75th Anniversary Trisection Meeting: Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan Sections to Gather
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In 1943, in the midst of World War II, the mathematical infrastructure of the Unites States was strained in many ways. Many young men were serving in the military and many of the nation's practicing mathematicians were working away from the universities on war-related projects. Furthermore, restrictions on fuel and access to transportation limited the ability of the remaining mathematicians to gather for conferences.

In response to this environment, mathematicians in the Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan sections of the Mathematical Association of America decided to pool their resources and hold a joint meeting. This meeting was held on April 23 and 24, 1943, at the University of Notre Dame. Among the 46 attendees were Emil Artin, Lester R. Ford (editor of the *American Mathematical Monthly* at the time), and a young Ivan Niven, who would eventually serve as president of the MAA in 1983-84. In addition to the business meeting for each section, there were eight plenary lectures on topics ranging from mathematics and meteorology (which described the army air force's meteorological training programs) to complex variables (which described simplifications of some of the standard proofs in the field).

In 1991, Steve Carlson was working as a visiting mathematician at the MAA and uncovered this story in old issues of the *Monthly*, which used to include news of section meetings. Being an active member of the Indiana section and its Secretary-Treasurer, Steve thought that it would be great fun to have a 50th anniversary trisection meeting and began recruiting supporters among the three sections for a repeat event. The idea was popular among the members of the three sections.

A planning committee for the event was organized. It consisted of Dan Maki (Indiana), Rich Fleming (Michigan), and Bob Kuller (Illinois). Saint Mary's College, across the street from Notre Dame, would host the conference and it would be on April 23 and 24, 1993 … 50 years to the day after the first tri-section meeting!

The scale of the 50th anniversary trisection meeting was very different. According to a report in the South Bend Tribune, more than 400 faculty and students attended the conference. Highlights included a talk by Robin Wilson titled "Memoirs of a Victorian Mathematician" and a panel presentation on research on mathematics education that included Ed Dubinsky, John Ewing, Frank Lester, and Brian Winkel.

In total, there were three additional plenary talks and 32 contributed papers. Undergraduate students began to make their presence felt at this meeting, contributing at least seven papers. The Indiana College Mathematics Competition was opened up to students from all three sections; thirty teams of three students from across all three sections participated. Teams from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, and Calvin College took first, second, and third place, respectively. On Friday evening, while the faculty were off campus at a banquet (alcohol being prohibited on campus), the students had their own murder mystery dinner.

The student activities were partially supported by a $1500 grant from the Association.   The meeting had its own logo, displayed near-by to this essay, and the organizers sold t-shirts to commemorate the event.

Ruth Favro, Michigan Section, sporting the 1993 t-shirt at a recent Section meeting.

In his annual report to the Association, Howard Saar, secretary-treasurer of the Illinois section, wrote that "the 50th anniversary tri-section meeting was a tremendous success – such joint efforts for geographically contiguous areas should be explored." And they have been, with the Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky sections holding a joint meeting in 2004 at the University of Evansville. But that is another story.

Presently, a group of MAA members from Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan is hard at work planning the 2018 IL-IN-MI Tri-Section Meeting, which will be held at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN, on March 23 & 24, 2018, one month shy of the exact 75th anniversary of the first gathering during World War II. Highlights of the program include a planned art exhibit, a major student competition, student talks and contributed faculty talks, and plenary addresses by Judy Holdener (Kenyon College), Steve Butler (Iowa State), Mike Jones (Math Reviews, Math Magazine), Allison Henrich (Seattle University), Jennifer Quinn (University of Washington-Tacoma), and Michael Starbird (University of Texas at Austin).

We look forward to this exciting event, to gathering with MAA friends, and to continuing in the long tradition of MAA Sections advancing the understanding of mathematics and its impact on our world.

MAA members from any section are welcome to join us. More information about the planned conference can be found at http://sections.maa.org/indiana/meetings/Spring18/announcement.html.