

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

# THE SUMTIMES

JULY 2025

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# GRADUATE LIFE

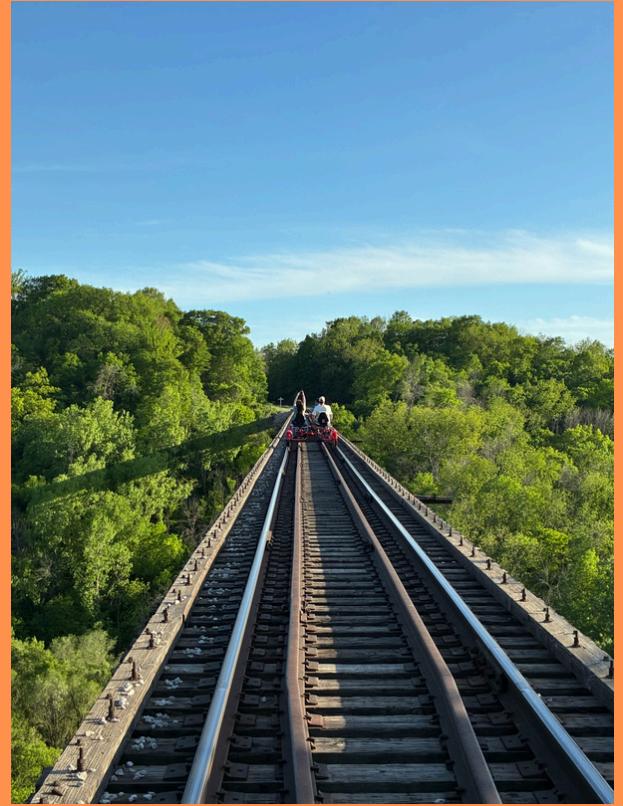
## MARCH DEFENSE CELEBRATIONS



# SPRING PICNIC



# BOONE RAILWAY EXPLORERS



# OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARDS



# SCMB MATH-BIO SYMPOSIUM



# INTERVIEW

WITH AMY SIMONSON

- PARIA KARIMI

PARIA: CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU CAME TO WORK IN THE MATH DEPARTMENT?

AMY: OH, SURE! I ACTUALLY WAS—AND STILL AM—A DANCE TEACHER. I WAS WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY IN THAT ROLE, AND THEN THINGS SHIFTED DURING THE PANDEMIC AND AFTER I HAD A BABY. I STARTED LOOKING FOR MORE ADMINISTRATIVE-TYPE ROLES. I ALREADY HAD EXPERIENCE WORKING AT DIFFERENT DANCE STUDIOS AND IN ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES WITHIN THAT WORLD.

PARIA: AND CAN I ASK WHAT KIND OF DANCE YOU TEACH? OR IS IT MORE OF AN ACADEMIC SORT OF THING?

AMY: I TEACH BALLET, MODERN, JAZZ, AND MUSICAL THEATER. I'M CURRENTLY PART-TIME AT CORNELL COLLEGE.

PARIA: OH, MY GOODNESS, YOU'RE SO COOL! I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

AMY: THAT'S MY OTHER GIG—IT'S VERY DIFFERENT FROM THIS! I LIKE HAVING THE BALANCE OF BOTH.

PARIA: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT WORKING WITH MATH FACULTY OR STUDENTS? AND IF YOU DON'T FIND ANYTHING REWARDING, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO LIE.

AMY: [LAUGHS] NO, IT'S OKAY. I ACTUALLY LIKE IT BECAUSE I'VE



BEEN IN YOUR SHOES—AS A GRAD STUDENT AND AS SOMEONE WHO'S TAUGHT IN UNIVERSITY SETTINGS. SO, I ENJOY HELPING AND BEING THERE FOR YOU ALL IN THIS DIFFERENT KIND OF ROLE.

PARIA: YOU'RE SO SWEET. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU'VE HAD IN YOUR ROLE?

AMY: THINGS CHANGE A LOT, SO LEARNING TO ADAPT TO NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PROCESS OF ORDERING BOOKS IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT NOW THAN IT WAS IN MY FIRST YEAR. BUT HONESTLY, THAT ALSO KEEPS THINGS INTERESTING—IT'S JUST CHALLENGING AT TIMES.

PARIA: INTERESTING! FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, WHAT MAKES THE MATH DEPARTMENT UNIQUE OR SPECIAL? OR WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT IT?

AMY: I THINK EVERYONE FEELS COMFORTABLE SHARING WITH EACH OTHER. THERE SEEMS TO BE A REALLY GOOD LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION IN THIS DEPARTMENT. I ALSO SEE THE STRONG BONDS THAT GRAD STUDENTS HAVE WITH EACH OTHER, AND THAT PROFESSORS HAVE WITH ONE ANOTHER. THERE ARE A LOT OF POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS HERE.

PARIA: AND YOU'RE A BIG PART OF THAT. YOU'RE AMAZING. HAVE YOU SEEN THE DEPARTMENT CHANGE OVER THE YEARS YOU'VE BEEN HERE?

AMY: YEAH, IT'S CHANGED FOR ME PERSONALLY IN THAT I GET TO INTERACT WITH PEOPLE A LOT MORE NOW. WHEN I FIRST STARTED, WE WERE ALL WEARING MASKS, THERE WERE PLASTIC BARRIERS AT EVERY DESK, AND PEOPLE RARELY CAME INTO THE OFFICE. I REALLY ENJOY HAVING MORE INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS AND STAFF NOW.

PARIA: THAT'S GREAT! IS THERE A MEMORABLE MOMENT FROM YOUR TIME HERE THAT STANDS OUT?

AMY: THAT'S A TOUGH QUESTION ON THE SPOT. I THINK ONE MOMENT I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER IS MARGARET'S RETIREMENT PARTY. SEEING

HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT SHE HAD ON EVERYONE—AS A STAFF MEMBER AND A PERSON—WAS REALLY TOUCHING. IT WAS MEMORABLE TO BE PART OF THE END OF HER CAREER AND WITNESS HOW APPRECIATED SHE WAS.

PARIA: SHE WAS AMAZING—AND SO ARE YOU. WE'RE SO LUCKY TO HAVE YOU. WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING OUTSIDE OF WORK?

AMY: I JUST FINISHED CHOREOGRAPHING A MUSICAL! I REALLY ENJOY DOING CREATIVE THINGS LIKE THAT—EXERCISING, DOING YOGA, AND SPENDING TIME WITH MY FAMILY. MY HUSBAND ALSO WORKS AT THE UNIVERSITY AND WE HAVE A 5-YEAR-OLD WHO JUST STARTED T-BALL!

PARIA: WOW! THAT LEADS ME TO MY NEXT QUESTION: HOW DO YOU BALANCE WORKING AND BEING A MOM TO A FIVE-YEAR-OLD? DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE? I KNOW SOME STUDENTS HERE HAVE KIDS, SO YOUR ADVICE COULD REALLY HELP.

AMY: I USED TO THINK ABOUT WORK A LOT, EVEN WHEN I WASN'T AT WORK. WHAT I APPRECIATE ABOUT THIS JOB IS THAT I CAN REALLY FOCUS WHILE I'M HERE, SO WHEN I GO HOME, I CAN FOCUS ON BEING A MOM. THE SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY IN ACADEMIA IS ONE OF THE BEST PARTS. I'M ABLE TO LEAVE WORK AND PICK HIM UP FROM SCHOOL. IT'S NICE THAT SCHEDULING CAN WORK BOTH FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY.

PARIA: THAT'S GREAT—THANK YOU FOR SHARING. I WANTED TO ASK: ARE THERE ANY COMMON ISSUES OR QUESTIONS THAT STUDENTS COME TO YOU WITH?

AMY: WELL, I'M ALWAYS HERE TO HELP WITH EXAM PRINTING, GETTING PAPER, UNLOCKING ROOMS—THINGS LIKE THAT. I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ONE COMMON ISSUE, BUT ONE THING I'D SAY IS: DON'T HESITATE TO COME TALK TO ME, EVEN IF I LOOK BUSY. IF I CAN'T HELP, I'LL TRY TO FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN.

PARIA: YOU'RE THE NICEST! I KNOW YOU DO A LOT—YOU ORGANIZE ALMOST EVERYTHING. YOU MAKE THE POSTERS, MANAGE THE WEBSITE...

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UNIVERSITY OF IOWA MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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WE REALLY APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU DO.

AMY: WELL, THANK YOU. I ACTUALLY ENJOY ALL THE DIFFERENT THINGS I GET TO DO.

PARIA: THAT'S AMAZING. YOU HAVE SO MANY SKILLS. MY LAST QUESTION IS: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO GRAD STUDENTS NAVIGATING DEPARTMENTAL PROCESSES OR RESOURCES? ANY TIPS FOR US?

AMY: I'D SAY: DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK QUESTIONS AND LEAN ON OTHER PEOPLE. PEOPLE ARE USUALLY MORE WILLING TO HELP THAN YOU THINK. AND SOMETIMES YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO TO ASK UNTIL YOU START TALKING TO SOMEONE. JUST BEING OPEN TO COMMUNICATION REALLY HELPS.

PARIA: THAT'S GREAT ADVICE. THANK YOU SO MUCH, AMY.

AMY: YOU'RE WELCOME! THANK YOU FOR THE INTERVIEW.

# CONGRATULATIONS!

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## CONGRATULATIONS ON COMPI NG

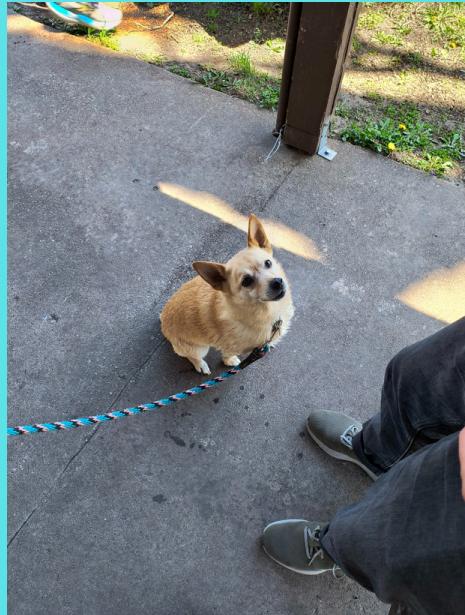
- ABDUL SHABEER
- NANDITA NAIR
- DYLAN JOHNSON
- SAM HOLEN

## CONGRATULATIONS ON DEFENDING

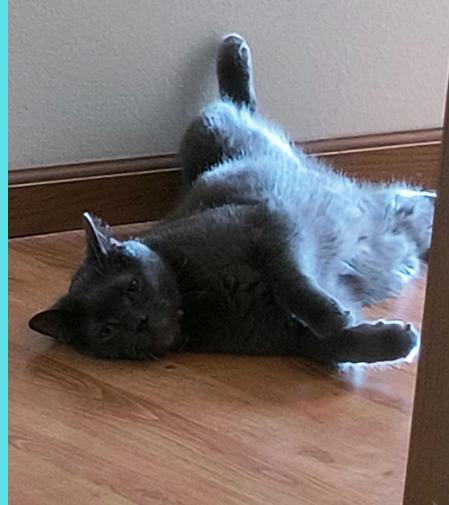
- KEVIN DEL RAMOS
- NIKI AMARAWEEERA

## CONGRATULATIONS TO DYLAN ON THE NEW BABY!

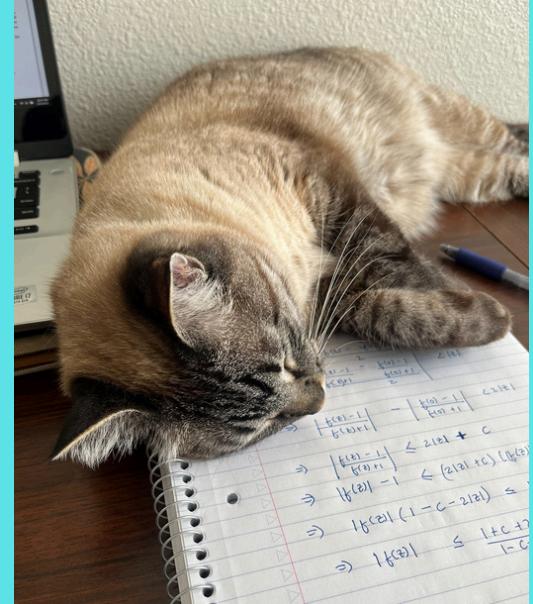
# MATH PETS!



BEATRIX KINSER



GRAMMY NAIR-BRASS



SARTHAK'S CAT



DELBAR KARIMI



CHARLIE HOLEN



PICKLES DEYESO

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ALEX BRASS



LION ARZANI-SHANEHSAZAN



GINGER ARZANI-SHANEHSAZAN



BABY JUNE KARIMI



HANDSOME PICKLES DEYESO

# RECIPES!

## EDDIE'S TACO PASTA

### EQUIPMENT:

- INSTANT POT

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 POUND GROUND BEEF
- 1 OUNCE TACO SEASONING
- 8 OUNCES TOMATO SAUCE
- 2.5 CUPS BEEF BROTH
- 11 OUNCES SMALL PASTA
- 1.5 CUPS SHREDDED CHEESE



### INSTRUCTIONS:

SET INSTANT POT TO SAUTE. ADD THE GROUND BEEF AND BREAK UP AS IT COOKS. ONCE GROUND BEEF IS BROWNED, STIR IN TACO SEASONING, TOMATO SAUCE AND BEEF BROTH. BE SURE TO SCRAPE THE BOTTOM WHILE STIRRING, TO AVOID MEAT STICKING TO POT. NEXT ADD THE PASTA. PUSH THE PASTA INTO THE MIXTURE JUST ENOUGH TO SUBMERGE; DON'T STIR.

COVER AND SEAL LID. CHANGE SETTING TO MANUAL AND ADJUST TIME TO 5 MINUTES.

ONCE INSTANT POT BEEPS TO SHOW IT'S DONE, QUICK RELEASE. CAREFULLY REMOVE COVER AND STIR.

TURN OFF INSTANT POT. TOP WITH CHEESE, PUT COVER BACK ON BUT DON'T SEAL. ALLOW A MINUTE OR TWO FOR CHEESE TO START TO MELT. SERVE WITH DESIRED TOPPINGS.

## LIZ'S COFFEE BROWNIES

### INGREDIENTS:

- ONE BROWNIE BOX MIX (THE CHEAPER THE BETTER)
- INGREDIENTS ON BOX AS DIRECTED
- 2 TBSPS OF INSTANT COFFEE
- 2 TBSPS COCOA
- $\frac{1}{2}$  TSP OF SALT
- 2 TSPS OF VANILLA
- 1 CUP OF CHOCOLATE CHIPS (OR AS MUCH AS DESIRED)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- COMBINE EVERYTHING EXCEPT CHOCOLATE CHIPS INTO ONE BOWL AND MIX
- ADD CHOCOLATE CHIPS AS DESIRED THEN MIX AGAIN
- POUR INTO GREASED 8X8 PAN
- BAKE AT 350 FOR 10 MINS, LET SIT ON STOVETOP FOR 10 MINS, THEN BAKE SOME MORE FOR ANOTHER 30-40 MINS OR UNTIL DESIRED DONE-NESS



# PUZZLE TIME WITH COLE

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- COLE HENGEL

## THE KEY COMPONENT

YOU'VE SPENT WEEKS TRYING TO DECODE THE SECRET MESSAGES TO DETERMINE WHO THE SPY IS. FINALLY CONNECTING THE DOTS, YOU DISCOVER THE TRUTH: YOUR TYPIST IS THE SPY! YOU RUSH TO THEIR OFFICE TO CONFRONT THEM, BUT THEY'VE ALREADY FLED. BETWEEN THEIR TWO KEYBOARDS, YOU SEE THE FOLLOWING ENCODED NOTE. WHERE DID THEY GO?

QZ WAX\ CERFD\ BTY GH\ I<>O\QE WX  
ZC\RV\ UTBMJH\ <ILP?\ \ QZ8XE\ RV\TG  
YH\U J\{L?\ \ ZEC SD\FVHTF  
GB\UM\IOLK\QDZ\RY TBV UM IJ<\EQZC  
AS\RVBT\YN\UK OM\P"? P\EQZCDS\RB  
VT\YN\MUIJ<\PO>? \QE  
WX\VRBT\YN\U\I<O>P

# HERE BE THE MATH MEMES

COLLECTED FOR YOU BY LIZ BRASS

people say it's broken but for me it's normal



Therapist: Gaussian Gauss isn't real!

Gaussian Gauss:



$$\frac{3x^3 + 12x^2 + 9x}{3x} = 0$$

$$x^2 + 4x + 3 = 0$$

$$(x+1)(x+3) = 0$$

$$x = -3, x = -1$$



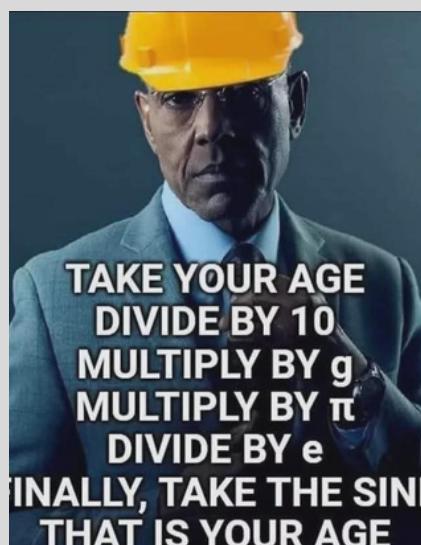
**LEBRON JAMES SPOTTED DIVIDING EQUATION BY X WITHOUT CHECKING X = 0 AS A SOLUTION**

imgflip.com

Guys how do I know the direction of the cross product between two vectors



Thanks



← Thread 41,146 views

mondaypunday 7h Follow

Pope has a math degree. This guy really has a keen grasp of cardinality

1.2K 37 58 107