

String-Math 2016 after dinner remarks, by Dave Morrison.



Mesdames et Messieurs. Je vous souhaite la bienvenue à ce dîner au nom de l'Union Cordes-Maths-éenne.

Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to welcome you to this dinner on behalf of the StringMathian Union.

The StringMathian Union, also known as the SMU, proudly displays this unity flag of 28 golden stars on a pale blue background; the 28 stars representing either the 28 bitangents to a plane quartic, or a half-56 representation of E7.

As many of you know, the SMU traces its history back to the 1978 Treaty of ADHM, whose signatories realized that they had important interests in common. In its modern form, the SMU is devoted to free movement of students, postdocs, and faculty, and to an open market of ideas, free from artificial boundaries. Nearly 25 years ago, the SMU adopted its common currency, the "are-keev," to promote this free exchange of ideas.

The SMU has carefully developed an extensive set of regulations governing interactions among its members. Although Brussels was briefly considered as a possible location of the SMU capital, the actual capital has been firmly established in Princeton for many years. It is from Princeton that those meddlesome regulations emerge: the regulations which insist that papers be refereed; the regulations which discourage physicists from using the word "proof" unless they have actually proved something; the regulations which discourage mathematicians from using the words "quantum" or "quantize" unless they have an actual physical system in mind; and the crucial regulation which forbids anyone from asserting either that the foundations of quantum field theory are irrelevant, or that results obtained from path integrals are nonsense.

Recently, to the great regret of the SMU, a movement has sprung up which is referred to in some quarters as "StrExit." Imagine! Some of the string theorists are threatening to leave the Union! They complain about the impact of the regulations, which insist that they do things in a new, "precise", way and yet do not -- as they see it -- provide sufficient benefit in return from their mathematical colleagues. It's just not like the good old days, when i's were not dotted and t's were not crossed! And they complain about immigration from the mathematical communities to theirs: immigrants babbling in strange languages

about categories, functors, schemes, Hecke correspondences, ... IT IS TOO MUCH TO TAKE!

The SMU sincerely hopes that none of you will join this movement, and sincerely hopes that it will fail. However, if StrExit is successful, the SMU stands ready to punish the Leavers, withholding information about exciting new developments in mathematics, developments involving results which will have been obtained without any input from string theory whatsoever. That's right, Leavers: if you go, your math former friends will immerse themselves so deeply in derived categorical and scheme theoretic viewpoints that you will never again understand what they are saying!

I must report that the SMU is prepared in many ways if the disaster of StrExit comes to pass. For example, we have already designed a new flag, with 27 golden stars on a pale blue background, this time representing the 27 lines on a cubic surface or the smallest representation of E_6 . But we fervently hope we will never have the occasion to use it!

Vive la SMU!