
A f t e r m a t h

Message from the Chair

by Aaron Bertram

As you have all no doubt heard by now, Annetta Cochran is embarking on her richly deserved retirement after more than 20 years of superb service to the department. It will be strange not to have Annetta in the office next door for advice and encouragement, but I feel lucky to have had the benefit of her wisdom this past semester.

After a campus-wide search, our own Mary Levine emerged as the top candidate, and she assumes the post of Administrative Assistant effective December 16. I hope you will join me in welcoming Mary to her new job!

Of course, this initiated a game of musical chairs, as Mary's post of Graduate Secretary then needed to be filled. Fortunately, we have such a deep pool of talent that this, too, was filled from within, by Heather Rasmussen, who will be moving over from the Cowles building to her new office on December 16. As you dodge all the moving furniture, you may be wondering how far this game will continue.

The answer is that until the status of the VIGRE grant application is determined, we're going to wait on further personnel changes. But this spring there are bound to be more developments to report.

Annetta Retires

Annetta Cochran, who has been the department's administrative assistant for sixteen years, is retiring at the end of this week. Annetta was surprised at her retirement luncheon on Thursday by a retirement gift of a Hawaii vacation for her and her husband, Allen. Frequent flier mileage was donated by Graeme Milton, and a little travelling money by friends and faculty. In addition, members of the dean's office and other administrators brought gifts. We will all miss her cheerful, thoughtful and helpful presence in the front office.

Klaus Schmitt, who was department chairman from 1988 to 1991 remembers, "It was in 1989

that the Administrative Assistant to the Chair position became vacant and Annetta kindly agreed to step into this vacancy. She has served the department in this capacity since then with superb and quiet efficiency, subtle humor, and much charm. Her organizational skills and help were of great import to me in performing the dual duties of professor and chairman, as, I am sure, they have been to the other chairmen since."

Mary Levine says of Annetta, "I'm going to miss her wit and humor, she always brought the light side of any situation to the forefront . . . I'll always appreciate her and never be able to repay her for her support, encouragement, and belief in my abilities."

Eleen Collins, who was a secretary in the department when Annetta arrived, describes her as "considerate and understanding. . . She was very good. She did a good job and shall be missed." Eleen appreciated how Annetta represented the staff to the chairman. "She worked hard for the staff . . . she stood by the staff very well."

At a recent get-together with some of the college staff Annetta was heard to say that she would love to have a day when she could say anything she wanted without getting fired.

"Holly-Daze" Party

Friday, December 9 was the annual department holiday potluck party. Those who came were treated to a wonderful lunch that included a variety of foods and a fun program coordinated by Nancy DeMello. Mary Levine, Jacey Faulkner, and Nancy started off the program by singing "The Twelve Days After Christmas," accompanied by Aaron Bertram. Aaron and Jacey played a piano duet, "Sleigh Ride," and Angie Gardiner and Nancy performed a flute-piano duet, "The First Nowell." Nancy sang a beautiful rendition of "White Christmas," and Bob Palais, accompanied by Fran Wilcox, treated us to a couple of fun Tom Lehrer numbers. The party ended with Fran accompanying several group songs. A fun time was had by all.

Personality!



Kathleen Moore, our coordinator for the VIGRE, IGERT and RTG grants, grew up in Boise, Idaho and moved to Salt Lake City in 1999. She graduated from the University of Utah in modern dance in 2003. She married her husband, Matt, this past August. She has

three older brothers, three nieces and one nephew.

In her spare time, Kathleen enjoys reading fiction, going to the park with her dog, Davie, skiing and playing cribbage. You may not have guessed it, but when she was five, Kathleen wanted to be a rock star named Rose. It may also surprise you to learn that she has a kitchen appliance fetish!

We appreciate Kathleen and all she does for the department.

Visiting Professor will be Missed



Janet Andersen, who visited our department on sabbatical last year, was killed in a car accident over the Thanksgiving weekend. Janet was an extraordinary and enthusiastic teacher and researcher who gave a great deal to

our department, including designing an REU course that is a model for our current efforts.

The project combined mathematics and biology, and brought together students majoring in both fields to study the complex interaction between a fungus, a grass, two caterpillars, and a species of wasp that attacks the caterpillars. The two caterpillars, fall armyworm and tobacco budworm, are notorious for damaging crops, leading farmers to seek effective means of control. One idea is to use a parasitoid wasp that lays eggs on the caterpillars to limit the caterpillar popula-

tion. Alternatively, a fungal infection might make the grass unappealing to caterpillars without harming the plant. Her REU students used a system of coupled nonlinear differential equations to mathematically model the interactions among these species. Janet worked with students on the whole research cycle: growing and taking care of the organisms, writing models to summarize results, estimating model parameters, and using the models to make testable predictions.

Janet was a member of the Hope College Mathematics Department since 1991, and was involved in many aspects of education, including serving as chair of the MAA Committee on the Teaching of Undergraduate Mathematics. She was working on an NSF curriculum grant to develop a sophomore-level mathematical biology course, and had published “Projects for Precalculus” and “Precalculus: A Study of Functions and Their Applications” (jointly with Todd Swanson, Hope College, and Robert Keeley, Calvin College) based on an earlier grant. In addition, she developed a general education mathematics course, Mathematics in Public Discourse.

In addition to her mathematical and teaching expertise, Janet was an accomplished and delightful keyboardist and sometime composer who played weekly at her church. Her keyboard skills extended to the computer, where she used her mathematical training to not only become expert at the game of “Set” but addicted a whole generation of graduate students to the mental equivalent to a quick morning cup of hot coffee. She also spoiled students by baking weekly treats for group meetings.

The Mathematics Department at Hope College has established a Mathematics Scholarship Fund in her honor, and donations can be made directly by sending checks to the Hope College Advancement Office with reference to “Mathematics Department Scholarship Fund in memory of Janet Andersen,” or through the mathematics department here (see Nancy Demello for details).

Aftermath is published monthly during the academic year. Issues of the newsletter will be archived on the web at: www.math.utah.edu/newsletter

Editors: Angie Gardiner and Andrejs Treibergs. Please email article submissions or ideas to one of them.