

THE FIBONACCI QUARTERLY: FIFTY YEARS

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The first *Fibonacci Quarterly*, published in February 1963, had a subscription rate of \$4.00 per year, and its first editor, Verner E. Hoggatt, Jr. (VEH), held that position for eighteen years. His friends told him the *Quarterly* would exhaust submitted papers in two years. Undaunted, VEH kept a mental list of “backsliders” who had not renewed their subscriptions and contacted each of them personally. The editorial prefacing the first issue of the *Quarterly* read, in part:

The Fibonacci Association was formed in order to exchange ideas and stimulate research in Fibonacci numbers and related topics. From the start, the group was active in producing results and it soon became evident that a journal would be highly desirable for the rapid dissemination of this research.

We hope that the journal may serve as a focal point for widespread interest in Fibonacci numbers, especially with respect to new results, research proposals and challenging problems. In addition we wish to help nurture beginners in the fundamentals of Fibonacci numbers, using the field of recurrent sequences as a background in which various basic concepts of simple research may be illustrated.

Mathematics teachers and students of all levels are encouraged to share our enthusiasm. The thrill of discovery is wonderful; and devising a good proof is satisfying, even if the discovery or proof is not new, so long as it is an original experience for the student.

This is a journal for active readers; the editors desire reader participation especially from mathematics teachers and students. VEH

In a nutshell, the Fibonacci Association was founded as a 501(c)3 non-profit California corporation by Verner E. Hoggatt, Jr., Brother U. Alfred Brousseau, and I. Dale Ruggles. In addition, the first issue listed as on the editorial board H. L. Alder, S. L. Basin, John L. Brown, Jr., H. W. Gould, Leo Moser, and D. E. Thoro.

Since the first twenty-five years is described in detail in *A Short History of the Fibonacci Quarterly* in the February 1987 issue of the journal, I will give one digression and then skip to events following Vern’s sudden death in 1980.

One job given me by VEH was to proofread his paper, *The First 571 Fibonacci Numbers*, in which F_{571} had 119 digits, the most possible to list by the computers of the time. That “small” chore took many hours, and I thought the job was perfect. When he found errors in the published paper — 50 digits of F_{521} and F_{522} were transposed — he tracked the error down to an apprentice printer who had dropped a tray of lead characters. How much printing has changed in fifty years! How he noticed the error, I do not know, but it took him about five minutes after he received the magazine in the mail. The incident shows how amazing Vern was.

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Vern preferred to work at home, at the executive desk in his book-lined study. He never learned to type, so I typed many papers by him and others. Also, if he received a handwritten submission for the journal, I typed it before it went to the *Quarterly* typist. He wrote several letters everyday in his big scrawling hand and without making copies. He kept everything in his head: addresses and telephone numbers and ongoing correspondence with other mathematicians. At one point, he was working on fifteen research papers at once while supervising several graduate mathematics projects and master theses in progress. So, when he died suddenly in 1980, his files were in disarray, and that created a fragile time for the *Fibonacci Quarterly*.

Soon after Vern's death, Gerald E. Bergum, Co-Editor of the *Quarterly*, came to Santa Clara from South Dakota and stayed with my husband and me long enough to bond with my family. Jerry and I made several visits to Vern's home and cleaned out his desk and his four-drawer filing cabinet. Jerry shipped to his home several cartons of manuscripts and wrote to each author because there was no way to tell if the paper submitted was accepted for publication, returned for revision, rejected, or merely ignored. Had Jerry not stepped in and reorganized everything with a strong hand, the *Quarterly* would not be publishing today.

Thus it was that, in the fall of 1980, the *Fibonacci Quarterly* moved to South Dakota State University with Editor, Gerald E. Bergum, and Board of Directors G. L. Alexanderson, Leonard Klosinski, Marjorie Johnson, Dave Logothetti, Richard Vine, Hugh Edgar, and Robert Gulli. Jerry's daughters Jennifer and Patty served as secretaries and typists for the *Quarterly*, and his wife Shirley helped with registration at conferences.

In 1984, Andreas N. Philippou organized the First International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and Their Applications, held at the University of Patras, Greece, and attended by fifty mathematicians from fifteen countries. The second conference, in 1986, was at San Jose State University in California. The third conference was in Pisa, Italy, in July 1988. Visiting Fibonacci's hometown was particularly memorable, and many of us had pictures taken with the statue of Fibonacci. The mayor of Pisa hosted a party for Fibonacci conference participants in an elegant historic building, and he honored us by arranging for a special one-day commemorative Fibonacci postmark that many of us used to send postcards home.

The conferences, the mental stimulation I receive from each one, and the friends I have made there have become an important part of the history of the *Quarterly* for me. Later conferences, and something I remember from each one, are listed below.

1990: Wake Forest University, North Carolina. Fibonacci sunflower T-shirts and an authentic Southern banquet dinner, featuring fried chicken, grits ("gre-its"), collard greens, mashed potatoes with milk gravy, and peach cobbler.

1992: St. Andrews University, Scotland. Eighty presenters from five continents stayed in a dormitory together and tried haggis, tatties, and neeps with a sip of Scotch.

1994: Washington State University, Pullman, Washington. My husband Frank and Crane Miller used Frank's plane to make a "beer run" to a microbrewery in Yakima. The resulting beer tasting was enjoyed by all in the dormitory — made more fun by being against the rules. While river rafting, Andrzej Rotkiewicz, an Olympic swimmer a few years ago in his youth, insisted upon swimming along without a life vest; we had to pull him in at one point because of white water ahead.

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1996: Technische Universität, Graz, Austria. This was our largest conference, with a record of 95 papers presented and attendees from 32 countries. While all the papers didn't make it into the *Proceedings*, we had to make choices on which to hear because the conference had to schedule double sessions.

1998: Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York. The group visited Niagara Falls and the Erie Canal, and we had a delightful "cook-out" at the home of Peter and Jane Anderson.

2000: Luxembourg City, Luxembourg. Visit to Roman city, Trier. This was the only meeting with no conference proceedings because of a disagreement with the publisher; most papers found their way into the *Quarterly*. I found unique shopping, an entire store devoted to witches with dolls of every description.

2002: North Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, home to the Grand Canyon. Art Benjamin demonstrated some of his "mathemagic," concluding with mentally multiplying two five place numbers.

2004: Technische Universität Carolino-Wilhelmina, Braunschweig, Germany. We visited the Volkswagen works in Wolfsburg.

2006: San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California. We saw the sights from Twin Peaks from a sightseeing bus followed by viewing the entire city from the base of Coit Tower.

2008: University of Patras, Greece. We returned to the birthplace of our conferences. At Olympia, the home of the Olympic Games, Christian Ballot and Curtis Cooper ran a race on the ancient track; Andzej Rotkiewicz, wearing his usual suit and tie and long-johns, accompanied them in 90-degree heat.

2010: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Morelia, Michoacán, México. Florian Luca held a Mexican fiesta, complete with a Mariachi band, in his backyard. We visited the Aztec ruin Tingambato where Monarch butterflies winter and hummingbirds (*tzin-tzan-tzun*) abound.

And now in 2012, the fifteenth such conference was held in Eger, Hungary, at Eszterházy Károly College in a historic building and during a street fair. We viewed the world through the "Eye of Eger," a camera obscura above a tower atop the Lyceum. Bill Webb and Peter Anderson were initiated into *Kulacs Csárda Borozó* by ably drinking wine with Egri-Nagy Attila, one of the local conference organizers. We also visited a winery to drink "bulls blood," a famous local beverage. This time, our banquet was held in a castle within walking distance of our hotel and overlooking Eger.

In all fifteen conferences, the papers themselves were as remarkably diverse as the nationalities attending, attesting to the richness of our discipline and the creative imagination of mathematicians. Our conferences have been mind stretching for me as well as heart-warming as friendships are deepened and new ones developed.

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When Jerry Bergum retired as editor of the *Fibonacci Quarterly* in 1998, Curtis Cooper took the reins and the journal moved once again, now to the University of Central Missouri. Nowadays there are no more handwritten manuscripts and no more proofreading line-by-line and symbol-by-symbol, but the mission is the same; the *Fibonacci Quarterly* provides a focus for worldwide interest in the Fibonacci number sequence and related areas of mathematics.

We all look forward to the next conference in 2014 in Rochester, New York. The spirit of Fibonacci lives on.

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