

# MSCS Mess

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

20 February 2015  
Vol. 43, No. 19

## This Week's Colloquium

<b>Title:</b>	The Practicum Experience
<b>Speaker:</b>	Students of Math 390
<b>Date:</b>	Monday, February 23
<b>Time:</b>	3:30 - 4:30 pm
<b>Location:</b>	RNS 310

**About the talk:** Ever wonder what mathematics is good for after college? If you are interested in learning more about the ways mathematics is used in the real world, please join us Monday at 3:30pm for a special MSCS colloquium. This colloquium is being given by the students of this January's Mathematics Practicum. The problems are real world problems from three different real world sponsors: Target, Inc., Tiger Risk, Inc. and the Town of Bridgewater. The students will present their problems, say something about the mathematical and statistical techniques they used, and be available for questions about the Math Practicum course itself. After all, it will be offered again next January, and you might want to take it yourself!

## MSCS Recital

The annual MSCS Recital is only four weeks away, Wednesday, March 18th, to be exact. That's a week and a half before spring break! Make your plans now to attend or, even better, perform.

The recital is an annual recognition of the talent, of all types, of the members of the MSCS community. Faculty and students will perform, together and separately, for a couple of hours in the evening. Anyone associated with MSCS is welcome to participate, as a performer or an observer. We will gather at 7:00pm in Ytterboe Lounge. This is a fun, relaxed gathering of students and faculty on equal footing. We sincerely hope you will join us.

As with most MSCS events, there will be food and drink, but this event features homemade food offerings, not Bon Appetit fare. If you are interested in performing, please contact Steve McKelvey (mckelvey@stolaf.edu).

## Women in MSCS Alumnae Panel

On Tuesday, February 24, come meet St. Olaf graduates who majored in mathematics, statistics, or computer science. These women are coming back to campus to share their experiences and advice about their careers. Find out about the many ways they are using their MSCS skills in their current work. Get advice about classes, internships, and everything else! The panel discussion will take place 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm in the 6th floor lounge of the RMS building. Dessert will be offered!

## Konhauser ProblemFest Mathematics Competition

The annual competition for the Pizza Trophy, pitting teams from St. Olaf against teams from Carleton, Macalester, and St. Thomas, will be held at St. Olaf on Sat. Feb. 28 from 9 AM until Noon, with lunch provided afterwards. This is a really fun contest and can be done in teams of up to three. If you are interested in participating, whether or not you have a team in mind, please contact Prof. Berliner or Prof. Diveris no later than Monday Feb. 16. It's time to take the trophy back from Carleton!

## Mathematics Education in Budapest!

Budapest Semesters in Mathematics Education (BSME) is a semester-long program in Budapest, Hungary, designed for those interested in teaching

middle or high school mathematics. BSME was conceived by the founders of Budapest Semesters in Mathematics (BSM), and the two programs share a common goal—to provide their participants with an opportunity to experience the mathematical and general culture of Hungary. BSME is specifically intended for students who are not only passionate about mathematics, but also the *teaching* of mathematics.

You do *not* need to be enrolled in a teaching program (like our Math Education Program) to apply to BSME. Come enjoy a shared experience with other passionate future teachers, forming a rich support network and professional community that will extend beyond your time in Budapest. For more details, see [bsmeducation.com](http://bsmeducation.com) or contact Ryota Matsuura ([matsuura@stolaf.edu](mailto:matsuura@stolaf.edu)). **Act now, since the application deadline for semester/year off-campus study in 2015-16 is Monday, February 23rd.**

## and for Your Reading Pleasure...

### a Math Joke

A mathematician walks into a bar accompanied by a dog and a cow. The bartender says, "Hey, no animals are allowed in here."

The mathematician replies, "These are very special animals."

"How so?"

"They're knot theorists."

The bartender raises his eyebrows and says, "I've met a number of knot theorists who I thought were animals, but never an animal that was a knot theorist."

"Well, I'll prove it to you. Ask them them anything you like."

So the bartender asks the dog, "Name a knot invariant."

"Arf! Arf!" barks the dog.

The bartender scowls and turns to the cow asking, "Alright, name a topological invariant."

"Mu! Mu!" says the cow.

At this point the bartender turns to the mathematician and says, "Very funny." With that, he throws the three out of the bar.

Outside, sitting on the curb, the dog turns to the mathematician and asks, "Do you think I should have said the Jones polynomial instead?"

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*If you would like to submit an article or event to be published in the MSCS Mess, e-mail [greimann@stolaf.edu](mailto:greimann@stolaf.edu)*