

Aug 30, 1999.

Dear Bill,

This is on page 4 of our University's Annual Report to the Community.

**P**roblem: University mathematics professor A travels around the world inspiring young mathematicians, runs a Saturday afternoon math club, conducts his own research, creates math problems for international competition and carries a full teaching load. Yet there are only 24 hours in a day – how does he do it?

**Solution:** No problem. Professor A is the University of Alberta's own Dr. Andy Liu.

Math is Liu's passion, and he lives to get young people turned on to his subject. Since 1981, he's been running an informal math club, encouraging anyone interested to develop their skills while having fun with games and puzzles. But the Saturday afternoon gathering is no tutoring session, says Liu. "A club is a club, and some (of the children) don't listen to a word I say."

Liu can explain the most complex equations to sophisticated graduate students but says his most challenging lectures are those given to kids. He even learned to write math equations upside-down so students could follow his explanations while sitting across from him at his desk. "Andy was the one who got me interested in math," says Graham Denham, a former math club member and friend of 18 years, now pursuing a PhD in mathematics at the University of Michigan.

Liu mentored the University of Alberta's youngest-ever graduate – Jason Calwell, who finished a math degree in 1994 at the age of 18 – and this ability to connect with young, gifted mathematicians has earned him many honours. Two of his latest are a 1999 3M Teaching Award and 1998 Outstanding Canadian University Professor of the Year from the Canadian Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CCAE) and the American-based Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

"Teaching is not just a necessary evil; it is an interest of mine," says Liu, who holds a graduate diploma in elementary education in addition to his doctorate in mathematics, both from the University of Alberta. Always looking for ways to convert the young to a love of numbers, he is currently developing math puzzles for sale in Taiwan. "It's a great example of applied mathematics," says Liu.



Dr. Andy Liu with students  
Richard Ng, 14 and Robert  
Barrington Leigh, 13

I am not sure whether I should pay you royalty or charge you advertising fee.

Best regards,

Andy.