

Report of the Ted Lewis Workshop on SNAP Math Fairs in BIRS in April 2012, 12w2168

This was the tenth year that a spring math fair workshop has been held at BIRS. The participants came from elementary schools, junior-high and high schools, from independent organizations, and from universities and colleges.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together educators who are interested in using our particular type of math fair, called a SNAP math fair, to enhance the mathematics curriculum and introduce a culture of active mathematics in the school community. (The name SNAP is an acronym for the guiding principles of this unconventional type of math fair: It is student-centered, non-competitive, all-inclusive, and problem-based.) Unlike many "poster-session" science fairs, a SNAP math fair is highly interactive and the student presenters are very engaged with the visitors to the math fair. For more information, see <http://www.mathfair.com>

The purpose of these workshops is to bring together persons who wish to enhance mathematics in the K-12 classroom. The participants fall into several categories: teachers from K-12, university and college instructors, and puzzle makers and collectors. The BIRS math fair workshop included presentations by persons who have organized math fairs, puzzle sessions where teachers have an opportunity to try math fair puzzles, and suggestions about how to use games and math puzzles in the class room. Also we had an opportunity to discuss some helpful activities to accommodate the demands of the new curriculum. The workshop provided a rich interaction between the various groups.

The BIRS math fair workshops contribute greatly to the enriching the curriculum, and the workshops have helped encourage the use of SNAP math fairs around the world. The information about various resources available locally as well as access to information and research results on line are valuable tools for our schoolteachers.