

NES/MAA IN THE 90'S

Frank Battles

(Frank battles of Massachusetts Maritime Academy wrote this at the request of the NES Executive Committee. Ockle Johnson of Keene State College in New Hampshire is writing a history of the Section in the years 2000-2005 and will have that ready at the Fall meeting. It will appear in the Spring Newsletter. These two histories complete the history of the Section which was begun by Jim Tattersall of Providence College. The full history will be on the Section web site when it is completed. – The editor.)

The 1990's saw the addition of many programs to the menu of offerings of the Section. In April of 1991 the Section held its first minicourse: "Using History in Teaching Calculus" given by V. Frederick Rickey and held at Bentley College. The original intention of these minicourses was to bring to the Section outstanding minicourses first presented at the national meetings. Minicourses were offered each following year until 1998. In the spring of 1992, the first round of regional dinner meetings were held, the very first one at Worcester Polytechnic Institution with the dinner talk given by Gil Strang. These were continued through the 90's and have provided a mechanism for networking with one's colleagues on a regional basis. This concept sparked a lot of interest from other Sections when we presented this concept at the national Section Officers Meeting. At the Spring Meeting of 1997 held at Merrimack College we had as part of the program a session for "Future Colleague" presentations and at the Fall of 1997 meeting held at Western New England College we had the first session of "New Faculty" presentations. As a result younger mathematicians have become more involved in Section activities. At the Spring Meeting of 1998 held at Keene State the first Battles Lecture was given by Jim Tattersall. This annual feature of the Spring Meeting is named for Frank Battles who served as Newsletter Editor from 1988-1998. Early in 1997 the Section's web page first appeared with Ross Gingrich of Southern Connecticut State University serving as Webmaster.

Several interesting joint efforts of the Section took place in the 90's. On October 30, 1993, the MAA/NES and Bentley College cosponsored a Student Career Conference, "Mathematics Opens Doors to the World". Ten workshops, each run by an expert in their field, were offered. The areas covered included medicine, computers and technology, banking, operations research, teaching, information systems, statistics, telecommunications, environmental sciences, and actuarial sciences. On October 21, 1994 the Section, in conjunction with the Mathematics and Music Departments of Regis College, presented "Mathematical Aspects of the Music of Bach". This was given by Victor Hill IV, the Thomas T. Read Professor of Mathematics at Williams College.

The Section's "Distinguished College or University Teaching Award" was first given at the Spring of 1992 meeting at Merrimack College to Frank Morgan of Williams College. The sectional winner is then eligible for the corresponding national award and five of the eight Section awardees in the 90's went on to also receive the national award. The National MAA Certificate of Meritorious Service, which is given every five years, was awarded to Jim Tattersall of Providence College in 1972 and to Frank P. Battles and Laura L. Kelleher of Massachusetts Maritime Academy in 1997. The Section introduced the Howard Eves Award to honor those who had been of great service to the Section but did not receive the previously mentioned award. The first recipient was Howard Eves (1990), followed by Clayton Dodge (1995) both of the University of Maine.

June of 1996 marked the end of the annual section short course at the University of Maine which had been a popular weeklong event since it was started in 1979 by Don Small and Grattan Murphy. For many years, the running of this course was under the very capable direction of Clayton Dodge. These courses provided us with an opportunity to learn some mathematics and meet with a distinguished mathematician on the beautiful campus of UMaine in Orono. The social highlights included an afternoon at Acadia National Park followed by a pizza party back on campus and a Thursday night lobster bake.

We were most fortunate in the 90's to have many talented and creative Section Officers. More than at any other time in the Section's history, women played a very prominent role. The first three Section Chairs during this time period were Karen Schroeder of Bentley College (1989-1991), Laura Kelleher of Massachusetts Maritime Academy (1991-1993) and Donna Beers of Simmons College (1993-1995). Karen went on to serve the Section as Governor from 1994 to 1997 and Laura and Donna each became Governor in the next decade. Their outstanding leadership was followed by Rick Cleary of St. Michael's College (1995-1997) and Frank Ford of Providence College (1997-1999). We were lead into the next decade by Ed Sandifer of Western Connecticut State University. Don Small of Colby College finished up his three year term as Governor in 1991. In addition to Karen Schroeder, Dennis Luciano of Western New England

College served two terms as Governor: 1991-1994 and 1997-2000. Our growing treasury and communications with the National Headquarters were ably handled by Laura Kelleher, Premjit Singh of Fitchburg State College, Marilyn Durkin of Bentley College, and Betsey Whitman of Framingham State. Our Two-Year College Representatives were Joe Menard of Community College of Rhode Island, Helene Savicki of Dean Junior College, Miguel Garcia of Gateway Community Technical College, Phil Mahler of Middlesex Community College and Kathy Bevelas of Manchester Community Technical College. Frank Battles, Frank Ford and Barry Schiller of Rhode Island College served as Newsletter Editors.

Section Meetings were held in November and June with ten in Massachusetts, three in Rhode Island, three in Connecticut, two in Maine, one in New Hampshire and one in Vermont. Our 40th anniversary meeting was hosted by Salem State College in 1995. We met twice at Merrimack College which gives this school the distinction of having hosted the most section meetings: five. Our most elegant meeting site was certainly the one at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. The best attended meeting for the 90's was held at Framingham State College with 258 registrants. Our last meeting of the 90's was held at Bradford College whose closing was announced the following week.

We had many outstanding lectures at our Section Meetings in the '90's. The Christie Lectures given at the Fall Meeting were presented by John Conway, Rodica Simion, Peter Hilton, Jim Tattersall, Robert Rosenbaum, Doris Schattschneider, Roger Cooke, Michael Starbird, Gilbert Strang and Charles Hadlock. The Battles Lecture instituted in 1998 was given by Jim Tattersall and Robert Devaney. Other notable presenters include Herb Wilf, Dan Kleitman, Marjorie Senechal, Gerald Alexanderson, William Dunham, Ingrid Daubechies, Martha Siegel, James Leitzel, Ben Fusaro, John Ewing, H.S.M. Coxeter, Thomas Banchoff, Philip Davis, Joe Gallian, Margaret Cozzens, Carl Pomerance, Laurie Snell, Colin Adams, Persi Diaconis, Philip Uri Treisman, Ken Ross, Florence Fasanelli, and Ed Dubinsky.

The Northeastern Region was a popular choice for summer national meetings in the 90's. The Joint National Meeting was held at the University of Maine (Orono) in 1992 and at the University of Vermont in 1995. At the meeting at the University of Maine, Karen Schroeder dedicated The Howard Eves Room in the Washington headquarters of the MAA and presented a plaque and doorknob to Clayton Dodge, representing Howard Eves. The summer MAA Mathfest was held in Providence in 1999. In addition, the annual meeting of the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges was held in Boston in November of 1993.

Our Section bylaws were carefully looked at by a committee consisting of Dennis Luciano, Jim Tattersall and Karen Schroeder. The major changes proposed were to form an advisory council and add the Newsletter editor to the Executive Committee. These changes were approved by the membership and the National office in 1994.

The MAA celebrated its 75th anniversary in Columbus, Ohio in 1990. In a memorial parade, each section carried a banner indicating the section name and year of its founding. Ours was carried by Don Small. This banner was then on prominent display at all of our section meetings throughout the nineties. Each section was asked to write a history of the section. Jim Tattersall undertook this task for our Section and wrote a decade by decade history from the 50's through the 80's. Clayton Dodge chipped in a biography of Howard Eves, one of the founders of our Section; Jim Ward of Bowdoin College gave us a biography of Dan Christie for whom the Christie Lecture is named; and Don and Shirley Blackett of Boston University and Northeastern University respectively gave us a personal history of the Section. This and other historical information regarding the Section is available on the Section's website.