

# Journal of Humanistic Mathematics

---

Volume 1 | Issue 2

July 2011

---

## Vampire Statistics and Other Mathematical Oddities

Mark Huber

Claremont McKenna College, [mhuber@cmc.edu](mailto:mhuber@cmc.edu)

Gizem Karaali

Pomona College, [gizem.karaali@pomona.edu](mailto:gizem.karaali@pomona.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm>

---

### Recommended Citation

Huber, M. and Karaali, G. "Vampire Statistics and Other Mathematical Oddities," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics*, Volume 1 Issue 2 (July 2011), pages 1-. DOI: 10.5642/jhumath.201102.02 . Available at: <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/vol1/iss2/2>

©2011 by the authors. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

JHM is an open access bi-annual journal sponsored by the Claremont Center for the Mathematical

Sciences and published by the Claremont Colleges Library | ISSN 2159-8118 | <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/jhm/>

# Vampire Statistics and Other Mathematical Oddities

Mark Huber

*Department of Mathematical Sciences, Claremont McKenna College*  
mhuber@cmc.edu

Gizem Karaali

*Department of Mathematics, Pomona College*  
gizem.karaali@pomona.edu

The world tends to trust mathematicians and their numbers. By extension, the numbers generated by polls and surveys command much respect, sometimes beyond their deserved due. Thus, when an especially juicy statistic enters the public consciousness, it can take on a life of its own, long after new data superseded the old survey and should have driven a stake through its heart. Cathy Kessel covers one such story in her report “Rumors of Our Rarity are Greatly Exaggerated: Bad Statistics about Women in Science”.

This summer issue covers a wide range of topics. Susan D’Agostino turns to Polya’s text *How to Solve It* to tackle a tricky problem: creating a new major in mathematics that is relevant in today’s world. Ilhan Izmirlı gives us an overview of how culture affects our basic views of what constitutes mathematical knowledge. Meanwhile Sue VanHattum presents a personal, in-depth look at how mathematical problems actually get solved, and Kris Green contemplates how the teaching of mathematical thinking could impact public understanding of evolution. JoAnne Growney provides a friendly yet brief account of the diversity of the mathematical blogosphere and other online resources. Reuben Hersh presents a profile of Alvin White, the founder of our predecessor journal, the HUMANISTIC MATHEMATICS NETWORK JOURNAL. Marjorie Senechal reviews a book containing the non-mathematical writings of another hero of the JHM editorial staff: prominent activist, writer, and mathematician Chandler Davis. We also have a review of Joe Mazur’s *What’s Luck Got to Do with It?* written by Michael Lugo, and some fantastic mathematical poetry, by Sarah Glaz, Florin Diacu, and Mari-Lou Rowley. The short story “Final Exam” by Robert Dawson wraps up this issue.

We hope you enjoy our sophomore effort!