

NEWSLETTER

Department of Mathematics & Statistics

Friday, 1st November 2002

This Week: DEPARTMENTAL VISITORS
CONGRATULATIONS
BON VOYAGE ROBERT!
NEWS FROM AFAR
N Z SCHOOL STUDENTS
N Z OFFICIAL YEARBOOK 2002
PAPER SUBMITTED
ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION
PAPER PUBLISHED
QUOTE OF THE DAY

DEPARTMENTAL VISITORS

Next week we have Adjunct Assoc Prof. Rey Casse, will be an Erskine Fellow from University of Adelaide is due to arrive on 8th November 2002. He will be doing some research with Dr David Glynn for three weeks.

Another visitor due to come will be Prof. Dieter Spreen from University of Siegen, Germany. He will arrive on the first week of December.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Peter Renaud on his UC Teaching Award. Taken with John Hannah's award from last year, this shows how fortunate we are to have such fine teachers in this department.

Douglas Bridges

BON VOYAGE ROBERT!

Congratulations to Robert Ware who departed us this past week to begin a postdoctoral appointment at the School of Medical Statistics at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Rob has been a major contributor to our department for several years now since completing his honours degree, both as a tutor and an active contributor to graduate student affairs at the University. Well done, Rob, and best wishes in your continued research.

Frank Lad

NEWS FROM AFAR

Ben Williams a former postgrad student from the Maths department is due to start next Monday at ACC on the same floor as Julian Visch. Such a small world.

N Z SCHOOL STUDENTS

"New Zealand school students are among the top of the international class for literacy and numeracy, according to a report made public yesterday. ... Japanese 15-year-olds have the highest average scores in "mathematical literacy" but the report says these cannot be distinguished statistically from those of Korean and New Zealand students. On a "scientific literacy" scale, Japanese and Korean students have the highest average performance, but New Zealand students and those of eight other countries score significantly higher than the OECD average.

On the Pisa scale of mathematic proficiency, New Zealand 15-year-olds scored an average 537 points (after Japan on 557 and Korea on 547) and well above the average of 498. In science, New Zealand students scored an average 528, which was also much higher than the OECD average.

It was also one of the countries with the highest access to tertiary education with more than 60 per cent of young people entering degree-level tertiary programmes of three years' minimum duration."

My feeling is that the outcomes of this survey do not reflect any reality other, perhaps, than the incompetence of the surveyors. The final paragraph is a bit of a give-away: what merit is there in a high percentage of university students when that large percentage is achieved by significantly lowering the barriers to entry?

Douglas Bridges

N Z OFFICIAL YEARBOOK 2002

Out Now! New Zealand Official Yearbook 2002 Available from all major booksellers.

Pat Coope

PAPER SUBMITTED

"*The keg index and a mathematical theory of drunkenness*" by Christopher Tuffley (a former MSc mathematics student here) has just appeared in the Mathematical Intelligencer (vol. 24, 3).

Mike Steel

Four characters suffice to convexly define a phylogenetic tree (K. Huber, V. Moulton, M. Steel) to *SIAM Journal on Discrete Mathematics*.

Mike Steel

ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

N.D. Blakeley, R.P. Millane, P.Renaud and P.J. Bones "Efficient frequency-domain sample selection for recovering limited support images" *J. Optical Soc. America, Series A*.

Peter Renaud

PAPER PUBLISHED

Pere Ara, Kevin O'Meara and Francesc Perera, "Stable finiteness of group rings in arbitrary characteristic", *Advances In Math* 170 (2002), 224 - 238.

Kevin O'Meara

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"In a completely rational society, the best of us would be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less, because passing civilization along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest honor and the highest responsibility anyone could have." -- Lee Iacocca