A History of the Combinatorial Potlatches

Brian Alspach   Robert A. Beezer

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This is a brief history of the Combinatorial Potlatches and their speakers. It was maintained by Brian Alspach (BA) through November 2001, then by Robert Beezer (RAB) through the 2016 edition. Send additions, clarifications and corrections to Amites Sarkar, amites.sarkar@wwu.edu. Copyright 2002-2017, Licensed with a Creative Commons BY-SA License.

1. Combinatorial Potlatch One, 27 February 1982, University of Washington
   Branko Grünbaum Edge-transitive planar graphs
   C. C. Lindner How to embed a partial Steiner triple system

2. Combinatorial Potlatch Two, 27 November 1982, Simon Fraser University
   Bill Kantor Algorithms for graph isomorphism and other group theoretic problems
   Peter Kleinschmidt Properties of simplicial complexes and Hilbert functions

3. Combinatorial Potlatch Three
   BA: I have no record, but I believe this was our first visit to Western Washington University.

   Geoffrey Shephard The theory of fabrics
   Richard Weiss Some aspects of graph theory in the classification of finite simple groups

5. Combinatorial Potlatch Five, 19 May 1984, Simon Fraser University
   Richard Weiss Some aspects of graph theory in the classification of finite simple groups
   Egan Schulte A combinatorial theory of regular polytopes

BA: At this point we have lost track of the numerical sequence, but perhaps we can reconstruct the other meetings.

6. 1 December 1984, Western Washington University
   Peter Cameron
   Random sum-free sets and cyclic automorphisms
   Tudor Zamfirescu
   Most stars are thin, most thick stars are not smooth

7. 14 December 1985, University of Washington
   Richard Nowakowski
   Pursuit and search games on graphs
   Brian Alspach
   Orthogonal factorizations of graphs
8. 5 April 1986, Western Washington University
   Moshe Rosenfeld
   \textit{Data allocation problem: Or how to divide a square into rectangles}
   Dave Kirkpatrick
   \textit{Algorithms for finding maximal vectors}

9. 13 December 1986, University of British Columbia
   Bojan Mohar
   \textit{Embeddings of infinite graphs}
   Peter Gritzman
   \textit{Finite packing and covering}

10. 9 May 1987, Pacific Lutheran University
    Stan Wagon
    \textit{Fourteen different (?!) proofs of a result about tiling a rectangle}
    Don Chakerian
    \textit{How to fit an elephant into a small cube}

11. 28 November 1987, Simon Fraser University
    J.-C. Bermond
    \textit{DeBruijn-Kautz networks}
    H. S. Wilf
    \textit{The exponential formula: Combinatorics’ best kept secret}

12. 9 December 1989, University of Washington
    Joan P. Hutchinson
    \textit{When does a graph contain a spanning tree with no vertex of degree 2? (And why would you want to know this?)}
    Charles J. Colburn
    \textit{Intersections and supports of designs}

13. 12 January 1991, Simon Fraser University
    C.C. Chen, National University of Singapore
    \textit{The edge-toughness of a graph and of its complement}
    Peter Horak, Bratislava
    \textit{Transversals and matroids}

14. 25 January 1992, University of Puget Sound
    Jason Rush, University of Washington
    \textit{Very dense packings of spheres and other shapes in Euclidean n-space}
    Jarek Nešetřil
    \textit{Dimension and boolean dimension}

15. 11 February 1995, Simon Fraser University
    Mike Fellows
    \textit{Coping with intractability: The parametric point of view}
    Anna Karlin
    \textit{Randomized and multipointer paging with locality of reference}
16. 11 May 1996, Pacific Lutheran University
   Dick Karp
   Error-Resilient molecular computation
   Gene Luks, University of Oregon
   Algorithmic applications of the simple groups classifications

17. 24 May 1997, Simon Fraser University (Harbour Centre Campus)
   Gary MacGillivray, University of Victoria
   The achromatic number of graphs
   Kathie Cameron
   Disjoint monotone paths in simple regions: Existence, uniqueness, min-max relations, algorithms and applications
   Peter Hamburger
   A graph-theoretic approach to problems in elementary and combinatorial geometry

18. 16 February 2002, University of Puget Sound,
    Brian Alspach, University of Regina and Simon Fraser University
    Group actions and hamilton decompositions of complete graphs
    Brett Stevens, Carleton University (Ottawa)
    On universal cycles of k-sets of an n-set
    Jonathan Jedwab, Simon Fraser University
    Combinatorial design theory and the IEEE 802.12 transmission code

19. 9 November 2002, University of Victoria, Main Campus
    Andrzej Proskurowski, University of Oregon
    Width parameters of graphs and discrete optimization problems
    Branko Grunbaum, University of Washington
    Polyhedra: Combinatorial and geometric
    Jozef Siran, Slovak University of Technology
    Links between graph theory, group theory, geometry, Riemann surfaces, and Galois theory

20. 8 November 2003, University of Victoria, Downtown Campus
    Steph van Wilgenburg, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)
    Enumerative properties of Ferrers graphs
    Peter Horak, University of Washington (Tacoma)
    Graph theory as an integral part of mathematics
    Rick Brewster, University College of the Cariboo (Kamloops)
    Categorical aspects of graph homomorphisms
    Zdenek Ryjacek, University of Western Bohemia (Czech Republic)
    Closure concepts, contractible subgraphs and hamiltonian properties of line graphs
21. 20 November 2004, Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre Campus  
John Gimbel, University of Alaska (Fairbanks)  
The traveling sales rep gets into abelian groups
Xuding Zhu, National Sun Yat-sen University (Taiwan)  
The game chromatic number of a graph
Jozsef Solymosi, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)  
Bounds on incidences and problems from additive number theory

22. 19 November 2005, Seattle University  
Bojan Mohar, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Simon Fraser University  
Small separations in symmetric graphs
Jenny Quinn, Occidental College and University of Puget Sound  
Determinants via determined ants
John Caughman, Portland State University  
How distance-regular graphs got all tangled up with the theory of knots

23. 11 November 2006, Portland State University  
Richard A. Brualdi, University of Wisconsin at Madison  
The Bruhat order for (0,1)-matrices
Gary Gordon, Lafayette College  
Graph polynomials for you; graph polynomials for me
Matt De Vos, Simon Fraser University  
Sumsets and subsequence sums

24. 29 September 2007, University of Victoria  
Manley Perkel, University of Puget Sound  
Antibandwidth and cyclic antibandwidth of Kneser graphs
John Moon, University of Alberta  
On the number of proper nodes in rooted trees
Anthony Quas, University of Victoria  
Distances in positive density sets

25. 22 November 2008, University of Puget Sound  
Eric Fusy, University of British Columbia  
Bijective links on planar maps via orientations
Chuck Dunn, Linfield College  
Complete multipartite graphs and the relaxed coloring game
Ioana Dumitriu, University of Washington  
Path counting and the moment method for random matrices or Fun with Walter and Theo

26. 21 November 2009, Simon Fraser University  
Glencora Borradaile, Oregon State University  
Graph constrained knapsack problems
Louis Deaett, University of Victoria  
New dimensions to graph coloring
Omer Angel, University of British Columbia  
Locally transitive graphs
27. 11 December 2010, Western Washington University
Christine Kelley, University of Nebraska, Lincoln
 Codes from algebraic lifts of graphs
Richard Guy, University of Calgary
 Some columns Martin Gardner might have written
Kai-Uwe Schmidt, Simon Fraser University
 What’s special about 0.3420…? How to increase the merit factor of binary sequences

28. 19 November 2011, Seattle University
William Stein, University of Washington, Seattle
 Sage — Creating a viable free open source alternative to Magma, Maple, Mathematica and Matlab
Josh Laison, Willamette University
 Obstacle numbers of graphs
Peter Winkler, Dartmouth College
 Cop vs Drunk: Chasing the random walker on a graph

29. 17 November 2012, Simon Fraser University
Chris Godsil, Waterloo University
 Continuous quantum walks on graphs
Dan Drake, University of Puget Sound
 Higher order matching polynomials and d-orthogonality
Ron Graham, University of California, San Diego
 The combinatorics of solving linear equations

30. 23 November 2013, University of Victoria
Richard Hoshino, Quest University
 Applying combinatorics to inspire change
Dillon Mayhew, Victoria University of Wellington
 Characterizing representable matroids
Jeremie Lumbroso, Simon Fraser University
 Analytic random generation of combinatorial objects

31. 22 November 2014, Western Washington University
Jane Butterfield, University of Victoria
 Line-of-sight pursuit in sweepable polygons
Steven Klee, Seattle University
 Face enumeration on simplicial complexes
Richard Anstee, University of British Columbia
 Forbidden configurations

32. 21 November 2015, University of British Columbia
Kilian Raschel, Université de Tours
 A Human Proof of Gessel’s Lattice Path Conjecture
Daniel Johnston, University of Montana
 On k-Ramsey Numbers of Graphs
Cory Palmer, University of Montana
Turán-type Theorems for Berge-Hypergraphs  
Alexander Holroyd, Microsoft Corporation  
Finitely Dependent Coloring

33. 19 November 2016, Seattle University  
Sara Billey, University of Washington, Seattle  
*Enumeration of Parabolic Double Cosets for Symmetric Groups and Beyond*

Shahriar Shahriari, Pomona College  
*Forbidden Configurations and other Combinatorial Problems for Posets of Subspaces*

Marni Mishna, Simon Fraser University  
*The Remarkable Ubiquity of Standard Young Tableaux of Bounded Height*

BA: You will note that Richard Weiss is listed as giving the same talk at two consecutive Potlatches. I vaguely recall that Richard had to cancel his appearance for the first of the two listed so that I think the later listing is correct. I undoubtedly have an early announcement in my files. It is certainly the case that he talked only once.