

Vampire Statistics and Other Mathematical Oddities

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Vampire Statistics and Other Mathematical Oddities

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The world tends to trust mathematicians and their numbers. By extension, the numbers generated by polls and surveys command much respect, sometimes beyond their deserved due. Thus, when an especially juicy statistic enters the public consciousness, it can take on a life of its own, long after new data superseded the old survey and should have driven a stake through its heart. Cathy Kessel covers one such story in her report “Rumors of Our Rarity are Greatly Exaggerated: Bad Statistics about Women in Science”.

This summer issue covers a wide range of topics. Susan D’Agostino turns to Polya’s text *How to Solve It* to tackle a tricky problem: creating a new major in mathematics that is relevant in today’s world. Ilhan Izmirlı gives us an overview of how culture affects our basic views of what constitutes mathematical knowledge. Meanwhile Sue VanHattum presents a personal, in-depth look at how mathematical problems actually get solved, and Kris Green contemplates how the teaching of mathematical thinking could impact public understanding of evolution. JoAnne Growney provides a friendly yet brief account of the diversity of the mathematical blogosphere and other online resources. Reuben Hersh presents a profile of Alvin White, the founder of our predecessor journal, the HUMANISTIC MATHEMATICS NETWORK JOURNAL. Marjorie Senechal reviews a book containing the non-mathematical writings of another hero of the JHM editorial staff: prominent activist, writer, and mathematician Chandler Davis. We also have a review of Joe Mazur’s *What’s Luck Got to Do with It?* written by Michael Lugo, and some fantastic mathematical poetry, by Sarah Glaz, Florin Diacu, and Mari-Lou Rowley. The short story “Final Exam” by Robert Dawson wraps up this issue.

We hope you enjoy our sophomore effort!