



# THE MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

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## The World of Mathematics 2006: *Celebrating Achievement.*

A Free Public Lecture Series at Melbourne Museum.  
Presented by The Mathematical Association of Victoria in  
association with [The Age](#).

THE  AGE

### Mathematics or Art?

Free Public Lecture presented by Professor Bill Casselman, University of British Columbia.

Visualization has always played several important roles in mathematics, although often unrecognised or thought to be something shameful. In this talk a sample of images playing various roles from several thousand years of mathematical history will be shown. At the end, current trends in mathematical visualization, particularly the use of computer graphics, will be discussed. Bill Casselman is visiting Australia specially for the MAV Annual Conference and has generously agreed to share his thoughts with the great mathematics-public-at-large. NOT TO BE MISSED!

VENUE: The Age Theatre, Melbourne Museum  
Carlton Gardens, Carlton, Melbourne  
Melway reference: 2B J10

DATE: Saturday, 9 December 2006

TIME: 2:30pm to 3:30pm

COST: Free. Note: teachers and students attending the public lectures can also visit the rest of the museum free-of-charge

Bill Casselman has an undergraduate B. A. Harvard College, 1963 and a Ph.D. in mathematics from Princeton, 1966. He specialises in the field of mathematical research: automorphic forms and combinatorial computing. Since 1971, he has been on the faculty of the University of British Columbia. He was a visitor in recent years to the University of Sydney, the University of New South Wales, and the Tata Institute in Mumbai, India. He has also been a speaker at the Euclid Conference held in October, 2005 at Oxford University. Since January 2001, he has been Graphics Editor of the *NOTICES* (<http://www.ams.org/notices/>) of the American Mathematical Society. Bill is also the author of the book *Mathematical Illustrations*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.



### The Numbers of Numb3rs Special Education Week Presentation

Lecturer: Dr Marty Ross

It is not often that a mathematician is the star of a TV show. However, that is the case with the new hit Numb3rs and its hero police sleuth, Charlie. But does the maths that Charlie introduces to solve the crimes actually make any sense? Or is it just a case of Hollywood throwing around enough buzzwords to fool us? In this talk, we'll look at the mathematical ideas which have appeared in Numb3rs. We'll make sense of them when we can, and we'll laugh at them when we can't.

## John Conway: Mathemagician

Lecturer: Dr Burkard Polster

Mathematical genius, superstar, eccentric extraordinaire, John Conway is a very special mathematician indeed. Come and learn about the man and some of his weird and wonderful inventions such as the Game of Life, the Surreal Numbers, Sprouts, and lots of tangly, knotty mathematics.

## How many mathematicians does it take...

Lecturer: Dr Burkard Polster

How many mathematicians does it take to change a light bulb?  
 What is the best way to stabilize a wobbling table?  
 What is the best way to lace your shoes?  
 Why does toast usually land butter-side down?

If you are interested in some seriously ingenious answers to these and similar pressing questions, don't miss this talk!



## Maths v God Special Maths Month & Science Week Lecture

Lecturer: Dr Marty Ross

God is about Faith. Unfortunately, not all religiously inclined people have sufficient faith in Faith. There then follows the quest for the proof of God's existence; and, usually, science and mathematics enter the picture in the most absurd manner.

In this talk, we'll consider the conflict between God and mathematical reasoning. We'll look at some purported proofs of God's existence, at religious mathematics, and at the abuse of mathematical modelling in the faddish nonsense known as Intelligent Design. These are sensitive issues; so, we cannot make promises, but we'll attempt to offend as many people as possible.



[Watch and listen to Marty's presentation here.](#)

## About the Lecturers:

Drs Burkard Polster and Marty Ross entertain and educate budding and experienced mathematicians alike with their exciting brand of fun, information and, above all, ideas.

*"These really are world class public lectures. And to make them work for such a diverse audience is a*

*splendid achievement."*

Dr Max Stephens, MAV Life Member.

**Burkard Polster** received his PhD in Pure Mathematics from the University of Erlangen in Germany in 1993, studied and worked at eight universities in Germany, America, New Zealand and Australia and specializes in “fun” mathematics. He is the author of numerous research articles and books, such as “*The mathematics of Juggling*” and “*Q.E.D.: Beauty in Mathematical Proof*”. Currently, Burkard is a Senior Logan Research Fellow, and Monash University's resident mathematical juggler, origami expert, bubble-master, shoelace charmer, and Count Count impersonator. When he is not doing fun mathematics he has fun investigating perfect mathematical universes.



**Marty Ross** is a mathematical nomad. Despite affecting an American accent, he grew up in Melbourne, completing his HSC at Macleod High School. He then went to ANU and then on Stanford University (where he completed a PhD on the mathematics of soap films). Marty has been a lecturer at Melbourne, Monash and La Trobe Universities and has won teaching awards at Stanford and Rice Universities. His research is in geometric analysis (the use of geometry to study naturally occurring phenomena). Marty has a passionate interest in the teaching of mathematics; he has no formal teaching qualifications, but he hides his ignorance with humour and a loud disdain for jargon..

Read what Burkard and Marty lectured about in [2005](#) and [2004](#).

For details of MAV's professional development activities, please go to <http://www.mav.vic.edu.au/pd/>.

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