A History of the Combinatorial Potlatches

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This is a brief history of the Combinatorial Potlatches and their speakers. It was maintained by Brian Alspach (BA) through November 2001, then by Robert Beezer (RAB). Send additions, clarifications and corrections to beezer@ups.edu. Copyright 2002-2013, Licensed with a Creative Commons BY-SA License.

1. Combinatorial Potlatch One, 27 February 1982, University of Washington
   Branko Grünbaum *Edge-transitive planar graphs*
   C. C. Lindner *How to embed a partial Steiner triple system*

2. Combinatorial Potlatch Two, 27 November 1982, Simon Fraser University
   Bill Kantor *Algorithms for graph isomorphism and other group theoretic problems*
   Peter Kleinschmidt *Properties of simplicial complexes and Hilbert functions*

3. Combinatorial Potlatch Three
   BA: I have no record, but I believe this was our first visit to Western Washington University.

   Geoffrey Shephard *The theory of fabrics*
   Richard Weiss *Some aspects of graph theory in the classification of finite simple groups*

5. Combinatorial Potlatch Five, 19 May 1984, Simon Fraser University
   Richard Weiss *Some aspects of graph theory in the classification of finite simple groups*
   Egan Schulte *A combinatorial theory of regular polytopes*

BA: At this point we have lost track of the numerical sequence, but perhaps we can reconstruct the other meetings.

6. 1 December 1984, Western Washington University
   Peter Cameron
   *Random sum-free sets and cyclic automorphisms*
   Tudor Zamfirescu
   *Most stars are thin, most thick stars are not smooth*

7. 14 December 1985, University of Washington
   Richard Nowakowski
   *Pursuit and search games on graphs*
   Brian Alspach
   *Orthogonal factorizations of graphs*
8. 5 April 1986, Western Washington University
   Moshe Rosenfeld
   *Data allocation problem: Or how to divide a square into rectangles*
   Dave Kirkpatrick
   *Algorithms for finding maximal vectors*

9. 13 December 1986, University of British Columbia
   Bojan Mohar
   *Embeddings of infinite graphs*
   Peter Gritzman
   *Finite packing and covering*

10. 9 May 1987, Pacific Lutheran University
    Stan Wagon
    *Fourteen different (?) proofs of a result about tiling a rectangle*
    Don Chakerian
    *How to fit an elephant into a small cube*

11. 28 November 1987, Simon Fraser University
    J.-C. Bermond
    *DeBruijn-Kautz networks*
    H. S. Wilf
    *The exponential formula: Combinatorics’ best kept secret*

12. 9 December 1989, University of Washington
    Joan P. Hutchinson
    *When does a graph contain a spanning tree with no vertex of degree 2? (And why would you want to know this?)*
    Charles J. Colburn
    *Intersections and supports of designs*

13. 12 January 1991, Simon Fraser University
    C.C. Chen, National University of Singapore
    *The edge-toughness of a graph and of its complement*
    Peter Horak, Bratislava
    *Transversals and matroids*

14. 25 January 1992, University of Puget Sound
    Jason Rush, University of Washington
    *Very dense packings of spheres and other shapes in Euclidean n-space*
    Jarek Nešetril
    *Dimension and boolean dimension*

15. 11 February 1995, Simon Fraser University
    Mike Fellows
    *Coping with intractability: The parametric point of view*
    Anna Karlin
    *Randomized and multipointer paging with locality of reference*
16. 11 May 1996, Pacific Lutheran University
Dick Karp
  *Error-Resilient molecular computation*
Gene Luks, University of Oregon
  *Algorithmic applications of the simple groups classifications*

17. 24 May 1997, Simon Fraser University (Harbour Centre Campus)
Gary MacGillivray, University of Victoria
  *The achromatic number of graphs*
Kathie Cameron
  *Disjoint monotone paths in simple regions: Existence, uniqueness, min-max relations, algorithms and applications*
Peter Hamburger
  *A graph-theoretic approach to problems in elementary and combinatorial geometry*

18. 16 February 2002, University of Puget Sound,
Brian Alspach, University of Regina and Simon Fraser University
  *Group actions and hamilton decompositions of complete graphs*
Brett Stevens, Carleton University (Ottawa)
  *On universal cycles of k-sets of an n-set*
Jonathan Jedwab, Simon Fraser University
  *Combinatorial design theory and the IEEE 802.12 transmission code*

19. 9 November 2002, University of Victoria, Main Campus
Andrzej Proskurowski, University of Oregon
  *Width parameters of graphs and discrete optimization problems*
Branko Grunbaum, University of Washington
  *Polyhedra: Combinatorial and geometric*
Jozef Siran, Slovak University of Technology
  *Links between graph theory, group theory, geometry, Riemann surfaces, and Galois theory*

20. 8 November 2003, University of Victoria, Downtown Campus
Steph van Wilgenburg, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)
  *Enumerative properties of Ferrers graphs*
Peter Horak, University of Washington (Tacoma)
  *Graph theory as an integral part of mathematics*
Rick Brewster, University College of the Cariboo (Kamloops)
  *Categorical aspects of graph homomorphisms*
Zdenek Ryjacek, University of Western Bohemia (Czech Republic)
  *Closure concepts, contractible subgraphs and hamiltonian properties of line graphs*
21. 20 November 2004, Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre Campus
   John Gimbel, University of Alaska (Fairbanks)
   The traveling sales rep gets into abelian groups
   Xuding Zhu, National Sun Yat-sen University (Taiwan)
   The game chromatic number of a graph
   Jozsef Solymosi, University of British Columbia (Vancouver)
   Bounds on incidences and problems from additive number theory

22. 19 November 2005, Seattle University
   Bojan Mohar, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Simon Fraser University
   Small separations in symmetric graphs
   Jenny Quinn, Occidental College and University of Puget Sound
   Determinants via determined ants
   John Caughman, Portland State University
   How distance-regular graphs got all tangled up with the theory of knots

23. 11 November 2006, Portland State University
   Richard A. Brualdi, University of Wisconsin at Madison
   The Bruhat order for (0,1)-matrices
   Gary Gordon, Lafayette College
   Graph polynomials for you; graph polynomials for me
   Matt De Vos, Simon Fraser University
   Sumsets and subsequence sums

24. 29 September 2007, University of Victoria
   Manley Perkel, University of Puget Sound
   Antibandwidth and cyclic antibandwidth of Kneser graphs
   John Moon, University of Alberta
   On the number of proper nodes in rooted trees
   Anthony Quas, University of Victoria
   Distances in positive density sets

25. 22 November 2008, University of Puget Sound
   Eric Fusy, University of British Columbia
   Bijective links on planar maps via orientations
   Chuck Dunn, Linfield College
   Complete multipartite graphs and the relaxed coloring game
   Ioana Dumitriu, University of Washington
   Path counting and the moment method for random matrices or Fun with Walter and Theo

26. 21 November 2009, Simon Fraser University
   Glencora Borradaile, Oregon State University
   Graph constrained knapsack problems
   Louis Deaett, University of Victoria
   New dimensions to graph coloring
   Omer Angel, University of British Columbia
   Locally transitive graphs
27. 11 December 2010, Western Washington University  
Christine Kelley, University of Nebraska, Lincoln  
*Codes from algebraic lifts of graphs*  
Richard Guy, University of Calgary  
*Some columns Martin Gardner might have written*  
Kai-Uwe Schmidt, Simon Fraser University  
*What’s special about 0.3420...? How to increase the merit factor of binary sequences*

28. 19 November 2011, Seattle University  
William Stein, University of Washington, Seattle  
*Sage — Creating a viable free open source alternative to Magma, Maple, Mathematica and Matlab*  
Josh Laison, Willamette University  
*Obstacle numbers of graphs*  
Peter Winkler, Dartmouth College  
*Cop vs Drunk: Chasing the random walker on a graph*

29. 17 November 2012, Simon Fraser University  
Chris Godsil, Waterloo University  
*Continuous quantum walks on graphs*  
Dan Drake, University of Puget Sound  
*Higher order matching polynomials and d-orthogonality*  
Ron Graham, University of California, San Diego  
*The combinatorics of solving linear equations*

30. 23 November 2013, University of Victoria  
Richard Hoshino, Quest University  
*Applying combinatorics to inspire change*  
Dillon Mayhew, Victoria University of Wellington  
*Characterizing representable matroids*  
Jeremie Lumbroso, Simon Fraser University  
*Analytic random generation of combinatorial objects*

31. 22 November 2014, Western Washington University  
Jane Butterfield, University of Victoria  
*Line-of-sight pursuit in sweepable polygons*  
Steven Klee, Seattle University  
*Face enumeration on simplicial complexes*  
Richard Anstee, University of British Columbia  
*Forbidden configurations*

32. 21 November 2015, University of British Columbia  
Kilian Raschel, Université de Tours  
*A Human Proof of Gessel’s Lattice Path Conjecture*  
Daniel Johnston, University of Montana  
*On k-Ramsey Numbers of Graphs*  
Cory Palmer, University of Montana
Turán-type Theorems for Berge-Hypergraphs
Alexander Holroyd, Microsoft Corporation
Finitely Dependent Coloring

BA: You will note that Richard Weiss is listed as giving the same talk at two consecutive Potlatches. I vaguely recall that Richard had to cancel his appearance for the first of the two listed so that I think the later listing is correct. I undoubtedly have an early announcement in my files. It is certainly the case that he talked only once.