

Math Mess

Department of Mathematics
St. Olaf College
Northfield, MN 55057

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This Week's Mathematics Colloquium

Title: From the Cradle to the Grave: The Birthday and Tombstone Problems

Speaker: Barry Cipra

Time: Tuesday, September 16th, 1:30 pm - treats at 1:15

Place: SC 182

This Week's Colloquium

At this week's colloquium we'll look at some variations on the classic Birthday Paradox: How big does a group need to be in order for the odds to favor there being two people with the same birthday?

Barry Cipra, a Northfield mathematics writer, is a regular contributor to *Science* magazine, *SIAM* News, and many other mathematical publications, including (up to now) five volumes of *What's Happening in the Mathematical Sciences*, a regular survey of important developments in mathematics and its applications.

Barry earned his B.S. at Cal Tech and his Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. He has taught at MIT, The Ohio State University, and St. Olaf College. He is the author of *Mistakes*, an authoritative monograph on errors in elementary calculus.

MAA Student Chapter

The Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Student Chapter here at St. Olaf is a student-run group primarily geared towards organizing and hosting social events for the Math Department and its students.

Some of the events that are currently being planned for this year include a pumpkin carving contest in October, bowling with the profs, a screening of *Donald Duck in Mathemagic Land* during finals, a glorious Pi Day celebration in March, and a mathematical games night with Professor Molnar.

Besides being a great way to get to know other math-loving students and spend quality time with professors outside of class, most MAA events are also accompanied by copious amounts of candy and various other treats. If you are interested in receiving e-mails about upcoming MAA events or

if you would like to get involved in organizing events this year, please send an email to Nick Maryns at maryns@stolaf.edu.

Problem of the Week

Can three CDs (5" in diameter) be placed on one LP (12" in diameter) without overlapping? Determine geometrically the largest possible diameter of three circles which can be packed inside a circle of diameter 12".

*** Please submit all solutions to David Molnar by e-mail (molnar@stolaf.edu) or by placing them in his 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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