

Message from the Chair.....Tommy Ratliff

In my first column as Chair, I would like to thank explicitly all of the Section officers, current and past, and other contributors who put so much into the Section, especially Sarah Mabrouk, whose term as Chair just ended in November. Since taking over as Chair at the end of the Fall Meeting, I have come to realize how much work goes on behind the scenes to keep the Section programs and meetings running smoothly. The next time you see any of the people who have been involved in the Section, take the opportunity to thank them for their hard work.

We had a wonderful Fall Meeting at the University of New Hampshire in November to celebrate our 50th Anniversary as a Section. Those of you who were able to attend know what a fantastic job the program committee (Frank Battles, Donna Beers, Laura Kelleher, Lois Martin, and chaired by Jim Tattersall) did. If you were not able to make it, take a look at the program at the Section website (<http://www.maa.org/Northeastern>) and see what you missed. Special thanks also go to Eric Grinberg at UNH for handling the local arrangements.

Keep an eye on the website for announcements for Section activities this spring. In particular, there are several Dinner Meetings already planned, and be sure to circle June 2-3 on your calendar for the Spring Meeting at Boston University.

I initiated an email discussion with the Executive Committee and others last fall where I posed the question

What is the purpose of the Northeastern Section and the Section Meetings?

Obviously different people will have different opinions, and our Section may serve a different role than other Sections, but I think it is worthwhile to discuss this explicitly so that we can focus our efforts accordingly. One of the reasons why I asked this question is that I have thought that we should have much more participation at our Section meetings given the large number of MAA members we have in the Section. Certainly not every MAA member will attend every Section meeting, but I have wondered if there is something else we can offer that would be of interest to a larger group. I have suggested that we consider adding more opportunities for undergraduates at the Fall Meetings to supplement the very successful Student Papers sessions, and that we look very hard at the purpose and timing of the Spring Meeting. If you have opinions or ideas about this, please drop me (tratliff@wheatoncollege.edu), or any of the other Section officers, an email, and we can include you in the email discussion. I would like for this conversation to be very open and to include as many people as possible.

I look forward to seeing many of you at BU in June!