Mathematical Association of America History of Mathematics Special Interest Group

HOM SIGMAA News

Volume XVI, Number 1 January 2026

Dates to Remember:

- June 4 - June 6, 2026 CSHPM in Halifax, Nova Scotia
- August 5 – 8, 2026 *MathFest* in Boston, MA
- July 23-30, 2026 ICM, Philadelphia

Inside this issue:

Greetings from your HOM SIGMAA Chair

This past fall, we continued our HOM SIGMAA Virtual Speaker Series presentations with several excellent talks. Mark your calendars for this spring since we have several speakers scheduled, the meetings will occur on the second Friday of the month at 3pm ET, see details here. If you have any suggestions for speakers for our Virtual Speaker Series, please contact Abe Edwards, our Program Coordinator, at aedwards@msu.edu.

The 2026 Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Mathematics (CSHPM) will hold its Annual Meeting in Halifax at Dalhousie University in conjunction with the 2026 Meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association and the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science from June 4-6, 2026. The call for papers can be found here. Submissions have to be received by February 1, 2026.

Save the date for MathFest 2026 in Boston, MA, August 5 – 8, 2026. We will have an invited speaker for the Annual HOM SIGMAA Business meeting. HOM SIGMAA is sponsoring a Contributed Paper Session called "*Teaching through Time: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Mathematics"*, and a "*Read the Masters*" session organized by Danny Otero. Additionally, HOM SIGMAA is planning on having another "*History of Mathematics Trivia*" event, and Rick Gillman has submitted a proposal for a session titled "Stories from Our Section History".

The portal for individual paper and poster abstract submissions for MathFest will open in early 2026.

The International Congress of Mathematicians 2026 (ICM) will take place in Philadelphia, July 23–30, 2026. Amy Ackerberg-Hastings announced, at the last Convergence Editorial Board meeting, that Adrian Rice is one of the organizers of a History Session at the ICM meeting.

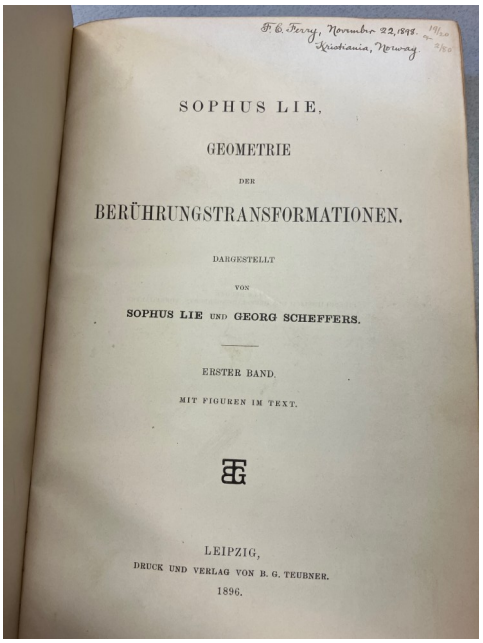
Best regards from Ximena

A Good Home for an Old Treasure

Rick Cleary, Babson College

As a mathematician interested in, if not actively engaged in, the study of the History of Mathematics, I feel like a friend of the History of Mathematics community. I always enjoy the History of Mathematics paper sessions at our meetings. especially when speakers showed primary source materials. On my several runs every year with the late, great Euler scholar Ed Sandifer, he would entertain me with tales of what he had found on recent trips to rare book collections. I admired this but was never myself strongly tempted to browse through older tracts.

Then in August of 2025, a relatively old book fell unexpectedly into my lap, or more precisely, onto my desk! I arrived at my office one day and found an 1896 text by Sophus Lie sitting on a draft syllabus for my Linear Algebra class. Where had it come from? Was it valuable? And, more to point, what should I do with it? I know from my experience listening to historians of mathematics that I had a responsibility to treat it with care.


F. E. Ferry, November 22, 1898.
Kristiania, Norway

SOPHUS LIE,

GEOMETRIE

DER

BERÜHRUNGSTRANSFORMATIONEN.

DARGESTELLT

VON

SOPHUS LIE UND GEORG SCHEFFERS.

ERSTER BAND.

MIT FIGUREN IM TEXT.

LEIPZIG,
DRUCK UND VERLAG VON B. G. TEUBNER.
1896.

The full story is told in this email I sent to Prof. Saber Ahmed of Hamilton College:

Hello Saber:

I teach Mathematics and Statistics at Babson College and my wife Ann Trenk (cc'd here) is a mathematician at Wellesley and was on your department's review committee about three years ago. Our son Eddie Trenk was a math and CS major at Hamilton who graduated this May and his younger brother Tommy is a rising sophomore who plans to major in math and/or CS.

I'm writing today because I see on the website that you mentioned Lie Algebras as an area of interest. Some workers doing renovations in my office this summer found a book on a top shelf that I'd never bothered to look at it. It's a text, in German, by Sophus Lie from 1896. I had one of our librarians look at it and he determined that it was interesting though not especially rare/valuable. But it's beautifully bound and pretty cool looking .

Now the fun part: I correctly guessed that my retired colleague Gordon Pritchett had owned the book and I tracked him down. He doesn't want it but he reported that he got it when he was teaching at Hamilton 50 years ago and somebody (a Prof. Ferry) who retired gave it to him.

Since we are not algebraists, and we don't read German, we are not interested in keeping

the book, so I thought I would see if we might "repatriate" the text to Hamilton. If you would be interested, or if you think your school library might be interested, we could bring the book when we come for the home cross country meet on September 12 and have Tommy deliver it to you.

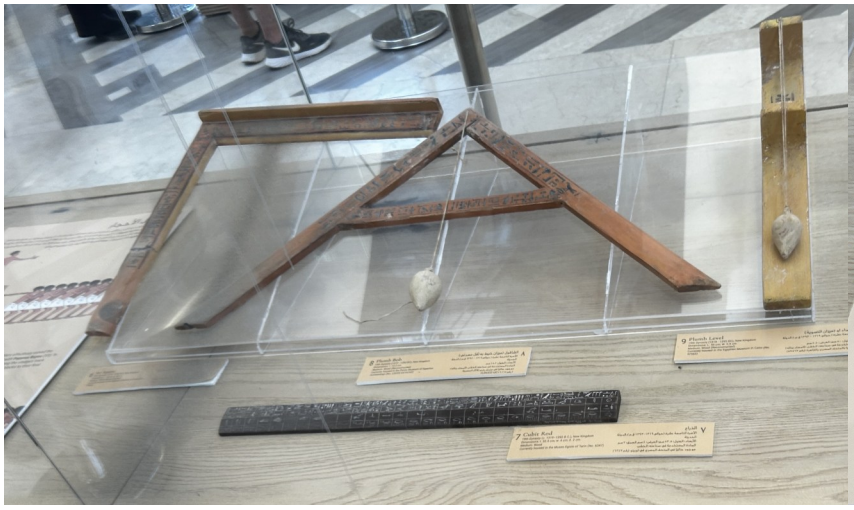
Let me know if you'd like it … if not, I can put out a call to the MAA History of Math group.

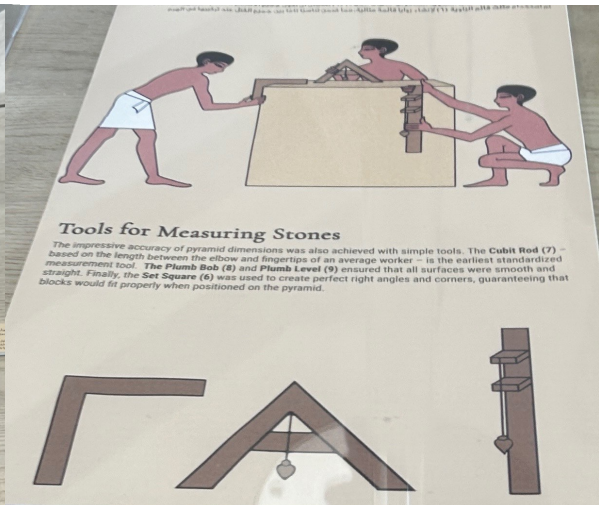
Have a great fall semester in any event,

Rick Cleary

The follow up: Saber was delighted to get the book and will work with the Hamilton library to take care of it, an extremely happy resolution! Tommy was happy to be the delivery boy as he's in the math building all the time anyway.

I am sending this along because it is a cute story that I think the HoM community might enjoy. What I find most rewarding about this tale is that every year on MAA Connect there are people who write in and say, "I'm retiring and I have a huge collection of books journals, who would like them?" And the answer is generally, "Nobody!" I am pleased that at least in this one circumstance we had a happy outcome.





Above: Replica tools (Set Square, Plumb Bob, Plumb Level, and Cubit) on display at the Giza Pyramids, Egypt.

Left: Six cubits found in the tomb of King Tutankhamen now on display at the Grand Egyptian Museum in Giza, Egypt.

Photos by Cynthia Huffman.

TRIUMPHS Society News

As readers of this newsletter are likely to know, the TRIUMPHS Society (TRansforming Instruction: Understanding Mathematics via Primary Historical Sources) seeks to bring together practitioners and others interested in the use of primary historical sources in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Formally launched in 2023, the Society is an outgrowth of the NSF-funded TRIUMPHS project through which a collection of approximately 100 Primary Source Projects (PSPs) was developed for use in mathematics courses across the curriculum. Those projects remain freely available for classroom use via Digital Commons, with more peer-reviewed PSPs now appearing in the Society's flagship peer-reviewed journal, *Annals of the TRIUMPHS Society*.

In addition to offering virtual professional development opportunities focused on teaching with and authorship of PSPs, the Society has launched a members-only Primary Source Virtual Reading Group (VRG). During the inaugural session of that VRG, held the weekend of January 16, 2026, participants read from and discussed Book II of Euclid's *Elements*. That session took place in two 2-hour meetings. On Friday evening, we began with a brief introduction to Euclid and the *Elements* by Danny Otero (Xavier University, and the Society's Lord Viscount Brouncker President Emeritus). Then participants—across four timezones—spent time reading Book II together in small groups with a focus on understanding the structure of the propositions and carefully working through a small number of proofs. These small-group discussions were interspersed with time for collective check-ins and participant-driven exploration. On Saturday morning, we started by reflecting together on insights, questions, and confusions from Friday's work. We then returned to the source text for further small-group reading, with attention to several particularly interesting propositions. Groups were also prompted to reflect on the pedagogical value of the source, a topic to which we returned during our closing whole-group discussion. Approximately 20 individuals participated in at least one of the two meeting times, with most taking part on both Friday and Saturday. No prior experience with Euclid was required; just curiosity, patience, and a willingness to read closely with others!

The TRIUMPHS Society invites interested individuals to take part in the next VRG session for what we expect to be an equally rich shared exploration! That session will take place on Friday/Saturday, April 10-11 with readings from Isidore of Seville (c. 560–638) as our focus. In all, the Society plans to offer four VRG meetings annually in sessions designed to work through texts that are not very well-known but speak to core mathematical ideas. Source readings will be selected from a variety of historical periods, places, and cultures organized roughly chronologically (Greek antiquity to the twelfth century, in 2026; 1200–1750, in 2027; 1750–2000, in 2028). The remaining schedule for 2026 can be found on the HOM SIGMAA History of Mathematics Events Calendar maintained by Bud Boman.

The Society will also be holding a members-only virtual discussion session on "Implementing PSPs: What does this look like in the classroom?" on February 26 at 2 pm Eastern. Instructors who have used PSPs in the past are invited to share their experiences at this session, while those who are new to the practice are invited to join in to learn more about the benefits that this powerful pedagogy offers to students and how best to take advantage of those benefits.

As noted above, the *Annals of the TRIUMPHS Society* continues to publish new PSPs for courses throughout the undergraduate curriculum. As well, the editors have released a special legacy issue featuring PSPs written under the parent grant to TRIUMPHS, Learning Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science via Primary Historical Sources. Currently, about half of these parent grant PSPs are available in the legacy issue; the rest will be added to the issue in the coming weeks. The *Annals* not only publishes PSPs ready for classroom use, but also seeks artifacts and documents related to the development of or that support the implementation of such projects, as well as articles on the scholarship of teaching and learning with primary sources. *If a topic is related to teaching mathematics with primary sources, then it is potentially of interest to the journal — please consider submitting your own work in this exciting field for publication!*

Membership in the TRIUMPHS Society is only 12 USD annually and allows for participation in all Society events. Membership is not required, however, to access or submit to the *Annal*s.

HOM SIGMAA Student Travel Grants Available

HOM SIGMAA is pleased to announce travel grants to graduate and undergraduate students. Money is available to help students travel to meetings to present a paper or poster in the history of mathematics. Details can be found in the HOM SIGMAA community on MAA Connect, connect.maa.org.

2026 HOM SIGMAA Executive Committee

Chair: Ximena Catepillán, Millersville University,
Ximena.Catepillan@millersville.edu

Secretary/Treasurer: Cynthia Huffman, Pittsburg State University,
cjhuffman@pittstate.edu

Program Coordinator: Abe Edwards, Lyman Briggs College within Michigan State University,
aedwards@msu.edu

Electronic Resources Coordinator: Eugene (Bud) Boman, Penn State, Harrisburg (Emeritus),
budboman@gmail.com

Past Chair: Amy Shell-Gellasch, University of Michigan,
ashellg@umich.edu

Save these dates for future MAA meetings!

MathFest 2026	Boston, MA	August 5-8
MathFest 2027	New Orleans, LA	August 4-7
MathFest 2028	San Diego, CA	August 2-5
MathFest 2029	Chicago, IL	August 8-11
MathFest 2030	New York, NY	August 7-10

HoM Events Calendar

Visit the History of Mathematics Events Calendar (maintained by Eugene Boman) for a list of events and meetings around the world which relate to the History of Mathematics.

Small grants for the history of mathematics classroom are available

HOM members who need some help to purchase items for use in the teaching of the history of mathematics are encouraged to apply for a small grant. Information on how to apply can be found on our website at https://homsigmaa.net/hom-sigmaa-grants-new and at the end of this newsletter.

MAA Convergence Moving Forward

Daniel E. Otero and Amy Ackerberg-Hastings

Editors, *MAA Convergence*

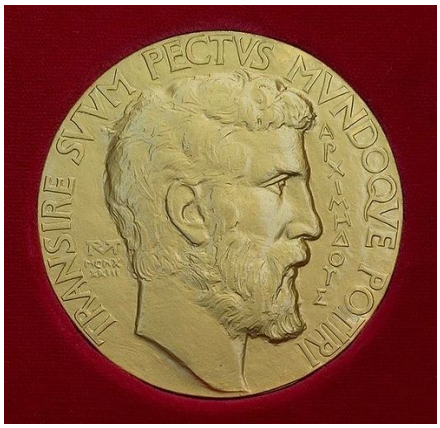
As the MAA's electronic, refereed journal for the use of the history of mathematics in the teaching of mathematics, *MAA Convergence* has offered readers high-quality scholarship and classroom resources since 2004. We moved into the Taylor & Francis suite of MAA journals in 2025 and have completed our first year of providing materials for use in teaching a variety of mathematical topics in that location. Our two most recent articles that you might employ with your students are:

- "A Little on the Heaviside," in which Michael Waters looks into the mathematics and history of a clever trick he learned as an undergraduate and has shared with his students. Although the electrical engineer Oliver Heaviside (1850–1925) probably did not invent or use the "Cover-Up Method" that carries his name, his life story and a proof of the technique can each be introduced when the situation is right in calculus and other courses.

$$\frac{4x^2-3x-4}{x(x-1)(\text{[illegible]})} \qquad \frac{4\cdot(-2)^2-3\cdot(-2)-4}{-2\cdot(-2-1)}=\frac{18}{6}=3.$$

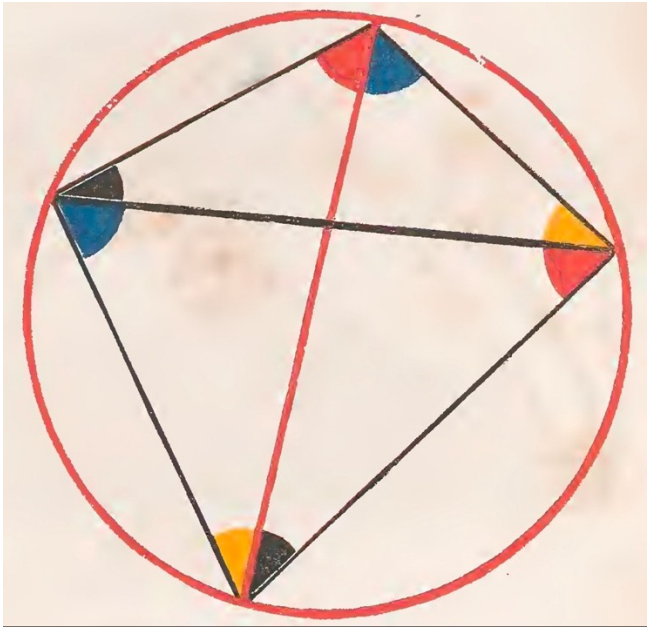
An example of Heaviside's Cover-Up Method in action.

- An installment of Michael Molinsky's long-running series of "Quotations in Context" that examines the origin of a quotation from Archimedes' famous treatise on counting large numbers, *The Sand-Reckoner* (3rd century BCE): "There are things which seem incredible to most men who have not studied mathematics." As with all the installments in this series, mathematics instructors might share the intriguing story to engage students' interest; prompt students to think about and discuss the potential problems that arise from too much reliance on tertiary sources; or use the background of the quotation to instigate student research projects.



A conception of what Archimedes might have looked like from the mind of Canadian sculptor R. Tait McKenzie, designer of the Fields Medal.

Explore our entire 2025 volume here: https://maa.tandfonline.com/toc/ucnv20/22/1. Our back catalog will remain live at MAA's old website until summer 2026 at: https://old.maa.org/press/periodicals/convergence; the effort to transfer these articles to T&F continues, and we will let you know when *MAA Convergence*'s first 21 volumes are available there.



MAA Convergence's volume 23 cover image includes the diagram accompanying Proposition III.22 from Oliver Byrne's 1847 *The First Six Books of the Elements of Euclid*.

Have you made a New Year's resolution to increase your professional service? Even if annual attempts at self-improvement aren't your thing, *MAA Convergence* needs you! We are looking to expand our roster of potential referees for the mathematics of all time periods, subjects, and geographical places. To volunteer, send us an email at convergence@maa.org with a few sentences outlining your interests in mathematics, its history, and its teaching. Alternatively, set up an account at https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ucnv and select or create classification keywords relevant to the history of mathematics and mathematics education. An FAQ for the ScholarOne Manuscripts system is available if you have questions about the registration process.

Finally, as always, *MAA Convergence* seeks submissions through our T&F portal. Descriptions of the types of articles we consider are provided in the journal's Aims & Scope Statement. For instance, if you have used an *MAA Convergence* article or classroom resource, a TRIUMPHS Primary Source Project, or another historically-based mathematics teaching aid or activity in your classroom, please write up a classroom testimonial explaining what went well, what didn't, what you would do differently next time, and what you would try to repeat. Perspectives from instructors or from students are both valuable. Similarly, we can all learn from your teaching flops as well as from your triumphs. Interested in contributing or need help getting your ideas ready for submission? We'd love to hear from you at convergence@maa.org!

HOM SIGMAA Small Grants

Guidelines and Procedures

Purpose: The HOM SIGMAA wants to aid its members in their quest to bring the joys of the history or mathematics to their students. These small monetary grants will allow HOM SIGMAA members to purchase items that will aid in learning the history of mathematics. For example, a classroom set of abacus or materials to make an historical model.

Guidelines

1. Recipients must be a current member of the HOM SIGMAA
2. The idea is to purchase items, materials to make a historical model, or materials that can be used year after year. (Not supplies that will be used up quickly.)
3. These materials may be used by an individual's colleagues, but belong to the HOM SIGMAA member and not their department.
4. Items or materials must clearly be for the instruction of a historical topic.
5. Grants will be for amounts up to $100 and considered on a rolling basis (so apply early in the year).
6. Approval of the grant is at the sole discretion of the HOM SIGMAA executive board.
7. Applications can be made at any time, but may take several weeks to be approved and paid out by the MAA. So plan ahead.
8. Receipts for purchased items is preferable. But if purchase depends on funding, receipts may be required after purchase.
9. Total annual grants dispersed will not exceed $1000 per year and are subject to HOM SIGMAA funding needs.
10. Preference will always be given to first-time grantees. And the HOM SIGMAA has the right to deny any request if they feel a single member is requesting too often.

How to apply

Please send the application form (available on the HOM SIGMAA website) in Word or PDF to the Chair of the HOM SIGMAA via email.

HOM SIGMAA Classroom Small Grant

Name

Institution

Email

Phone

Address

Funds requested

Item(s) to be purchased

Purpose or use of items

HOM SIGMAA Student Travel Grants

Guidelines and Procedures

Purpose: The HOM SIGMAA wants to support students of the history of mathematics. We will offer travel grants (in the form of travel expense reimbursements) for students traveling to conferences to give a paper or poster on the history of mathematics. Grants are up to $250 for a local/regional/sectional meeting, and $350 for a national/international meeting. We encourage students to attend MAA meetings, but grants are not limited to MAA meetings. Submit application materials prior to the meeting; submit registration/travel/lodging receipts and verification of talk after the meeting.

Guidelines

1. Travel must be completed while a student or the summer immediately following graduation.
2. Approval of the grant is at the sole discretion of the HOM SIGMAA executive board.
3. Applications can be made at any time, but may take several weeks to be approved and are paid out by the MAA after travel is completed. So plan ahead.
4. Total annual grants dispersed will not exceed $1500 per year and are subject to HOM SIGMAA funding needs and will be considered on a rolling basis.
5. Preference will always be given to first-time grantees.

How to apply (prior to meeting):

1. Please send the application form (available on the HOM SIGMAA website) in Word or PDF to the Chair or Secretary of the HOM SIGMAA via email.
2. Have your research advisor email the Chair or Secretary of the HOM SIGMAA a letter verifying your status and stating the nature of your research.

Reimbursement (post meeting):

Email scans of the following to the HOM SIGMAA:

1. travel receipts totaling the grant amount or more
2. program page verifying your participation.

HOM SIGMAA Student Travel Grant Application

Full Name:

Status: (circle one) Graduate student Undergraduate student

Home Institution:

Email:

Address:

Conference title and session title:

Location and dates:

Title of talk/poster:

CALL FOR PAPERS / APPEL À COMMUNICATIONS

Canadian Society for History and Philosophy of Mathematics
Société canadienne d'histoire et de philosophie des mathématiques

Annual Meeting / Colloque annuel
Dalhousie University / Université Dalhousie
4-6 June 2026 / 4-6 juin 2026 / Halifax, Nova Scotia

Special Session / Séance Spéciale
Ancient Mathematics / Mathématiques dans l'Antiquité
Kenneth May Lecturer / Conférencière Kenneth May
Jacqueline Feke, University of Waterloo

The CSHPM will hold its 2026 Annual Meeting in Halifax at Dalhousie University in conjunction with the 2026 Meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association and the Canadian Society for the History and Philosophy of Science, Thursday - Saturday, June 4-6, 2026.

Special Session - Ancient Mathematics: Papers are welcome on the history and/or philosophy of mathematics in the ancient world, or on any related topic. Talks concerning the mathematics of any pre-modern culture are welcome. Talks may be given in either English or French.

General Session: Papers are welcome on any subject relating to the history of mathematics, its use in the teaching of mathematics, the philosophy of mathematics, or a related topic. Talks may be given in either English or French.

Proposals for special events such as stand-alone paper sessions, panels, or symposia are welcome; please direct your proposal to all three organizers.

Travel stipends of $750 CA are available for up to six papers given by graduate students and early career scholars (post-2023 PhD) at this meeting.

Please send your title and abstract (200 words or less) in Word or in the body of an email by February 1, 2026, to: / Veuillez envoyer le titre de votre communication, ainsi qu'un bref résumé de 200 mots ou moins en format Word ou dans le corps d'un courriel avant le 1 février 2026 à:

GENERAL SESSION / SÉANCE GÉNÉRALE:
Maria Zack, mzack@pointloma.edu

La SCHPM tiendra l'édition 2026 de son colloque annuel à l'Université Dalhousie à Halifax, dans le cadre de l'Association Canadienne de philosophie et de la Société Canadienne d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences, du jeudi 4 juin au samedi 6 juin 2026.

Séance spéciale - Mathématiques dans l'Antiquité : Les articles touchant à l'histoire et/ou à la philosophie des mathématiques dans l'antiquité sont bienvenus. Les présentations portant sur tout sujet lié aux mathématiques prémodernes sont aussi bienvenues. Les présentations peuvent être en français ou en anglais.

Séance générale : Les articles portant sur tout sujet lié à l'histoire des mathématiques, à son utilisation dans l'enseignement des mathématiques, à la philosophie des mathématiques, ou tout autre sujet connexe sont bienvenus. Les présentations peuvent être en anglais ou en français, et peuvent porter sur des travaux en cours.

Les propositions d'événements spéciaux tels que des sessions sur un ouvrage, des séances ou des colloques sont aussi bienvenues ; veuillez adresser votre proposition aux trois organisateurs.

Des bourses de voyage de 750 $ CA sont disponibles pour un maximum de six communications d'étudiants gradués et de chercheurs en début de carrière (doctorat post-2023).

SPECIAL SESSION / SÉANCE SPÉCIALE:
Robert E. Bradley, bradley@adelphi.edu
Duncan Melville, dmelville@stlawu.edu