

# REPORT ON THE TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF FIBONACCI NUMBERS AND THEIR APPLICATIONS

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The Twelfth International Conference on Fibonacci Numbers and their Applications was held in San Francisco, 17–21 July 2006, hosted by San Francisco State University (SFSU). The Fibonacci conferences have been held every two years, alternating between Europe and the United States. The venues for all twelve conferences held to date are as follows.

1984	Patras, Greece	1986	San Jose, California
1988	Pisa, Italy	1990	Wake Forest, North Carolina
1992	St. Andrews, Scotland	1994	Pullman, Washington
1996	Graz, Austria	1998	Rochester, New York
2000	Luxembourg	2002	Flagstaff, Arizona
2004	Braunschweig, Germany	2006	San Francisco, California

One happy feature of these conferences is that there has been no need for parallel sessions. As a consequence, most people attend all or nearly all the talks, and this has encouraged the friendly nature of the conferences. I wondered if the charms of San Francisco might change our habits. Would I find myself spending more time on the cable cars and less time in the conference hall? In the event, I thought we were just as diligent in San Francisco as we had been elsewhere. But perhaps the delightful campus of SFSU helped keep us in school. On SFSU's website we find the sentence: "Our campus is located on 106 acres in a beautiful corner of San Francisco, just one mile from the Pacific Ocean and 15 minutes from downtown." In fact, this is far too modest a description of the campus, which is exceptionally attractive. The general impression is of a harmonious collection of fine buildings arranged in a spacious arboretum of mature trees. It also helped that our organizers chose a week when San Francisco enjoyed warm, sunny weather, with scarcely a glimpse of its famous fog. During the conference I heard several people quote the saying attributed to Mark Twain, "The coldest winter I ever saw was the summer I spent in San Francisco." This reminded me that on my first visit to San Francisco in the summer of 1981 my friend Tom Robertson said "Out there, if it weren't for the fog, you would be able to see Alcatraz." It *was* rather cool that day.

At the reception held on the first evening of the conference we were addressed by the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering of SFSU. Most happily for us, this was our fellow mathematician Sheldon Axler, well-known for his books *Linear Algebra Done Right* and *Harmonic Function Theory*. The warmth and wit that came across in his welcoming address told us that he was enjoying the evening as much as we were. Later in the week we also enjoyed a fine conference dinner together on the campus of SFSU. Most of us lived on the campus and enjoyed fine breakfasts and lunches there. Many of us used San Francisco's excellent public transport systems, the Bay Area Rapid Transport (BART) and the San Francisco Municipal Railway (MUNI) to get to and from the airport and to do some local sight-seeing.

In my view, the overall quality of the talks at this conference matched that at the previous one and the standard is now clearly better than that of the very early conferences. This is very pleasing, and although there were a few talks that were rather below an acceptable

standard, there were several really outstanding talks, beautifully delivered, that greatly enhanced the conference. A particularly exciting feature of this conference was the number of fine contributions from graduate students and from undergraduate students, all of a fine standard.

The arrangements for scheduling the talks were again most ably carried out by Bill Webb, in his customary modest and efficient manner. The local arrangements were in the capable hands of Neville Robbins and everything went smoothly, the highlight being the conference excursion, a sight-seeing tour of San Francisco by bus with stops at various points of interest such as Twin Peaks, the Cliff House, Fisherman's Wharf, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Marina Green. Neville Robbins drew on his 34 years' experience of living in San Francisco, a city he understandably loves very much, to act as our knowledgeable, wise, and amusing tour guide. This was a masterly performance.

I conclude this report on a personal note. I attended the very first Fibonacci conference, which was held in Patras, Greece in 1984. That is where I first met Herta Freitag (1908–2000), and we became great friends. I am forever grateful that I met this very special lady. Herta published many of her papers in the Fibonacci Quarterly and contributed prodigiously to the Elementary Problems and Solutions section of the Quarterly. She was an especially gifted communicator and a most inspiring lecturer. Our next conference falls in 2008, the centenary year of Herta's birth, when we are to meet in Greece for the second time.

