

Supporting Journals

The Society publishes two journals that support the activities of the Society, namely the *Notices* and the *Abstracts*. The latter is a guide to the scientific content of meetings and a record of research while the former carries not only programs of meetings but also a variety of general information of professional interest.

The *Notices*

From the beginning of the Society through 1953, preliminary announcements and programs of meetings were issued as separate. Early issues seem to have vanished. The first in the files of the secretary (soon to be turned over to the archives) is for the Eighth Summer Meeting and Third Colloquium at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY in August 1901. Beginning with the 172nd Regular Meeting in New York on 31 October 1914, the collection is bound and gives the appearance of being complete.

In 1954, the *Notices* began as a periodical. One purpose was to take advantage of the favorable postal rates allowed to periodical publications. The issues were numbered consecutively. Volume numbers were added retrospectively, so that Issue No. 29 of February 1958 is also labeled Volume 5, Number 1.

The editorial management was initially lodged with the editors of the *Bulletin*, who were W. T. Martin and G. B. Price. However, after the first year, beginning with number 8 in February 1955, the editor was the executive director, then J. H. Curtiss. When the executive director changed from Curtiss to Gordon Loftis Walker in 1959, the editorship of the *Notices* changed as well. Volume 6, Number 5 of October 1959 was the first issue edited by Walker.

In addition to preliminary announcements and programs of meetings, the *Notices* contained notes on appointments and news about publications in mathematics. Announcements of fellowships, grants, and conferences appeared in increasing numbers. Abstracts of contributed papers were moved from the *Bulletin* to the *Notices* effective in 1958.

Letters to the Editor were a frequent subject of disagreement in the development of the *Notices*. The minutes of the Council of 29 December 1953 contain the following entry:

The Secretary reported a request from a member of the Society that a "Letters to the Editor" column be established which would make it possible for members of the Society to state objections or clarifications to statements made in the Society's publications. The Council did not approve of this suggestion.

Not until 1958 did Letters to the Editor become a feature of the *Notices*. The first was a letter from R. P. Boas and G. Piranian concerning multiple submissions of an unspecified manuscript, accompanied by some remarks on the desired physical quality of manuscripts. The letter was followed by this note:

The purpose of this new department is to provide a forum for discussions of the programs of the Society, and a method for communicating information of interest to the membership. Questions concerning matters of scholarship, such as those relating to the location of primary references, will be welcomed.

The Council has instructed the Editor of the *Notices* not to allow the new department to be used for quick publication of mathematical results, and not to accept criticism of *specific individual papers* or of *specific individual reviews in Mathematical Reviews* or elsewhere. Thus a letter protesting against what the writer feels to be an unfair review in *Mathematical Reviews* of his or someone else's results is not eligible. There will be no editing of any letter, except for correction of obvious minor misprints, without direct negotiations with the writer.

The last paragraph of the note corresponds to the fact that the editor was solely responsible for the acceptance of letters.

In 1961, the Council voted to eliminate Letters to the Editor. When this was reported to the Business Meeting of 30 August 1961 in Stillwater, the meeting voiced its displeasure by passing a motion to place the matter on the agenda of the Business Meeting of 24 January 1962 in Cincinnati for discussion. In the intervening time, the Council reversed its position, as was reported in Cincinnati. At the same time, possibly to secure more diversified opinion on the suitability of Letters to the Editor, the bylaws were changed to lodge the editorship of the *Notices* with the executive director and the secretary.

This change in editorship was not enough. The Council came to regard the editors as too restrictive and too defensive in their handling of Letters.

Moreover, rejected Letters to the Editor were frequently coming to the Council on appeal. In 1976 an interim advisory committee was established. It was understood that it would not be concerned with abstracts, which are in the province of associate secretaries, or announcements but would be concerned with possibly controversial matters. In January 1976, the Editorial Board of the *Notices* was formalized as a committee elected by the Council in the following manner:

The Editorial Board of the *Notices* shall consist of the executive director ex officio without vote, the Secretary ex officio with vote, and six other voting members with four year terms selected by the Council in the following manner. Every two years, three members' terms expire. The Nominating Committee submits a proposed slate of three to replace them, making an effort to achieve a Board broadly representative of different viewpoints within the Society on matters involved in *Notices* policy. The Council may ratify the whole slate, or else shall elect the three incoming Board members by preferential ballot. The first occasion when this procedure is followed, the three continuing members shall be obtained from among the present (appointed) Board.

This arrangement was quite satisfactory to the former editors, as it relieved them of considerable onus. At the same time, over the years, it brought into being a substantial administrative framework of circulating Letters to the Editor (and occasional articles and advertisements) and voting on them. However, the turmoil over Letters abated. The arrangement persisted except that the executive director was soon replaced by a deputy executive director, inasmuch as the editorial duty was not a direct part of the administrative management of the Society. It is noted that a slate has never been rejected.

At the Council of 28 December 1954, the secretary reported that a Survey of Research Potential and Training in Mathematics was to begin in January 1955. The committee supervising the survey consisted of A. A. Albert, chairman, L. Bers, L. W. Cohen, William L. Duren, A. Gleason, G. A. Hedlund, Mina S. Rees, R. L. Wilder, and S. S. Wilks. The investigator for the committee was J. W. Green. The Survey arose in the Division of Mathematics of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council, where Albert was division chairman. The division report of 1954–1955 shows J. A. Clarkson also as a member of the committee. Financial support came from the National Science Foundation through a contract with the University of Chicago and the committee submitted its reports to both the NSF and to the National Research Council.

The Albert Committee was no formal part of the apparatus of the Society. However, its work formed a basis for subsequent Society activity. In August 1956, President R. L. Wilder appointed a Committee to Investigate

the Present Economic Status of Teachers, initially consisting of W. Givens, chairman, G. N. Garrison, and H. M. Schaerf. It was on the instigation of Schaerf that the Council mandated the appointment of the committee. In late 1957, a questionnaire was sent to the sixty-one departments of mathematics included in the Albert Survey requesting minimum, median, and maximum salaries by rank for 1956–1957 and 1957–1958. Forty-two usable replies were obtained. Inasmuch as the year 1956–1957 was included, there was overlap with this aspect of the Albert Survey. The result was presented in the *Notices* for December 1957. This was the first edition of the Salary Survey, which has been published annually since then in the *Notices*.

Following the first survey, the committee was enlarged to include A. A. Albert, R. Bellman, D. Blackwell, and J. W. Green. The subsequent history is developed elsewhere.

From the beginning, meetings of other organizations and conferences that could be of interest to the membership were reported. Such items became more numerous either in actuality or in the reporting until these notices were collected into a Special Meetings Information Center beginning in February 1971. This was soon organized into a calendar of forthcoming meetings covering on the order of a hundred meetings spread over the next two years.

Abstracts of papers presented at meetings or offered by title were printed in the *Bulletin* after the fact for many years. The system was changed so that abstracts appeared currently in the *Notices*, effective with volume 5 (1958). Among the advantages was the fact that registrants at a meeting could better plan their time in attending competing sessions of papers. This arrangement continued through 1979, at which point the journal *Abstracts of the American Mathematical Society* was started.

From its beginning, the *Bulletin* was the journal of record of the Society. It contained reports of Council and Business Meetings, elections, reports of the treasurer, bylaws, and other items of Society business affecting the membership. The Council of 26 January 1977, in the course of considering the redirection of the *Bulletin*, ordered that the *Notices* become the journal of record of the Society.

The Committee on Membership (a committee of the Trustees), in looking for ways to make membership more attractive to persons who should naturally belong, proposed two changes to the Council of 20 April 1979. The first was approved in modified form “to endorse the principle of trying to make the *Notices* into an attractive mathematical newsletter which would be pleasant to read, and to reorganize it both technically and editorially to that effect.” The second was approved as a recommendation to the Trustees that the *Notices* be separated into two journals, the prose and the abstracts.

Abstracts were only the beginning of the appearance of substantive mathematics in the *Notices*. It had always been regarded by many as a “throw-away” journal, of little value after the occurrence of the programs listed in it. Already in 1972, at the behest of the Committee to Monitor Problems in Communication, a column called “Queries” was instituted, with Wendell H. Fleming as the first associate editor. He was followed in 1975 by Hans Samelson, who served through 1987, and who was joined by Stuart Antman in 1985. The column “welcomes questions from members regarding mathematical matters such as details of, or references to, vaguely remembered theorems, sources of exposition of folk theorems, or the state of knowledge concerning published conjectures.” Responses were supplied by readers. An effort was made to keep the column from becoming either a problem column or a vehicle for publication. The “Queries” column was consistent with the throwaway character of the journal at the time the column was initiated. By 1987 the “Queries” column appeared to have outlived its usefulness. During the next few months it was terminated.

With the prevalence of personal computers, there were two developments in the *Notices*. There was a series of articles, some written and some edited by Richard S. Palais, in a column called *Mathematical Text Processing*, of which the first appeared in January 1986. A column called *Mathematical Software*, edited by Joseph P. Buhler, also began in January 1986. It is too early to say what the stable state of either of these ventures will be.

When the journal became one of record, it was realistic to put articles with mathematical content of more permanent value in it. In 1982, Ronald L. Graham was named associate editor for special articles and the first such article, by J. C. Lagarias and titled *The van der Waerden Conjecture: Two Soviet Solutions*, appeared in the February issue. The new direction was a source of some discontent among those readers whose concept was still that of a throwaway.

The first advertisement in the *Notices* appears to be on the back cover of the issue of August 1960. (The date is inferred. Although the second class mailing data specify months of publication, the issues at the time were neither numbered nor dated.) It was an ad for four elementary textbooks from Holt, Rinehart and Winston. There were no more than half a dozen ads in the entire 1960 volume.

The page size was increased with the 1961 volume and the style was greatly improved. At the same time the amount of advertising gradually increased.

The pale brown cover appeared in 1964. Volume and issue numbers and dates, which had again disappeared, were restored, this being volume 11 of which number 1, part 1 was issue number 72 of January 1964.

Classified ads first appeared in 1976. The major category quickly became that for vacant positions. Advertising for situations wanted never became a

large category, though it was free to the unemployed. Of course the employment register and the journal *Employment Information in the Mathematical Sciences* covered this area.

Effective in 1988, the *Notices* was remodeled. The page size was increased to $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches. The number of issues was increased from eight per year (seven in 1985 and 1986) to ten, one per month except for issues of May–June and July–August. Moreover, most of the material of the former December issue, principally the listing of assistantships and fellowships for graduate students, became a separate publication appearing earlier in the year. The revised *Notices* contains no more material than its predecessor but appears in more timely fashion.

Although the *Notices* has an editorial board, the burden of putting the book together issue by issue falls on the staff of the Society in Providence, that is, on the managing editor, the assistant to the managing editor, and persons who watch over the departments in the journal.

The editorial board of the *Notices* since 1976 has consisted of the secretary, ex officio, as chairman with vote, the managing editor without vote, and the following elected members:

Ed Dubinsky	6/76–1/83
Joseph B. Keller	6/76–1/77
Robion C. Kirby	6/76–1/81
Yiannis N. Moschovakis	6/76–1/77
Barbara L. Osofsky	6/76–1/81
Scott W. Williams	6/76–1/79
Arthur P. Mattuck	2/77–1/81
George Piranian	2/77–1/81
Richard J. Griego	2/79–1/83
M. Susan Montgomery	2/79–1/83
Ralph P. Boas	2/81–
Mary Ellen Rudin	2/81–
Bertram Walsh	2/81–1/85
Paul F. Baum	2/83–1/87
Raymond L. Johnson	2/83–1/87
Daniel Zelinsky	2/83–1/87
Steven H. Weintraub	2/85–
Robert L. Blattner	2/87–
Lucy J. Garnett	2/87–
Nancy K. Stanton	2/87–

The managing editors, ex officio, have been:

Gordon L. Walker	–10/77
William J. LeVeque	11/77–1/78

Lincoln K. Durst	2/78-1/85
Jill P. Mesirov	3/85-10/85
James A. Voytuk	11/85-

Abstracts

The journal *Abstracts* first appeared in 1980. It contained material that had appeared in the *Notices*. As its title implies, it contains abstracts of contributed papers, which are required as part of the process of contributing a ten-minute paper or participating in a special session, and abstracts of invited addresses, which are requested and are usually supplied but are not required. Abstracts appear in advance of the oral presentation except for some irregularities. Abstracts of papers presented “by title”, that is, without oral presentation and not associated with a meeting are published as well. Beginning in 1982 abstracts from the Summer Research Conferences have appeared after the fact.

The journal *Abstracts* was “free” in its first year. Then a subscription charge was instituted and was gradually increased. Nonetheless, the journal is still subsidized from general funds.

The Editorial Committee of the *Abstracts* consists of the secretary and the associate secretaries. It is the latter who have supervised the acceptance of the contributed papers that are abstracted. The work of assembling the journal is done by the staff in Providence.