



# Pi Mu Epsilon News

Fall 2012  
Volume 2, Issue 2

## Important Dates:

- January 9-12, 2013 - Joint Mathematics Meetings - San Diego, CA
- August 1-3, 2013 - annual PME Conference - Hartford, CT

Pi Mu Epsilon, Inc (PME), is the National Mathematics Honor Society.

Founded on May 25, 1914 at Syracuse University, PME currently has over 300 chapters at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

The purpose of the Society is to promote scholarly activity in mathematics among the students in academic institutions.

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## Letter from the President

Dear Members, Advisors, and Friends of PME,

I am just back from the wonderful 2012 PME meeting at MathFest in Madison and still basking in the energy of all our talented students. Our meeting started with the most fun opening reception I've ever attended. The fruit smoothies and the Set Game icebreaker were big hits with everyone. We had two days of excellent student talks as well as a "Face Off" competition and lectures and activity sessions for students. The meeting ended with the annual PME banquet and awards ceremony in a lovely room overlooking Lake Monona followed by an engaging J. Sutherland Frame lecture by Dr. Melanie Wood titled "The Chemistry of Primes". If you haven't been to Madison you should go if you get a chance. It is one of the great American universities towns.

The beginning of school is always a time of renewal and setting goals for the year. Students, it is not too early to start planning to attend the 2013 PME meeting at MathFest in Hartford, CT. Start thinking about turning your class projects or independent research into a 15-minute presentation so you can get full travel support to attend! Attending a local conference or giving a presentation to your PME chapter on your work is a great way to polish your presentation. Start thinking now about travel so you can get good deals on transportation and housing. And recruit your student colleagues in your chapter to come too! Many students say that attending a national PME meeting was the highlight of their undergraduate career.

Faculty advisors, now is a good time to start discussing next year's PME meeting with the members of your chapter. This newsletter has some great suggestions on how to encourage students to attend the annual meeting and give a talk. Also, please be sure that your students sign up to give a talk in the PME student sessions through the PME website. The existence of both PME student sessions and MAA student sessions at MathFest can be confusing to students and advisors and we are working with the MAA to make this distinction more clear. PME has generous funding for members to attend MathFest but they must participate in the PME conference.

Could your chapter use some fresh ideas, would you like to have an outside speaker visit for **FREE**, or would you like to learn more about the opportunities available to PME chapters and members? You should apply for a Richard A. Good PME Lectureship and Chapter Enhancement Grant! The application process is extremely simple and we are able to fund most requests. These grants provide up to \$500 in travel expenses for a member of the PME council to come to your institution to meet with students and faculty and to give a mathematical talk. We still have some funds available for this year so contact me immediately if you are interested in participating in the Good Lectureship program this year. For more information go to <http://www.pme-math.org/chapters/lectureship.html>.

Mathematical Jeopardy question: What is 2014? Answer: The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of PME. Your council is hard at work planning for this big event and we need your help. Please keep an eye out for emails and announcements on the PME website about opportunities for your chapter to be a part of the planning and celebrations. This fall we will be announcing a contest for designing the commemorative t-shirt for our 2014 meeting. So get your creative students thinking about artistic and mathematical PME designs.

I wish you a productive and enriching semester,

Eve Torrence  
Pi Mu Epsilon President  
etorrenc@rmc.edu



## Welcome New Jersey Xi, California Upsilon, and South Carolina Zeta!



### How to Get Your Students to Conferences

At the PME Advisors' breakfast at MathFest, we discussed tips and strategies for getting your students to come to conferences (like the PME Summer Conference in Hartford, CT, August 1 - 3, 2013). Some great suggestions included:

- Get your students to local conferences, even if they are not presenting. These are inexpensive, and sometimes do not even require an overnight stay. Once the students see other student presentations, they will feel more confident in their ability to present at a future conference.
- Get students involved early. If students attend conferences as freshmen and sophomores, then they will be more likely to continue to attend when they are juniors and seniors. By the time they are upperclassmen, they will be more prepared to present, and more likely to attend a national conference when their advisor suggests it.
- Make conference attendance (especially at local conferences first and national conferences later) a requirement or expectation for students taking upper level seminar courses or working with you on a Senior Thesis or Capstone Project.
- Explain to students that Pi Mu Epsilon speakers are eligible for one of approximately 12 cash prizes for best student presentations.
- Students speaking in PME sessions are eligible for funding (up to \$1200 per institution, \$600 for the first speaker or \$300 for delegates) to help cover their travel costs. See the webpage for specific requirements or details about how to apply for funding.
- Most students who are eligible for funding will also receive subsistence funding. This is typically about \$200 per student to help defray the costs of hotel and meals.
- Seek funding from your university early to help cover remaining student expenses. Since most PME students attending will receive some funding from PME, your department, college, or university might be willing to cover the remaining expenses.
- Encourage students who have attended past conferences to share their experiences with new students or students who have never attended before. Maybe a small colloquium can be given by student attendees upon returning to your institution to promote future attendance and increase excitement among other students.
- Eventually conference attendance will become a part of the culture of your college or university and students will seek you out for information about upcoming conferences!



## Call for Referees for the Pi Mu Epsilon Journal

Referees play an important role in getting journal articles ready for publication. All articles submitted to the editor for possible publication are sent to at least two referees for their comments. The identity of the referee is usually not revealed to the author, but the referee is told whether the author is a student or faculty member. A student written paper needs constructive comments. Very often drastic changes are required, it is hard for students to live up to the three Cs of mathematical writing: to be clear, concise and complete.

PMEJ articles should be understandable and interesting to undergraduate math majors. Your role as a referee would be to first decide if the topic of the article is appropriate and if the writing style is engaging. If yes, read on and see if the length of the article is justified by the content.

Short articles are preferred, they are more likely to hold the reader's attention to the end. It is NOT the referee's job to check every detail, nor is it the referee's responsibility to insure that the results are new. Detection of blunt errors or plagiarism result in rejection. Refereeing can be a rewarding and stimulating experience, it's all about communication of ideas.

If you are interested and willing to serve as a referee, please send an email with your preferred subject (geometry, number theory, and statistics are in high demand) to the editor, Brigitte Servatius ([bservat@wpi.edu](mailto:bservat@wpi.edu))

## Upcoming PME Centennial Celebration!



Pi Mu Epsilon was incorporated on May 25, 1914, under New York state laws. The Syracuse University Mathematics Club first met in 1903; at the tenth anniversary in 1913 the Club began undertaking reorganization of the club as a professional society. In 1914 those plans became reality with the adoption of a constitution, a pledge, and a name—Pi Mu Epsilon. Forty-two students and eight faculty members signed as charter members of the new organization. Chapters followed in 1919 at the Ohio State University, in 1921 at the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1922 at the Universities of Alabama and Missouri. Today there are 360 chapters of PME around the nation. If you are interested in reading more of the history behind PME, our webpages

[www.pme-math.org/organization/history.html](http://www.pme-math.org/organization/history.html)

contain several articles covering the early history, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PME.

The PME Council has already begun planning centennial activities for the PME Meeting at the 2014 MathFest in Portland, Oregon. You may have already seen the button from a student contest at the last national meeting. Plans are also moving forward for centennial pins, one to replace the regular pin for the centennial year and the other to present to centennial donors to PME. We will have a historical display at both the Joint Meeting and MathFest in 2014 as well as some cool PME trinkets. Prominent mathematicians and past Frame Lecturers will be asked to reflect on their PME experiences and we will encourage others to do so via a web page or wiki. The *Journal* will get a new look in 2014 and we are planning special articles and stories. Expect a t-shirt design contest and other exciting plans to be announced as we move toward 2014.



## Pi Mu Epsilon

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We're on the Web!

[http://www.pme-  
math.org/](http://www.pme-math.org/)

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## Student Presentation Award Winners at the 2012 PME Summer Conference

This year MathFest was held in beautiful (and hot and muggy) Madison, Wisconsin. The Pi Mu Epsilon students came out in full force giving a total of forty six talks in the student paper session. The winner of the Council for Undergraduate Research award went to Marie Meyer from the College of St. Benedict for her talk, "Nim on Groups." The winner of the Janet L Andersen prize for a talk in the area of mathematical biology was Estee George from Youngstown State University for her talk, "Mathematical Model for the Metabolic Pathway of the Butanol Fermentation." The SIAM award went to Frances Withrow from Texas A&M for the talk, "Science Fiction to Reality: The Influence of Interaction Rates, Flesh Decay, and Detection Rates in the Zombie Apocalypse." Shane Wilson from Luther College won the Environmental Mathematics award for the talk, "Sex-Dependent Deer Population Dynamics with Effects from Seasonal Harvesting." Other winners included Sarah Wesley from Elmhurst College, Wilson Cheung from SUNY Geneseo, Beth Bjorkman from Grand Valley State University, Mario Sracic from Youngstown State University, Marissa Clougher from Elmhurst College, Sarah Heilig from New York University, Erik Miller from St. Norbert College, Nathaniel Card from Carthage College, Ashley Broadwell from Pepperdine University, and Candice Nielsen from Elmhurst College. Each student received \$150.00 and a book donated by Dover Publications. For a full list of presenters and winners, please visit our webpage at <http://www.pme-math.org/conferences/national/2012/presentations2012.html>.

### About Our Organization...

Pi Mu Epsilon is dedicated to the promotion of mathematics and recognition of students who successfully pursue mathematical understanding. To promote mathematics, the National PME Council sponsors an annual conference in conjunction with the Mathematics Association of America's annual MathFest. Traditionally, this conference occurs the first weekend of August. Many local chapters also host local conferences. Check the PME website for more information.

<http://www.pme-math.org/conferences/regionalconferences.html>