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American Mathematical Society

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Address: American Mathematical Society
201 Charles Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02904

Phone: 1 800 321-4267, or
1 401 455-4000 (worldwide)

Founded: 1888

Fax: 1 401 331-3842

Number of employees: 221

Web address: www.ams.org

AMS Executive Director: Dr. John Ewing

Divisions: Providence & Pawtucket, RI;
Washington, D.C.; Ann Arbor, MI

of books: 3,000 books in print (monographs, textbooks, collected works, proceedings & general), 100 books published each year

of research journals: 9

Important Events:

108th Annual Meeting, AMS National Meeting, Jan. 6-9, 2002, San Diego; Mathematics Awareness Month, each April.

Important Publications:

MathSciNet: "a comprehensive database covering the world's mathematical literature" with an archive going back to 1940. Over 70,000 items added each year from 3,000 publishers, and links to over 165,000 original articles. Unique feature: worldwide, *Author Identification*. Contains bibliographic data from *Mathematical Reviews* and *Current Mathematical Publications*. *MathSciNet* enables mathematicians and other readers to quickly navigate a vast international mathematics literature.

Books (general interest):

Edited by: Curtis D. Bennett and Annalisa Crannell, *Starting Our Careers: A Collection of Essays and Advice on Professional Development from the Young Mathematicians' Network*; Barry Cipra, *What's Happening in the Mathematical Sciences*, Volume 4; Steven G. Krantz, *How to Teach Mathematics*: 2nd Edition.

Books (professional interest):

Robert E. Green and Steven G. Krantz, *Function Theory of One Complex Variable*, 2nd ed.; Wolfgang Kühnel, *Differential Geometry: Curves - Surfaces - Manifolds*; N. V. Krylov, *Introduction to the Theory of Random Processes*; E. B. Dynkin, *Diffusions, Superdiffusions and Partial Differential Equations*.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting the AMS's Executive Director, **Dr. John Ewing** at AMS's offices in Providence, RI. Here is a snapshot of a great scholarly society and its multifaceted, worldwide efforts to improve mathematical research and scholarship.

Founded, 1888 in NYC, the AMS is a catalyst for "comradeship and communication among mathematicians." The AMS has "nearly 30,000 members and over 500 institutional members in the U. S. and worldwide." I asked Dr. Ewing about AMS's Support for Young Scholars and Epsilon Fund¹ (an effort to create a AMS endowment fund): Presently the AMS awards grants to selected summer programs totaling about

\$80,000 per year. The Epsilon Fund's goal is to reach \$2 million dollars, which will provide about \$100,000 in spendable income per year for the support of the young scholars program, without using any outside funding at all. An example of a very successful program is one held each summer at Ohio State University, the *Arnold Ross Program*.

Undoubtedly, encouraging lots of talented young people to pursue careers in mathematics is a *critical element* and a salient issue in America's scientific and technological future—AMS's continuing support of young scholars, summer programs is a crucial move in that direction.

AMS Book Publishing Program:

Books are extremely important to the mathematical community, and mathematicians have a keen interest in the history of mathematics. It is not uncommon for a mathematician to delve back in mathematics literature that was published 20, or 30, or even 50 years ago. Just as librarians are acutely aware of the extraordinary value of archival material, so to the mathematics community. AMS has a vigorous book publishing program (100 new titles per year) and does not allow individual AMS titles to go out of print (there are over 3,000 backlist titles). AMS is closely watching developments with print-on-demand technology and how that might benefit the international mathematics and scholarly community.

As a society publisher, AMS has paid

special attention to complex factors affecting individuals and institutions in "dollar poor countries." For example, following the breakup of the Soviet Union, AMS provided grant money to Russian mathematicians and institutions in order to sustain them during a very difficult time.

In my conversation with Dr. Ewing, I was reminded of the fact that we—as librarians, society publishers, commercial publishers, book or serials vendors—are in a *People Business*.

We are successful because we are working side-by-side with many talented, dedicated people. So, if you have a moment, please take a look at the AMS Web page (www.ams.org) and a inspiring remembrance of the late mathematician, **Prof. Radha G. Laha**.

Finally, I hope *ATG* readers will take a few moments to check out the AMS's *Mathematical Moments* on the Web (www.ams.org/ams/mathmoments.html). *Mathematical Moments* is a "series of informational flyers...designed to promote appreciation and understanding of the role mathematics plays in science, nature, technology and human culture."

Endnotes

1. Epsilon ("small or close to zero") was a term—at once humorous and affectionate—that the great mathematician, Paul Erdos, used in speaking about young, very talented, scholars of mathematics.

Something About Books from page 49

is, first and foremost, the story of **Hickam**'s young life in a company owned and controlled coal mining town. It is also the story of **Homer**'s attempts to make his father, the mine superintendent, understand why his youngest son wanted to be a rocket scientist, not a mining engineer. Finally, it is the story of **Homer**'s mother, **Elsie**, who dreams of helping

both her husband and her son break the ties of the mine, ties, she feels, which will eventually kill both her men.

The **Hickam** trilogy does not have to be read in the order first published (I, for example, read the second and third books first, followed by *Rocket Boys*), and if time does not permit the reading of all three volumes, then any of the three titles will stand alone. The reader will find the storytelling crisp, compelling, and entertaining.