

AFTERMATH

Texas A&M University – Commerce

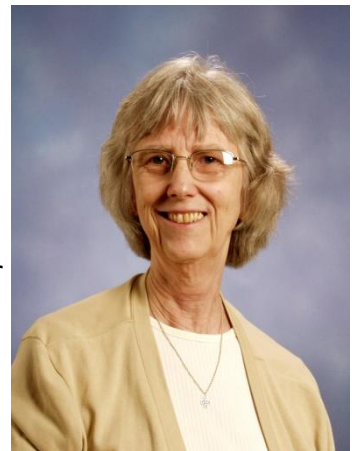
Mathematics Department Newsletter Fall 2010 vol 24 no 1

Find us on the web at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/math/>

Let no one ignorant of Geometry enter here. –Engraved above the doors of Plato’s Academy

Comings and Goings of Faculty

Unfortunately, the Mathematics Department was forced to say an early goodbye to **Laurene Fausett**, who passed away this year from colon cancer. Laurene passed away on Sunday, April 18th. The department misses her tremendously and the loss is felt throughout our student body, both in undergraduate and graduate courses. The department is pleased that, even after their loss, her husband Don and daughter Beverly continue to work closely with the department.



Dr. Laurene Fausett

Thomas Faulkenberry completed his Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology in December 2009. His dissertation, focusing on mathematical cognition, examined mental representations of fractions and working memory loads associated with those representations. Thomas is now the Director of the Math and Science Teacher Preparation Program at A&M -Commerce and is Project Director for the CREATE Richardson Implementation Project. He is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology and Special Education for the 2010-2011 academic year. He also continues to assist the Department of Mathematics as an adjunct.

Sarah Bunch, a recent graduate of our Master’s Degree program, continues to teach as an adjunct for two evening classes this fall. In addition, **Leah Reagan**, an alumnus of TAMU-C, continues to teach online courses for the department. In the area of Graduate Assistants, the department welcomes **Aida Murtazina-Allen** and **Lacy Gaines**, both recent graduates of our Honors undergraduate program, as first-time instructors. Aida states, “I am a native Russian who fell in love with America and Texas”; we all look forward to her new viewpoint and sharing our cultures. The department welcomes back teaching assistants **Muhammed Ozturk**, **Josh Patterson**, and **Eric Pleasant**. Finally, the department welcomes new adjuncts **Lori Blagg** from Paris, TX and **Deborah Rhoads**, an alumnus of our department.

Updates on Returning Faculty and Staff

Stuart Anderson spent most of the last year serving as Interim Department Head. He is pleased to be back to full-time teaching. Dr. Anderson has recently completed a term as Texas Section MAA Governor. He is preparing a paper, [From Babylonian Table Texts to Abstractions](#), for presentation at the Joint Mathematics meetings in New Orleans next January.



Bill Aslan, who accepted a teaching position here in 1967, has been testing the idea of retirement recently. However, the lure of the classroom draws him back each time. This summer, Bill, his wife Gloria, and son James went took several trips, and are recently back from yet another cruise.

Hasan Coskun has recently had four research papers published in prestigious journals: one in Mathematical Biology and the other three in Algebraic Combinatorics. In addition, a technical report is also published by the Advanced Research Program (ARP) of THECB on speech processing. In addition, he has submitted even more research articles that should be published by the end of the year.

Dr. Coskun continues to serve on Editorial Boards of four peer reviewed journals, and continues to teach our Mesquite graduate courses in addition to graduate and undergraduate courses on the main campus. The Mesquite graduate courses are now offered as distance education courses, and the Instructional Technology department featured distance education math courses on their website at <http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/facultyStaffServices/instructionalTechnologyandDistanceEducation/instructionalDesignUnit/default.aspx>



Charles Dorsett received his tenure this year, and was promoted to Associate Professor. In addition, he continues to publish numerous papers, primarily in Topology. He recently had his 100th, 101st, and 102nd papers accepted for publication. In addition, he presented a paper at this year's meeting of the Texas Section of the MAA in Abilene: "Additional Topological Characterizations of Finite Sets and a Check for the Total Number of Topologies on a Finite Set." Perhaps most important to the department, however, is his recent acceptance of the position of Interim Head for the Department of Mathematics. After some difficulties with the search process, the department found itself without a head as Stuart Anderson moved back into the faculty. Graciously, Dr. Dorsett agreed to take up these duties for 2010-2011.



Eileen Faulkenberry is involved in much grant activity (see Departmental Outreach/Grants below). Eileen and **Thomas Faulkenberry** had an article published in the NCTM journal *Mathematics Teacher*, entitled, "Transforming the way we teach transformations of functions." This article is available for download at http://www.nctm.org/eresources/article_summary.asp?URI=MT2010-08-29a&from=B.

On a more personal note, Thomas, Eileen, and big sister Emily welcomed Elena Edele Faulkenberry to their family on September 12, 2010. She weighed 6 lbs. 12 oz. and was 19 inches long.



Baby Elena

John Heath is enjoying his 36th year of teaching at East Texas State-Texas A&M-Commerce University. He attended the Texas Section of MAA Meeting at Abilene last spring and plans to attend the 2011 meeting at UT-Tyler in April. John and his wife, Marilyn, are working on their 32nd year of marriage.

Angie Hill continues with the department as Administrative Assistant. She has been with us for 3 ½ years and still says she loves us, even with all of the recent changes and additions to our department. She and her husband, Bryant, continue to provide the department with a country perspective as they attend and help run their church rodeo. Their daughters are doing great; Mandy recently started work for the TAMU-C Residence Life department and Mallory is another year closer to her degree as a Math 4-8 teacher. As for Angie, she's taking 6 hours this semester on top of working 40 hours for the department.

Vanessa Huse continues her work with Teacher Quality Grants (see below). In addition, she remains active with the International Conference on Technology in Mathematics Teaching (ICTMT) for 2011.. The website for this conference can be found at <http://www.ictmt10.org/>.

Sandy Johnson rejoins the department as an ad-interim instructor for the year. She will be teaching a variety of first-year courses.





Yelin Ou and his wife Baifang Qin went back to China to see their parents during the summer. Yelin took the opportunity to give several invited talks at Peking University, Fudan University, and Zhejiang University. Yelin's research in the past year was fruitful with a faculty research award and a research grant award from the university. In addition, Dr. Ou managed to have 2 papers published, 2 papers accepted, and 4 others submitted for publication. He also continues to serve as a reviewer of Mathematical Reviews and Zentralblatt Math.

While working at A & M Commerce, Yelin is trying to establish a wide international cooperation. As more and more scholars cited his works and expressed the interest to come and work with him, he has helped to have a visiting scholar from China visit and conduct research in the department in fall 2009. He is expecting to have a visiting scholar from Romania come in November of this year.

Yelin and Baifang are very excited about their impending move into a house in a neighborhood of Commerce, though the radius of the neighborhood is yet to be decided.

Debra Newton continues with the faculty as an ad-interim instructor, teaching various courses for first-year students. In addition, she is working as a faculty member on the Project DREAM grant (see Departmental Outreach/Grants below).

Lymeda Singleton has once again made several presentations at CAMT in July. She also presented at workshops for Commerce ISD (Geometer Sketchpad and TI calculators) and Bonham ISD (Fractions K – 8). In addition, Lymeda continues to provide professional development for our pre-service teachers twice a month via Math Mania. In-service teachers are welcome to come. It would involve getting a half-day sub. Interested teachers are encouraged to email her at Lymeda.Singleton@tamu-commerce.edu for details and a schedule of topics.

The Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators - Texas Section benefits from having Lymeda as a task force member who is studying and making recommendations on the alignment of national and state standards on the preparation of master math teachers. She also serves as part of the A&M-Commerce team of the Faculty Initiative on College and Career Readiness Standards, a TEA state-wide focus.

Lymeda continues as Problem of the Week sponsor, and she recently accepted the position of math club sponsor. On a personal note, Lymeda and Mike have welcomed a new member to their family: a new granddaughter. Also, she and Mike celebrated 36 years of marriage this summer with a trip to the US Virgin Islands to enjoy snorkeling.



Lymeda Singleton at a Math Club Meeting

Nikolay Sirakov is in his 7th year with A&M-Commerce and he was promoted to Associate Professor when he received a tenured position this spring. He continues as a reviewer for a number of peer-reviewed International Conferences and Journals. In the past year, he has published a paper in automatic skin cancer delineation, and three conference papers in automatic tracking of neutrophils in the blood and weapons recognition. His work in skin cancer research was funded by an internal project. In his research, Nikolay collaborates with four faculty members and supervises the research of two students.

However, by his own words, his greatest achievement is the collaboration with his daughter, Nona, in the development and coding of an algorithm for automatic tracking of neutrophils. During the 2009 Christmas vacation, he was desperately looking for someone with a very good math background and programming skills to code his new expanding active contour (AC) model. He realized that while in the Honors Programs of the Department of Mathematics and the Department of Computer Science at UT Austin, Nona had accumulated exactly the knowledge he needed. Thus, they spent several hours a day for a month working together on the project. Their work together evolved into a Java tool and, through collaboration with a colleague from UT Arlington, was applied to a video sequence of a neutrophil chasing and engulfing bacteria.



KaSai Un went home to Macau this summer. KaSai has not been home since the summer of 2004, and she was excited to see her friends and family. She was especially happy to learn that her brother is in remission of lymphoma after his chemotherapy and radiation treatments that ended in June. This is KaSai's fourth year teaching in the department. She received the Texas A&M University System Teaching Excellence Award for fall 2009. She gave a talk at the Texas MAA meeting in Abilene this April with a topic about the support system for our developmental mathematics students. She has also worked with **Pamela Webster** to give a talk about the Career & College Readiness Standards for Texas public schools at the CAMT conference in San Antonio this July.



Pamela Webster begins her 12th year as a faculty member with a multiple talks under her belt at the MAA Texas Section, CAMT, and various other conferences. She also presented at workshops for Commerce ISD and Bonham ISD through the Texas Regional Collaborative. While she continues to collaborate with alumnus **Heather Allen** and faculty member **KaSai Un** on talks and research, she is also excited to receive a major grant from the THECB (see Departmental Outreach/Grants).

Dr. Webster continues on the teaching team for the MASTA grant. She is also currently doing contractual work in the area of math education and serves as part of the A&M-Commerce team of the Faculty Initiative on College and Career Readiness Standards, a TEA state-wide focus. In addition, she received a second Teaching Excellence Award from the Texas A&M System in the Spring 2010 semester.

Perhaps her greatest professional joy this year, however, was advising **Lacy Gaines** through her Honors thesis. Lacy has the distinction of being the first student to graduate from the Honors College, and she graduated with High Honors. This was Dr. Webster's first Honors thesis to direct, and she was truly thrilled to be able to pin the honors forage to Lacy's lapel during the August graduation ceremony. In her free time, Pamela continues to ride and jump horses, as well as furthering her interests in SCUBA diving.

Retired Faculty

Dale Bedgood and his wife, Betty, celebrated their 51st Wedding Anniversary. The Bedgoods stay very busy as their lives are filled with activities almost on a daily basis. They are both active in adult Sunday School departments at their church. Also, it is not unusual for department members to see them both at the Student Recreation Center, where they work out practically daily.

Archie Brock and his wife, Lela, and **Archie Brock** celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary in September. At a recent gathering with the department, Archie took the opportunity to tell stories about the department. In particular, Bill Aslan stories were popular.

John Davenport--It is hard to believe that John is beginning his 5th year of retirement. At a recent gathering, John expressed gratitude that he and Donna have not had difficulty keeping of with their seven kids (although their combined children are not really kids anymore). They enjoy their time with their grandchildren tremendously. Also, they have enjoyed many Rangers baseball games this season, and have had the opportunity to do some traveling.

Jack Lamb--Jack and Mildred entertain themselves by chasing their four grandchildren. Tristan (13) is in the eighth grade this year. Zander is in the second grade, and two granddaughters, Kristen and Kathryn, are in 6th and 2nd grades, respectively.

Howard Lambert and wife Freda are enjoying retirement. They have a travel trailer and like traveling and camping. At a recent gathering with the department, both were thrilled to be visiting with the department and, indeed, Howard took the opportunity to assist Archie Brock with the straight lines for some Bill Aslan stories.

Vance Underhill and wife, Ann, celebrated their second wedding anniversary on August 29th. The Underhills also attended a recent gathering with the department, and seemed to be enjoying both each others' company and the company of the department.

Departmental Outreach/Grants

Mathematics and Science Teacher Academy (MASTA) – A Math and Science Teacher Academy for undergraduate and graduate students at Texas A&M University-Commerce was established during the fall 2009 semester, and that grant continues. The academy is for students pursuing degrees in math and science. There are approximately 50 in-service and pre-service teachers attending the academy. This group has focused their professional development on Lesson Study and Action Research. The academy is made possible by a \$685,000 grant by The Higher Education Coordinating Board. Project directors are **Eileen Faulkenberry** and Gil Naizer, Curriculum and Instruction faculty. Other faculty involved in the grant are **Pamela Webster** of the mathematics faculty, Cheri Davis, Assistant Director of the A&M-Commerce Planetarium, and Mark Reid, Curriculum and Instruction faculty.



The Advanced Research Project Grant (\$108,000) funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has been extended for another year until 2011. **Hasan Coskun** continues as the director of the grant. In addition, Hasan served as a Principle Investigator on the team for a Federal Initiative grant last year, and a current proposal for a grant on Speech Processing.

Teacher Quality Grants – Last year, the mathematics department received two two-year Teacher Quality grants. The Teacher Quality Professional Development grant is funded from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the U.S. Department of Education. One of the grants was authored by **Eileen Faulkenberry** and **Thomas Faulkenberry**. In this Teacher Quality grant, 28 teachers from the region attended a three-week intensive summer workshop and meet the first Saturday of every month during the school year to continue the professional development and support the teachers as they implement changes in their classroom practices. “Measurement in the Middle Grades” was granted for the Athens area and was authored by **Vanessa Huse**. Maribeth McAnally serves as the co-director. In addition, Vanessa Huse was awarded \$64,000 in extra funding for this year of the grant, added to the \$89,000 which was funded in May of 2009 for a total of \$153,000 for the year.

Project DREAM, Developing Readiness for Everyone in Algebra and Mathematics, was funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for \$400,000 over two years. The grant is directed by **Pamela Webster** and co-directed by Wendy Gruver, Director of Student Assessment. A&M-Commerce is one of four four-year institutions in the state to receive such a grant, which is the first of its kind on campus. It will allow students in Intermediate Algebra to receive expanded services and will enhance the university's developmental mathematics program. The grant provides funding for the university to implement innovative approaches toward developmental mathematics. Many services will be provided through the DEDP grant, which includes modular courses, technology-enhanced sections of Intermediate Algebra, service learning, and project-based learning.



Mathematics Clubs and Other Student Activities

During the Fall 2009 semester, **Lymeda Singleton** and **Pamela Webster** took approximately 25 students to the STEEM conference in Texarkana. Students participated in various concurrent sessions and were even allowed to play with a Wii® game in an effort to collect mathematical data. We had 18 students attend the CAMT conference in San Antonio in July. **Mrs. Singleton and Dr. Webster** also attended the conference and made presentations.

The math clubs continued their new fundraiser during the Spring semester: Pi a Prof. The students voted for the professor they wanted to receive a pie (to eat, not to wear) by making donations in the professor's jar. **Dr. Webster** was the overwhelming winner, and received a pecan pie.



After almost a year and a half as advisor to the Math Clubs, **Eileen Faulkenberry** asked to step down from the position this fall. **Lymeda Singleton** has taken over as Math Club advisor. **Lymeda Singleton** has been active in creating and sponsoring student activities. She continues as the departmental sponsor of the Problem of the Week competition. In addition, she was the sponsor this year of Math Mania, a professional development for pre-service elementary and middle school certification majors. In-service teachers are also welcome. The sessions are usually self-paced centers. Contact Mrs. Singleton for the topics scheduled.



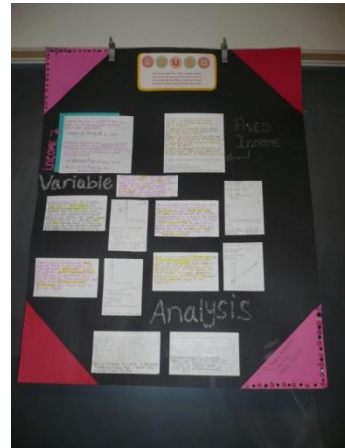
Math Skills Center and Developmental Mathematics

The **Math Skills Center** continues to thrive! Students use our services regularly and often grow attached to a particular “favorite” tutor who explains things in just their language. In the meanwhile, the Math Skills Center continues to serve students in math courses through Calculus I. Approximately 15 tutors work with students in this area. Tutors must know how to work with MyMathLab (the online homework program used for Intermediate and College Algebra). The Math Skills Center also houses the Ellison Letter Press, used in the Math Elementary Education courses; many die cuts are available for both student and alumni use.

The **Developmental Mathematics Program** has added project-based learning and



service learning to the curriculum, in part thanks to Project DREAM. A pilot program was run during the Fall 2009 semester, where students participated in a Project Fair to present their projects to the department and the campus as a whole. In addition, we have implementing occasional voluntary workshops for both Intermediate Algebra and College Algebra, to address special topics that need attention from the students. Topics include items such as factoring and calculator use.



Foundation and Scholarship news

We are most thankful for friends of the department who over the years have helped countless students with their mathematical careers. Working with two other departments on campus, we are now able to assist some of our students who are currently teachers; this is in addition to our ability to help needy undergraduates. A few of our recipients for the 2009-2010 school year can be seen here:



If you wish to make contributions to any of these funds, you may call the Department at 903.886.5157 or the A&M-Commerce Foundation at 903.886.5712

Homecoming Brunch

The twenty-first annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Brunch (formerly Breakfast) will be held at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, October 23, 2010 in the (new) Sam Rayburn Student Center, Room 213C. **Please send in your reservations by October 20, 2009.** The cost is FREE(!) to alumni, special friends of the math department, and their guests – but only if we know ahead of time (for catering purposes).

Please RSVP at 903.886.5157 or

via email to Angie_Hill@tamu-commerce.edu

Let Us Hear From You

We would like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or TAMU-C, we are interested in what has happened in your life since you left campus. If you have a story about a favorite professor, we would like to hear that, too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included in the next *Aftermath Newsletter*.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Degree: _____

Year Graduated: _____

Email address: _____

Please list any career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news that you would like to share:

Please send to the address below:

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