congress.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheri Boyd

Special thanks to Missouri Section Governor Yungchen Cheng for posting a very detailed Spring 2010 Report on which I have drawn many of these pieces of information, due to being disabled with back pain issues and unable to get to my own notes at the office in a timely fashion prior to our Spring 2010 Seaway Section Meeting.