

Re: ? -- JSH related

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[E. Xavier]

> *Hi. This is my first post here. I'm an English major and math is sort
> of my side interest*

Welcome!

> *Recently, I began checking sci.math: reading posts and then having to
> tear through multiple textbooks in order to almost begin to understand
> what you're talking about. Nevertheless, I've still learned a lot from
> all of you. Thanks.*

Then don't hesitate to start a thread about a math topic that interests you, even if you feel it's elementary. Any on-topic post should be welcomed. For example, insist that even numbers are all divisible by triangles, and then fight unbelievers to the death <winK>.

> *Then I came across a JSH post.*

Heh. I was much more active on Usenet a decade ago, and started dipping my toe in some of my favorite old groups again a few months ago during an illness. JSH was a new phenomenon to me then too. Usenet has always had its share of characters, but JSH is ... special.

> *As you can probably imagine, it was a jarring experience.*

Oddly addictive, too! Like watching a train wreck. In slow motion. Interminably.

> *Given my feeble understanding of mathematics, I have no right to and
> will try very hard not to judge him or his paper(s). But could someone
> tell me a few things; I'm curious (especially after seeing that his
> name is in a group by itself on CrankDot Net).*

I'm sure others can tell you much more than I can. FWIW, then (not much):

> *First, is he -- really -- serious?*

About everything, all the time? Doubt it -- no human is. I do believe he believes he's an unrecognized genius of the highest order. At least sometimes. Consistency isn't his strong suit <wink>. He's certainly serious about his math work.

> *Second, is he a professor or ... uh, what does he do?*

He says he has a bachelor's degree in physics (and my best guess is that he does), but I haven't seen an academic claim beyond that. If the math is good, or at least interestingly wrong, nobody here really cares what anyone else does for a living, and it's impolite to ask <wink -- I'm a computer geek>.

> *Third, before becoming involved with his FLT work, did his posts make sense (not to say they don't now -- I'm still trying to stay impartial)?*

I caught up on some history using Google groups. My *sense* of it is that the rhetoric and "mood swings" have gotten more extreme over time, but that there really wasn't more substance in earlier days. He has, of course, attracted an enormous amount of opposition over the years, in several newsgroups. Replies have not always been kind. Viciousness escalates on all sides.

> *Fourth, he wasn't successful in ending or affecting Dr. Ullrich's job, was he?*

Sad to say, poor Dr. Ullrich has been unemployed as a result since 2002, and posts now from an illegally jacked-in laptop at the bottom of a dumpster behind the University of Oklahoma's football stadium. Oops! I'm afraid I channelled one of JSH's dreams there <wink>. Seriously, by all credible accounts, David wasn't tangibly injured in any way. Google groups turned up several repetitions of this entire brouhaha spanning the years, so I'll venture to guess it's sure wasted some of his time -- but that's all.

> *I could probably type out a list of questions as long as a job application, but I'll spare you all. And sorry to post something that has little if anything to do with math. I honestly never thought I'd post here.*

When are you going to get it through your thick skull that TRIANGLES are NOT INTEGERS? It's a matter of definition, not voodoo. Go back to conjugating nouns, Beowulf-head. Etc, etc.

Have fun!