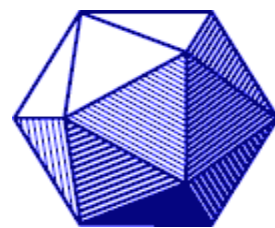


Volume XVI, Number 2



September 2026

HOM SIGMAA News

Greetings from the HOM SIGMAA Chair

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This past spring, we continued the HOM SIGMAA Virtual Speaker Series with several excellent presentations. Please mark your calendars for this fall: we have several speakers scheduled, with details available [here](#). If you would like to suggest a speaker for the series, please contact Abe Edwards, our Program Coordinator, at aedwards@msu.edu.

At MathFest 2026 in Boston, MA, August 5-8, History of Mathematics was present in numerous events including talks, sessions, workshops, awards, panels, readings, a business meeting, and a trivia contest.

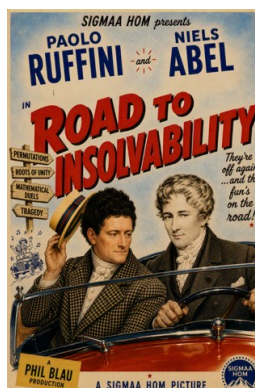
Some pictures at MathFest 2026:



Jennifer Clinkenbeard, Abe Edwards, and Danny Otero were the organizers of the **Workshop: Discovering Mathematics Through Primary Historical Sources**, a successful event that gave participants experience with classroom materials based on primary historical sources.



Amy Ackerberg-Hastings and Danny Otero receiving recognition as *MAA Convergence* journal editors.



Phil Blau of Shawnee State University was the speaker at the HOM SIGMAA business and reception meeting. He delivered a noteworthy presentation titled **Road to Insolvency**, which began with the poster he designed, shown on the right.

Chair letter continued
on next page →

Chair letter continued from previous page:



Rick Gilman, one of the organizers of the successful ***Poster Session: Stories from our Section Histories***, in which presenters shared stories, based on original sources from the history of their sections.



Bud Boman one of the speakers at the ***CPS: Teaching through Time: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Mathematics***. The event had twelve excellent presentations and was organized by Abe Edwards, Ximena Catepillán and Cynthia Huffman.

On the left is one of the lucky winners at the ***History of Mathematics Trivia*** event. The session was organized by Bud Boman, Greg Coxson, Ximena Catepillán, Tom Drucker, and Abe Edwards, and more than 60 participants attended. The trivia questions are available at the end of this newsletter.



The final HOM event at MathFest 2026 was ***Read the Masters! Galois' Memoir on Solvability by Radicals***, organized by Danny Otero.

See you at [MathFest 2027](#) in New Orleans, LA, August 4 – 7, 2027.

Best regards,
Ximena

HOM SIGMAA Elections

Fall is election time for HOM SIGMAA. Each of the members of the Executive Board – Chair, Secretary/ Treasurer, Program Coordinator, and Electronic Resources Coordinator – serve a three-year term, appropriately staggered so as to preserve continuity of governance. We need to elect a Secretary/Treasurer and a Program Coordinator this fall, as their terms are set to expire at the conclusion of 2026. Elections will be administered by MAA staff and will take place in October.

The Secretary/Treasurer keeps records of official meetings of the HOM SIGMAA and its Executive Committee and disburses funds as directed by the HOM SIGMAA Executive Committee. Other duties include keeping a record of the affairs of HOM SIGMAA, communicating important information about the SIGMAA to its members through a regular Newsletter, handling correspondence, and preparing the SIGMAA annual report for submission to the MAA.

The Program Coordinator solicits proposals for special sessions at MathFest, and for other workshops, conferences, etc., from the HOM SIGMAA membership, and coordinates with the MAA Associate Secretary to plan these programs. The Program Coordinator is also responsible for organizing the HOM SIGMAA speaker series.

It is the responsibility of the immediate Past Chair of HOM SIGMAA to organize these officer elections with the MAA staff. Please send nominations of candidates to Amy Shell-Gellasch at ashellg@umich.edu by **September 30**. Self-nominations are also welcome.




MAA

MAA MathFest

AUGUST 4, 2027 - AUGUST 7, 2027

New Orleans, LA

Location: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, 500 Canal Street

Reflections from My First MathFest: People, Posters, and Possibilities

Simran Adnani

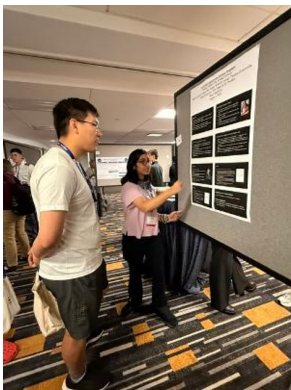
Standing in the registration line, I wondered if I would meet other students at MathFest. Just then, I heard a voice: another high school student waiting to be registered. We immediately connected and shared our backgrounds and interests; I felt right at home, in a community of like-minded people.

MathFest 2026, held at the Marriott in downtown Boston, was a celebration of the joy and curiosity of math. From student events like Math Jeopardy and the poster session, to contributed paper sessions, workshops, invited paper sessions, and the exhibit hall, each event gave me a new sense of excitement and inspiration to pursue math from a whole new perspective.

One of the most memorable experiences was attending Dr. Art Benjamin's talk on Math Magic. His talk was surprising, entertaining, and truly magical. The highlight of the talk came when Dr. Benjamin invited me on stage to demonstrate a magic square whose first row was 2, 5, 20, 14, the date on which I was born. As a souvenir, Dr. Benjamin let me take the poster with the magic square drawing home (I can finally tell my friend, who received a magic square from Dr. Benjamin at math camp two years ago, that I have one, too).

Dr. Eugenia Cheng's talk, *Unequal: The Math of When Things Do and Don't Add Up*, connected random math facts to real-world scenarios (anywhere from eating chips to societal equality). At the end of her talk, she sang a poem, and played its music on the piano. That poem was *Loveliest of Trees* by A.E Housman, and also contained a mathematical and poetic description of the narrator's age. Moreover, she connected a lot of the facts to social justice. In her words, "We should think about what metrics we apply to people and take into account the obstructions different people have fought against."

Another captivating talk was given by Dr. Phil Blau, who presented the SIGMAA-HOM guest lecture, *Road to Insolvability*. He took us on a historical journey of math, discussing the work of Paolo Ruffini and Niels Abel, and how it led to the eventual discovery that 5th degree and higher polynomials can't be solved using a general formula. I realized that behind each theorem or discovery, there were innumerable attempts, mistakes, and failures. Mathematical discoveries don't happen all at once; they happen as a result of curiosity, passion, and patience. As someone who's fascinated by the history of math, this was one of my favorite talks.



In addition to attending talks, I also got the opportunity to share my own mathematical work, *No Perfect Squares are Perfect Numbers*, at the Undergraduate Student Poster Session. I really enjoyed sharing and communicating my research with the judges and fellow participants. The judges gave me great feedback which was both inspiring and thought provoking. I left the poster session rejuvenated with new ideas to expand my research further.

MathFest further showed me that math isn't just something we learn in a classroom or read from a textbook, it's a vibrant community of people who are curious to explore deeper, who are unafraid to make mistakes, who are persistent in their quest to learn and add to the wide ocean of mathematical knowledge. As a student attending MathFest for the first time, I'm immensely grateful to be part of this community. I can't wait to go to MathFest 2027 in New Orleans.



HOM SIGMAA VIRTUAL SPEAKER SERIES

Contributed by Abe Edwards, HOM SIGMAA Program Coordinator

We are delighted to once again offer a virtual speaker series in the history of mathematics for the 2026-2027 academic year. Talks will generally take place the second Friday of each month at 2:00 p.m. Eastern time. This year's list of speakers will include Ryan Thomas (Charleston Southern University), Terika Harris (Teachers College, Columbia University), Ramiro Carrillo Catalán (National Pedagogical University, Oaxaca, Mexico), and Dana Mackenzie (Mathematician and Science Writer). We are still finalizing our schedule and list of speakers, but the full schedule will be announced soon via MAA Connect. We invite you to join us for this series of one-hour talks on a variety of topics related to the history of mathematics, from an eclectic group of scholars. For more information, contact Abe Edwards (aedwards@msu.edu)

Small grants for the history of mathematics classroom

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 <https://homsigmaa.net/> and at the end of this newsletter.



2026 HOM SIGMAA Executive Committee

Chair: Ximena Catepillán, Millersville University

Email: Ximena.Catepillan@millersville.edu

Secretary/Treasurer: Cynthia Huffman, Pittsburg State University

Email: cjhuffman@pittstate.edu

Program Coordinator: Abe Edwards, Lyman Briggs College within Michigan State University,

Email: aedwards@msu.edu

Electronic Resources Coordinator: Eugene (Bud) Boman, Penn State, Harrisburg (Emeritus),

Email: budboman@gmail.com

Past Chair: Amy Shell-Gellasch, University of Michigan,

Email: ashellg@umich.edu

A Visit to Quaternion Bridge

Toke Knudsen

Department of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Statistics
State University of New York at Oneonta
toke.knudsen@oneonta.edu

In the early 1840s, the Irish mathematician Sir William Rowan Hamilton was working on extending the complex numbers, which can be thought of as points in a plane, to higher dimensions. Points in space (three dimensions) can be represented as triples of real numbers. Addition of such triples is straightforward to define, but Hamilton could not figure out how to define multiplication for them.



Broom Bridge. Photo by Toke Knudsen.

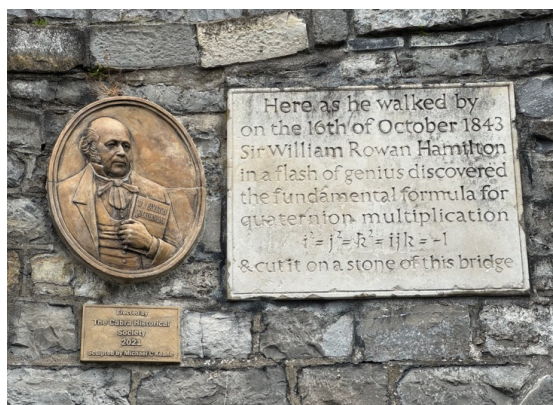
On October 16th, 1843, Hamilton was walking with his wife Helen Bayly. As the couple reached Broom Bridge, which crosses the Royal Canal in Dublin, Hamilton suddenly realized how to define multiplication of quadruples (rather than triples), and he carved his insight into the bridge:

$$i^2 = j^2 = k^2 = ijk = -1$$

Hamilton called quadruples with multiplication defined in this way for *quaternions*. A quaternion has the form

$$a + bi + cj + dk$$

where a , b , c , and d are real numbers, and 1 , i , j , and k , are the basis elements. The quaternions form a non-commutative extension of the complex numbers.



Plaque commemorating Hamilton's discovery. Broom Bridge. Photo by Toke Knudsen.

A plaque on Broom Bridge commemorating Hamilton's discovery reads:

Here as he walked by on the 16th of October 1843 Sir William Rowan Hamilton in a flash of genius discovered the fundamental formula for quaternion multiplication

$$i^2 = j^2 = k^2 = ijk = -1$$

& cut it on a stone of this bridge

On July 1st this year, I visited Broom Bridge with my wife and daughter. It is a beautiful old bridge still in use. Despite its narrowness, traffic crosses the bridge in two directions. Everybody can enjoy the bridge and the landscape surrounding it, but only few can appreciate what the plaque celebrates. For these few, the bridge is, as Hamilton's sons called it, *Quaternion Bridge*.

I highly recommend a visit to the bridge. Broom Bridge is a mathematician's must-see! It is easy to get to, too: Take the train to Broombridge station, and the bridge is right there.



Toke Knudsen at Broom Bridge. Photo by Ida Knudsen.

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 at the end of the newsletter and in the HOM SIGMAA community on MAA Connect.

New Home, New Content for *MAA Convergence*

Daniel E. Otero and Amy Ackerberg-Hastings, Editors

Editors, *MAA Convergence*

Throughout 2026 *MAA Convergence*, the MAA's electronic, refereed journal for the use of the history of mathematics in the teaching of mathematics, continues to settle in at its new home within the Taylor & Francis portfolio of MAA journals. To read our articles, simply visit <https://maa.org/publication/convergence/>, click on the "Read Now" button, enter your MAA member credentials in the log-in window, and use the "Browse all articles & issues" menu to explore our content.

We began the year with an editorial/announcement highlighting *MAA Convergence*'s unique mission and previewing upcoming content. Next, Robert E. Bradley and Salvatore J. Petrilli of Adelphi University and Patrick J. Wallach of Queensborough Community College shared their English translation and analysis of an 1826 work by François-Joseph Servois (1767–1847) in "Servois' 1826 On the Theory of Parallels, with an English Translation." This work by Servois investigated the possibility of proving Euclid's Parallel Postulate, one of the last such works before it became widely known—through the "invention" of hyperbolic geometry independently by Lobachevsky, Bolyai and others—that it would be impossible to do so. The authors also presented useful suggestions for how Servois' work can be used in today's classrooms to investigate the Parallel Postulate and its independence from Euclid's other axioms.

At the same time, the latest installment of the "Historically Speaking" column edited by associate editor Betty Mayfield featured commentary by Michigan Technological University professors Andrew Fiss and Laura Kasson Fiss on an 1898 parody poem by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch called "A New Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens." Humor related to Euclid I.1 can be found both in the words and the amusing drawings that accompanied the original version of the verse.

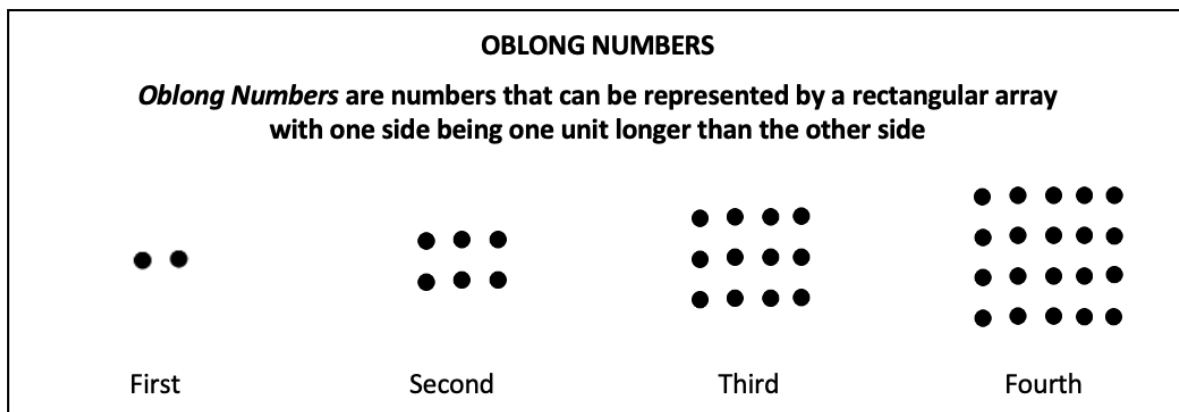


Quiller-Couch drew a "rider on proposition 1" to accompany his ballad.

Spring 2026 also saw the publication of a new translation into Spanish by former associate editor Ximena Catepillán (with assistance from Samuel Navarro) of an English-language article originally published in *Convergence* in 2004 by Rick Faloon, “Teaching Leonardo: an integrated approach.” Both versions of the paper present an interdisciplinary project for high school students that explores the art, mathematics, and science found in the work of Leonardo da Vinci. The new translation is a service to our growing Spanish-speaking readership.

Former associate editor Mike Molinsky added to his series of “Quotations in Context” by considering two collections of non-fiction essays by science fiction writer Herbert George Wells. These works establish background and context for a statement attributed to Wells: “Statistical thinking will one day be as necessary for efficient citizenship as the ability to read and write.”

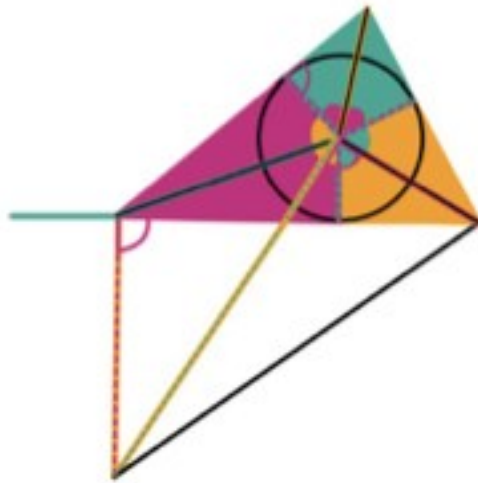
In “Some Brief (and Not-so-Brief) Ideas for Bringing History into the Mathematics Classroom,” former co-editor Janet Heine Barnett shared insights about incorporating the history of mathematics throughout the mathematics curriculum, several concrete ideas for classroom work, and eight supplemental worksheets and resources that instructors can use directly in classrooms or draw upon for inspiration and role models in creating new historically-focused classroom activities.



An illustration of oblong numbers from one of Barnett’s student worksheets,
 “Pythagorean Patterns: Figuring out the Figurate Numbers.”

Barnett and her fellow TRIUMPHS (TRansforming Instruction in Undergraduate Mathematics via Primary Historical Sources) PI Kathy Clark assessed the development and classroom implementation of the TRIUMPH team’s approximately 100 classroom modules during that NSF grant initiative’s tenure (2015–2023). Barnett and Clark also suggested directions for future preparation of Primary Source Projects, including the work of the recently-established [TRIUMPHS Society](#) (where the acronym represents “TRansforming Instruction: Understanding Mathematics via Primary Historical Sources”).

Our most recent article is a revised version of the essay by the final winner of HOM SIGMAA’s Annual Student Paper Contest, Jenna Slusser. “Heron’s Formula: A Visual Proof in the Style of Oliver Byrne” adapts the popular style of presentation that Oliver Byrne applied in his famous 1847 edition of *The Elements of Euclid* to the later and rather sophisticated proof by Heron of Alexandria of his method for determining the area of a triangle from its side lengths. 2026 has been a great year so far, and we look forward to bringing more classroom resources to our readers later this year.



One of the diagrams from Slusser's Byrne-inspired proof of Heron's Formula.

MAA's former website was taken offline in June 2026, which means that *MAA Convergence's* articles published between 2004 and 2024 are currently available only through the [Wayback Machine of the Internet Archive](#). PDF versions of our back catalog of articles have been created and reviewed by a team of MAA staff and volunteers, including: Carol Baxter, Bev Ruedi, Tori Thatcher, Mike Molinsky, Marty Bonsangue, Bob Rogers, Cynthia Huffman, Betty Mayfield, Sooie-Hoe Loke, Jennifer Clinkenbeard, Danny Otero, and Amy Ackerberg-Hastings. We are currently preparing overview editorials for each volume to finish readying these 344 articles for transmission to T&F, who will then add them to the journal's current location. We are also working on plans to continue and re-envision *MAA Convergence's* large collection of Mathematical Treasures. Stay tuned for how you might contribute to that effort.

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, do you have a go-to primary source or group of sources that you share with students in one of the courses you teach? How do you connect the source(s) to the mathematical concepts of the course? Consider writing up your process and tips so other instructors can share the benefit of historical context with their students! Interested in contributing or need help getting your ideas ready for submission? We'd love to hear from you at convergence@maa.org!

Save these dates for future MathFests!

HOM Events Calendar

Visit [History of Mathematics Events Calendar](#) for a list of events and meetings around the world which relate to the History of Mathematics. To list an event, email historyofmathcalendar@gmail.com.

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

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:



Organizers

Eugene Boman, *Penn State University-Harrisburg*
Ximena Catepillán, *Millersville University of Pennsylvania*
Greg Coxson, *United States Naval Academy*
Thomas Drucker, *University of Wisconsin-Whitewater*
Abe Edwards, *Michigan State University*

History of Mathematics Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

Sponsors:

MAA Committee on Undergraduate Student Programming (CUSP)
SIGMAA on the History of Mathematics (SIGMAA HOM)

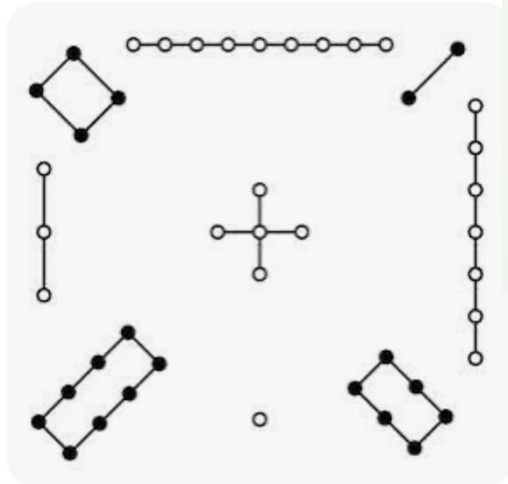


Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[1] What famous Boston native enjoyed creating complicated magic squares in their spare time?

- a) Helen Keller
- b) Edgar Allen Poe
- c) Benjamin Franklin
- d) Leonard Nimoy

8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2



MAA

Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[2] Of the following Harvard-associated mathematicians, which one once described themselves this way: "left high school at an early age to earn a living as a magician and a gambler, only later to become interested in mathematics and earn a PhD at Harvard".

- a) Barry Mazur
- b) Melanie Wood
- c) Persi Diaconis
- d) Noam Elkies

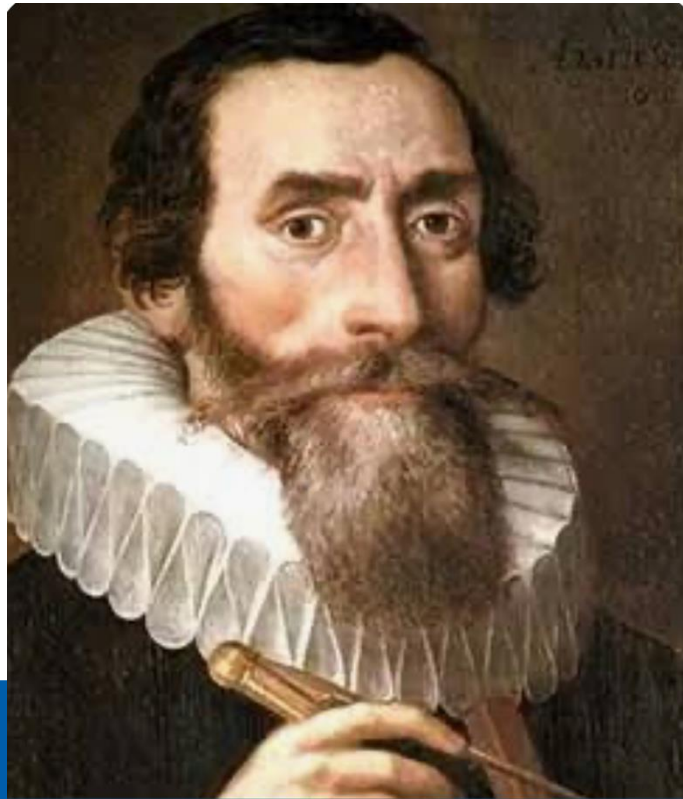


MAA

Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[3] On August 7, 1620 Johannes Kepler's mother was arrested for what crime?

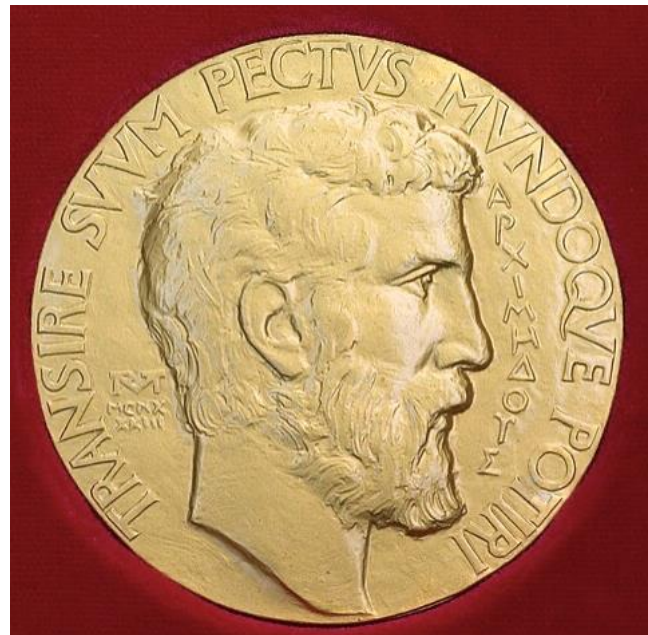
- a) witchcraft
- b) prostitution
- c) heresy
- d) embezzlement



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[4] How many women have won the Fields Medal?

- a) 0
- b) 1
- c) 2
- d) 3



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[5] The Smithsonian Institution was founded on August 10, 1846. Which famous American mathematician served on the committee which drew up its organizational program?

- (a) Nathaniel Bowditch**
- (b) Artemus Martin**
- (c) Josiah Willard Gibbs**
- (d) Benjamin Peirce**

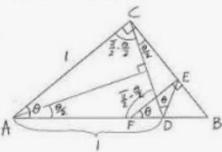


Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[6] The William Lowell Putnam competition is a memorable part of a college experience, Of recent years MIT has been racking up team victory after team victory. The streak was interrupted in 2018 and 2019 by a team from a different institution. What was that other team?

- (a) Princeton University
- (b) Harvard University
- (c) California Institute of Technology
- (d) The University of Toronto

Putnam 1999, B1



$\angle ACB = 90^\circ$
 $\angle BAC = \theta$
 $DE \perp AB: AC = AD = 1$
 $EF \perp CD: \angle CDE = \theta$
 $FE \perp AB: FE \perp CB$

Find $\lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} EF$

From the isosceles $\triangle ACD$,
 $CD = 2 \sin \frac{\theta}{2}$. Let $EF = y$. We want to express y as a function of θ . We have $EB = y \tan \theta$,
 $CB = CA \tan \theta = \tan \theta$. Hence $CE = (1-y) \tan \theta$.
 $\angle CED = \pi - \frac{\theta}{2} - \theta = \pi - \frac{3\theta}{2}$.
 The sine theorem for $\triangle CED$ gives

$$\frac{CD}{\sin(\pi - \frac{3\theta}{2})} = \frac{CE}{\sin \angle CDE}$$
 or
$$\frac{2 \sin \frac{\theta}{2}}{\sin \frac{3\theta}{2}} = \frac{(1-y) \tan \theta}{\sin \theta} \quad \left(= \frac{(1-y)}{\cos \theta} \right)$$
 Then
$$1-y = \frac{2 \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \cos \theta}{\sin \frac{3\theta}{2}} = 2 \cos \theta \frac{\sin \frac{\theta}{2}}{\frac{\theta}{2}} \frac{\frac{3\theta}{2}}{\sin \frac{3\theta}{2}} \cdot \frac{1}{3}$$
 Clearly $\lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} (1-y) = \frac{2}{3}$, because $\lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \frac{\sin \theta}{\theta} = 1$ and $\lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} \cos \theta = 1$.
 Therefore, $\lim_{\theta \rightarrow 0} y = \frac{1}{3}$.

Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[7] J.J. Sylvester had an unfortunate experience teaching at the University of Virginia in the years before the Civil War. He returned to England but allowed himself to be wooed to return to the United States, for the sake of creating one of the first graduate programs in mathematics in this country. At which university did he have this longer stay?

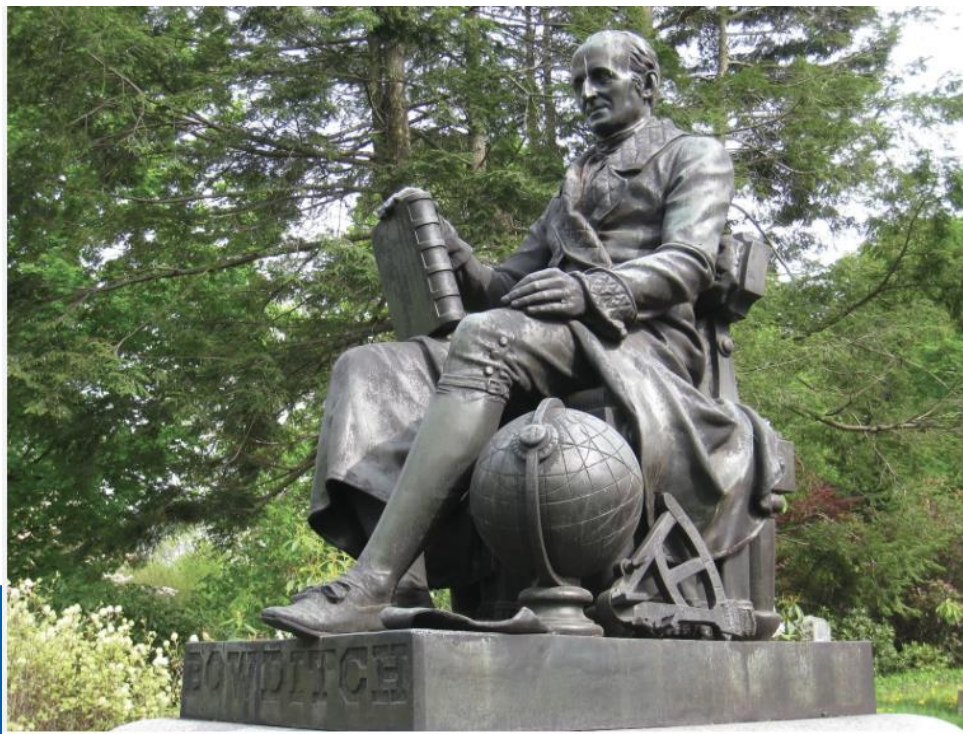
- a) New York University
- b) University of Maryland
- c) The Johns Hopkins University
- d) University of Pennsylvania



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[8] Nathaniel Bowditch is buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in suburban Boston. While not known as a great original mathematician, his translation of one of the classics of French mathematics was a spur to American mathematical development. Whose work did Bowditch place within reach for those without a knowledge of French?

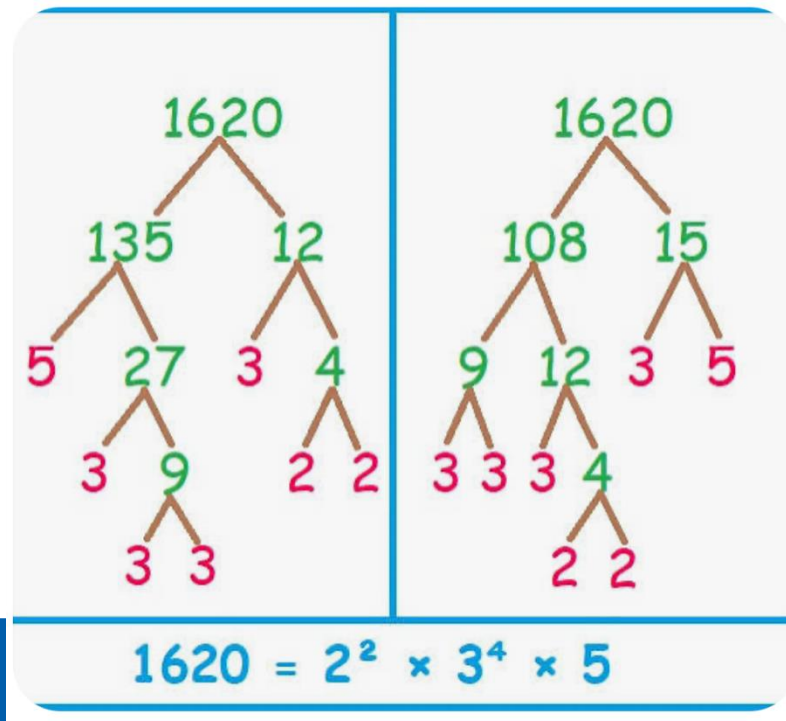
- (a) Laplace**
- (b) Lagrange**
- (c) Lacroix**
- (d) Legendre**



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[9] In 1620, the Mayflower landed, leading to the formation of the Plymouth Colony. The integer 1620 has a combination of special properties. One of the following is a subset of numerical properties of 1620; which is it?

- (a) Deficient, Perfect, and the Average of Twin Primes;
- (b) Abundant, Algebraic, and a Triangular Number;
- (c) Algebraic, the Average of Twin Primes, and Abundant;
- (d) Algebraic, Part of a Pythagorean Triple, and Perfect.



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[10] Consequential 20th-Century mathematician Norbert Wiener spent much of his career at MIT, but had deep ties to another Boston-area school, from which he graduated in 1909 at age 14. Which of the following was it?

- (a) Tufts University;**
- (b) Boston University;**
- (c) Harvard University;**
- (d) Northeastern University.**



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[11] The individual recognized as the first professor of Mathematics in the Boston area is Isaac Greenwood (1702-1745). In 1729 he published *Arithmetick BLANK and Decimal*, which has the distinction of being the first mathematics textbook published by an American-born author in the colonies. Which of the following words fills in the blank in this title?

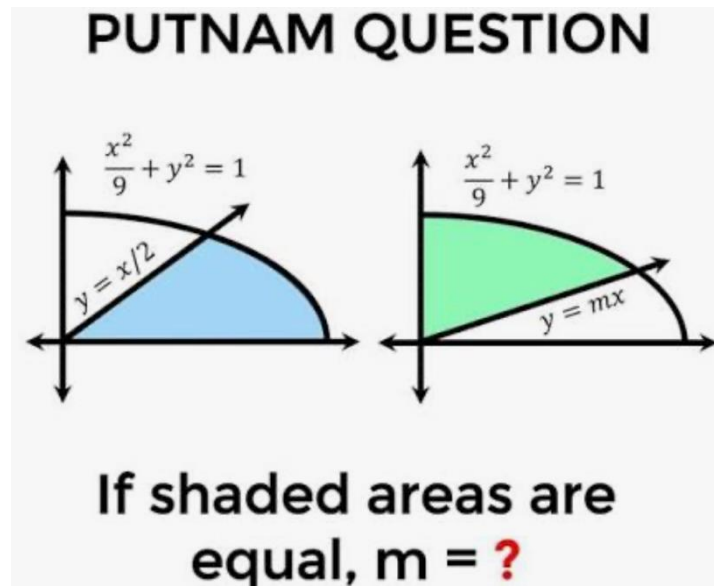
- a) Binary;
- b) Simple;
- c) Vulgar;
- d) Practical.



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[12] The Putnam Exam started in 1938, but was inspired by a 1933 competition between two schools. One of the two was Harvard University, which went down to defeat in the match, which involved 10 contestants from each school. What was the winning school?

- (a) The United States Military Academy;
- (b) Princeton University;
- (c) Cornell University;
- (d) Haverford College.



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[13] Over the centuries, Harvard has graduated numerous mathematicians of note. Which of the following having earned their undergraduate degree from Harvard went on to win, to date, a Fields Medal, a Cole Prize, the Fermat Prize, a Clay Research Award, and a Morgan Prize, among others?

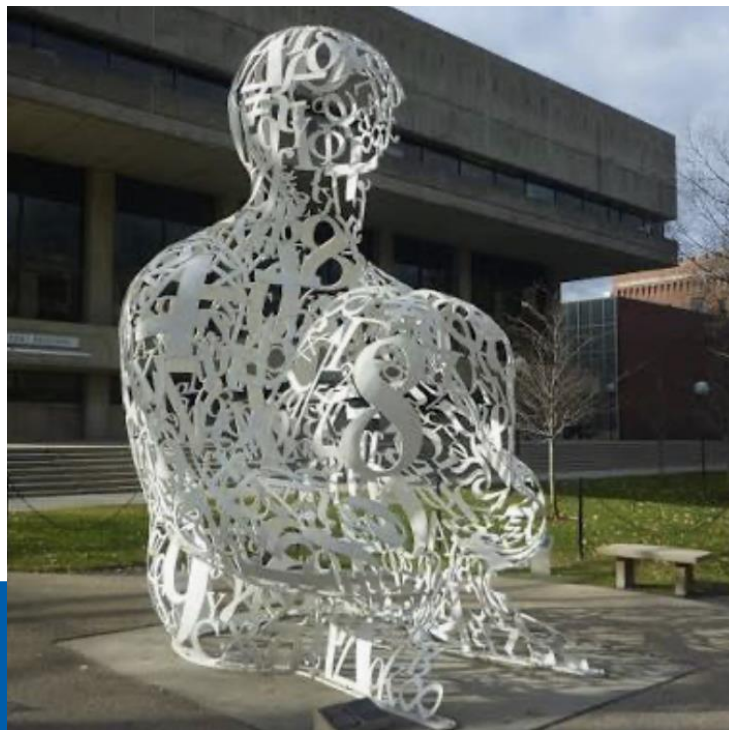
- (a) Kiran Kedlaya;
- (b) Noam Elkies;
- (c) Melanie Wood;
- (d) Manjul Bhargava.



Trivia Contest MathFest 2026

[14] Not surprisingly, the Boston area is blessed with a number of fascinating sculptures and architectural designs of a mathematical nature. One of them is an installation by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa that can be found in a grassy area in front of MIT's Julius Adams Stratton Student Center (Building W20) in Cambridge. It is a sculpture 5 meters tall forms the outline of a seated human being, using "complex scramble" of numbers, mathematical symbols and punctuation marks. What is the name of this artwork?

- (a) The Mathematician;
- (b) Formula for Life;
- (c) Body of Knowledge;
- (d) The Alchemist.



ANSWERS

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1) c | 12) a |
| 2) c | 13) d |
| 3) a | 14) d |
| 4) d | |
| 5) d | |
| 6) b | |
| 7) c | |
| 8) a | |
| 9) c | |
| 10) a | |
| 11) c | |