



Canadian Society for History
and Philosophy of Mathematics
Société canadienne d'histoire et
de philosophie des mathématiques

NEWSLETTER

News of significant events, personal items, notices of important publications, expressions of opinion are solicited. Please send all material to Professor E.J. Barbeau, B201, University College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1.

81.1 PROFESSOR CHAKRAVARTTY WINS SYMONS AWARD

Professor Ishwar C. Chakravartty, Chairman of the mathematics department at Trent University in Peterborough, received the fourth Symons Award for Excellence in Teaching. He received a cash award of \$1,000.00 and a citation at the spring convocation on May 30, 1980.

The citation reads: "Comprehensive in his knowledge. Thorough and logical in his lecturing. Considerate and humane in his treatment of students. Sensitive to their problems. Professor Chakravartty combines a mastery of his subject with a warm and perceptive interest in his students, that happy alliance of qualities that makes a great teacher."

One of 80 nominees for the award, Professor Chakravartty was born in Assam, India, took his B.Sc. and M.Sc. at Gauhati University in Assam and his Ph.D. at the University of Saskatchewan. He has been at Trent since 1967. Congratulations!

81.2 TORONTO MEETINGS OF HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY, 1980

There were two sessions on the history of mathematics at the 1980 meetings of the History of Science Society, which were held in conjunction with the Philosophy of Science Association, Society for the History of Technology, and the Society for the Social Study of Science (Toronto, October 16-19). The Saturday morning (Oct.18) session, entitled "Mathematics in Its Social and Historical Context", was comprised of papers by J.W. Dauben (Lehman College, C.U.N.Y.), "Mathematics in Germany and France in the Early 19th Century: Transmission and Transformation"; Philip Enros (University of Toronto), "The Analytical Society (1812-1813): Precursor of the Renewal of Cambridge Mathematics"; Thomas Hawkins (Boston University), "Schools of Mathematicians and their Philosophies: An Approach to the History and Sociology of Mathematics"; and Jo Ann Morse (Princeton University), "Imitation in 16th Century Mathematics; The Pursuit of Method". The commentator was Michael S. Mahoney (Princeton University) who suggested the talks might all be viewed as dealing with the notion of an 'agenda' in mathematics. The overflow audience--at one point numbering in excess of 75--gave the speakers active reactions and debated the appropriateness of agenda as a unifying concept. Charles V. Jones (University of Toronto) chaired the session.

The Saturday Afternoon session, somewhat inaccurately called "Works in Progress", was chaired by Michael J. Crowe (Notre Dame). It was sub-titled "Issues in the History of Mathematics" and the following papers were presented: Lorraine Daston (Columbia University) "Seventeenth Century Combinatorics"; Ronald Riddell (University of British Columbia), "Parameter Dispositions in Pre-Newtonian Planetary Theories"; Craig Fraser (University of Toronto), "Louis Lagrange and the Variational Approach to Mechanics"; Janis Langins (University of Toronto), "Subaltern Staff at the Early Ecole Polytechnique (1795-1800)"; Helena Pycior (University of Wisconsin), "Augustus de Morgan's Early Views of Symbolic Algebra"; Erwin Neuenschwander (Mathematisches Institut of Zurich), "Towards a New Biography of Bernhard Riemann"; and William Aspray (Williams College), "Thinking or Computing? Turing and von Neumann's Dispute over Electronic Computing Equipment".

In addition to these sessions, there was a novel session in the form of a social and dinner with a talk. Charles V. Jones (Toronto) welcomed the historians of mathematics in attendance and introduced the speaker, Sabetai Unguru (University of Oklahoma) who spoke on "Historiographic Table Talk: Some Specimens of Ancient Mathematics and their Interpretations". The dinner with a host bar, which was subsidized by the Eleanor Parkin May - Kenneth O. May Fund of the University of Toronto, was oversubscribed and judged a great success. In addition to a good meal followed by a talk an unusual opportunity for historians of mathematics to meet and visit socially. Many expressed the wish to have the dinner session at future H.S.S. meetings.

There were other sessions at the meetings which had talks of interest to historians of mathematics: "Observation and Theory in Early Astronomies" (H.S.S.); "Aspects of the Genesis of Victorian Science" (H.S.S.); "Patterns in the Social Relations on Mathematics" (S.S.S.S.); "Continuity and Infinity in Medieval and Early Modern Science" (H.S.S.); several sessions on twentieth century physics, and papers in many of the Works in Progress sessions, to mention some of them. All in all, mathematics was a conspicuous component of these meetings and historians of mathematics were well served by the proceedings in general. The 1981 meetings of the History of Science Society will be in Los Angeles, December 27-30. Those who are not members of H.S.S. may obtain more information from the Secretary, Professor Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, Department of History, Syracuse University, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13210. (Charles V. Jones)

81.3 1981 ANNUAL MEETING: May 28-30 in Halifax. SEE ALSO 81.7

The 8th annual meeting of CSHPM/SCHPM will be held at the Learned Societies Conference at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia on May 28-30, 1981. Professor Louis Charbonneau, the Programme Chairman, invites all members to attend the meetings and, in particular, to read papers or help to organize sessions. Louis can be reached at Department of Math, U.Q.A.M., C.P. 8888, Succ. A, Montréal, P. Que. H3C 3P8 Tel. #514-282-3213.

81.4 FOR THE RECORD: THE 7th ANNUAL MEETING.

The 7th Annual Meeting of CSHPM/SCHPM was held in Pavillon Hubert-Aquin at Université du Québec à Montréal at June 3-4, 1980.

The sessions were as follows: (Chairman underlined)

- A. Histoire des mathématiques au Canada/History of Mathematics in Canada.
Chandler Davis (Toronto).
G. de B. Robinson (Toronto) "Mathematics in Toronto".
Michael P. Closs (Ottawa) "The ritual use of numbers in the Ojibway medicine scrolls".
J. Peter Denny (U.W.O.) "Eskimo and Algonquian mathematical concepts".
Louis Charbonneau (U.Q.A.M.) "L'enseignement des mathématiques dans les collèges classiques de Québec au 19ième siècle".
- B. Charles V. Jones (Toronto).
Giovanna Cifoletti (Montréal) "Maximum et minimum chez Fermat".
M.A. Malik (Concordia) "A note on Cavalieri integration".
- C. Philip Enros (Toronto).
Roger Fischler (Carleton) "Division in extreme and mean ratio in Greek mathematics".
Charles V. Jones (Toronto) "The influence of Zeno's paradoxes on the development of mathematics".
R.C. Gupta (B.I.T., India) "The process of averaging in the history of mathematics".
- D. Topos/Toposes (Joint with C.M.S.) Joachim Lambek (McGill).
William Lawrence (SUNY, Buffalo) "Categorical dynamics".
Philip Scott (McGill) "Intuitionist type theory and the full topos".
Andre Joyal (U.Q.A.M.) "What is the significance of topos theory for mathematical logic?".
Michael Makkai (McGill) "The prime completion of coherent topos".
- E. Mathématiques récentes/Recent mathematics B. Arthur Miller (Mount Allison).
Roy Ryden (Humboldt S.U., California) "Mordell and the Manchester School of number theory".
Francine Abeles (Kean Coll., New Jersey) "Apportionment and proportional representation: a Carrollian view".
Thomas M. Thompson (Walla Walla Coll., Washington) "Error-Correcting codes: the beginning".
- F. Jaques Lefebvre (U.Q.A.M.).
Victor J. Katz (U. of Dist. of Columbia) "The change of variable formula - Euler to Ostrogradsky".
B. Arthur Miller (Mount Allison) "Fact or fiction? The infinite and the infinitesimal in 18th century mathematics".

In addition, there was a light meal followed by an address:

R.C. Gupta (B.I.T., India) "A survey of the study and activities in history of mathematics in India".

The invited speaker for the conference was Maurice L'Abbé (Conseil des Sciences du Canada) whose address was entitled "Montréal et le développement des mathématiques au Canada et au Québec".

81.5

REPORT ON THE SECOND CONFERENCE ON FEDERATION POSSIBILITIES FOR CANADIAN SOCIETIES OF SIMILAR INTERESTS.

The conference was held January 15-16, 1981, in Ottawa and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Attending were representatives of the Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Science, the Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Mathematics (G. de B. Robinson, President, and P.C. Enros, Secretary-Treasurer), the Canadian Society for History of Medicine, and the Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association. R.E. Butts, Chairman of the Canadian National Committee for the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science also attended.

It was decided a Council of Federated Societies should consist of one representative of each of the four societies and five representatives of different regions of the Country. The Chairman would be anyone of the nine members elected by the Council for a one-year term. It was further decided a part-time secretary would answer the federation's administrative needs. This secretary would take over the routine duties (e.g. mailings, dues notices) of the individual societies' secretaries.

The Federation Council would probably meet once a year at the annual Federation Meeting at the Learned Societies. The CSHPM annual meeting could be a part of the larger annual meeting (Federation Meeting) with joint programmes or we could meet wherever and whenever we wished.

Regional activities continue to be regarded by all as the principal scholarly reason for creation of a federation. The Federation Council would oversee the creation of regional councils (made up of representatives of the individual societies) and would lend them some financial support. A Speakers' Bureau was advocated. "Off-season" (i.e. not May nor June) regional conferences would be encouraged.

It would be possible for members of CSHPM, for example, to receive the newsletters of other societies if they so desired. This selective distribution of information would take place on specified mailing dates and be handled by the federation office.

A constitution committee was appointed: Enros, Jarrell, Roland, Lacharite. The constitution was to be ready by 1 March. A 'name-the-federation' committee was also appointed: Duchesneau, Roland, Jones, Roos.

N.B. The initial regions are to be Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie provinces, and British Columbia. If you would like to serve as the CSHPM representative [fame, glory, but no money] in one of the above regions (in which you are located) then please write or call me as soon as possible.

P.C. Enros
Sec.-Treas.

81.6 CSHPM/SCHPM DIRECTORY

On the last page of this newsletter, there is a form. Please fill it in and return it to ensure that our new edition of the Society's Directory of Members is as accurate as possible.

81.7 CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT THE CSHPM/SCHPM MEETING IN HALIFAX

Because a strike may occur at UQAM, please address correspondence to Louis Charbonneau at his home address: 416 St. Joseph Ouest, #5
Outremont, P.Que.
H2V 3P4

The programme is organized as follows: Location Life Science #2922

May 28: 10-12 opening session
2-5 working session

May 29: 9:30-11 working session
11-2 Annual Business Meeting and lunch
2-5 working session

May 30: 9-12 working session

An exhibition of books related to the history of mathematics will be displayed in Life Science, Room 3900.

81.8 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Please find enclosed a list of this year's Executive Committee, and on its reverse a first notice of nominations for the Executive Committee for 1981-82. If you have further nominations contact B.A. Miller, Dept. Mathematics, Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick EOA 3C0

81.9 RONALD CAMERON RIDDELL (1938-1981)

The history of mathematics community in Canada suffered a serious loss with the death from leukemia on January 12 of Professor Ronald Riddell. Professor Riddell, who was at the height of his scholarly career, had taught in the Department of Mathematics of the University of British Columbia since 1965. His professional areas of interest were non-linear analysis, especially eigenvalue problems for non-linear operators, and the history of mathematics and mathematical astronomy. Riddell's strong research interest in the latter areas was evidenced in recent years both by his publications in the Archive for History of Exact Sciences as well as the talks he delivered at learned society meetings. (see attached list of historical publications)

Since the early 1970's Professor Riddell taught a course in the history of mathematics to senior undergraduates at the University of British Columbia. As a student in this course in 1975-76, I remember Professor Riddell's high level of teaching and his remarkable grasp of the historical material. Ronald Riddell's contributions to research and teaching in the history of mathematics were keenly appreciated and his loss will be felt deeply by all of us.

Craig Fraser
I.H.P.S.T.

"Latitudes of Venus and Mercury in the Almagest" Arch. Hist. Ex. Sci. vol.19 no.2 (1978) 95-111.

"Eudoxan mathematics and the Eudoxan spheres" Arch.Hist.Ex.Sci. vol.20 no.1 (1979) 1-19.

"Parameter disposition in pre-Newtonian planetary theories" Arch.Hist. Ex.Sci. vol.23 no.2 (1980) 87-157.

