THE CUBIC FUNCTION

AND OTHER STRANGE ALGEBRA
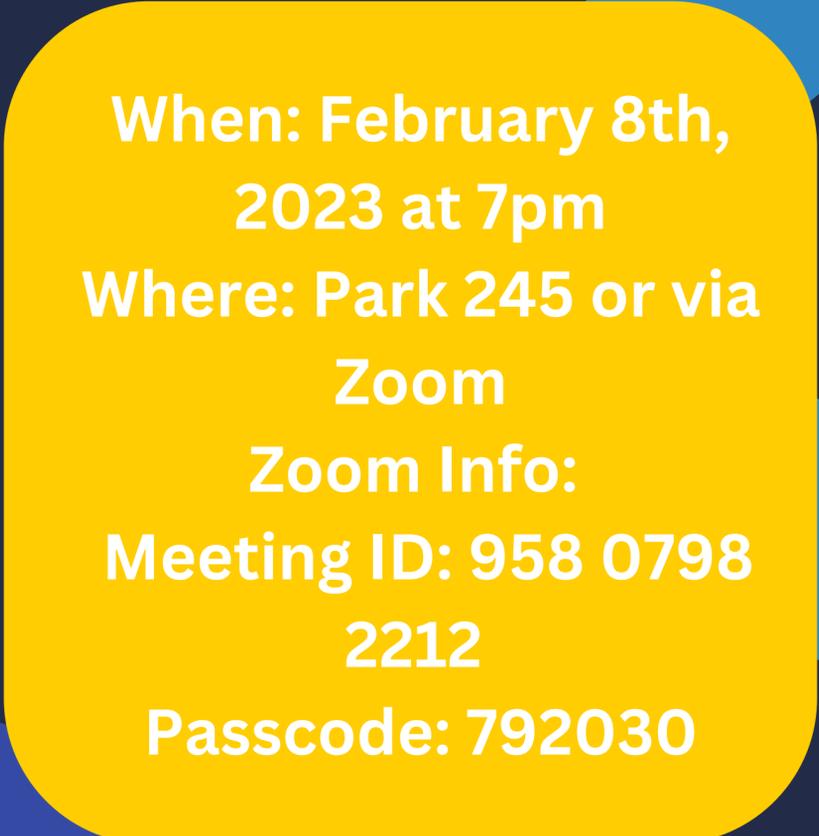
Presented by:

Walter Stromquist, Research Associate in Mathematics at Bryn Mawr College

When: February 8th, 2023 at 7pm
Where: Park 245 or via Zoom
Zoom Info:
Meeting ID: 958 0798 2212
Passcode: 792030

The cubic formula, and how to remember it or reconstruct it if you forget. It isn't complicated: If you want to solve $x^3 + 3px = 2q$, find any number t whose square is $p^3 + q^2$ and any number u whose cube is q + t. Then x = u + p/u satisfies the equation. We will see why this formula is so much less satisfying than the quadratic formula, and how people really find roots of cubes.

But I might not get very far with that, because first I want to tell a story about a second grader who learns about pixies and fairies, and wonders whether the fairies know how to add fractions.