

What's Happening in the Mathematical Sciences, 2001-2002

Barry Cipra



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Mathematicians like to point out that mathematics is universal. In spite of this, most people continue to view it as either mundane (balancing a checkbook) or mysterious (cryptography). This fifth volume of the ""What's Happening"" series contradicts that view by showing that mathematics is indeed found everywhere - in science, art, history, and our everyday lives. Here is some of what you'll find in this volume: Mathematics and Science: Mathematical biology - Mathematics was key to cracking the genetic code. Now, new mathematics is needed to understand the three-dimensional structure of the proteins produced from that code; Celestial mechanics and cosmology - New methods have revealed a multitude of solutions to the threebody problem. And other new work may answer one of cosmology's most fundamental questions: What is the size and shape of the universe? Mathematics and Everyday Life: Traffic jams - New models are helping researchers understand where traffic jams come from-and maybe what to do about them; Small worlds -Researchers have found a short distance from theory to applications in the study of small world networks. Elegance in Mathematics: Beyond Fermat's Last Theorem - Number theorists are reaching higher ground after Wiles' astounding 1994 proof: new developments in the elegant world of elliptic curves and modular functions; The Millennium Prize Problems - The Clay Mathematics Institute has offered a million dollars for solutions to seven important and difficult unsolved problems. These are just some of the topics of current interest that are covered in this latest volume of ""What's Happening in the Mathematical Sciences"". The book has broad appeal for a wide spectrum of mathematicians and scientists, from high school students through advanced-level graduates and researchers.

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