

The aim of the Bolyai Society is to help and coordinate the activities of mathematics teachers, pure mathematicians and applied mathematicians. Work is accomplished by three corresponding departments within the society.

The function of the Education Section is twofold. On one hand it helps public education by publishing material, organizing lectures and discussions, and supporting educational research. Recently, a computer network was started for such purposes. The Highlight is the annual conference of mathematics teachers. The Section's other major aim is to discover and support mathematical talent.

The Section of Pure Mathematics and the Section of Applied Mathematics organize lectures and international conferences and publish their proceedings. For instance, the society will organize the 2nd European Congress of Mathematics, in Budapest in 1996. Naturally, the three departments do not work in isolation; interaction is a very important factor in their effectiveness.

Some people claim that Hungarian mathematics is very strong. Others disagree with this statement. In any case, even if only partially true, there can be no argument with the fact that the search for and support of mathematical talent has a central role in the activity of our society. We organize an annual nationwide mathematical contest in six different age groups between 12 and 18 (the population of Hungary is only 10 million!); the best students are then prepared for the International Mathematical Olympiad. There is also a very interesting contest for all undergraduate students. Contestants are given ten days to solve problems requiring a broad knowledge of different areas of mathematics. The society also gives prizes for the best research produced by students for their master's theses. Young mathematicians can receive another prize for outstanding research in pure or applied mathematics. Finally, there is even a prize for the older generation: the Szele Prize, awarded for training outstanding researchers.

But the most important part of this search for talent is KöMaL (KöMaL is the popular abbreviation of Középiskolai Matematikai és Fizikai Lapok, the high school mathematics and physics journal). This journal helps young students to understand non-trivial mathematical problems and, teaches them to work hard and steadily, preparing them for competitions.

It is a miracle that this journal has not ceased to exist in spite of the several political changes, wars, and revolutions in Hungary during the last 100 years. An important reason is that many of the scientific, economic and even political leaders were participants in KöMaL, sending solutions regularly. Many prominent people understand the importance of this activity. I feel that the Lord must have been a solver, too. This gives me hope that there will be financial support for the next 100 years as well.