

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Cover Article

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As I write these lines for the December issue of the *Notes*, I feel both proud and sleep-deprived. I had been gradually getting more involved with the CMS towards the end of my maternity leave and my return in September was after an extremely successful Summer Meeting with over 1000 registrants celebrating the 75th+1 anniversary of the CMS. The CMS was also still basking in the excellent news from [Team Canada's glorious performance at the International Mathematical Olympiad](#) and [Girls' Math Team Canada's first gold](#) in the history of its participation at the European Girls' Mathematical Competition. Despite what we had anticipated, COVID-19 had minor side effects, but the strong will, talent and hard work of our young mathematicians offset all difficulties.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the training of both teams, namely Robert Garbary, Anna Krokline, Elnaz Hessami Pilehrood, Dorette Pronk, James Rickards, Mariya Sardarli, Alex Song, and Dani Spivak.

Upon my return, I thought my biggest task would be to secure a place for my soon-to-be 1-year-old at a daycare centre. But as I succeeded in doing so, the CMS went through some unexpected changes. Unfortunately, two key members of our staff went on sick leave and the newly hired staff had no choice but to plunge in head first into the thick of things with the competition season afoot and Winter Meeting preparations pressing. The task in front of us seemed insurmountable and at times we had to work long hours to make the competitions a possibility. I am so grateful for the hard work and dedication of our new and old staff members and everyone who helped us organising another successful competition season.

We are also grateful to the RBC Future Launch program and Actuarial Foundation of Canada for funding the CMS Inclusion Initiative that provided an opportunity for Black, Indigenous and female-identifying students to participate in the competitions at no costs. We would have liked to be able to better advertise and implement our new initiative for female-identifying students. But we have built the foundation and will improve upon it in the years to come. We firmly believe at the CMS that all students should be given a chance to discover and develop their love and talent for mathematics.

I am also happy to report that participation in the Gray Jay competition increased by 50% this year and we were able to form partnerships with 17 new countries to have international students write the competition. The Canadian Mathematical Gray Jay Competition was conceived in 2020 to engage students in stimulating mathematical activities from a young age.

This year too, some math camps had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Others went ahead with an online format. The CMS is also proud to have sponsored a brand new Math Week for Black Students in Nova Scotia this year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organisers of this initiative for their creativity and their hard work.

We were not able to take a break since we had to do a fast transition from competitions to the meeting planning. The list of sessions, speakers, and mini-courses promise another enriching gathering, albeit virtual, of the Canadian and International mathematicians.

I am proud to announce that this year, thanks to funding from RBC Future Launch program, we have put in place a new inclusion initiative for 2021 Winter Meeting, in addition to offering free registration to the meeting and mini-courses. This year, the CMS will be offering a good number of free registrations to female-identifying, non-binary and LGBTQ+ student registrants and to registrants with disabilities. We strongly believe that lifting barriers for the participation of equity-seeking groups will result in a richer and more diverse community that can offer new exciting perspectives and value different knowledge systems.

We hope to see you all on December 2-7 on Zoom.

In the end-of-the-year tradition, I wish us all a COVID-free 2022, where we can come together in person again and hold spaces for K-12 students to see their math-y peers and foster their mathematical interests. That said, we are ready for anything and if the COVID pandemic has shown us anything it is that our community is resilient and adaptable.

At the end, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Javad Mashreghi and Dr. Monica Nevins for their guidance and words of encouragement that have helped me during this difficult fall session. Last but far from least, I would like to thank one more time the great CMS staff (old and new) for their hard work and dedication. A very special thank you to Yvette Roberts: it would not have been possible to pass this season without her help and dedication.

Stay well and stay safe!