

NES/MAA 2000-2005Ockle Johnson

(With this installment, the Northeastern Section has a complete written history. Earlier installments included Jim Tattersall's history of the era before the 1990's available on the Section website and Frank Battles' history of the 1990's which was in the last issue of the newsletter. –Editor)

In 2005 the Northeastern Section celebrated its 50th anniversary. Having begun with a meeting on October 14, 1955 at the University of New Hampshire, the Section returned to UNH for a semi-centennial anniversary celebration at its fall, 2005 meeting. As the Section began its next 50 years, it was appropriate that the incoming chair, Tommy Ratliff, asked the Executive Committee to consider what the purpose of the Section is.

As the Section moved into the 2000's there was a mixture of continuity and change. Section meetings in the fall and spring continue to be our central activity. These are supplemented by dinner meetings in the spring. Despite excellent programs and locations, the summer short courses suffered from low attendance and morphed into a one day mini-course before the 2004 spring meeting. What to do next was a topic of discussion through 2005. At the fall 2002 meeting Section NEXt activities for new faculty were inaugurated under the leadership of Lisa Humphreys and have continued prior to each of the fall and spring meetings. This complements the New Faculty paper session at the fall meetings. Sarah Mabrouk brought a renewed focus on activities and outreach for graduate students at the meetings.

The early 2000's continued the tradition of excellent Section meetings. Fall meetings were typically held close to the Boston area and Spring meetings moved further out into the section. Through 2005 six meetings were held in Massachusetts, two in Rhode Island, two in New Hampshire, one in Vermont and one in Maine. Connecticut will host its first meeting of the decade in fall 2006. Meetings planned for the rest of the decade will move us around the Section. Excellent speakers giving excellent talks were the norm for our two named lectures, the Christie Lecture in the fall and the Battles Lecture in the spring. The Christie Lectures were given by Ed Burger, Richard Guy, Carl Pomerance, Lisa Humphreys, Bud Brown and Dusa McDuff. The Battles Lectures were given by Joe Gallian, Tom Banchoff, Thomas Hales, Mike Rosen, Frank Farris, and Frank Morgan. Some of the other speakers of note at Section meetings were Fred Rickey, Greg Fredrickson, Richard Guy, Underwood Dudley, Sean McLaughlin, Gil Strang, Steve Dunbar, Dawn Lott, Ary Goldberger, Stephen Brams, Robert Bradley, David Bressoud, Arthur Benjamin, Jack Graver, Brian Winkel, Carl Cowen, and Ron Graham. A few of the other highlights were the recreational math focus and games from Binary Arts at the Bridgewater meeting, visitors from the Seaway Section and lots of students at the Williams meeting, and presents for almost everyone in attendance at the Framingham meeting.

In addition to our Section meetings, our region was again an attractive location for the national MAA. We hosted MathFest 2002 in Burlington, VT and MathFest 2004 in Providence Rhode Island. Section members served vital roles in the planning and execution of those meetings.

Dinner meetings in the spring provided another opportunity for Section Members to gather. Sites varied, but one could always count on a meeting at Holy Cross in conjunction with their Sulski lecture and a Providence area meeting. Framingham State added an annual dinner meeting in honor of Ken Preskenis.

The Section is blessed with excellent teachers. The Distinguished Teaching Award winners for the Section were Ed Burger, Paul Blanchard, Laura Kelleher, Emma Previato, Joe McKenna and Dave Abrahamson. Ed and Tom Garrity were also nation Haimo Award winners.

The Section also recognized the outstanding service of three of its members. Dennis Luciano received the National MAA Certificate for Meritorious Service in 2002 and Jim Ward and Karen Schroeder received the Howard Eves Award in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

Although the financial health of the Section remained strong, the Executive Committee discussed ways to deal with a downward trend. Registration fees for Section meetings were increased by \$5 across the board, with the fee being \$25 for members. The largest expense was the printing and mailing of the Newsletter. To cut costs the Newsletter was published on the Section website and individual members were given the option of receiving an e-mail notification that the Newsletter was available on-line, a one page Newsletter

Lite, or the full print version. Frank Ford, the Newsletter Editor, and Ross Gingrich, the webmaster, were key players in this move.

The Section continued to be served by a committed group of officers. Ed Sandifer of Western Connecticut State University began the decade as chair, followed by Ockle Johnson of Keene State College (2001-2003), Sarah Mabrouk of Framingham State College (2003-2005) and Tommy Ratliff of Wheaton College (2005-2007). Former chairs served admirably as our Section's Governor, Donna Beers of Simmons College (2000-2003) and Laura Kelleher of Massachusetts Maritime Academy (2000-2006). Betsey Whitman of Framingham State College concluded several years of fine service as our Secretary/Treasurer in 2000 and was succeeded by Ann Kizanis of Western New England College. Kathleen Bavelas of Manchester Community Technical College provided excellent service as our Two-Year College Representative until 2004 when she was succeeded by Lois Martin of Massasoit Community College. After sharing the Editorship of the Newsletter with Barry Schiller of Rhode Island College, Frank Ford of Providence College has done yeoman's work as the sole editor since 2000. Lucy Kimball of Bentley College has been the coordinator for our dinner meetings. The section has also been well served by a cadre of organizers for the various paper sessions at our meetings: Ed Sandifer, Tommy Ratliff, Rob Podiak, Ockle Johnson, Mike Cullinane, Lisa Humphreys, Karen Stanish, Ray Kovac, Phil Hotchkiss, Chris Aubuchon and Sarah Mabrouk.

The Section has also provided national MAA leadership. Tom Banchoff began the decade as the President of the MAA. Jim Tattersal continues to serve as Associate Secretary of the MAA.

As we continue, we look forward to continued strong leadership, good meetings and new directions.