**PETER THOMAS**

The Department of Mathematics struck out in a new direction this year by hiring a mathematical biologist Peter Thomas. Dr. Thomas works in the exciting new areas of computational neuroscience and computational cell biology, rapidly growing fields of applied mathematics. In addition to teaching in the general mathematics curriculum, Dr. Thomas is introducing new courses such as Mathematical Methods for Computational Neuroscience and Mathematical Biology.

Dr. Thomas comes to Oberlin by way of San Diego, where, after graduate work at the University of Chicago, he pursued postdoctoral research at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies. Despite having to give up surfing, Dr. Thomas is happy to be back in the Midwest. In his own words, "I have a long if indirect connection with Oberlin College. Many relatives passed through its doors: uncles Jeff Thomas ('65) and Brian Thomas ('62), aunt Jennifer Thomas, and my grandmother Helen Eddy (nee Horton) ('32). My parents (Timothy Thomas ('60) and Marian Thomas (nee McCaa) ('61)) met singing in the choir of 1st Methodist Church. And I have a cousin in the class of '07!"

Peter Thomas's new computational laboratory has already drawn students from mathematics, computer science, biology and neuroscience to work on various research projects. Dr. Thomas has also hosted the department's Distinguished Visitor this year, Dr. Bard Ermentrout (University Professor of Computational Biology and Professor of Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh) who regaled audiences with dynamic talks ranging from delicate mathematical analyses of synchronized neural activity to the mathematics of hallucinations, on which he is an authority.

Peter devotes his spare time to participating in Oberlin's rich musical and community life, and helping care for a brand-new daughter.

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**ANDRIES LENSTRA**

Andries Lenstra is a visiting professor of statistics. He is from the Netherlands. There he studied mathematics, physics, and musicology, and also spent a lot of time at the piano as a student of a local conservatory. For years, he divided his time between piano teaching and teaching probability and statistics at several Dutch universities.

Research on an econometric model earned Andries Lenstra a doctorate in mathematics at the Universiteit van Amsterdam, as well as two post-doc positions. Among his current scientific interests are information bounds. These are the statements that give the maximum precision that can be reached in estimation, i.e., extracting information from data; if a procedure attains the bound, then you know that in this respect it cannot be improved. Examples are the Cramer-Rao bounds in statistics or, in physics, the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. Why do such bounds exist at all: why cannot we approach truth as closely as we wish? It turns out that in many situations they are as inevitable as the fact that, in a right-angled triangle, the hypotenuse cannot be shorter than either of the other two sides.

Before joining Oberlin College, Andries taught at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, and at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX.
I’m officially retired from the University of North Florida. However, I’m still going to be teaching mathematics and statistics courses and working on a variety of teacher training projects. The major difference is that now I’ll be paid less than half of my recent salary! This year I am the Florida nominee for the national MAA Distinguished Teaching Award.

-- Lipkin, Leonard ’60

My energies continue to be directed towards the digital displacement of print, & print’s redefined role in our evolving digital culture. Applied mathematics continues to mean to me applied common sense..., one thing that seems less common all the time. I continue to be in awe of the riches of knowledge & life open to us through the web. Whether it evolves into Berner-Lee's semantic web or in other directions, it redefines all of us every day. -- Neil Richards ’60

After almost 30 years at U. Mass. (Amherst), I retired at the end of 2003. But I’m still quite active mathematically. A new book is to be published later this year by Cambridge University Press: "Modular Representations of Finite Groups of Lie Type". Another is in the planning stage.

-- James E. Humphreys ’61

I am nearing the end of my career, as a Professor of Mathematics at Western Michigan University. I have enjoyed four sabbatical years in England, working with both undergrad and grad students, doing research, writing books, ... Currently I am finishing a book entitled "Math and the Other Arts," which has been great fun to write.

Here is a little curiosity, just encountered: 153 = 1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3. Are there any other such numbers? -- Art White OC ’61

I’m in my 14th year of actuarial consulting, in St. Louis, Missouri. Winding down to full retirement in 2008.

This September, I return to Mozambique for the 3rd time, leading a team to assist the Chicuque Rural Hospital with medical and construction work. This is in cooperation with the United Methodist Church in Mozambique. I have found this work very rewarding and enlightening. -- Tom Mitchell ’63

Ten years after completing my chairmanship of the UCLA Mathematics Department, I am now Undergraduate Vice Chair. Our undergraduate program is one of the largest in the country, with about 240 majors graduating each year. On the research front, my first book “Interacting Particle Systems” was recently reprinted by Springer in its series “Classics in Mathematics”

-- Tom Liggett ’65

BECOMING AN ARCHITECT

When it came time for me to declare a major at Oberlin there weren’t many options. I only learned English at age 13 when I immigrated with my family from China, and my writing skills were not up to Oberlin standards. I crossed out all majors that would require a lot of reading and writing. I briefly considered being an architect but was told it would take seven more years of study after Oberlin. I majored in math by default.

After grad school at Michigan and the Peace Corps, I had a 35 year career in telecommunications but the thought of being an architect became increasingly attractive. Now I am two-thirds through the Masters program at the Catholic University's School of Architecture. To obtain an architect’s license, I will need another three years’ internship. So whoever told me that it would take seven years after Oberlin to become an architect was just about right!

Industrial Design School: Ettie Butters

I enjoy being back in school with young people. While I can’t pull all-nighters like my classmates, I can draw on my family for help. My son Eric, an artist and art teacher, taught me perspective drawing; my daughter Ellen (’99), a graphic designer, helped me with my portfolio; and husband Jerry, (’67) an economist, but also an Oberlin math major, helped my team win the classic toothpick bridge competition! Decades after Oberlin, I have now learned to whip out the term papers which once intimidated me.
After many years in academic computing and high-tech computer engineering, I have returned to my mathematical roots and satisfied a long-time desire to be working with young people. I'm now in my fourth year as a high school teacher in an excellent department (Concord-Carlisle in Massachusetts). The teachers here are pedagogically, and mathematically, sophisticated and care deeply about how students of all abilities can develop their mathematical understanding and skills. --Lee Cooprider '69

I have a part-time clerical job at The Nature Conservancy, which provides lots of good things. Of course I have the opportunity to goof off a lot, but also to do some worthwhile things. I've been a tax counselor with the AARP for several years, and enjoy being able to help people befuddled by our tax laws. And I've also gotten back into mathematics a bit. In the fall of 2004, I taught a course in Finite Mathematics at Marymount University in Arlington, VA. I enjoyed it, and hope to teach a course again next fall.

Teaching at Marymount reminded me of Oberlin. At Oberlin we had an honor code, and everyone took it seriously as far as I could see. Marymount has an honor code, but no one seems to take it very seriously. I realized this when a dean indicated that students could not be trusted to take an exam on their own, without a proctor. I trust that the honor code is still meaningful at Oberlin. (Ed. note: Mostly.) --Joel Katz '71

I'm still working at Rho, Inc., heading the Massachusetts Office of this full-service CRO providing services to the pharmaceutical industry. My 2 Siamese cats and I recently moved within Newton (just outside of Boston) to a condo, which means no more snow shoveling! Sons Dan and Chris are, respectively, in New Jersey and Tucson, AZ. --Kathy (Nuckolls) Monti '71

I haven't pursued math since I left Oberlin. I'm currently doing sustainable community development work in Nicaragua, and it's really fun for me to have at least this minimal contact with the world of math. Because of technical difficulties here in Nicaragua, I do not currently have good internet access, so I especially appreciate getting the newsletter by email.

--Pat Floerke '72

I graduated from Oberlin in '73 with majors in Music Composition and Mathematics. For the next 14 years I pursued advanced degrees and a career in music. Not long after attaining my DMA in Music Composition from Columbia, I got tired of the whole thing and turned to computers.

Today, I am a founding partner of Plainwrap Solutions, located in Santa Barbara, CA. We specialize in Internet technology strategy--determining how businesses can grow by making the right choices in what to buy and to build.

I'll never forget the gentleman who lectured one morning in Sam Goldberg's 8:00 Operations Research class. His task was to make the jury selection process in Chicago more efficient. He correctly identified the problem as one of reducing spending. He also determined that the budget could be attained simply by reducing the number of jurors called by half, not using any Operations Research at all. OR wasn't the best solution domain! What an eye-opener!

--Eric Valinsky '73

After 25 LONG years, I have retired from the federal Bonneville Power Administration in Portland Oregon. I spent most of those years as an economist, analyzing acquisition of new energy resources and the impact on the regional economy of changes in hydropower operations to benefit migrating salmon. Lately I've been a risk analyst, trying to bring Bonneville into the new era of agency-wide Enterprise Risk Management.

I'm going to focus on cleaning my house,
spending time on hobbies (violin, singing, flag twirling in the country’s largest adult marching band), and working in my small business. About 6 years ago, I had a mid-life crisis and my husband and I opened a gift shop that my husband has been running.

We would love to see any alums passing through Portland. I can be reached at audrey@woodbloom.com or 503-246-6462. Or (shameless plug) check out our website at www.woodbloom.com. --Audrey Perino '75

I’m still at Geneseo but I will be spending the 2005-2006 academic year at the Institut für Medizinische Biometrie at the University of Tübingen, Germany. I’ll be working with a group concentrating on modeling the spread of disease, with an emphasis on influenza and SARS. It’s a long way from set theory, but it’s interesting, and ties in well with a big NSF grant that we have at Geneseo training undergraduates in mathematical biology. --Chris Leary '79

I’m still working in the Biometric Research Flight Center and then at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, where I have been since, now a Team Leader for Knowledge and Information Systems Science in the Computer and Computational Sciences Division. My work has only grown more mathematical in recent years: it turns out that I SHOULD have taken that topology course after all! --Cliff Joslyn, '85.

I was promoted in '02 to become Professor of Statistical Epidemiology at Imperial College London. I enjoy enjoying working in London and living in Oxford with husband Ben and son Evan (born June ’03). Last month I enjoyed lecturing to Oberlin in London students on statistics, epidemiology and giving advice to policy makers on controlling infectious diseases. --Christl Donnelly '88

After years teaching middle and high school, I decided to go back to grad school in math. I had not taken any math classes since graduating from Oberlin in ’89! This Spring I completed my doctorate in Applied Mathematics from NC State University and will begin a post-doctoral position at Duke University this summer. I work on discontinuous solutions of PDEs that model the flow of very thin liquid films. Some of the applications are in industry and others are biological (in the lung). Going back to school in math has been a great experience. Anyone who has not been near Oberlin is definitely an exciting place. Recent issues in safety, security, and business operations have certainly caused some turmoil, but I am fortunate to be a member of a stimulating, well-run group.

I now have 3 daughters: 16, 13, and 10. Alas, my 16 year old high school junior, who is interested in math and psychology, does not appear to be interested in Oberlin! --Joanne Roth Wendelberger '81

I went on to get a masters in theater (costume design), so have not been in the math biz (other than helping with homework) but I always enjoy hearing about goings on. As I currently am home with my three kids (two still preschoolers) I’m happy to hear about anything outside my house!

Kathy (Wilson) Mooneyham '84
thinking about it and wanting to talk should send me an email: rlevy@math.duke.edu.

On the personal side, I designed and contracted a passive solar home with my husband Sam Kome. We have held potluck dinners at our house every Friday for 15 years and many Obies have joined the fun. We have two awesome kids Tulani (17) and Miryam (8) who help with the 12 chickens, 3 dogs, 2 cats and 1 dwarf hamster.

--Rachel Levy '89

Lisa and I recently moved to the D.C. area. In my new job I’ve run across several interesting finite field problems and am learning a lot about how the atmosphere works. --Greg Bloy '90

My family, the good cat and I have moved to Munich for a two year rotation with Munich Reinsurance. (The bad cat went to my mother-in-law’s, where she’s much happier.) I’m working on international accounting standards issues for the duration, then heading back to Atlanta to the US office. A side project is getting a German driver’s license — here they don’t "cross their fingers" but "hold the thumbs." --Brian Holland OC’91

After graduating from Oberlin, I earned an MS in Astrophysics from the University of Wyoming in 1996. (I wish I had taken some physics at Oberlin!) I then joined the Peace Corps and taught general science and math at a rural secondary school in Zimbabwe from ’97 to ’99. I then worked as a lecturer at U. Wyoming for four years, teaching introductory physics. This fall I will begin a Ph.D. program in Applied Mathematics at the University of Arizona. I plan finally to follow up on the inspiration I received from the Chaos, Fractals and Dynamics seminar at Oberlin in the early 90’s. --Brenae Bailey ’92

My career as a math major at Oberlin was undistinguished. My advisor, Dr. Henle, once suggested I try pottery. I thought this extremely odd, but sure enough I actually did make my living for a time making earrings with modeling clay. The time spent working with my hands in clay was about the best time of my life. Eventually, I went on to a more distinguished career in music and math at Xavier University in Cincinnati, and as of next fall I’ll be licensed to teach those in the public schools.

--Justin Dudley ’92

I got married in October. And I’m an airline pilot! Neither requires me to do much complicated math, and that’s just as well.

--David McLaughry ’95

I am currently a physics post-doc at Texas A&M University. I mostly do research but occasionally teach. Recently, I was substitute teaching a graduate electromagnetism class where we were discussing a geometric way of solving Poisson's equation in electrostatics. I was a bit nervous since I had not much experience with graduate classes, and was momentarily stumped when one of the students asked me whether there might be an elegant mathematical way of transforming from a planar to a spherical geometry, connecting the respective problems we had just solved. I recovered quickly, and responded with the Riemann sphere, which projects points on the sphere to the extended complex plane. Although I have not thought much about the connection, I remember being thankful at the time for my mathematics training at Oberlin which came to the rescue.

--Ashok Muthukrishnan ’95

I’m working outside Boston as a Java software engineer at The MathWorks, Inc. Previously, I earned a MS in Operations Research and Industrial Engineering from Cornell and worked for two years at the Cornell Bioacoustics Research Program. In January of 2005, my partner, Dr. Sarah Cazabon, and I were married in Boston.

--Christina Ahrens ’97

I am finishing a Ph.D. in math at the University of Wisconsin. I study symplectic topology and algebraic geometry; the specific topic is Gromov-Witten invariants, which count holomorphic curves in symplectic manifolds. These invariants play a central role in string theory, a branch of "physics" that has generated much beautiful math. Next I go to Duke for a post-doc. I remember Oberlin fondly (perhaps too fondly) and hope to end up teaching at a liberal arts college.

I just ran into Josh Mullet ('99), who is also studying algebraic geometry: at Illinois. Mohan Rajagopalan ('98) is also an instructor of sorts in the games program at the Cornell CS department.

I hope things are generally fantastic at Oberlin.

--Josh Davis ’98

I just received a Masters of Music from Rice University and I have also been chosen as a Fulbright Scholar for 2004-2005 for study in Germany. I will focus on contemporary techniques on the trombone, studying with Abbie Conant and Mike Svoboda in Stuttgart.

--Steven Parker ’01

COMMENCEMENT
• This year our Commencement Reception is Sunday, May 29 from 2-4 PM in King 205. If you're here for commencement, please come.