

Mighty math

Prof encourages mathematics careers

Even students who excel at math in their high school and early college years seldom decide to major in mathematics.

"They think there aren't any jobs for math majors — other than becoming math teachers," said Wayne State University Mathematics Department chairman Clarence W. Wilkerson.

"That's simply not true."

Students believe math is a tool used by engineers, physicists, computer scientists and other professionals, but not a profession in itself.

Wilkerson of Southfield hopes to attract that myth. He has facts about the need for mathematics majors in industry and business as well as education.

"Math is not seen as a separate field," he said. "We don't have the recognition factor at the high school level that other disciplines have."

"STUDENTS DON'T realize that math is still ongoing and still happening. It's alive and well."

Every semester, 3,500 to 4,000 undergraduate students at Wayne take math courses as part of the requirements for other majors. However, Wilkerson said, only 30 students a year will take math courses toward a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

Currently, the math department has about 20 graduate students studying at the master's degree level and about 30 at the doctoral level.

Wilkerson feels that number would increase substantially if more students were aware of the opportunities available to them through mathematics.

"A mathematician is a problem solver," Wilkerson said. "In an academic setting, a mathematician makes up his or her own problems to solve."

"In an industrial or business environment, a mathematician solves predetermined problems."

BECAUSE MATH is used in so many professions, mathematicians easily adapt to nearly every field, Wilkerson said.

"A mathematician is a resource person for other people in the company. I think of a mathematician as being a general problem solver who can abstract out the important components of a situation and see what is really necessary to solve a problem."

Math majors can find jobs in fields as diverse as physics, medicine, geology and government.

According to a November 1984 article in Scientific American, the average starting salary for graduates holding bachelor's degrees in mathematics was \$23,400. That represents an 8.4 percent increase over the previous year.

The average offer for master's candidates was \$28,764, a 12.9 percent increase from the 1982-83 level.

"The central and pervasive role of mathematics in the age of technology should help prevent the boom-or-bust employment phenomena that occasionally affect more specialized areas of science and engineering," the article said.

House OKs 5-part bill for renters

One part of state Rep. Maxine Berman's package of tenants' rights bills has sailed through the Michigan House of Representatives.

The House gave 105-0 approval to a bill which would protect a renter's right to join a tenants' organization.

The measure, House Bill 4695, now goes to the Senate.

Berman, D-Southfield, introduced it last year as part of a five-bill package.

Most of the bills are stalled in the House Consumers Committee.

Another key measure Berman hopes to keep alive would require a landlord to give tenants longer notice of an intended rent increase.

For example, if a tenant is required to give a landlord 30 days notice of intent to move out, a landlord would be required to give 60 days notice of an intended rent increase. Purpose is to allow the tenant ample time to shop for other quarters.

A boom in Oakland County, prompted by the location of many high-technology firms there, has caused a shortage of rental property, Berman argued in hearings last year.

She said some tenants have been kept from participating in tenants' organizations by a fear their landlords will evict them. They signed rental agreements apparently waiving their rights to join a tenants' group.

The Berman bill would prohibit such clauses. If it becomes law, it would be an amendment to the Truth in Renting Act.

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Special courses available

The Continuum Center, a community service arm of Oakland University which offers programs in career and professional development, leadership training, and personal growth, is offering the following educational opportunities:

JOB HUNTING — A five-session training series for job hunters will be offered by The Continuum Center 7-10 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning March 6, in Holiday Inn of Southfield.

The schedule: Job Hunting Skills, Mar. 6; Writing Effective Resumes, Mar. 11; Planning the Job Campaign, Mar. 13; Networking, Mar. 18; Job Interview Techniques, Mar. 20.

Participants may register for individual workshops at \$25 each or all five for \$60.

Judy Hopkin, career specialist on the Continuum Center staff, will conduct the series.

"We find one of the most significant ways this

program works is that it helps people avoid the common mistakes of unsuccessful job hunters. A step-by-step approach like this gives the job seeker skills that build confidence and also outlines proven techniques for making you stand out from the crowd," she said.

PRESENTATIONS — An all-day workshop on "How To Make Effective Presentations" will be offered 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, March 6, in the Holiday Inn of Southfield by the Oakland University Continuum Center.

Rebecca "Becky" Dailey, counselor-trainer at the Continuum Center, will lead the program.

"Speaking in front of a group is at the top of most Americans' list of fears," said Dailey. "Learning to overcome fear and thinking on your feet are skills that can be learned and practiced."

Workshop fee is \$65. Register by calling OU at 370-3333.

Agencies prepare for floods

State and county officials, along with the American Red Cross, are gearing up for expected flooding problems on the Great Lakes.

The latest developments:

- The Southeastern Michigan Chapter of the Red Cross began recruiting 300 volunteers to aid along the 75 miles of shoreline from New Baltimore to Brownstown Township.

- Gov. James J. Blanchard and shoreline area legislators announced three programs to help communities and individuals combat Great Lakes shoreline erosion and flooding problems. They are aimed at 17 counties.

The Red Cross said anyone over the age of 14 who wishes to volunteer time during the relief operation should call 494-2860. Three-hour training sessions are being scheduled.

RED CROSS will provide shelter, food, clothing and personal care items.

Licensed nurses are also being recruited. They should call 494-2875 to sign up. Those who need it will be given disaster training.

Although Red Cross aid is a gift, the agency hoped recipients would replace such health care items as prescriptions, eyeglasses and dentures.

State programs announced by Blanchard are:

- a \$2 million shoreline community protection program to provide grants for damage-prevention efforts to communities threatened by the high waters of the Great Lakes;

- a low-interest loan program to enable homeowners to elevate or flood-proof their homes;

- another low-interest loan program for homeowners who lack adequate adjacent property to move their homes. They may borrow to build anti-erosion devices or buy adjacent land for house moving.

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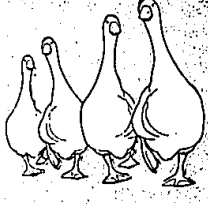
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