The 2008 – 2009 academic year was filled with many challenges, due in part to the economic downturn. As this academic year winds up, we’re all hopeful that the economy will improve and that we will see an upturn in enrollment next fall. Despite economic worries, we have much in the way of good news to report. Dr. Janet Sharp joined us in fall 2008, coming to us from Oakland University in Michigan. Her expertise is in mathematics education, and we look forward to working with her in the years to come! We have three retirements to report – Dr. Larry Blumberg (former Chair, 1997 – 2007), Dr. Richard Driver and Dr. Ken Ohm are retiring this spring/summer. We will miss them and the camaraderie we had with them over the years, and their many contributions to our department and to Washburn. We wish each of them well in their retirement, and look forward to seeing them at our annual get-togethers.

Math Day last Nov. 4th was another big success – we always look forward to hosting many of our local high school students on our campus each year for the competition. In March, Dr. Porta and Dr. LaLonde took three students, Sarah Butler, Amanda McCullough, and Christine Potter, to the KME national convention held in Philadelphia, PA. Both Sarah and Christine presented papers based on work begun in our Capstone Experience. Christine won a “top four” award out of 16 presenters, to continue our long-standing record of having at least one prize winner at KME each year. Our students continue to do well academically, with 23 of our students being awarded over $22,000 in scholarship funds from our department – it is always a pleasure to be involved in student success this way! We enjoy hearing what’s new with our alumni, so if you have some news, we’d really like to hear from you!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE
Chair’s corner
Spotlight on Seniors
Math Day XL
Three Faculty Retire
New Lecturer
Student Teachers in Mathematics
What’s Happening in the Department

Spotlight on Seniors 2008-2009


Sarah (Butler) Finan (2009) graduated with a BA in Mathematics with Emphasis in Secondary Education. Sarah has taken a job teaching geometry at Highland Park High School.


Heather Lewis (2009) graduated with a BA in Mathematics with emphasis in Secondary Teaching. In the Fall, Heather will become part of the Comets team teaching seventh graders at Washburn Rural Middle School.


Aaron Shaffer (2009) graduated with a BA in Mathematics. Aaron tells us “the job I have lined up to begin shortly after graduation is Financial Analyst, in which I will be managing futures trading for a private equities group in Texas. I plan to go on to graduate school to obtain an M.S. in Mathematics.”

Quinn Stenzel (2009) graduated with a BA in Mathematics. She has been accepted into the graduate program for engineering at Kansas State University.

Jackson Waechter (2009) graduated with a BA in Mathematics with specialization in Actuarial Science. Jackson is looking into entry level actuary positions in the Midwest. For the last three years, Jackson has served as an assistant coach for the WU Women’s soccer team.
News from our Graduates
Some of these entries may be old, please feel free to let us know and we can update your information

Ben Artiles (1992) graduated from Washburn University and then earned his MBA in 1997. He now works in Marketing at Hill’s Pet Nutrition. Ben and his wife have one daughter, Kathyrn.

Michael Barton (2004) took a job as an Actuarial Assistant 1 at Sun Life Financial in Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts. He tells us his main responsibility is in Lapse (Surrenders) and Mortality Study Analysis for Sun Life’s Variable Block of Business. (I need to bone up on my statistical terms!)

John Johnson (1956) was a retired Air Force Colonel and spent many years in Burke, VA. His work was in computer modeling and database management. Just imagine the changes he saw in computers and data management over the years! Sadly, John died on April 9, 2008 or as the military would write is 9 April 2008. We salute you, John!

Mary Wilson (1991) took a job at the Haskell Indian Nation University upon graduation at WU. She was released during the academic year 2008-09 from her teaching duties to work on her dissertation for her Ph.D. in curriculum with an emphasis on Math Education and minor in Math from KU. Mary plans to complete her Ph.D. in this year 2009. She sends “a big HELLO! to all those at the WU Math Dept. You’re the Best!”

Club Mathematica
By Dr. Sarah Cook
Club Mathematica (aka Math Club) continued the tradition of pizza, pop, and cookies for its monthly meetings. We had great attendance at the meetings and were thrilled to have six wonderful presentations throughout the year.

In the fall, faculty member Dr. Jennifer Wagner took us To Infinity and Beyond, Washburn Mathematics alumnus Peggy Huard explained The Division of Property Valuation and Mathematics, and Cair Paravel math teacher James Seidel gave an interesting account of The Life of Leonard Euler.

In the spring semester faculty member Dr. Gaspar Porta presented The Fibonacci Numbers and student Christine Potter taught us all about The Peg Game. Our final speaker of the year, Washburn Math alumnus Edward Glotzbach shared with students and faculty his Lessons Learned Along the Way. Mr. Glotzbach received the 2009 Washburn Alumni Association Distinguished Service Award and graciously adjusted his schedule to present to our group while he was in town to receive the award. His presentation drew in a few of our former faculty, namely Dr. Richard Shermoen and Dr. Emanuel Calys (dubbed “E.”)

Math Club “bumped” into a new experience during the fall semester. Several students and even a couple of faculty members comprised the Co-Rec Volleyball team known as the Mathletes. Everyone had a great time, got some exercise, and relished in our one victory of the year (even if it was by forfeit).

Math Club is always looking for speakers. If you would like to present to our group, please contact Dr. Sarah Cook at sarah.cook@washburn.edu.

Three Professors Ride off into the Sunset
This year our three semi-retired professors formally retired. All three of the following gentlemen and friends have touched our lives and made their indelible mark on our department and on Washburn University.

Dr. Larry Blumberg
Dr. Larry Blumberg began his WU tenure in 1967, the year after the tornado and the west wing of Morgan was just opened. He tells us “I had just finished an MA from KU. While at WU, I attended KSU and finished a PhD somewhere around 1978.” There is only one current WU professor who has been at Washburn University longer than Larry. (Can you guess?)

Larry has been on most minor and major committees at WU. He was the driving force behind the establishment of the Department’s Actuarial Science Program. Larry was appointed Department Chair - 1997-2007 and was an excellent leader, mediator, motivator, and friend to all. He was involved in the hiring of many of the current faculty. Larry was very active in the WU athletics program; he served as Faculty Athletic Representative of WU for about 20 years, and was on a National Infractions Committee for NCAA Division II for 8 years.

He is a “legend” on the WU handball court playing most week-days for nearly 40 years with his partner or opponent, Al Riveland. We have enjoyed many annual department parties at the Blumberg house with plenty of burgers, homemade ice cream, laughter, and camaraderie. Speaking about legends, Al tells us “During several department parties Larry and I both tried to play guitar and sing... we were usually referred to as “Willie and Waylon.” Sorry, Al, that reference was made tongue-in-cheek.
He and Sherry recently retired to the Las Vegas vicinity to enjoy the activities of the area and to spend time with the families of their three children and 12 grandchildren.

**Dr. Richard Driver, in his own words**

“Fresh from a masters degree from Boston College in the fall of 1968, I visited Dr. Shermoen about possible adjunct teaching for the department (I had a teaching position at Shawnee Heights High School.) Dr. Shermoen said there was no need at that time, but prior to the spring 1971 semester he contacted me to see if I might teach a statistics course at Forbes Air Force Base (Washburn had a satellite program there.) I remember the date well for my son was slated to be born in late March, and Ruth, the Dr. and I got together to decide on a date for the caesarean delivery. I said, well, it can’t be on Tuesday or Thursday, for I teach for WU then. Subsequently, Michael was born March 30. That’s where I began. The following semester, I taught an intermediate algebra course at Forbes for WU, and then transitioned to the campus, where I taught various courses, including statistics, intermediate algebra, trigonometry, and several teacher ed. courses for the next 20 years.

One summer around 1989, I was slated to teach a night statistics course and Larry was to teach a daytime teacher-ed. course. He called me and asked if I would consider trading with him. At that time I was an administrator at the central office of TPS and I asked my boss, the associate superintendent, if I could take my lunch hour to teach the teacher ed course. He gave me the go ahead and that is how my long stint of teaching Math for Elementary Educators began. In the early 1990’s I begged off to pursue courses in my doctorate at KSU, which I received in 1993. After the degree I then again taught every semester (mostly at night, but not always) until 1996, when I retired from USD 501 administration, and came to Washburn full time--to teach, perhaps three years, I was thinking.

Twelve years later I finally went to a phased retirement (three years) but cut that short when I took the offered buy-out after one year of the phased retirement, which was this spring. My official retirement date is June 30, 2009, but I will teach one more statistics course in July--going out as I came in - by teaching statistics, but a very different course from that in 1971.”

---

**Dr. Ken Ohm**

Dr. Ken Ohm retired in May, 2009, after 50 years in the teaching business. His professional career included assignments as a science and mathematics department chairperson, dean of faculty, observatory director and acting college president. His real passion, however, was classroom teaching. During his career, he received numerous teaching awards, including those during his 17 year tenure at Washburn.

He will soon release his first full length novel following two very successful autobiographies relating to his growing-up years on Flint Hills farms.

As if his life is not full enough, Ken is quite the sportsman. After winning two national championships in Senior Men’s Javelin both in the 65-69 and 70-74 age divisions, Ohm looks forward to a third championship in 2011 for the 75-79 age group. He certainly does not look his age.

Ken tells us “I will really miss the teaching and the kids....I will not miss any other aspect of higher education...50 years is, indeed, enough.” Maybe for you, Ken, but we will truly miss you.

---

**Math Students Present at Kappa Mu Epsilon’s 2009 Regional Conference**

Our annual Kappa Mu Epsilon experience took place at Hunans Chinese Restaurant on Monday, February 23, 2009, keeping with our yearly tradition. Mike Mosier is currently our Corresponding Secretary of KME. This year’s five new KME 2009 initiates: Moriba DeCoteau, Anna Lischke, Christine Potter, Michael Reb, Kyle Volle and were formally inducted at the annual meeting. Next year’s officers will be Kyle Volle as President, Moriba DeCoteau as Vice President, and Sean VanDyke as Secretary Treasurer.

Kevin Charlwood serves as our faculty sponsor to our KME chapter. Among his other duties he arranged travel and funding for the KME trip to Philadelphia in March 2009. Dr. Porta and Dr. Lalonde attended KME National Convention in Philadelphia with three students: Sarah Butler, Christine Potter and Amanda McCullough. Both Sarah and Christine presented papers based on work begun in our Capstone Experience. Sarah presented a paper -- Dancing with Crops: Using Modeling to Maximize Profits on a Family Farm. Christine presented a paper -- The Peg Game. Christine won...
Back row: Dr. Sarah Cook, Dr. Jennifer Wagner, Dr. Janet Sharp, Evelyn Pitts, Dr. Hwa Chi Liang, & Lynn Bailey

Front row: Dr. Gaspar Porta, Bill Gahnstrom, Dr. Allan Riveland, Dr. Kevin Charlwood (Chair), Dr. Mike Mosier, Dr. Tom Glynn

Missing: Dr. Donna LaLonde, Dr. Pat Mower
a “top four” award out of 16 presenters, continuing our long-standing record of having at least one prize winner at KME each year.

Our "very own" Ron Wasserstein (whose last job with us was Vice President of Academic Affairs) was installed as the NATIONAL KME President for the next term. He is currently Executive Director of the American Statistical Society in Washington DC. We miss him but are very happy for him and his family!

**Department Hires New Lecturer**

Last Spring 2008, we hired Dr. Janet Sharp who was then a full professor at Oakland University in Michigan. We feel very lucky to have her and anticipate having her around for as long as she wants to be here. I recently interviewed her and the questions and answers are below.

Q. Janet, what brings you to Kansas?
A. My family roots are from Riley and Clay counties. I have family here still. I have always loved living in and visiting Kansas.

Q. How about Washburn? What appealed to you regarding teaching at WU?
A. Several things…the atmosphere of the math department and how well everyone gets along and works together. Also, I get to teach the class I love the most, Math for Elementary Educators. Oh, yes, and who wouldn’t love the small class sizes?

Q. Could you please tell us where you earned your degrees and what they were in?
A. First, ha, I earned an Associate degree at Butler County! Then a BSE in Math Education from Wichita State, and an MA in Education and MS in Mathematics from Emporia State. Lastly, I earned my PhD in Curriculum in Math Education at K-State in Manhattan, KS. Oh, and I taught at Curtis Junior High School in Wichita right after graduation.

Q. Just one last question... would you please share with us what your academic and/or non-academic interests are?
A. My math research is in Understanding Fractions, that is, the theoretical division of fractions and how we teach future teachers to teach this. I guess my main non-academic interests are in reading and scrapbooks.

Editor’s note: Janet has proven to be a great fit for our department. She is enthusiastic about teaching and her students seem to respond in kind.

**Math Day XL**
**By Dr. Jennifer Wagner, Coordinator**

Washburn’s 40th annual Math Day was held on November 4, 2008. 183 students and 23 faculty sponsors from 19 area high schools participated. In the morning, the students took a forty question competitive exam, while the sponsors had a lively discussion about their experiences as student teachers and with supervising them. After the exam, everyone had lunch and an opportunity to explore campus. The day ended with an awards ceremony, where the top scoring students and teams were honored. The contributions of all of the math faculty and staff, as well as many other individuals on campus, helped make this year’s Math Day a success.

**Student Teachers in Mathematics**

Three mathematics majors successfully completed their student teaching experience this spring. Sarah Butler, now Sarah Finan taught at Silver Lake High school. Heather Lewis student-taught at Shawnee Heights High School and has received a job teaching at WRMS in the fall 09. Christine Potter student-taught at Washburn Rural High School and will teach there starting this fall. All three pre-service teachers received glowing comments on their teaching abilities. The department has had two to six student teachers each spring who have all found jobs in Kansas.

**What’s Happening in the Department?**

The Math faculty was busy over the 2008-2009 academic year. Here is a snapshot of some of the activities each tenure-track faculty took part in.
Sarah Cook

- Led workshops on “Don’t Burst your Bubble” at Washburn’s Women in Science Day (with Jennifer Wagner)
- Led workshops on "The Mathematics of Games" at Emporia State University's Sonia Kovalevsky Day (with Hwa Chi Liang)
- Presented “Calculations Assessment: Then and Now” at the National Joint Meetings of the MAA/AMA/AWM in Washington DC
- Presented “The Algebra Strand: Middle School to College” at the SMARTT Conference in Kansas City (with Donna LaLonde and Penny Guy)
- Received FIRE grant to explore computer-based algebra programs for use in Intermediate and Basic Algebra
- Received the April Student Life Achieving Excellence Award

Hwa Chi Liang

- Served in the following service positions
  1. Faculty senate
  2. Math tutor center coordinator
  3. Departmental library representative
- Prepared students for the actuarial exams. The actuarial exams are highly competitive and require, on average, 250 to 300 hours of study.
- Assisted Sarah Cook in leading workshops on "The Mathematics of Games" at Emporia State University’s Sonia Kovalevsky Day
- Currently working on project with KU Professor.

Mike Mosier

- Continues to serve as the Chair of the Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) for a large R01 grant, which is co-PI’d by Dr. Carol Smith (Nursing) and Dr. Edward Ellerbeck (Preventive Medicine) at the University of Kansas Medical Center. The grant will continue for five years, and involves an innovative outpatient treatment regimen for heart failure patients.
- As course coordinator for MA-140 (Statistics), Mike helped initiate the implementation of common final questions. This first year we used 12 common questions, and are anticipating making the entire final common in the near future.
- Submitted paper: “A randomized Comparison of Two Antiseptic Preparation for Prevention of Surgical Site Infections.” To the New England Journal of Medicine with Rabih O. Darouiche of Baylor University of Medicine. It is currently under review.
- Received FIRE grant to develop an online version of MA140. Work will commence Fall 2009 with first offering targeted Fall 2010.
- Led workshops on “Clinic Statistics for Non-statisticians” in Philadelphia, PA and Washington D.C. These are sponsored by the Drug Information Association and are intended for professional in the pharmaceutical industry. A webinar seminar also occurred in July 2009.

Pat Mower

- Served as Editor for math dept’s annual news letter, Slice of Pi.
- Received FIRE grant to develop and teach an online version of MA110 Exploring Mathematics
- Was accepted and signed contract for writing a third book for Dr. Mower’s Math Out Loud series, this one is titled PreAlgebra Out Loud. It is due out in the Fall-Winter term.
- Developed and taught MA 110 Exploring Math VA, online course twice learning 2 course platform programs.
- Conducted workshop titled “Flip, Turn, and Slide: Tessellation” on Washburn’s Women in Science Day for middle school girls. Several of the Middle School Educators MA320 students served as helpers.
- Completed NCATE and KSDE Program Review (with Donna LaLonde) to be evaluated February 2010.

Jennifer Wagner

- Attended the 20th Annual International Conference on Formal Power Series and Algebraic Combinatorics, Viña del Mar, Chile, June 2008
- Conducted workshop with Sarah Cook at the Washburn Women in Science Day, October 2008
- Coordinated the events of Washburn’s Math Day, November 2008
- Presented "Evaluating Communication Skills in a Modern Algebra Course" at the Joint Mathematics Meetings, Washington, DC, January 2009
- Presented "Exploring Paint By Numbers Puzzles" at the meeting of the Kansas Section of the Mathematical Association of America, Pittsburg, KS, May 2009
- Was elected Chair-Elect of the Kansas Section of the Mathematical Association of America for the 2009-2010 year

Kevin Charlwood

- Attended the KS MAA Annual Sectional Meeting held at Pittsburg State University, May 1 – 2, 2009.
- Serving on the national Actuarial Education Committee under the auspices of the MA
- Coordinator for Washburn’s Faculty Development Program Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society – Washburn chapter President
- As faculty sponsor to our KME chapter, arranged travel and funding for KME trip to Philadelphia in March 2009.
WU Department of Mathematics & Statistics
Sheet for Alumni Information and/or Recommendation of Potential Student

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

Name:_____________________________ Year of Graduation from WU: ________
Address:____________________________ Phone: (   ) __________________________
_________________________________________ Cell: (   ) __________________________

Employer or Business (address):
_________________________________________ Phone: (   ) __________________________
_________________________________________ E-mail: (   ) __________________________
_________________________________________ Web URL: ___________________________

News: (Tell us about yourself; recommend a potential student – name, address, something about her or him; other news of interest or update your last entry.)
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Please return to:
Dr. Pat Mower
Dept. of Mathematics & Statistics
1700 SW College Ave.
Washburn University
Topeka KS 66621