

Governor's Report

By Luise-Charlotte Kappe, Spring 2006

Greetings from San Antonio, my favorite place for Winter meetings: sunshine, no coats, sitting outside in a restaurant on the Riverwalk in good company watching the world go by, and last but not least, the Hotel Menger. (In case you don't know, Menger is my maiden name which I chose as my log-in, but so far no discounts at the hotel.) I agree with Ann Watkins that we long for that direct human interaction in this age of saturation with instant electronic communication, and that is why the annual meetings have gotten bigger instead of smaller over the last couple of years. Professors see their former students and vice versa. We meet old friends and make new ones. Come to New Orleans next January for the Joint Meetings, in particular if you missed out on San Antonio! We have been told that New Orleans would be up and running by then and ready for the onslaught of several thousands of mathematicians.

San Antonio was also the last of my six meetings of the Board of Governors I attended. My term as Governor of the Seaway Section will end by June 30. Elections for my successor are under way. They will be held by mail with an option to cast your vote over the internet. I urge you to cast your vote. When I started on the Board of Governors, I asked myself how I would survive those eight hours of meeting time. It went better than I thought. A good lunch with interesting conversation in the middle helped in breaking up the long hours. From my days on the Faculty Senate in Binghamton I came with some misconceptions on what my role would be on the board. It was much more passive than I had expected. We were read to and talked to a lot and voting was for the most part approval voting. The role of debates was usually for generating input for a proposal the executive committee was preparing. The next time around this proposal reflecting the input would come before the board for approval. As usual, some of the things which happened on the sidelines of the board meeting were of primary importance to me, such as exchange of ideas and information between the governors of the different sections.

There are plenty of things left to do for my successor together with the executive committee of our section: Our section's input to the MAA for the centennial celebration in 2015 and a formal review of our bylaws which should happen about every ten years, and lastly a territorial adjustment of the Seaway Section. For a long time those people in our section living around Windsor, ON, across the border from Detroit have been involved in the activities of the Michigan Section. Looking at the map, it is clear that geography is the reason for this. Making an adjustment has nothing to do with giving up territorial rights but with better serving these members. So far I found out how this adjustment can be done: The three governors involved (Michigan, Seaway, governor-at-large for Canada) have to get together and submit a proposal to that effect to the MAA.

In the twelve years since I became an officer of the Seaway Section, many things have changed, in particular how we communicate with each other. There was no website, no e-mail list for liaisons and the Seaway Current was strictly on paper. What I said at the beginning about the annual meetings providing us with the human interaction we need holds likewise for the section meetings and you can get it there for a fraction of the cost. So I hope to see you at our Spring meeting, April 28 and 29, at Ithaca College and mark your calendar for the Fall meeting which will be joint with the Metro Section at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, October 13 and 14.