

Field Report Damir Ferizović

Location

Vincent Hall (Institute of Mathematics), University of Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Time Period

August – October 2019

General Impression of Research Stay

Minneapolis is quite a nice city, especially in summer and when one lives near the lakes. The public transport system is alright, compared to European standards – it gets you to the main places in reasonable time. It is also a bicycle friendly city – a circumstance that I gladly made use of. The campus of the U. of M. is especially nice, with lot of green spaces, restaurants and other useful facilities.

In the first days, I was helped to organize myself an ID card, health-insurance and an office – everything went rather smoothly. I learned where the offices of my host professor D. Bilyk and his PhD-student R. Matzke were to find, and I got together with one of them at least every second day.

In the first month, during conversations with me, R. Matzke had a couple of break troughs on some long standing open questions on two-input energies (a mathematical concept) – and it became evident to me, that I had to step up my game if I wanted to keep up with his wits (but to be fair, he spent the last three years with this questions).

Soon after we switched to three-input energies, where we all had to start from scratch – here I contributed the most, writing computer scripts to automatically compute certain decompositions and proving some small conjectures, and providing counter examples to other ones. That was fun.

During my stay I attended a class delivered by my host D. Bilyk, and I still wished I could have finished it. I was very happy with his lecture, both with the content and the style. I also went to some seminars that are regularly organized there.

D. Bilyk invited me to his house a couple of times and drove me around the city to show me around, that too I enjoyed.

R. Matzke also introduced me to the other Ph D's and he spent a lot of time with me to make me feel welcome – I very much appreciate this about him. He invited me to his home for a Halloween party, and introduced me to some American traditions:

Like carving pumpkins (mine was Micky Mouse), apple bobbing (aim for the stem and you will never get wet), eating a donut hanging on a wire (I lost this one badly).

To sum up, we are still working on a rather interesting set of questions that should produce some very nice outcome; and I might have made some friends for life – which I am very happy about.

Quality of the Host Institution

D. Bilyk is one of the leading scientists in my field and I am looking forward to a publication with him – also the Institute of Mathematics in general seems to have well-known professors, though I only had the pleasure to interact with a couple of them.

Next to Vincent Hall, there one can find an additional Math-building: The Institute for Mathematics and its Applications. Unfortunately I had no interaction with its staff, but it seems to attract many talented people.

The Ph D students were all very bright young women and men, especially R. Matzke of whom we can expect to become a big name of his own.

My impression is that Vincent Hall in particular, and the University on Minneapolis in general seem to be very good places to be associated with.

Contacts with the Host Institution

I am regularly in contact with D. Bilyk and R. Matzke – around once a week with each of them.

Recommendations for Future Marshall Plan Students

Always have an ID with you when you want to enter a club – you might be denied access otherwise, regardless of how old you look.

Contact Email

damir.ferizovic@posteo.de