

Mu Alpha Theta Newsletter

Spring 2004

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Student Highlight:

At 16 years old, Michael Owens already works with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on Mars exploration research. This sophomore at Arizona's Prescott High School leads a team of 15 students who watch for storms on Mars that could affect the rovers presently exploring the surface of the planet. Michael, a member of Mu Alpha Theta, has also created robots to guard his computer and chase his parents away from his bedroom. He became fascinated with space in fourth grade, when he built a model Mars colony out of LEGO blocks.



Michael hopes to excite younger kids about space exploration possibilities as a spokesperson for "Space Day 2004: Blazing Galactic Trails" that will be celebrated worldwide on May 6. Michael was selected as a teen spokesperson for this educational initiative that seeks to inspire young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math, as called for by President Bush's 21st Century jobs initiative. Michael joins three other remarkable Space Day 2004 teen spokespeople: Justin Houchin, 17, who hopes to be the first teenager in space; Bianca Baker, 15, who wants to be the first actress on Mars; and Kristin Hadfield, 17, the daughter of Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, who has an insider's view of astronaut life. In the 2002 Space Day Design Challenge, Michael's team received "Stellar" recognition from Senator John Glenn and Dr. Sally Ride by creating a Green Algae Oxygen Generator that could be used to support life on a space ship or on another planet.

More than 75 organizations participate as Space Day Partners and Associates, including founding sponsor Lockheed Martin Corporation. Other information is available at the Space Day web site at www.spaceday.org. On Monday, March 1, Michael met with Janet Napolitano, the governor of Arizona, to receive her personal congratulations.

A Message from Susan Hiller, President :

Active Sponsors: Now is the time to get in on planning for Mu Alpha Theta. At the 2004 National Convention to be held in Huntsville, Alabama, there will be sessions for sponsors to give input into the planning of Mu Alpha Theta activities. Sessions will be held on:

1. Strategic Planning - What is the mission of MA θ ? What do we do now and where do we want to be in five years? Do we need to evolve or are we just fine the way we are? How can we be more effective to meet the needs of our sponsors and members?
2. Membership – Interested in demographic trends of our membership? Where in the country are our chapters? Are our regions equally represented? What other services should MA θ provide to members?
3. Convention - Ideas on how to improve conventions. Lay the groundwork for future conventions. How should we divide the responsibilities of a convention so one host isn't bogged down with so much to do?
4. Scholarship - What kind of scholarships could MA θ provide and what should the requirements for receiving such awards be?
5. Newsletter - How can we gather information for a newsletter for all members? What is needed in the newsletter? There are lots of state organizations with many activities happening each year. How can we disseminate this information?

Some of our old timers are beginning to fade away as sponsors of MA θ . We need new teachers and sponsors involved in our leadership. For MA θ to survive, new faces have to become involved in the national organization, including the offices of President and Regional Governor. Please take time to become familiar with the national mission of MA θ and all it provides. We cannot keep this outstanding organization working for our mathematics honor students without your help. Have any ideas for us and can't attend, please email to Kay Weiss at matheta@ou.edu.

Governing Council Decisions

Your Governing Council met in February. Mu Alpha Theta remains financially healthy. We welcomed Susan Doker as the new Regional Governor from Region III. Sue replaced Thom Morris who resigned in the fall. She will serve out the remainder of Thom's term until August of 2006. Susan is from Lincoln High School in Tallahassee, FL and was the 2001 Huneke Distinguished Sponsor Award recipient.

At the meeting, the Governing Council passed a motion to change the name of our organization to Mu Alpha Theta, National High School and Two-Year College Mathematic Honor Society. You will find a place to vote for the change on your election ballot.

The Convention Committee is finishing up a Convention Handbook to help hosts plan and run a successful National Convention. The convention typically draws 600 to 800 students from around the country. We are still looking for hosts for the 2006 convention and beyond. The Handbook will include "everything you need to know", including a timeline to help with planning.

Our first annual Write-In Contest this year drew participation from over 200 Mu Alpha Theta chapters. The Governing Council decided to award prizes to contest winners, besides the certificates and trophies to be handed out. We will send a free mouse pad to each of the new and reinstated chapters that joined or signed up new members so they could participate in the contest. We will hold a random drawing for the following prizes: 1 free registration to this summer's National Convention in Huntsville, 5 TI-89 calculators, 10 of our new turquoise t-shirts – contacting the winning schools for their desired size.

This summer at the National Convention, the Governing Council will host a number of different discussion groups to seek input and participation by attending sponsors. Have any ideas for us and can't attend, please email to Kay Weiss at matheta@ou.edu.

Members and sponsors:

Greetings, MA θ sponsors and students! It is Spring already, and preparations for the National Convention are being made. One of the highlights will be an Ultimate Frisbee tournament if all goes well. Cross your fingers!

In other news, Florida will be joining a number of other states in Mu Alpha Theta by creating state-level student offices. I've been working with delegates statewide so that our first election will be ready to be held this April at the State Convention.

I would like to take some time out to recognize a few individuals. Ashish Kundra, the Recruiting Committee Head, has designed some wonderful brochures to entice schools to attend the National Convention; Jing-Jing Mao, our National Secretary/Treasurer has created a national delegates' forum (which can be accessed at <http://nmaodelegates.fateback.com>) so please post your ideas and of course, my other national officers, Nick Vanmeter and Miguel Morcuende are doing a wonderful job. Thank you all!

I look forward in seeing you in Huntsville!

Paul Baek
National MA θ President

Volunteers Needed: Mu Alpha Theta is looking for enthusiastic sponsors willing to do a presentation at state NCTM meetings on How to Run a Mathematics Club. The National Office is hoping to put together a short talk about Mu Alpha Theta and some "club" activities for the audience to participate in to show them how much fun students can have. We would love to put together a video to be shown featuring clubs around the country and their local club-related activities. If you have some footage you want to share, activities that can be done in a fifteen minute time period, or would be willing to do a presentation, please contact Kay Weiss.

Maple Software still available free to Sponsors

You can still order your free Maple computer algebra system, CAS, online at our website. After going to the homepage at www.mualphatheta.org, press the button in the lower left corner marked "Order Maple Products." If you are a sponsor that doesn't know your ID number, just press the link to find it. Maple will send a resource CD with high school-specific applications and tutorials, a copy of "Integrating Maple into the Math Curriculum", a free home use license of Maple 9, and more. For more information on our homepage above, go to the left and press Partners, Corporate.

Online Order System

Our new online ordering system is available for use. All sponsors were sent a password with the fall mailing. If you missed it, just email Kay Weiss at matheta@ou.edu with a personal password that you would like to use – minimum of five alpha-numeric in length. She will enter the password and you can use that and your chapter ID number to login. Chapter ID numbers are listed in the Roster that was sent to you in the fall. There is a button on the bottom left of the homepage at www.mualphatheta.org marked “Order Certificates and Merchandise Online.” Pressing it will take you right to the login page. Once into the system, you can update chapter information, order items with a purchase order number, and view your current members. We will be upgrading the way you enter names in the certificate order area soon. The new window will allow you to cut and paste names from a word processor or spreadsheet in as a block. The system will allow you to view the names and make corrections before sending into our database. We will also have a cancel order button soon, since some sponsors have wanted to try the system out before actually using it and we are not set up to do this at the moment.

Also this spring, we hope to add a place for sponsors to enter the names of their Associate Members.

By this summer, sponsors will be able to access the complete Mu Alpha Theta roster in their online area, which will be automatically updated during the year as changes are made by chapters. We will no longer send the paper copy of the roster out each fall.

Convention Hosts Still Needed

Think about hosting a National Convention! Hosts are needed for 2006 and beyond. Mu Alpha Theta will help you organize, but we need sponsors to volunteer to host. For information, email Susan Hiller at susiehillier@bellsouth.net

MAΘ 2004 National Convention

Blast off to the Rocket City-Huntsville, AL

The 2004 National Mu Alpha Theta Convention is being hosted by Grissom High School and Lakota West High School from July 27 – August 1, 2004. A final registration packet is now available online. Included in the online information will be a sweepstakes rubric as well as judging sheets for the poster, scrapbook and chalk talk competitions. Housing will be at the Hilton Hotel in Huntsville, and contests will take place in the Von Braun Center. The Early Bird Registration Fee for 2004 convention will be \$400, a \$50 deposit per participant is due on April 1 with the balance of \$350 due on May 15. The Late Registration Fee will be \$425 per participant and will be due in full on May 15. Registration is on line via the Mu Alpha Theta web site. Go to National Convention, press the How to Register tab and scroll down to the bottom of the screen. Follow the instructions there to login. For more information contact: Beth Andrada, Grissom HS (bandrada@hsv.k12.al.us) or Mary Rhein, Lakota West HS marv.rhein@lakotaonline.com

Convention Changes

There will no longer be a Proofs test offered on Wednesday, July 28 and Calculator Programming will run from 1:45 – 4:00.

The computer science topic test will not involve HTML or Visual Basic. Those taking the History of Mathematics topic test will not be allowed to use a calculator.

CONVENTION GRANTS ARE STILL BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION. FORMS ARE ONLINE UNDER NATIONAL CONVENTION.

Aloha. Get ready for Hawaii!! The 2005 National Convention will take place in Honolulu, Hawaii from Aug. 1 – Aug. 6 at the Ala Moana Hotel.

CHAPTER NEWS

Many chapters celebrate Pi Day on March 14 (3.14...). The Mu Alpha Theta chapter at Norman High School in Norman, Oklahoma uses the event as a fundraiser. Sponsor Lennie Gibson told us they sell all different kinds of pie to honor Pi Day. This year 280 pieces of pie were sold for a profit of \$250. 157 pieces of pie were cut, boxed and delivered by chapter members in less than one hour. The success of this event was credited to the leadership and organization of President Katherine Ensler and Vice-President Emily Sievers. This was the school's second year for the event and they increased their profit by 25%.

Bridgewater-Raritan High School's major event for the year is their annual Pi Night. This year was a major success with a turnout of over 200 people. There was a pie-eating contest for students to compete in (how much pie could be eaten in 3 minutes and 14 seconds?) and all-you-can-eat pizza and pie. However, the main attraction was the pie throwing at teachers. Additionally, a senior MAT officer from last year built a jeopardy system of buzzers, so students and teachers could play "BRHS Jeopardy!" Pi Night has become one of the school's most exciting and anticipated events of the entire year.

Lakota West High School celebrates Pi Day for fun. Every year the Lakota West Mu Alpha Theta students convince some of their teachers to have a whipped cream pie thrown at them. Tickets to throw sell for \$0.25 (which covered the cost of whipped cream and drop cloths). There is always lots of laughter and a big mess. Some students have a great technique of throwing the paper plate full of whipped cream and others just have lousy aim. An entire can of non-dairy whipped cream is used per teacher. As a thank you for being a good sport, each teacher gets a homemade pie of their choice, made by a Mu Alpha Theta member, to take home.

Chapters, please share your special events with us.

New Mu Alpha Theta Products Available

This spring, Mu Alpha Theta will offer a new turquoise blue t-shirt with our logo on the front left breast and the words: "Mathematics What Else is There?" on the back. The shirt comes in S, M, L, and XL sizes and sells for \$10. See our website at www.mualphatheta.org, Chapter Resources, Merchandise for pictures and an order form. We continue to offer all our jewelry items, honor cords for graduation, and have restocked the temporary tattoos of our logo offered a few years ago. Orders can be made by sending a check or entered online using a purchase order number. If you are ordering honor cords, medallions or patches, remember to give us enough time during the Spring rush to get them shipped to you. If you have any questions, just call Kay at 405-325-4489 or email to matheta@ou.ecu.

Come visit the Mu Alpha Theta booth at the NCTM Convention in Philadelphia! We will have a present for sponsors who come by to say hello. We are in back by the Texas Instrument booth.