

Math News

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The Easy Answer ---- Check It

Previous Puzzle: Orvin went to the store with just enough money to buy 30 balloons. When he arrived, he discovered that the store was having a sale on balloons: buy 1 balloon at the regular price and get the second at $\frac{1}{3}$ off the regular price. What is the greatest number of balloons Orvin could buy?

Solution: He can now get two balloons at $\frac{5}{3}$ the cost of one regular priced balloon (instead of $\frac{6}{3}$, as if there were no sale happening). Therefore, assuming he buys an even number, we can average the cost of each pair over each balloon, getting $\frac{5}{6}$ of each balloon's original cost. Hence, he can buy $(\frac{6}{5})$ of 30, or 36.

New Puzzle

There are 50 pennies lying on a table, 10 heads up and 40 tails up. Your task is to divide the pennies into two piles, such that each pile has the same number of heads showing. The piles need not have the same number of coins. You may flip pennies as you divide them. And, to make it worthy of your efforts, you're blindfolded. How can you do it?

Math Anxiety by Gender

In recent decades, concerted efforts have been made to address so called "math anxiety" in both genders and to attract a greater number of females to study mathematics and related subjects. A recent study has determined that several factors other than math performance are resulting in higher mathematics anxiety in girls compared to boys.

Analysis by the team of psychologists from the University of Missouri, the University of California-Irvine, and the University of Glasgow in Scotland revealed that girls' mathematics anxiety was not related to the level of their mothers' engagement in STEM careers, nor was it related to gender equality in the countries studied. In fact, the gender difference in mathematics anxiety was larger in more gender-equal and developed countries. In more developed countries, boys' and girls' mathematics performance was higher and their mathematics anxiety was lower, but this pattern was stronger for boys than for girls.

One co-author summarized, "It is fair to say that nobody knows what will actually attract more girls into these subjects. Policies and programs to change the gender balance in non-organic STEM subjects have just not worked."

The End of an Era

The time has come for Frostburg State University's Department of Mathematics to bid farewell to one of its most beloved and most influential professors, Dr. Karen Parks, who will be retiring after this semester. Dr. Parks started her career at FSU in 1980, with the support and guidance of colleagues such as John Jones and Dick Weimer, her mentor. Since then, she has won multiple awards, including the Teacher of the Year Award in 1982 (an award which was determined by the votes of students), the Faculty Achievement Award for Teaching in 1989, and the Service Learning Professor of the Year Award in 2009.

When asked how she feels about retiring from FSU, Dr. Parks stated that the university and its math department have been like home to her and that leaving the students and colleagues that have made her 36-year experience here so enjoyable will be bittersweet. She expressed how much she is going to miss the FSU math department, but we will undoubtedly miss her more. We wish her all the best in her retirement.

Fall Courses

236.001	MTRF	8:00- 8:50	Revenaugh
236.002	MTRF	11:00-11:50	Dunmyre
236.003	MTRF	2:00- 2:50	Dunmyre
237.001	MTRF	11:00-11:50	Hughes
237.002	MTRF	2:00- 2:50	Hughes
238.001	MTRF	11:00- 11:50	Barnet
315.001	TR	12:30- 1:45	Dunmyre
350.001	TR	2:00- 3:15	Wojnar
432.001	MWF	12:00-12:50	Dunmyre
451.001	MWF	1:00- 1:50	Forsythe
460.001	MWF	10:00-10:50	Hughes
491.001	TR	3:30- 4:45	Hughes
680.001	MWF	11:00-11:50	Revenaugh

KME Corner

The April meeting of KME will be at 6:00 pm on Thursday, April 28th. Elections for next year's officers will be held (without benefit of primaries, caucuses, or an electoral college.) Also, a Reading Day picnic is being planned for May 11th.