Colin Adams

Blown Away: What Knot to Do When Sailing

by Sir Randolph Bacon III (cousin -in-law to Colin Adams)

Abstract: Being a tale of adventure on the high seas involving great risk to the taleteller, and how an understanding of the mathematical theory of knots saved his bacon. No nautical or mathematical background assumed.

Bio: Colin Adams is the Thomas T. Read Professor of Mathematics at Williams College. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1983. He is particularly interested in the mathematical theory of knots, their applications and their connections with hyperbolic geometry. He is the author of "The Knot Book", an elementary introduction to the mathematical theory of knots, "Why Knot?", a mathematical comic book with attached toy and "Riot at the Calc Exam and Other Mathematically Bent Stories", a compendium of humorous math stories. He is the co-author of the humorous supplements "How to Ace Calculus: The Streetwise Guide" and "How to Ace the Rest of Calculus: the Streetwise Guide" as well as the textbook "Introduction to Topology: Pure and Applied". He also appears with Thomas Garrity in "The Great Pi/e Debate", "The United States of Mathematics Presidential Debate" and “The Derivative vs. the Integral: The Final Smackdown”, DVD's of humorous debates on mathematical topics that are available from the Mathematical Association of America. He has written a variety of research articles on knot theory and hyperbolic 3-manifolds. He is a recipient of the Haimo National Distinguished Teaching Award from the Mathematical Association of America(MAA) in 1998, an MAA Polya Lecturer for 1998-2000, a Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer for 2000-2002, and the recipient of the Robert Foster Cherry Teaching Award in 2003. He is also the humor columnist for the Mathematical Intelligencer, and has just finished the manuscript for a new book entitled “Zombies & Calculus”.