



SAMF eNewsletter - August 2012

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Foreword - Prof Johann Engelbrecht

It has been a busy quarter for Mathematics in South Africa with the focus on the International Mathematical Olympiad that was held in Argentina from 4 to 16 July. The South African team returned with two bronze medals and three honorable mentions. I would like to make use of this opportunity to congratulate them on their performance.

Last week was National Mathematics Week and a number of schools and universities took part in nationwide activities. Together with SAMS and AMESA I would like to invite everyone that took part to send your event's photographs to our office for inclusion in our next newsletter.

We at SAMF are also working towards the Annual Gala Event that will take place in Durban during October this year. At this event we will be presenting SA's top young Mathematicians with certificates and medals for their contribution to Mathematics.

But without further ado, I will leave you to read the rest of our news.

Announcement



Alwyn Olivier has been appointed President of AMESA last month. He is a senior lecturer in Mathematics Education and Director of the Research Unit for Mathematics Education at the University of Stellenbosch.

As the (co)author of more than 100 journals, books and conference papers he is also a Director of SAMF who has made a considerable contribution to Mathematics Education in South Africa.

SAMO Training Programme

Mathematics teachers now have access to the SAMO Training Programme online. This means that teachers can now access all assignments and notes.

Phil Labuschagne, who is the project coordinator together with SAMF would like to encourage all Mathematics teachers to join the site at [here](#). The top participating schools are:

St Andrew's College
Domino Servite School
Sicambeni Junior Secondary School
St Stithians Boys' College
Uplands College
Wynberg Girls' High School
Leseding Technical Secondary School

AMESA Congress

From 25 to 28 June delegates came together at the University of the North West's Potchefstroom campus for the Annual AMESA Congress. Prof Johann Engelbrecht was one of a handful of invited guest speakers whilst Patrick Rasehwete addressed delegates about the advantages of the Harmony Teacher Development Programme. SAMF also took part at the exhibition together with several other organisations who showcased their commercial products and services.



Delegates were also treated with excursions to the Vredefort Dome, Letsatsi la Afrika, Ikagent Township as well as social function that included a Jazz evening on the Tuesday followed by a Cultural evening on the Wednesday.

Siyanqoba Training Centres

The Siyanqoba Regional Olympiad Training is a programme coordinated by SAMF with support from the Department of Science and Technology and provide Olympiad training to approximately 300 high school learners. The existing centres are:

Extra Maths & Science School, Bloemfontein
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban
Rhodes University, Grahamstown
University of Stellenbosch with 3 satellite centres in Paarl and Bellville
University of Limpopo, Polokwane
University of Pretoria
University of Johannesburg with a satellite centre at their Soweto campus
University of Venda



National Mathematics Week

August marks an important event for learners and teachers from both primary and high schools. National Mathematics Week, sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology and the South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF) and organised by the SAMF and the Association for Mathematics Education of Southern Africa (AMESA) took place from 30 July to 3 August.

A variety of activities was hosted in four provinces across the nation: University of Pretoria's Mamelodi Campus (Gauteng), the Butterworth Department of Education (Eastern Cape), the North West University's Mafikeng Campus (North West) as well as a variety of schools in the Western Cape to celebrate National Mathematics Week.

"The main purpose of the Mathematics Week was to highlight the beauty, utility and applicability of mathematics and also to dispel the myth that this subject is difficult, cold, abstract, and only accessible to a few," says Prof Johann Engelbrecht, Executive Director of the SAMF.

Activities during Mathematics Week focussed attention on mathematics and mathematics education with the aim of making

mathematics more interesting, attractive, relevant, challenging, rewarding and engaging to learners and the community at large. “I hope everybody enjoyed the activities on offer.” says Alwyn Olivier, recently elected as President of AMESA.

Some of the activities that took place were: games, competitions, quizzes, puzzles, calculator workshops, teacher development workshops and exhibitions.

Running concurrently with National Mathematics Science Week was the JET South African Mathematics Challenge for Grade 4 to 7 learners held locally at schools across the country.

Send photographs of your own Mathematics Week event to info@samf.ac.za or upload them onto our Facebook Page at <http://www.facebook.com/MathematicsFoundation>.

International Mathematical Olympiad

The South African Mathematics Foundation (SAMF) is proud to announce the results of the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) that took place in Argentina on 10 and 11 July. The team was awarded two bronze medals and three honourable mentions at the closing ceremony last night.

Since 1992 South Africa has been an active participating country in the largest and oldest Olympiad for the exact sciences. The South African team is made up by Dylan Nelson (Benoni High School, Gauteng), Robert Spencer (Westerford High School, Western Cape), Dalian Sunder (Star College, Kwa-Zulu Natal), Robin Visser (St George’s Grammar School, Western Cape), Junho Son (St Alban’s College, Gauteng) and Mickey Chew (Elkanah House, Western Cape).



They have been training under the watchful eyes of team leaders Maciek Stankiewicz and Dr Jay van Zyl. “This year a total of 548 contestants took part in the IMO and the jury voted to present extra medals which resulted in 277 contestants being awarded a medal for obtaining a score of 14 or above,” explains Maciek Stankiewicz. “An honourable mention is given to contestants who solved one problem perfectly.”

Bronze medals were awarded to Dalian Sunder, who scored a total of 18 and Dylan Nelson with a score of 15. Mickey Chew, Junho Son and Robert Spencer all received honourable mentions.

With these results team South Africa is ranked 56th in the world. The top countries, in this order, are South Korea, China, the United States of America and Russia. Coming out on top with a perfect score of 42 was Jeck Lim from Singapore.

The SAMF, as the organizers of the South African team, and the Harmony Gold Mining Company, who sponsored the team’s travel expenses and training camps, would like congratulate the team on their performance.