

**Kopell elected to London
Mathematical Society**

Math May Help Cure Brain Diseases

NANCY KOPELL'S research into the intersection of numbers and neurons earned her a "genius" award from the MacArthur



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Foundation in 1990. Now that same research has put her in a club to which Einstein belonged.

Kopell, a College of Arts & Sciences mathematics professor, has been elected an honorary member of the 146-year-old London Mathematical Society (LMS) by the group's governing council. The

accolade cites her work "on the neural networks governing rhythmic motor activities in animals and her ongoing work on the brain dynamics underlying various cognitive factors." (The LMS voted Einstein an honorary member in 1924.)

The roughly 100 billion neurons in the human brain behave in patterns governed by the same physical laws as, say, molecules that "condense from gas to liquid, or freeze from liquid to solid," as one science writer puts it. Kopell says her work seeks to discover "how the brain produces its rhythmic dynamics, how it uses them for cognition, and how the symptoms in neurological diseases are related to pathological changes in brain rhythms.

I'm especially interested in Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia."

For the moment, the work is basic science, Kopell says, "but it has strong implications for the etiology of disease and, perhaps in the future, for novel interventions."

Since 1871, the 2,300-member LMS has elected just one or two honorary members annually. "It is a very special recognition," says Kopell, one of BU's William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professors, the University's highest faculty honor, and a founder and director of the Center for Biodynamics. "The list of previous awardees is extremely impressive, and I'm extremely honored to be in that company."

Kopell, who has a PhD from Berkeley, came to BU in 1986. RB

New Footbaths a Nod to BU's Growing Muslim Population

CELOP's facilities available to everyone

Faisal Alasiri, a second-year student in BU's Center for English Language & Orientation Programs, uses one of the office's new footbaths.



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Even the janitors admitted that the decade-old bathrooms at the Center for English Language & Orientation Programs (CELOP) needed help. So last summer, they were fully renovated with a fresh coat of paint, bright lights, and gleaming tiles and fixtures. But also added was a feature not found in most public restrooms: footbaths.

Elsie El Dayaa, CELOP's operations manager, says the footbaths fit nicely with the office's planned remodel and its desire to meet the needs of its growing Muslim student population.

The number of Middle Eastern students enrolled at CELOP—many of them Muslim—has grown by 175 percent in the past four years, and Middle Eastern students comprise nearly 40 percent of those in the program.

Visitors to the CELOP office at 890 Commonwealth Avenue step onto the second floor and see doors immediately to the left leading to the newly redesigned men's room and women's room, each with a foyer with coat hooks on the wall and the footbaths. A sturdy bench forms one wall of the tiled basin, allowing users to sit and rest their feet on a sloped tile surface for convenient scrubbing. Two faucets and soap and paper towel dispensers are affixed to the wall within easy reach.

Faisal Alasiri, a second-year CELOP student from Saudi Arabia, says the footbaths are a vast improvement. "Before that, we used the sink," he says. "It was high and hard to wash your feet."

Muslims, who pray five times a day, are required to perform ablution—the washing of hands, face, and feet—before prayer. "You're not able to bring yourself before God without purification," says Ziad Howlader (CAS'12), the caretaker of the George Sherman Union's second-floor mosque, where many CELOP students pray.

El Dayaa says no one asked for the footbaths, but office staff had noticed Muslim students using the sinks for their ablutions before heading down a hallway to two quiet classrooms where they held afternoon prayers. The footbaths seemed an obvious addition when it came time to renovate. LF ■