

Governor's Report

By Luise-Charlotte Kappe, Fall 2005

This was my fifth Board of Governors Meeting and the last one at a MathFest. This summer MathFest was held at Albuquerque, NM, in the first week of August. For me it was a venue I had not visited before. It is hot there in the summer, but dry, perhaps an ideal place for a winter meeting. Since I usually have such a full schedule at these meetings keeping me indoors for most of the time, it really does not matter for me where these meetings are held. At least I managed to visit the old town one evening and join the rest of the crowd at the Los Amigos Roundup, a barbecue at an Indian reservation outside of Albuquerque.

Aside from the Board of Governors meeting, my time is filled with other meetings, networking, and at least I try to go to some of the lectures. On short notice I had to take over the organization of a panel for graduate students on the academic job search. There was a good turn-out and everyone involved thought it was a success. I used the opportunity to talk to some of the officers of the Metropolitan Section about a joint section meeting in Fall of 2006 at Marist College and this time there is a good chance of success, contrary to what happened in our first attempt where we ran into insurmountable scheduling problems for such a meeting at West Point.

As always, I tried to go to some of the lectures. With pure math talks I do not fare so well, since they induce thinking about my own mathematics in my brain. That's different for other topics. As highlights I want to mention the talk by Alan Tucker at the Saturday banquet, who in his address "The Mathematical Basis of 'Standard-based' Tests: It Makes Cold Fusion Look Respectable" reported on the rather sad state of such tests in New York, and the Leitzel Lecture. William Y. Velez of the University of Arizona got a standing ovation for his talk "Increasing the number of mathematics majors: lessons learned from working with the minority community". As he emphasized, there are no miracle cures. The road to success is full of work, personal commitment and involvement and requires thinking outside the box. You can see more on his website: www.math.arizona.edu/~velez.

But now back to the Board of Governors meeting. One thing on the agenda was a restructuring of the membership fee schedule. At the moment governors were only asked about feed-back on something which was not yet very well thought through and most of us did not feel very comfortable about it. It is expected that a finished proposal will come before the board at the next meeting. On the brighter side, we heard that the third annual study tour to the Home of the Ancient Maya was a full success. Next years trip to China looks very tempting, but I seem to have again a scheduling conflict. It is highly recommended to anyone who is interested in it.