

# Features

## Behrend Profs Achieve Publishing Success

by Cindy Craig  
Collegian Staff Writer

The University of Alabama, the University of Colorado, and dozens of other colleges across the country have something in common. All make use of math books published by Behrend professors Dr. Roland E. Larson and Dr. Robert P. Hostetler.

The two have collaborated on a number of highly acclaimed math textbooks, one of which (The Precalculus Series) is currently being used in all 50 states of the U.S. and in over 500 schools, including those mentioned above.

The second edition of their Precalculus Series was just published this fall. It includes four texts: Algebra & Trigonometry, College Algebra, Precalculus and Trigonometry. Each text has six supplements: an instructor's guide, a student study guide, a complete solutions guide, a transparency package, test generating software, and a student software package.

Except for a break from 1967 to 1970 when he worked on his doctorate, Hostetler, who earned his doctorate in teaching, has taught at Behrend.

Larson came to Behrend in 1970 after graduating from the University of Colorado with a doctorate in math. He began writing manuscripts in 1973. In 1974, he had written several chapters of a calculus book and

asked Hostetler to read it. That's when the initial collaboration began.

"When I got my degree, I never thought about writing text books," said Hostetler.

Their first manuscript was accepted in 1976 and was later published in 1979. Despite this acceptance, there were still obstacles ahead, according to Larson.

"Text book writing is really a tough way to make a living," said Larson. "Bob and I got really lucky. You have to have a market and be willing to take suggestions."

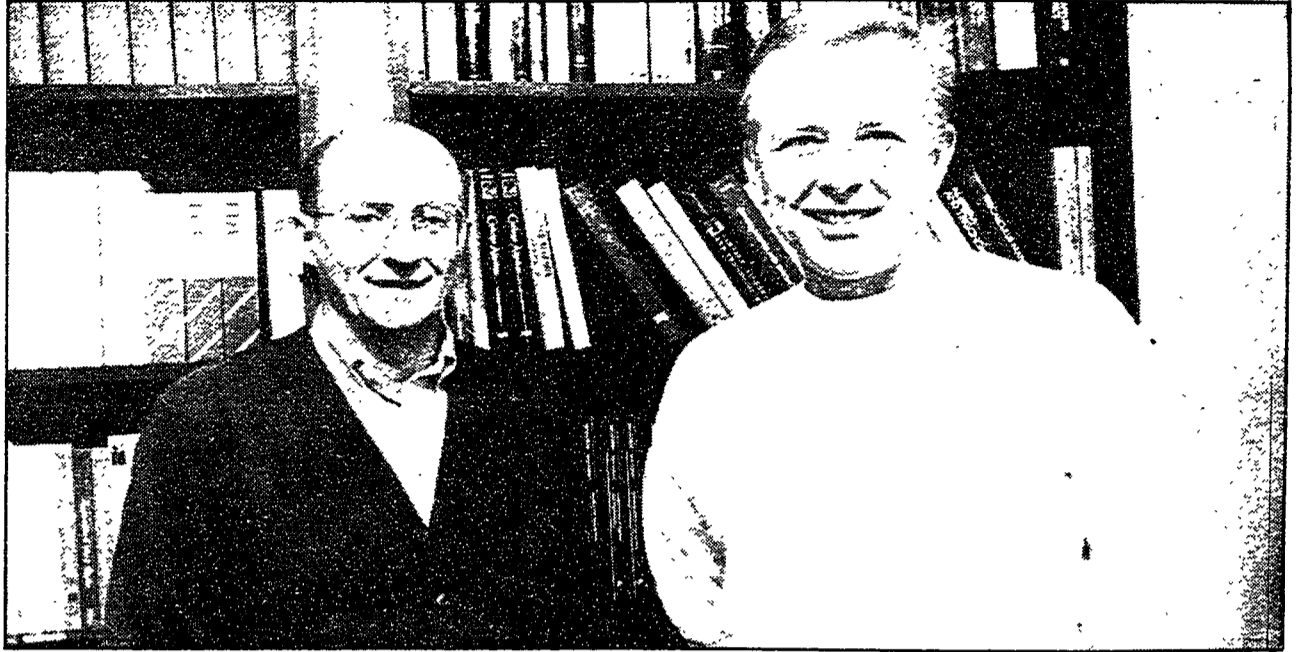
Evidently they know how. Right now their text, Business Calculus, is the number one best seller of texts in its category. Combined sales of all texts since 1979 is over 600,000.

Actual use is very likely, much greater, when one considers how many students buy and resell text books.

Perhaps part of their success can be attributed to the personal teaching experiences they have both had here at Behrend, specifically, teaching small classes.

Also contributing to the success of their texts is the rather unique emphasis they place on graphics and figures.

Some of their texts go so far as to include historical notes on the development of mathematical theories and include drawings of the mathematician given credit



Dr. Hostetler and Dr. Larson

photos by Jeff Majcher

for the particular theory.

Most math texts provide graphs and figures, but Larson and Hostetler definitely go out of their way to provide extensive graphic explanations of concepts presented within their books.

Currently, seven Larson/Hostetler texts are being used at Behrend. Hostetler says, "one thing about using your own text, it's nice, but it also presents a little bit of a problem, because it often states (the lesson) the way (I) want to say it in the classroom."

Being forced to restate facts in a different perspective "forces you to come up with new ideas,"

which eventually end up in a revised text.

"The texts have made us better teachers, as well as, being teachers has made us better text book writers. It's a very complementary type of activity."

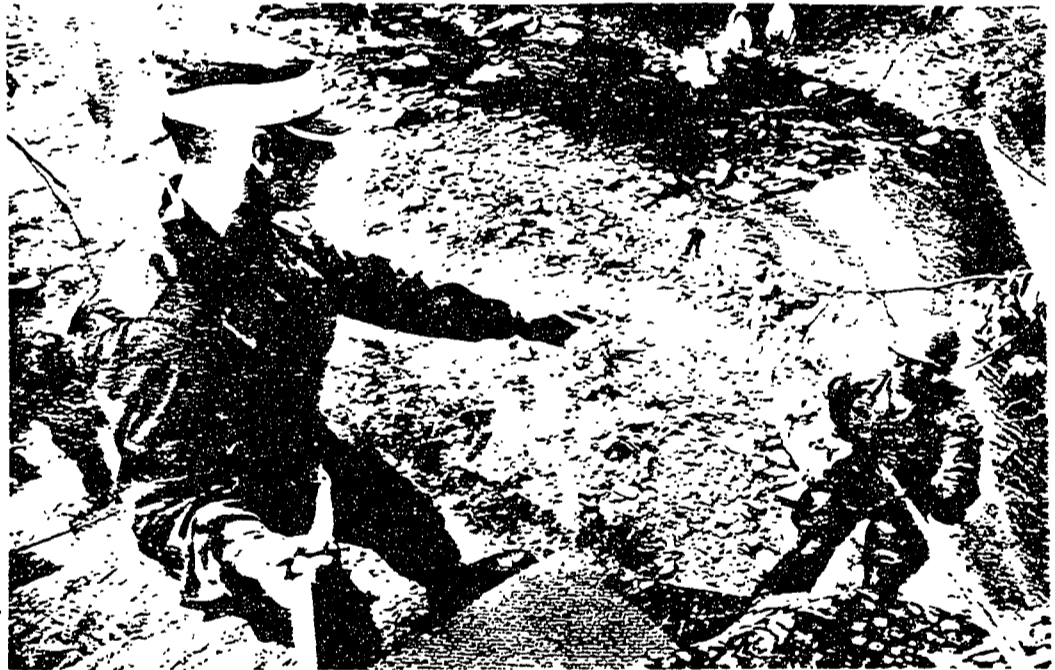
Hostetler currently teaches two classes and is in charge of math majors and is the mathematics faculty coordinator.

He is also doing the initial leg work for next spring's project, which will be a three-text Larson/Hostetler algebra series. It will include: Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra, and College Algebra with Applications.

Larson is currently on sabbatical, but will be returning to the classroom in the fall. He is currently working on at least two projects. One, with Hostetler, will be out in about a year. It's the fourth edition of Calculus.

The other project is Finite Mathematics which will cover in more depth sets in logic, stats, probability and in general, topics that don't get covered in calculus and algebra. He is also traveling and attending various math meetings on state, regional and national levels, both promoting texts and seeking new ideas for other projects.

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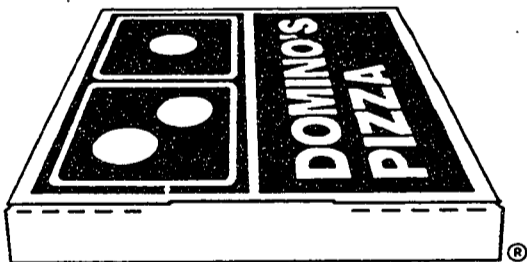
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