

ALGEBRA AND GEOMETRY SEMINAR

Speaker: David Wehlau (Royal Military College & Queen's University)

Title: Pascal's Hexagrammum Mysticum: Solving a 400-Year-Old Geometry Problem

Abstract: In 1639, the 16 year old Blaise Pascal proved his Hexagrammum Mysticum Theorem, which provides a straightedge construction to test whether 6 points in the plane lie on a conic. This naturally led to the question of whether there is a straightedge construction which tests whether there is a cubic curve through 10 given points in the plane. I will discuss my joint solution with Will Traves (USNA) to this problem explaining some of its history. There will be pictures.