

# SLICE OF PI

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*A Publication of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Washburn University*

## *Pull Up a Stool with the Chair "Thanks for the Memories"*

By Larry Blumberg, PhD, Chair  
**Mathematics and Statistics Department**

"Thanks for the Memories..." that was Bob Hope's signature song. For those of you who do not know what I am talking about you do not need to read any further. This is my thirty-ninth year at Washburn University, I have decided to step down as chair and phase into the sunset. It is therefore time to remember back and reflect on who had a major influence on my staying that long. It certainly was not my intention to start and end my career at WU. Of course one of the major influences was, and still is, my wife Sherry of almost 46 years. She has put up with and did without many things so that I could continue here. My three children Becky, Beth, and Erich certainly influenced my life. Becky and Beth both graduated from WU where Erich took some classes, but moved down the turnpike for his degree. Among the three children, Sherry and I have eleven grandchildren; I could devote a whole column to them.

Now let me mention a few outside the Department who influenced my life. First would be Dr. Richard Shermoen who came to WU the same time I did. It was my first time teaching and his first time as a Chair. Dick had a way about him to get you to do something he wanted done, but make you think you thought of it. He got me involved in a number of things in which I thought I was the one with the idea. One in particular is the Actuarial Program he encouraged me to get involved, which I did, but because of him we are the only school in Kansas that is on the Preferred List by the Society of Actuaries. I have tried to mimic his ability in my years as Chair of Department, I am sure not nearly as good.

Another was Terry McAdam; Terry had been at WU for a number of years. He had been in an automobile accident as a young man and was confined to a wheel chair. He had the habit that when you went into his office he wheeled his chair in such a manner to block you from leaving. Therefore I spent many hours in his office talking about teaching, life, and the politics of higher education at WU. I am sure the following is not original with him, but he is the first person I heard say, "there is the good reason and then there is the REAL reason". I think of that often, especially when a politician speaks. This was after the faculty had voted on some matter.

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## Spotlight on Seniors 2007

**Jared Dyche (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics.

**Emily Huelskamp (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics: Specialization in Secondary Mathematics Education with departmental honors. She has accepted a position in Andover, Ks.

**Stephanie Herbster (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics; Certification in Secondary Mathematics Education with departmental honors. Stephanie plans to pursue her Masters in Mathematics at Emporia State.

**Fai Ng (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics: Specialization in Actuarial Science with departmental honors. Fai plans to pursue a graduate degree in Statistics at KSU.

**Kristin Ranum (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics: Specialization in Secondary Mathematics Education with departmental honors. She has accepted a position in De Soto, Ks.

**Angeline Rhinehart (Spring 2007)**

BA in Mathematics: Specialization in Actuarial Science.

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Then there is Dr. Gary Schmidt. We were in graduate school together and I convinced him to come to WU to teach. He then officed with me for a number of years. Gary got me involved in more schemes. He convinced me to learn to program and thus I could teach a programming language and more importantly do consulting work. He also contracted to paint a house and some how got Dr. Riveland and me to help. But that is another story. Speaking of Dr. Riveland, I have spent more hours with Al than any other person (except Sherry) from car pooling, to handball, to managing the Department. He has been the most influential person in my tenure as Chair. I could not imagine functioning as Chair without his input, organizational skills, and advice. He is heading into the sunset after next year and the Department will miss him. For all of you that I had contact with, "Thanks for the Memories!"

## 100+ Years of Math Experience

We all know that Larry, Al, and Ron Wasserstein are the Math Department's elder sages. However, there are some other instructors who have been here for as long if not longer than those above and together have eons of mathematical genius.

- ❖ Evelyn Pitts has been here for 20 years, long enough for her husband to change jobs and both of her children to enroll in college. Evelyn has taught courses from MA103, Basic Algebra through MA141, Applied Calculus I. She is currently a lecturer which is the highest instructor job that is non-tenure track. She is indispensable.
- ❖ Dr. Dick Driver has been teaching at WU for 36 years, the last eleven full-time. Before and while teaching at WU, Dick has worked for and retired from USD 501 in administration. Dick has taught numerous courses, especially MA116, MA110, and MA140 and supervised student teachers. Dick says the best thing about his current job as a lecturer is he just teaches and does not have to attend meetings...some people get all the luck!
- ❖ Bill Gahnstrom has taught at WU for 13 years. After retiring from the Navy, Bill completed his Masters in Mathematics and is now a lecturer for our department. Bill has been known to dress up (in costume, for example, tux and tails) on exam days and wears a lab coat for teaching mathematics as the worthy science that it is!
- ❖ H C Beckman has taught at WU for 19 years and as a lecturer for the last 7 years. HC is assured his job due to his wife's baked goods!

It is nice to know that although we will be losing Larry Blumberg as he phases over the next 3 years, Al Riveland who will begin the same process in one more year, and Ron Wasserstein is leaving us this summer, we will still have over 100 years experience in teaching math. But, we will certainly miss our wiser and older sages!

## Student Teachers

This spring we have three exceptionally talented student teachers: Stephanie Herbster, Emily Huelskamp, and Kristin Ranum. Stephanie has spent this semester at Silver Lake High School with Alan Cunningham as her cooperating teacher. Silver Lake HS has block scheduling, so Stephanie has taught some long (90 minute) lessons. Her students seem to enjoy her and she has been involved in several extracurricular activities such as cheering on her students at basketball games. Emily Huelskamp has been at Washburn Rural High School, working with Sonja Hoglund. This experience is an extension of a practicum; Emily did at WRHS last semester, Fall 2006. Thus, Emily's students have got to know Emily well and seem very relaxed and do not hesitate to ask questions. Kristin is working with Sheryl Allison at Washburn Rural Middle school. Middle school is a great match for Kristin; she keeps up with her students who seemed to have endless energy and curiosity. Harnessing those two aspects will prove a super challenge for Kristin when she gets her own class. I think she is up to the challenge!

Dr. Pat Mower has been their university supervisor and has thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It is nice to get out in the area schools and see what is new and what is the same.

**Math Dept URL:** [www.washburn.edu/cas/math](http://www.washburn.edu/cas/math)

## News from Our Graduates

**Ben Artilles** (1991) graduated from WU and spent the next 7+ years working for PayLess Shoe Source (Topeka) in Finance Treasury Department. During this time he also worked on and earned his MBA at Rockhurst College (KS-MO) in 1997. He then began and still is working in marketing at Hill's Pet Nutrition in Topeka. His job titles and descriptions have changed somewhat, but Ben is still at Hills today. He and his wife, Eve, have one daughter, Kathryn.

**Michael A. Barton** (2004) graduated from WU with a BA in Mathematics, Actuarial Science. He recently took a job as an Actuarial Assistant at Sun Life Financial in Wellesley Hills, MA. His main responsibilities are in Lapse (Surrenders) and Mortality Study Analysis for Sun Life's Variable Annuity Block of Business. He has also taken a role in editing the ACTEX Publication of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of Probability for Risk Management by Dr. Matt Hassett and Dr. Don Stewart.

**Dr. Barbara Currier** (1971) sends her greetings to "those old enough to remember her. Larry and Al! Sorry, old-timers!" Barbara has been working at Greenhill School (one of the top independent schools in the country) in Dallas. She has been department chair since 1991 and states "The more I age, the more I learn, and the more I love what I do...best wishes for the new school year."

**Diana Holloway, formerly known as Di Ahlstedt** (1993) graduated from WU with a BA in Mathematics, emphasis in secondary education. She married Dan  
*(continued on page 4)*



**MATH DEPARTMENT Faculty et al: back row; Ron Wasserstein, Pat Mower, Hwa Chi Liang, Lynn Bailey, Jennifer Wagner, Sarah Cook, Dick Driver, front row; Bill Gahnstrom, Kevin Charlwood, Larry Blumberg, Al Riveland, Mike Mosier, [missing are Donna LaLonde, Evelyn Pitts, and HC Beckman]**

### New Chair in Fall 2007

The Department's current Chair, Dr. Larry Blumberg, is stepping down from this post this coming summer, and going on a phase-out retirement. The new Chair-elect is Dr. Kevin Charlwood. Dr. Charlwood has been in the Department since 1997, and has taught a wide range of courses, including Modern Algebra, Applied Statistics, Numerical Analysis and Real Analysis. Dr. Charlwood earned his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1994, and held teaching posts at Bradley University in Peoria, IL and at Saint Leo College (now University) in Saint Leo, FL.

### Mike Mosier's Papers and presentations:

"Statistical Analysis of Data from Studies on Experimental Autoimmune Encephalomyelitis," with Fleming, K.K., Bovaird, J.A., Emerson, M.R., LeVine, S.M., Marquis, J.G., *Journal of Neuroimmunology*

"A Real Data Approach To Teaching The Consequences Of Non-Random Sampling," presented at the International Conference on Teaching Statistics: ICOTS-7, Jul 6, 2006, in Salvador, Brazil, and published in the ICOTS-7 Conference Proceedings.

Also, Mike oversaw a student research project in Spring 2006: Fai Ng, an actuarial science math major, presented a student research project at KME in Spring 2006. His paper received an award for one of the top two papers (1st and 2nd rankings are not given, just top two).

### Math Day XXXVIII

Math Day XXXVIII was held on Tuesday, November 14. Participation in the event had to be limited due to the renovation project with the Stoffer Science Hall; however, we did draw 241 students from 21 neighboring high schools. The 40-question multiple choice competitive exam had a high score of 35, and 12 students scored 30 or better out of 40. Math Day XXXIX is slated for Tuesday, November 13, 2007 - we hope to see some of our graduates there as sponsors!!

**Scholarships:** We are pleased to report that we now have 25 students receiving about \$20,000 in scholarship aid from our department. This includes the annual winners of the McAdam, Shermoen, Carswell and Lempanau awards, as well as the renewable Kinzer and Greene awards. Information regarding these scholarships may be found at:

<http://www.washburn.edu/cas/math/>  
(link to "scholarships")



A drunk mathematician and an aging basset hound were seated at the bar, drinking beer. The drunken mathematician was going on and on about how service at the bar was getting worse and worse over the years.

After listening attentively to the agitated drunk, the old dog said, "At least you did not have to wait until you were 147 years old to drink legally!"

## WU Student Presents at KME

In April ,2007 eight Washburn mathematics students attended the National Kappa Mu Epsilon Convention at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Dr. Ron Wasserstein, President-Elect of the national KME organization, drove the students to Springfield. Kristin Ranum, President of the local chapter of KME, presented a paper, *Who Dun'it? Investigations in the Mathematics of Forensic Science* (directed by Dr. Donna Lalonde). Her presentation earned a top-3 award.

Many students have won awards for their presentations and frequently their papers have been published in the KME journal, *THE PENTAGON*. Included below is a list of Washburn paper presenters at KME conventions. (The list may be incomplete.) If a paper is known to have won an award in the competition it is indicated accordingly. Since 1995, undifferentiated awards have been given to the top-4 awards at national conventions and the top-3 awards at regional conventions. The faculty director or directors is/are included when known.

1962 - Emanuel Calys, *A Note on a Particular Class of Determinants*. Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1968 - Barbara Elder, *Paths and Knots as Geometric Groups*. Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1969 - Janet Love, *Linear Diophantine Equations and Congruences*. Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1970 - Barbara Shappard, *Egyptian Fractions*,

4<sup>th</sup> 1973 - Linda Granstaff, *On the Graphs of Groups*. (Milner)

1<sup>st</sup> 1975 - Sandy Peer, *A Definition of Number*. (Riveland)

5<sup>th</sup> 1975 - Janet Guyer, *A Discussion of the Division Algorithm in Interval Domains Other Than Z*. (Milner)

1<sup>st</sup> 1978 - Ron Wasserstein, *A Baseball Scheduling Model*. (Riveland)

1<sup>st</sup> 1979 - Mike Hewitt, *A Stochastic Process for Composing Music*. (Riveland). Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

2<sup>nd</sup> 1980 - Randy Leimer, *Graph Theory in Decision Making*. (Riveland)

3<sup>rd</sup> 1985 - Doug Bogia, *An Application of Linear Interpolation in Two Variables for Brain Wave Displays*. (Calys)

3<sup>rd</sup> 1987 – Kelly Eisenbarth, *From Alice to Algebra*. (Wasserstein)

3<sup>rd</sup> 1988 - Jill Rasmussen, *Least Squares: Moving from the Specific to the General*. (Wasserstein) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1<sup>st</sup> 1989 - Kevin Chartier, *The Rain I Claim Falls Mainly on the Brain*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1<sup>st</sup> 1991 - Mary Wilson, *What's the Fractal Dimension of KME*: (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1<sup>st</sup> 1994 - Kirk Drager, *Markov Chains and Ion Channel Conductance*. (LaLonde, Riveland)

Top-4 1995 - Dan Wessel, *Fore!*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

Top-4 1995 - Jeff Brown, *Atmospheric Gambling*. (LaLonde, Angel) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

1996 - Kim Bell, *Investigations of Biological Computers and Graph Theory*. (LaLonde)

Top-4 1999 - Laurie Payeur, *How Many is Enough?* (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

Top-4 1999 - Doug Appenfeller, *Going Up?*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

Top-4 2001 - Mark Smith, *Chicken Pecking Orders*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

2002 - Robert O'Loughlin, *Song of Banacio: Tonal Excursions in a Familiar Sequence*. (Mower)

Top-3 2004 - Fred Hollingshead, *An Investigation of Spiral Length*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

Top-4 2005 - Carolyn Cole, *The Topeka Public School Busing Problem.It's Simplex*. (LaLonde) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

2005 - Zeb Kramer, *An Introduction to the Theory and Uses of Ab Initio Electron Structure*. (Charlwood, Angel)

Top-4 2005 - Jo Marie Rozzelle, *Canoeing down the River of Recursion*. (Riveland) Published in *THE PENTAGON*.

Top-4 2005 - Fred Hollingshead, *On Health Care: Making an Informed Decision*. (to appear in *The Pentagon*). (Riveland)

Top-3 2006 - Fai Ng, *Health Insurance: Time Will Tell*. (Mosier)

Top-3 2007 – Kristin Ranum, *Who Dun'it? Investigations in the Mathematics of Forensic Science*. (Lalonde).

A Complete history of KME talks can be found at [www.washburn.edu/cas/math/](http://www.washburn.edu/cas/math/)

### *News From Our Graduates, cont. from page 2 .*

Holloway in 1993, currently an engineer at Cook, Flatt, and Strobel Engineers. They have 3 daughters: Abigail, Anna, and Alison. Diana taught for 3 ½ years at Topeka HS and retired from THS to start home-schooling her daughters in 2002. She sends special greetings to Dr. Driver, Al, and Larry.

**Louis E. Eck** (1971) graduated with a BA in pure mathematics. Louis works for the Eastman Kodak Company, located in Rochester, NY. He tells us "my membership in KME continues to be a source of pride and validation of the skills in mathematics, logic, physics, and process applications that I obtained while a student at Washburn."

**John T. Johnson** (1956) graduated with a BA in Mathematics. He retired as an Air force Colonel, and then worked on various government contracts using computer modeling and data-base management.

**Jeromy R. Kelly** (1998) graduated with a BA from WU and then went to University of Missouri – Columbia for his MBA. Currently he is working for Accenture doing Business Consulting for the Telecommunications Industry.

*News from our graduates, cont. from page 4.*

**Jan Perney** (1968) graduated from WU with a BA in Mathematics, specialization in Secondary Education. Jan has been Professor of Educational Research and Foundation at National-Louis University since 1976 where he teaches courses in educational research and statistics. He married Linda (Maag) Perney (BMED, 1968). Together they have two children and one grandchild.

**Fred W. Stawitz** (1973, 1985) is now with Story-makers, Inc. in Houston where they are working on increasing their screenwriters' workshops and consulting services.

**Ben and Jennifer Womack** (1996, 1996) have taught (Jennifer) at Washburn Rural MS and now at Topeka HS teaching math and coaching and (Ben) in 4 different districts, currently at Silver Lake teaching math, coaching softball and volleyball, and serving as math curriculum chair.

### New KME Members

Our chapter of KME inducted 16 new student members at its February 26 initiation ceremony and dinner.

## New Professors Join the Mathematics Department Family

Although we were only shopping for one tenure-track professor, the two top candidates were equally great. So we offered both Jennifer Wagner and Gaspar Porta positions beginning as Assistant Professors.

Jennifer talks about herself: "I'm originally from St. Paul, MN and have also lived in Iowa, San Diego, and Chicago. As an undergraduate, I spent a semester in Budapest, Hungary. I live in Lawrence now.

Mathematically, I am interested in combinatorics. Most of my research has involved symmetric functions, though I am also interested in graph theory. I have a current project that I hope might have applications to biology. When I have time, I like to read (especially mysteries), cook, and I am a wine enthusiast. I used to knit, but have fallen out of the habit recently."

Gaspar Porta has taught as a Visiting Professor at several institutions, including a year in Argentina. Dr. Porta joins us from Carthage College in Kenosha, WI. We look forward to his arrival and sharing with our readers many more details about our newest Prof.

## What's Happening in the Department?

*Many noteworthy things happened in our classes and around the department this year. Here is a random sample:*

Dr. Sarah Cook has been very busy in 2007. Here is a list of the highlights of her year:

- Presented "High School Calculus: To Be or Not to Be?" with Donna LaLonde and Donna Young at KATM in Manhattan (September 2006)
- Presented "Making it Real" at the national joint meetings of AMS/MAA in New Orleans (January 2007)
- Ran two workshops on Taxi Cab Geometry for ESU's Sonia Kovelevsky Day (Feb 2007)
- Presented "Math Placement: Problems and Progress" at the MAA meeting in Wichita (March 2007)
- Took four Real Analysis students to KSU to hear the lecture by Dr. Jill Pipher on "Some Problems in Multi-Parameter Fourier Analysis" for the Virginia Chatelain Memorial Lecture series. (fall semester)
- Instructor (with Donna LaLonde and other WU/area teachers) for the "Tri-C" project (funded through a grant).
- On a personal note. Sarah's husband Michael began working as a Systems Administrator for the WU ISS Dept last March.

Dr. Kevin Charlwood will be our new chair starting Fall 2007. So he has been learning the ropes. He presented at the Joint AMA-MAA meeting in New Orleans.

He also attended the KS MAA Annual Sectional Meeting held at Wichita State March 30 - 31, and gave a presentation, "Mathematics Assessment at Washburn University" in tandem with presentations by Dr. Pat Mower and Dr. Sarah Cook. Kevin is serving as chapter President of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and is the Corresponding Secretary for our chapter of KME.

Dr. Pat Mower's 2<sup>nd</sup> book *Geometry Out Loud* went on the market April 2006 and she is working on her 3<sup>rd</sup> book in the series. She presented a talk on Common Finals: Pros and Cons on March 31 at the KS MAA Annual Sectional meeting held at Wichita State. On a sadder note, Pat's mother passed away and most of the department faculty was at the funeral. Pat's family sends their gratitude. AND, we do have the best department on campus!

Dr. Hwa Chi Liang has been busy with math and university service: serving on the Faculty senate, overseeing the Math tutor center, hiring and scheduling, and serving as Departmental library representative. Dr. Liang is part of our actuarial program and says "the actuarial exams are highly competitive and require, on average, 250 to 300 hours of study. In February 2007, three out of five students passed the Exam-P the first time they took it." Kudos!

See Mike Mosier's "data" on page 3.

**Let us hear from you—tell us about yourself, suggest a possible student to Washburn who might be interested in majoring in mathematics, or give us other news of interest. A sheet is enclosed for your use.**

Pat Mower, PhD, Editor  
Department of Mathematics and Statistics  
Washburn University  
1700 SW College Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66621

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**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 – use back if needed.)

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