

# The Math News

Volume 3, Number 4

Thursday, December 4, 2003

---

## On the other side:

Mathematics majors can explore some of the mathematics relevant to the Traveling Salesman Problem in **Discrete Mathematics, SM342**, and **Linear Models and Optimization, SA401**.

This issue's quotation:

"One who can properly define and divide is to be considered a god." Plato

And a bonus quotation, also from Plato: "Mathematics is like checkers in being suitable for the young, not too difficult, amusing, and without peril to the state."

## Quick Math Problem

You flip a fair coin repeatedly until either heads has appeared three times in total or tails has appeared twice in a row. Which is more likely to happen first?

Last problem's solution: (Can you add four consecutive integers to get a perfect square?) No, you can't. A sum of four consecutive integers is always even but never a multiple of four. But any even perfect square must be a multiple of four.

---

Looking for copies of old final exams? Visit the Mathematics Department web site at <http://www.usna.edu/MathDept/website/index.htm>

**Learn About the New, Improved Mathematics Major**

Plebe Major Briefings will be held in Mahan Hall on January 7, 2004. After Dean Davis' remarks, you can learn more about the **Math Major** and its two new tracks in **SA115**. You can learn about the **Quantitative Economics Major**, a blend of economics and mathematics, in **SA105**.

---

## Don't Miss That Final Exam!

Tuesday, December 9, 1330-1630:

SM121, SM121A, SM121C,  
SM122, SM122S, SM212

Wednesday, December 10, 0755-1055:

SM005, SM161, SM221, SM221P, SM223

Thursday, December 11, 0755-1055:

SM230, SM230C, SM261

Tuesday, December 16, 1330-1630:

SM222

---

## Famous USNA Mathematics Majors

(A Periodic Feature)

CDR **Ray Putt** graduated from the Naval Academy with a major in mathematics in 1976. His next stop was Nuclear Power School. He's spent most of his career either on submarines or teaching math at USNA. He's now in his second tour here, finishing eight years as Associate Chair of the Mathematics Department.