EDITORIAL

In your editor's youth, it was customary to expose primary schoolcildren to fine verse, including that of Thomas Gray. Reflecting on the lives of the rural poor, he wrote:

> *Full many a gem of purest ray serene*
> *The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:*
> *Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,*
> *And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

His point was that outstanding achievement in public life, in art and literature, or in any worthy field of endeavour, requires both talent and opportunity. The simple fact is that much talent goes to waste for lack of opportunity. From the point of view of our discipline, it is to be regretted whenever people who might have elucidated its major problems are prevented by personal circumstances from giving the problems their undivided attention. For this reason, we disapprove of war, famine, pestilence, and any prejudice embedded in societal structures that might hinder the exposure of some genius to the question about the location of the zeta zeros. Accordingly, I applaud the spread of universal education, and positive action to overcome the barriers related to characteristics such as class, gender, and disability. In this, I am not adopting a controversial position. It's just commonsense.

We received a letter from the Association for Mathematical Research (AMR), a fairly new organisation devoted to supporting mathematical research and scholarship. On enquiry, it emerged that the AMR has been the subject of controversy, so rather than publishing their letter I have chosen to refer members to the article[1] about the matter by Rachel Crowell in the Scientific American for January 2022. The essence of the controversy seems to involve the question whether it is appropriate for any such organisation to have a policy of saying nothing at all about the injustices that suppress some talent.

Other correspondence included a letter informing us about the publication of a text: *Introduction à l'Etude des Probabilités Expérimentales. Un livre de probabilités pour les Ingénieurs* by Bernard Beauzamy. It is published by his Société de Calcul Mathématicque. Members who are familiar with Beauzamy's achievements and original views on the proper conduct of mathematical research and applications may wish to take note[2].

The Problem Page is a perennially-popular feature of the Bulletin, and is ably curated by Ian Short. Members will note a bit of an innovation this time, in that two of the new problems are supplemented by mention of related open questions. It is an interesting fact that the frontier of our understanding is never very far away from the things we actually know: the 'inner diameter' of mathematics is small. Many of the most entertaining puzzles are by-products of attempts to do something serious.

During 2023, Thomas Unger stepped down from the Editorial Board, and Colm Mulcahy joined. I would like to thank Thomas for his unfailing help and expertise. Colm will be looking after obituaries.

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[1] `https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/new-math-research-group-reflects-a-schism-in-the-field/`

[2] ISBN : 979-10-95773-02-3. Pour éditer un bon de commande : `http://www.scmsa.eu/livres/SCM_IEPE_order.htm` .

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[3]Go to www.lulu.com and search for *Irish Mathematical Society Bulletin*.