December, 2011

Dear Alumni and Alumnae,

Greetings from all of us here at the Mathematics Department. We hope this letter finds you well.

There are many exciting things happening at Westfield State University and in the Mathematics Department. We thought you might like to be informed of the goings–on and enjoy re-establishing or maintaining contact. This is the first ever newsletter from the department; in the future, we plan to publish it once a semester. So, please send in items / announcements / stories or suggestions you would like to have included. We're especially interested in knowing what you're doing – how you are using your math degree and where life took you. Also, if you would like to receive future editions of this newsletter, please help us maintain and update our address and email list. Send all communications to: Dr. Karin Vorwerk kvorwerk@westfield.ma.edu

Best wishes for the holidays and a healthy, happy, and successful new year!

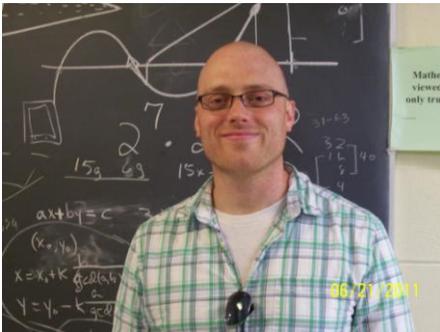| Current full-time faculty	Discovering the Art of Mathematics is an NSF/Harry Lucas supported project in which we are creating a library of *Inquiry-based Learning Guides for Mathematics for Liberal Arts*. These guides provide accessible, yet intellectually challenging mathematical explorations. In addition to the guided discovery approach, each guide provides *connections* between the mathematics and the arts, philosophy, history, humanism and culture. These books contain connections between current research such as the Millennial Problems, historical moments, popular cultural, and philosophical trends.
John Judge (1988) Chair	
Larry Griffith (1981)	
Maureen Bardwell (1984)	
Julian Fleron (1994)	
Philip Hotchkiss (1998)	
Mary Ann Connors (2001)	
Karin Vorwerk (2002)	
Edward Welsh (2003)	One of our goals for this project is to make our materials as easily accessible and affordable as possible. To this end, we have posted, for each book, draft materials in PDF (either full versions or completed chapters) on our website, artofmathematics.wsc.ma.edu .
Volker Ecke (2004)	
Anna Rokicki (2005)	
Christine von Renesse (2007)	
Marcus Jaiclin (2008)	We encourage you to examine these materials and use any part of them that would be appropriate for your course. We only ask that you give us feedback on whatever you download.
Brian Jennings (2011)	
Departmental Website http://westfield.ma.edu/math	We hope that you find our materials helpful and that you will pass this newsletter on to other colleagues who may be interested in our project. Please do not hesitate to contact one of us if you have any questions or comments.
	Dr.s Fleron, Hotchkiss, Ecke, and von Renesse

We mourn the loss of **Kyle Piazza** (2005) this October. During his six years teaching at Braintree High School, Kyle was an enormously popular teacher and coach, turning on many students to the beauty of mathematics. He will be missed

Mary Ann Connors authored an essay in a Mathematics Association of America (MAA) publication, *The Beauty of Fractals,* entitled "Exploring Fractal Dimension, Area, and Volume" http://www.maa.org/ebooks/notes/NTE76.html.

The department welcomes our newest faculty member**, Dr. Brian Jennings**.

Dr. Brian Jennings was born and raised in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio. For all of his time in grade school, and most of his time in high school he was not at all interested in school (in fact he hated it), and wasn't sure if he wanted to go to college. During the summer between his sophomore and junior years of high school he had two very important life changing experiences: he worked as a laborer for a roofing company, and he read 'A Brief History of Time' by Stephen Hawking. These led him to realize that he should use his brain rather than his back to make money, and that theoretical physics was crazy cool stuff. As an undergraduate he attended John Carroll University where he majored in physics. Originally intending to go to graduate school in physics he knew that if he wanted to be admitted to the best possible graduate program that he should augment his physics degree with as many math courses as possible; he eventually minored (nearly majored) in math. At some point he realized that he enjoyed his math courses as much as his physics courses, so he began looking for a graduate program that would allow him to combine physics and math. Brian attended the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) for his Ph.D. where he specialized in semi-classical analysis (an awesome combination of classical mechanics, quantum physics, functional analysis, and differential geometry). While at UM he met and married his wife Geri (who just defended her dissertation in math), and his son Grant was born in Michigan as well. They all currently live in Westfield, and they are expecting another little one in June.

Westfield State College becomes University	**Building Projects**
(Boston) –Surrounded by hundreds of state college students, presidents and faculty and state legislators, Governor Patrick today signed House 4864-10, creating a state university system for the nine current Massachusetts State Colleges. As a result of this bill, six state colleges will be renamed as Bridgewater State University, Fitchburg State University, Framingham State University, Salem State University, Westfield State University and Worcester State University. The three specialized state colleges– Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and Massachusetts Maritime Academy – which serve very unique missions, will retain their existing names but as part of a state university system.	On Saturday, October 23rd Westfield State University dedicated its newest academic space, the Banacos Academic Center (see http://www.westfield.ma.edu/news/dediction-of-banacos-academic-center/) .The Ely campus center and the library have been and still are undergoing renovations. The Dining Commons have been enlarged and renovated. Currently, preparations are underway to start construction on a new residence hall to be opened fall '13 . Most exciting, a new academic building is being planned. It should be ready to open in fall '15, and will hopefully also be the new home of the mathematics department.