The Math Colloquium
Department of Mathematics
San José State University

Mike Oliver

*How to have more things
by forgetting where you put them*

March 17, 2010, MH320

Abstract: If someone gives you a string of letters stretching off to infinity in both directions, is there any rule by which you can find the "center point" of the string? Is it possible to distribute infinitely many things into bins, and wind up with more nonempty bins than you had things to start with? We explore the surprising connections between these apparently unrelated questions.

Background: Students should have a basic familiarity with the notion of set (at a "naive" level; no formality is necessary). It would be helpful to have seen the notions of countable versus uncountable sets, but we will quickly review those ideas.

About the speaker: Mike Oliver finished his Ph.D. in set theory from UCLA in 2003. He has held visiting/postdoctoral positions at University of North Texas and York University (Toronto).

Snacks in MH331B at 2:30 pm
Talk starts at 3 pm

For more information, see our full schedule at:

http://www.math.sjsu.edu/∼hsu/colloq/