

IT'S THE 2008 HOLIDAY PARTY TRIVIA CONTEST!

TEAM NAME: _____

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

Instructions: Fill out your team name, list the members of your team, and answer as many of the following questions as you can. These will be collected between dinner and dessert, and the winners will be announced after the presentation of awards.

1. [2 points] A philosopher **often associated with planes**, this mathematician was so famous after his death that a politician kept the bones of his right hand as a souvenir. Who is it?

ANSWER: René Descartes

2. [4 points] Order the following famous mathematicians **from first-born to last**.

_____ David Hilbert

_____ Pafnuty Chebyshev

_____ Joseph Fourier

_____ Harold Coxeter

ANSWER: Fourier was born in 1768, Chebyshev was born in 1821, Hilbert was born in 1862, and Coxeter was born in 1907.

3. [2 points] What organization was originally housed in Malott Hall?

ANSWER: The Johnson School of Business

4. [2 points] What is the **largest room number** on the second floor of Malott Hall? (Circle the correct answer.)

224

253

260

20071

ANSWER: There is a custodial closet whose room number is 20071.

5. [2 points] What is the **Scrabble value** of the word "Malott"?

ANSWER: $3 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 8$

6. [4 points] The founder of this university, Ezra Cornell, had a cousin who also had a school named after him. What is the **name of the school**, and **in what U.S. state** is it located?

ANSWER: Cornell College was named after William Wesley Cornell, who was an iron tycoon. It is located in Iowa.

7. [2 points] The southern-most point in Canada is on Middle Island in Ontario. Of the 50 U.S. states, how many contain **some land north of this**? (Circle the correct answer.)

None

4

15

27

ANSWER: 27. They are Alaska, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

8. [2 points] How many letters of the alphabet **do not** begin the names of any U.S. states?

ANSWER: There are 7: B, E, J, Q, X, Y, and Z.

9. [2 points] In the most recent election, **how many electoral votes** did New York State have?

ANSWER: 31

10. [2 points] Who of the following was the (n^2) th president of the United States for some $n \in \mathbb{Z}$? (Circle the correct answer.)

John F. Kennedy

Lyndon B. Johnson

Richard M. Nixon

ANSWER: Lyndon B. Johnson was the $(36 = 6^2)$ th president of the U.S.

11. [4 points] Of the tenured and tenure-track faculty in our department, who has the **longest** name, (counting only first and last names)? Who has the **shortest**?

ANSWER: Alexander Vladimirovich, Tara Holm

12. [2 points] Which professor in this department currently advises **the largest number** of graduate students?

ANSWER: John Hubbard

13. [2 points] The graduate students in our department completed their undergraduate studies at institutions in nations all over the world, the most common of which is the United States. What is the **second most common**?

ANSWER: China

14. [2 points] Which current graduate student in our department has given the **most Olivetti talks**?

ANSWER: Matt Noonan and Jonathan Needleman have each given 10 Olivetti talks, although Jonathan's third talk, *A potpourri of fun mathematical proofs*, was a joint talk with several other speakers.

15. [1 point each] Name one graduate student in our department from **each of the following years**.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____

7 _____

16. [2 points] Pi Day is celebrated around the world on 3/14, March 14th. The first recorded celebration of Pi Day took place **in what U.S. state**?

ANSWER: The San Francisco Exploratorium, in California.

17. [2 points] On what day of the year is **Pi Approximation Day** celebrated?

ANSWER: On July 22, or 7/22, because $\pi \approx 22/7$.

18. [2 points] Today is Friday, December 5, 2008. What **day of the week** will December 5, 3008 be? (Hint: it won't be on the weekend.) **ANSWER:** Monday

19. [2 points] If $x(t)$ and $y(t)$ are the release numbers of the programs T_EX and Metafont, respectively, t years after their initial release, **evaluate the following limits**.

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} x(t) \quad \lim_{t \rightarrow \infty} y(t)$$

ANSWER: The first limit is π , and the second one is e . Since version 3 of T_EX and version 2 of Metafont were released, successive versions of the programs have been numbered by adding one additional digit from the decimal expansions of π and e , respectively. It is claimed that the release numbers change in this way because the only changes between successive releases are bug fixes. Their author, Donald Knuth, has requested that after his death their version numbers be set to precisely these transcendental numbers, at which point all remaining bugs will become features.

20. [4 points] Match the following super-heroes to the magazine in which they made their first appearances.

Batman *Action Comics*

Superman *Amazing Fantasy*

Spider-Man *Detective Comics*

ANSWER: Batman first appeared in *Detective Comics* # 27 in 1939, Superman first appeared in *Action Comics* # 1 in 1938, and Spider-Man first appeared in *Amazing Fantasy* # 15 in 1962.

21. [2 points] What is the only word in the English language that **ends in "mt"**?

ANSWER: dreamt

22. [2 points] This is the only type of cheese that is **made backwards**. What kind is it?

ANSWER: Edam cheese is "made" backwards.

23. [4 points] Match the following famous baseball players to their nicknames.

Willie Mays "The Sultan of Swat"

Phil Rizzuto "The Splendid Splinter"

Babe Ruth "The Scooter"

Ted Williams "The Say-hey kid"

ANSWER: Willie Mays is "The Say-hey kid", Phil Rizzuto was "The Scooter", Babe Ruth was "The Sultan of Swat", and Ted Williams was "The Splendid Splinter".