Aftermath

Hacon Receives Cole Prize

by Tommaso de Fernex

It was a pleasure to hear that Christopher Hacon, together with James McKernan from MIT, had recently been awarded the Cole Prize in Algebra – one of the most distinguished honors in the field – for their breakthrough contributions in higher dimensional algebraic geometry.

The birational classification of algebraic varieties has a long history, starting from the classification of surfaces by the Italian school in the early 20th century and passing through the works in dimension three by S. Mori and many others around the 80's. After decades of efforts by the most prominent mathematicians, the work of Christopher and James (part of which is joint with C. Birkar and P. Cascini) has finally solved long-standing conjectures and opened the way to the classification in all dimensions. It is safe to predict that their work will have immense impact on the field.

Christopher had previously received a Sloan Fellowship and an AMS Centennial Fellowship, and was more recently chosen as a recipient (again, alongside James McKernan) for the Clay Research Award. This new prize marks, once more, the outstanding career of a very gifted mathematician. Congratulations, Christopher!

Wasatch Topology Conference

by Kevin Wortman

The 27th Wasatch Topology Conference was hosted in the math department at the University of Utah on December 13th and 14th. It was sponsored by The University of Utah, BYU, and the National Science Foundation.

Speakers traveled from across the country to present their research: Ian Agol (Berkeley), Shinpei Baba (Davis), Tom Church (Chicago), Matt Clay (Oklahoma), Alex Eskin (Chicago), and Ilya Kapovich (Urbana-Champaign).

The conference was very well attended, with audiences in excess of twenty people – a particularly good number considering the snow storm on the morning of the 13th that many of our participants had to drive through.

Ideas generated by the conference created new and fruitful research directions for some of the participants, and we are eagerly awaiting Wasatch Topology Conference #28.

Math Karaoke Night

by Kelly MacArthur

Last December, I invited my Math1010 students to perform a mathematics karaoke song, within parameters that I had given them, for a few extra credit points on their final exam. The idea was to encourage the students to find alternative ways to remember mathematical formulas and/or processes. It was a fun evening filled with laughter, mathematics and song. We had about 15 groups perform. The U of U newspaper, the Chronicle, wrote up an article about Karaoke night that was interesting to read. Then, we uploaded the individual videos on youtube for the students to share with their friends and family. Vic graciously took care of all our audio needs and recorded the singing, to go along with the video. You can view the videos here:

http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=4BC7A2AF721C5198