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MSRI Posts Puzzles for MUNI Riders

San Francisco MUNI bus riders will have a chance to correctly solve an intriguing puzzle and win \$100.00 during the fall/winter launch of the “Puzzles on Wheels” poster project. Over the next five months, the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) in Berkeley is sponsoring a special city-wide effort to bring mathematics that is challenging and fun to citizens of all ages, especially school-age children. This is a pilot project that MSRI hopes to expand across the nation.

“Mathematics lies behind almost everything we do these days,” says MSRI Director, David Eisenbud. “The Institute is placing posters on the San Francisco buses to enliven the daily commute, and offer riders a way to experience some of the excitement of mathematics. We invite everyone to spend a few moments thinking about the puzzles, and the mathematical challenges they pose.” Each month, from October 2004 to February 2005 (December excluded), a new puzzle will appear on one of every four SF MUNI buses assigned to each route in the city. The puzzles require no advanced mathematics, only a willingness to figure out what is going on. Everyone can enter, (MSRI employees are not eligible to win prizes) or find out the answer to the problem by logging on to the MSRI website. In addition, the MSRI website will offer opportunities to delve more deeply into mathematical problem solving, with extra challenges and variations drawn from the puzzles on the bus.

MSRI is an independent, non-profit organization supported by eighty leading international universities, the private sector, the National Science Foundation, and the National Security Agency. To researchers from the United States and abroad, MSRI serves as a mathematics think-tank. The Institute also sponsors conferences for educators, weekly math circles and competitions for high school students, and public outreach programs with a focus on people in the news, and how they use mathematics in their work.

For more information, contact: www.msri.org or 510/655.2247 (media queries).