

## Preface

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This issue of the Journal of Statistical Physics (as well as the following one) commemorates fifty years of the semi-annual Yeshiva-Rutgers Statistical Mechanics Conferences, the hundredth of which took place in December 2008.

The first of these conferences took place at Stevens Institute of Technology in May, 1959. When I moved to Yeshiva University in the Fall of 1959 the conferences also moved to Yeshiva and stayed there for 18 years, taking place every Spring and Fall. In 1977, I and the conference moved to Rutgers where the meetings have taken place, since; the 103<sup>rd</sup> is scheduled for May next year.

The meetings started as very informal one day affairs and gradually expanded to their current three day format. Three principles have stayed constant during the whole period: (1) Anyone who wished to talk has an opportunity to do so, even if the time available is only a few minutes, (2) no posters or parallel sessions, and (3) no conference publications.

The earliest record of the conferences that I was able to recover is the invitation to the Fall meeting of 1962. This letter and the one announcing the switch to Rutgers, together with the program of the eighteenth conference, are reproduced at the end of this volume (including typos). A sampling of additional early programs as well as some photos can be found on the conference web page: <http://www.math.rutgers.edu/events/smm/>. Beginning with the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting in December, 1975, the titles of the talks have been published in this journal. The first appeared in J. Stat. Phys. **14**, 87 (1976)

These conferences have been mostly self-supporting with indirect, but very important, assistance in the form of secretarial help from Yeshiva University, Rutgers University, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research and the National Science Foundation. During the past few years, Springer, the publisher of the journal, has generously sponsored a concert and cocktail party at each meeting.

I am most grateful to all these supporters as well as to the wonderful staff who have made these meetings possible. These include in particular: Anne Cooper, Liz Buckelew, Judy Williamson, Yael Goldberg, Judy Lige, Leszita Townsend and Hope DiCapua. I also

thank my graduate students, postdocs and colleagues for their help. Finally I thank all the participants in these meetings and the contributors to this issue.

See you at the 103<sup>rd</sup> meeting, May 9–11, 2010.

Editor-in-Chief