

# MSCS



# Mess

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

February 13, 2006  
Volume 34, No. 10

## This Week's Colloquium

Title:	Pebbling a Graph
Speaker:	Josh Laison, Colorado College
Time:	Thursday, February 16, 2:30 p.m. (treats at 2:15)
Place:	SC 182

Graph pebbling is a fun game that involves moving pebbles around on a piece of paper, but it's also a new and exciting field of graph theory in which undergraduate students have discovered many results. In this talk, Professor Laison will play a few variations of the game and prove a few of the results. Pebbles will be provided.

Josh Laison received his B.A. from Oberlin College in 1996 and his Ph. D. from Dartmouth College in 2001. Since then, he has spent his time teaching at small liberal arts colleges, first at Kenyon College in Ohio, and currently at Colorado College in Colorado. His interests include graph theory and a wide variety of games and puzzles.

## Colloquia X 4

This week's colloquium kicks off a series of four colloquia that will be given by candidates for a tenure-track position in the MSCS department. Students are invited and encouraged to attend these colloquia and/or to eat lunch with the candidates in the King's Room (at the MSCS department's expense, of course!). Student input is very important in the evaluation process, so we really hope you will take time to meet the candidates, hear their talks, and provide feedback to the selection committee. If you are interested in eating lunch with one of the candidates, please contact Jill Dietz ([dietz@stolaf.edu](mailto:dietz@stolaf.edu)).

The colloquium schedule for the next few weeks is as follows:

Thursday, Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m.  
Josh Laison, Colorado College

Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 1:30 p.m.  
Sam Hsiao, University of Michigan

Thursday, Feb. 23 at 2:30 p.m.  
Eric Rawdon, Duquesne University

Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 1:30 p.m.  
Tina Garrett, St. Olaf College

Watch for more details in future issues of the MSCS Mess.

## Deadlines, Deadlines, Deadlines

### Summer Research

The bad news is that deadlines for summer research programs are looming. The good news is that many are not yet past! And the best news is that there are many great opportunities open to St. Olaf students. For example, why not apply to study numerical analysis and scientific computing in Hong Kong this summer? Think about it.

If you are interested in doing summer research, take a look at [http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/list\\_result.cfm?unitid=5044](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/list_result.cfm?unitid=5044) for a fairly comprehensive list of programs, and then talk to Amelia Taylor ([ataylor@stolaf.edu](mailto:ataylor@stolaf.edu)), Jill Dietz ([dietz@stolaf.edu](mailto:dietz@stolaf.edu)), or your favorite mathematics professor about applying. But keep in mind: time is of the essence with applying to these programs!

### Summer Math Program for Women

Are you a first-year or sophomore student? Are you a woman? Are you interesting in getting paid to study mathematics for a month at Carleton this summer? If you can answer yes to all these questions, contact Jill Dietz ([dietz@stolaf.edu](mailto:dietz@stolaf.edu)) for more information on applying to the 2006 Carleton Summer Mathematics Program for Women. The application deadline is February 24, so act quickly!

### Semester in Budapest

Students who are interested in participating in the Budapest Semester in Mathematics in 2006-2007 will have to apply by March 1. Please contact Cliff Corzatt in OMH 102 for information and details.

## Problem of the Week (POW)

In Minnesota license plates are 3 letters followed by 3 numbers, or 3 numbers followed by 3 letters. What is the probability that the 3 numbers are non-decreasing? What is the probability that the letters are also in alphabetical order (not necessarily consecutive)?

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

## MAA Meeting

Who: All student mathematicians!

What: A meeting to plan fun MSCS activities, such as Pi Day, the annual pig roast/picnic, and possibly even a game night. We will also be talking about this year's MAA t-shirt.

When: Thursday, February 16 at 8:00 p.m.

Where: SC 188

Why: Because you LOVE the MAA! (And because snacks will be provided, too.)

## Like Solving Problems?

If the answer is YES, then come to SC 186 on Tuesday nights from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m! A group of students and professors convene weekly to work on techniques for solving problems that appear in contests, the MSCS POW, and journals like "Mathematics Magazine." The atmosphere is very casual—you are welcome to show up any time and stay for however long you want. Snacks are definitely included. Contact Amelia Taylor with questions ([ataylor@stolaf.edu](mailto:ataylor@stolaf.edu)).

## Konhauser Contest

All student mathematicians are invited to enter the Konhauser Contest on Saturday, February 25. This is a three-person team contest hosted on a rotating basis by St. Olaf, Carleton, St. Thomas and Macalester. This year's contest will be held at St. Thomas, so we will leave St. Olaf around 8:00 a.m. and get back to campus around 2:00 p.m.

The contest is loads of fun; it includes cash prizes for the individual winners and a prize for the school that wins first overall. But mostly, this contest is about fun! Contact Amelia Taylor ([ataylor@stolaf.edu](mailto:ataylor@stolaf.edu)) if you are interested in participating. There is no limit to the number of teams each school can enter, and no need to sign up with a team—Amelia can help you find one!

## Cribbage, Anyone?

Those who prefer lunch with a side of board games are invited to attend regular biweekly lunchtime cribbage games. The games will begin this Thursday, February 16, at 11:30 a.m. in the Buntrock Faculty Lounge Meeting room (on the way to the library). Feel free to bring a lunch and stay for as long as you like. Check out Amelia Taylor's web page for reminders on time and place, or email her with any questions ([ataylor@stolaf.edu](mailto:ataylor@stolaf.edu)).

## Help Wanted: MSCS Webmaster

The MSCS department is looking for a webmaster to maintain and update its departmental web page. We would prefer to hire someone who has basic experience with Macromedia Dreamweaver. The total time required is around 2-4 hours per week, but is negotiable. If you are interested, please contact Paul Zorn ([zorn@stolaf.edu](mailto:zorn@stolaf.edu)).

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