

MSCS



Mess

Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science
St. Olaf College
Northfield, MN 55057

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This Week's Colloquium

Title: Math and the Business World
Speakers: Jen Beilfuss and Julie Kirkham
Time: Tuesday, February 15th, 1:30 pm
(treats at 1:15)
Place: SC182

The business world, especially the IT arena, looks to hire individuals who possess technical skills or technical aptitude combined with strong leadership abilities. Armed with a math degree, students out of college or grad school can find success within these companies. As employees at Target Corporation we will describe the paths that led to our current positions, examine the types of mathematical problems we encounter in the "real world," and offer a perspective of what students can do to ensure success in the IT business world.

Jen and Julie both graduated from St. Olaf College with a mathematics degree in 2001. After graduation, Jen was employed by Target Corporation as a member of the IT department and currently holds the position of Senior Technical Analyst. After completing a Master's degree in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota in 2003, Julie also began her career in Target's IT department and currently manages a technical support team.

Summer REU's

An REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) is a great way to spend the summer if you like the idea of exploring mathematics with other students while getting paid for it. There's a wide variety of REU's available for the summer of 2005 all around the country, but if you're interested you should act fast because the deadlines for most of them are in February and March. If you'd like to learn more about REU's, the following websites are quite useful:

www.maa.org/students/reu_for_you.html
www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/index.jsp

Also, you can check out the bulletin board on third floor of OMH for additional info. If you have questions about any of this, get a hold of Bruce Hanson (hansonb, OMH 302) or talk to your favorite mscs prof about it.

Webmaster Wanted

Wanted: Webmaster to maintain and update the mathematics department web page. Must have experience with Macromedia Dreamweaver. Total time required is around 2-4 hours per week for the remainder of the semester (this is negotiable). If interested, contact Matt Richey.

Spring Actuarial Exam

St. Olaf College is an official host site of the Spring 2005 actuarial exam for Course P (Exam 1), to be given on Wednesday, May 25, from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The deadline for registration is April 1; application materials and information about study notes can be found at

<http://www.soa.org/ccm/content/exams-education-jobs/candidate-and-exam-information/spring-exam-session/study-notes/spring-2005-exam-p/>

Actuaries in the U.S. and Canada achieve professional status by passing a set of examinations prescribed by the Casualty Actuarial Society (www.casact.org) or the Society of Actuaries (www.soa.org). The purpose of Course P (Exam 1) is to develop and test knowledge of the fundamental probability tools for quantitatively assessing risk. A thorough command of probability topics and the supporting calculus is assumed, in addition to a very basic knowledge of insurance and risk management. Many past (and a few present) Oles have passed at least one actuarial exam while undergraduates, giving them an advantage in securing actuarial internships or permanent positions.

Quoting from www.beanactuary.org, “actuaries are the leading professionals in finding ways to manage risk; they are the analytic backbone of our society’s financial security programs; their work is intellectually challenging, and they are very well-paid.” For these reasons and more, actuary is consistently rated as one of the top jobs in America (#2 in the most recent ratings). Anyone interested in the actuarial examinations (or the actuarial profession in general) should feel free to contact Paul Roback (OMH206, x3861) or Amelia Taylor (OMH205, x3480) with any questions.

Problem of the Week

This week we have a problem submitted by Paul Zorn from the American Mathematical Monthly in 1901. You may have to go look up some old units to do this one.

A Quaker once, we understand
 For his three sons laid off his land.
 And made three equal circles meet
 So as to bound an acre neat.
 Now in the center of the acre
 Was found the dwelling of the Quaker.
 In centers of the circles round
 A dwelling for each son was found.
 Now can you tell by skill or art
 How many rods they live apart?

Hint: A rod is 16.5 feet.

*** Please submit all solutions by Wednesday at noon to Amelia Taylor by e-mail (ataylor@stolaf.edu) or by placing them in her box at OMH 201.

***If you would like to receive a copy of the Math Mess in your P.O. Box weekly, please e-mail Donna Brakke at brakke@stolaf.edu.

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