

# Mu Alpha Theta



March 2019

## VIVA LAS VEGAS!

Dear Sponsors and Members,

We cordially invite you to this year's National Convention. Please read Richard Rusczyk's letter on the impact the National Convention had on him when he was in high school. If you have never been to a National Convention this is surely going to be one to remember and a great convention to make your first. Mr. Rusczyk is going to be the keynote speaker this year, and his staff at the Art of Problem Solving has written this year's Interschool test. It is sure to be fun and a great challenge for all. Hope to see you all in Las Vegas in July!

Kim Woolfenden  
Convention Host

Will Frazer  
Test Coordinator

### 49th Annual Mu Alpha Theta National Convention Las Vegas, Nevada – July 14-19, 2019

## TIPS & ADVICE

Las Vegas is in the desert and is HOT, so please dress accordingly!

There are no elevators in this hotel! You will walk to your rooms in the desert heat.

Hydration is key! Drink lots of water, wear sunscreen, use chapstick, lubricate eyes, etc.

Be prepared and arrive early for testing.

Yoga will be held in the early morning. Bring your yoga mat if you would like to participate.

"This convention wasn't just about math, it was about building connections with other students. One tip I have for first-time attendees is to just have fun!"

--Nancy Khuc  
Secretary/Treasurer

"One of the best parts of the National Convention was meeting and getting to know new people. The experience is made a lot better through meeting new friends."

--Brandon Chyi  
Parliamentarian

"I would urge first-time attendees to not be daunted by a week of math but rather see it as an opportunity to participate in a great convention amidst a wonderful, supportive community."

--Steven Qu  
President

"Have fun, be kind, participate in everything, meet new people, smile, and learn famous Beatles songs to sing along! You must stay **OUTSIDE** the lined off areas of gambling areas at **ALL** times and in all places!"

--Kim Woolfenden  
Convention Host

"Go in with low expectations regarding trophies. Participate in everything and make sure you celebrate [student] efforts. Know it is a privilege to represent your state and school at a national level."

--Dunbar High School

"Get enough sleep! It's easy to lose sleep at the convention. Do your studying beforehand and make sure you rest well. Also, don't forget to set an alarm!!!"

--Fayetteville High School

#### Official Field Trip:



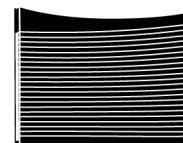
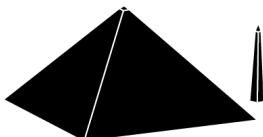
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL  
Wednesday, July 17, 2019

Registration fee is \$575 per participant. Online registration is open now.

**No registrations accepted after May 1, 2019.**

All final payments must be **postmarked** no later than May 1, 2019.

Registration fee includes convention activities, lodging at the hotel, all meals (except Wednesday dinner and Friday breakfast), and a t-shirt.





Dear Math Team Coaches,

My most important teacher was Gwen Snoddy, my math team coach and Mu Alpha Theta sponsor. Despite the fact that I went to the Math Olympiad Program three times and attended two of the country's top universities, Ms. Snoddy's contributions to my future were far greater than those of any of the professors or brilliant mathematicians I encountered at specialized programs and colleges.

Of course, I didn't appreciate the depth of her contribution while I was in high school. Probably not even in college, though the opportunities she made available to me in extracurricular mathematics during high school caused college to be much easier for me than it was for many of my college classmates. One of the most important opportunities she provided was attending the Mu Alpha Theta National Convention four times as a student. There I was inspired not just by the interesting mathematics, but by encountering so many other students who enjoyed tackling hard problems. I didn't realize at the time that this would be my future — that my professional career would be full of such people in ways most of my high school classes were not. Simply put, the Conventions helped me realize that I wasn't alone.

At the last Convention I attended as a student, I ended up on a state team with one of my fiercest Alabama rivals. We weren't good friends prior to being teammates at Mu Alpha Theta, but four years later we would collaborate on the first pair of *Art of Problem Solving* books. Now, our families travel together, we've co-founded a non-profit to bring these extracurricular experiences to underserved communities, and the original AoPS books served as a launching pad for my current career, running the Art of Problem Solving company for the last 16 years.

Through AoPS, I have finally come to appreciate what Ms. Snoddy made possible for me. I've had the great fortune to work with tens of thousands of the most eager math students around the world. They have a lot in common with the student I once was, but one thing most of them don't have is a Gwen Snoddy of their own. A small set of my students are so fortunate — through them I've encountered dozens of inspiring teachers. But not the thousands or tens of thousands that we so badly need to support the next generation of brilliant minds that make most of the scientific, mathematical, economic, and medical advances of the next generation. Many, if not most, top students are largely on their own if they want to go beyond the classroom.



# AoPS

Art of Problem Solving

I'm pretty sure I never thanked Ms. Snoddy enough for her contributions to my future. I'm not sure I could. So, instead, I'll thank you for what you're doing above and beyond the classroom. Too few people realize how much these students are capable of. What you're doing for your students in your math clubs is rare, perhaps more rare than you realize. It's also critical. For some of your students, it's only these efforts that will allow them to reach their full potential.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Richard Rusczyk

