



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

NEWSLETTER

Le 15 novembre 1983

Please send items to / Envoyer toute information à Louis Charbonneau,
département de mathématiques et d'informatique, U.Q.A.M., C.P. 8888, Succ.
A, Montréal, Qué., H3C 3P8.

83.8 ANNUAL MEETING / CONGRES ANNUEL

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

June 7 - 8 juin
1984

CALL FOR PAPERS / APPEL DE COMMUNICATIONS

We are looking forward to hearing about your research. We are also open to suggestions about speakers and panels. Please send titles of talks along with abstracts or your suggestions to:

Nous aimerions connaître les résultats de vos recherches. Si vous avez des idées relativement à l'organisation de cette rencontre, faites les nous savoir. Envoyez le titre de votre communication accompagné d'un résumé, ou encore vos suggestions à:

Prof. John W. Berry
Department of Mathematics
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Man.
R3T 2N2

83.9 NEW EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL MEMBERS
MEMBRES DE L'EXECUTIF ET DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION

Pour 1983-1984, les membres de l'exécutif et du Conseil d'administration sont:

For 1983-1984, members of Executive and Council Committee are:

President/Président
E.J. Barbeau (Univ. of Toronto)

Vice-President/Vice-président
M. Walker (York University)

Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier
L. Charbonneau (U.Q.A.M.)

Council Members/Membre du Conseil d'administration

J.L. Berggren (Simon Fraser Univ.)
J.W. Berry (Univ. of Manitoba)
B.A. Miller (Mount Allison Univ.)
R.D. Willard (Univ. of Waterloo)

83.10 ANNUAL MEETING, VANCOUVER, 1983
 CONGRSE ANNUEL, VANCOUVER, 1983

Our annual meeting was successful even if fewer people than usual attended it. Abstracts of talks given will enliven the next issue of our NEWSLETTER. But here are the titles:

- J.L. Berggren (Simon Fraser Univ.): The Mathematics of Prayer in Medieval Islam.
- J. Evans (U. of Wash.): Teaching the History of Ancient Astronomy: A hands-on approach.
- H.N. Gupta (U. of Regina): Gems from L. Euler's Introductio.
- H.N. Gupta (U. of Regina): Grappling with the Infinite in Mathematics and Logic: An Historical Essay.
- E. Kreyszig (U. of Windsor): Frédéric Riesz (1880-1956) and his influence on the development of functional analysis.
- W.M. Stevens (U. of Winnipeg): Computus: Focus of Mathematical Sciences in the Early Middle Ages.
- W.M. Stevens (U. of Winnipeg): The Lost Geometry of Boethius.

83.11 MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT / MESSAGE DU PRESIDENT
 Edward J. Barbeau, U. of Toronto

I am grateful to the members of the Society for their confidence in electing me president. Our Society exists for at least three reasons. First, it brings historians and philosophers of mathematics into communication for the sharing of ideas and reports on research. Secondly, it should try to encourage our mathematical colleagues to become more aware of the historical development of their discipline. Finally, it should foster the intervention of historical references in mathematics courses where these will illuminate the concepts and results under discussion. During my term of office, I will continue the contributions of my predecessors towards realizing these aims.

Members of the Society are earnestly invited to give me the benefit of their opinions and ideas. In particular, I would appreciate becoming better informed about your interests; please send me reprints and reports on your research.

Many members will have benefited from the travel grants provided to help them defray the costs of attending our annual meetings. These ultimately derive from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), but have been administered by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities (CFH). For the past two years, CFH has also disbursed administrative grants from SSHRC to its member societies, including ourselves; currently, this amounts to \$13.20 per member. The role of the CFH has been generally regarded by its member societies as satisfactory, and it was expected that the present system would continue. However, SSHRC, arguing that because some of its client societies were not federated with CFH or its sister body for the social sciences it should set up an equal regime for everybody, is proposing to take over directly the allocation of funds to its societies through "competitions" occurring every one to three years. This has drawn the vehement opposition of the members of CFH who fear the replacement of an equitable scheme by one which is open to political interference and offers less security. At the urging of the Executive Director of CFH, I have written on behalf of our Society to members of SSHRC before their October meeting to protest the proposed change. Members who feel that they can usefully contribute to the controversy should let me know, so that I can send them further information in case more lobbying is needed.

Unfortunately, I had to miss the Vancouver meeting since I was participating in a trip to the People's Republic of China with a delegation of North American mathematics educators to discuss undergraduate education. There is almost nothing to report concerning the history and philosophy of mathematics. The Chinese have been preoccupied with making good the damage

caused by their Cultural Revolution, and are only now getting degree programmes and research institutions operating with a reasonable amount of effectiveness. The undergraduate programmes in mathematics tend to be highly specialized with great emphasis on pure mathematics, particularly analysis. I met only one historian, and he gave a course in the history of Chinese mathematics at a Normal University.

However, I look forward to meeting you at Guelph on June 7-8, 1984. Please plan now to present a paper there.

83.12 IN MEMORIAM

VIKTORS LINIS

September 14, 1916 - July 2, 1983

With the death of Viktors Linis this summer, the mathematical community lost an inspiring teacher, a dedicated leader and a wise counsellor. A gentle man whose enthusiasm and humour warmed those who knew him, he had an astute and sympathetic understanding of human character not burdened with cynicism.

Born in Rostov, Russia, of Latvian parents, he graduated from the University of Latvia in Riga in 1940. After brief service in the Latvian army until the U.S.S.R. occupied that country at the onset of World War II, he taught high school for two years. When the German army moved in, he turned to farming and later served in the Latvian Legion. The end of the war saw him in Wurzburg, Germany, teaching at a high school for Latvian refugees.

In 1948, he emigrated to Canada and worked on a pig farm at Condon, Alberta, in order to fulfil his immigration condition. He was soon hired by the Red Deer School Board to supervise the dormitory of a residential high school. The opportunity to enrol in the graduate programme at McGill University led to his Ph.D. in 1953. During this period, on October 17, 1952, he married Vilma Kreslins, and then lectured at the University of Saskatchewan for two years. He was invited to join the new department of mathematics at the University of Ottawa, and after three years became head of the department, a post he held for fifteen years (1957-1972).

While his mathematical research was in complex variable theory, he was ever actively interested in the teaching, philosophy and history of mathematics. He worked hard to develop close ties between teachers at the secondary and college levels and to encourage them in the enjoyment of their discipline and fostering of the abilities of their students. His own excellence as a teacher was recognized by an award from the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in 1980.

His historical purview embraced Canadian mathematics in the nineteenth century, mathematics at the University of Ottawa, mathematical studies in the Baltic countries, in particular the work of Petersons and Bohl, number theory and the mathematical considerations of Kant. Accordingly, he was active in the Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Mathematics, serving as President from 1975 to 1977.

It is with regret and sorrow that we note the passing of this great-spirited man. Yet I am grateful to have known his and to have profited from his wisdom. His contributions to the growth of the discipline of mathematical history in Canada will be remembered and built upon by his colleagues in the Society.

(Edward J. Barbeau)

83.13 POSITION AVAILABLE - UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology of the University of Toronto invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professorship in the history of mathematics, for which the salary depending on qualifications is \$25,400 to \$43,000; the position begins on July 1, 1984. The rank of beginning Associate Professor, with salary starting at \$31,200, is also a possibility. Candidates must have a Ph.D. or its

equivalent and a strong record of scholarly publications. The institute seeks as its first choice someone whose work concentrates on aspects of eighteenth or nineteenth century mathematics which are closely related to the history of physics. We will also consider applicants concentrating in the scientific revolution or in ancient mathematics. We require a person able to provide leadership to a program of graduate teaching. Applications, including curriculum vitae and names of at least two references should be sent by January 15, 1984, to Prof. J.Z. Buchwald, IHPST, Victoria College, 73 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

83.14 LETTER FROM WESLEY STEVENS TO S.S.H.R.C.

You will find, attached to this newsletter a copy of a letter from our past president to S.S.H.R.C. This letter is related to the matter discussed in Ed Barbeau's message (Item 83.11).

83.15 INTERNATIONAL UNION OF THE HISTORY
AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

The past-president of our Society, Professor Wesley M. Stevens of the University of Winnipeg has been appointed to the Canadian National Committee for the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science. This was approved by the NRC Committee of International Scientific and Technological Affairs.