On January 12th I went down to San Antonio, Texas, to take part in the National Mathematics Joint Meeting of the AMS and MAA. My main purpose for attending was for the large number of employers that would be present. The purpose of this article is to give the graduate students some idea of what it is like to attend as a job seeker, and of the preparation needed before the actual event.

**Preparation:** If you know, or have even an inkling, that you will be graduating by August of year $x$, then you should start you search in September of year $x - 1$. It is about this time that it would be beneficial to start making your resumé and to start periodically checking the job postings at [www.ams.org/eims](http://www.ams.org/eims). Almost all openings at universities and colleges will be posted here. It is also a good time to ask those professors from whom you would like to have recommendation letters.

**Your Best Asset:** Your number one asset in your quest for a good job is your advisor. Your advisor has contacts which you don’t have, and knows the math community. I have the honored priviledge of being a student of Doron Zeilberger. He went far beyond just helping. In fact he probably changed my probability of getting a good job from $\epsilon$ to $1 - \epsilon$. So keep your advisor well informed of what you are doing, and what your goals are.

**Register for The Meeting:** The Joint Meeting is held in January. The registration deadlines, however, are quite early. Some are in late September, some are in October. Check the AMS webpage for the dates ([www.ams.org](http://www.ams.org)).

It is a good idea to give a talk at the Joint Meeting. If you can manage to get invited to a Special Session in your subject area, take it. This will give you 20 minutes to present your talk. Dr. Zeilberger was able to get me an invitation. Otherwise, you can give a 10 minute talk with a contributed paper. Either way, this is a good opportunity for potential employers to see you in a different setting from the Mob Scene (which I’ll describe below).

**Applications:** The deadlines for applications in general are from December 1 to December 30. Since you’ve been checking the AMS job postings every day by now, you should have a growing list of 50 to 100 positions available which apply to you. It’s now time to send out your applications. You’ll need a cover sheet, tailored to each school, your resumé (which should have been revised several times by now and in its final form), AMS cover sheet, statements on your Teaching Philosophy and Research Interests, and (p)reprints of any articles you’ve had published, submitted, or accepted. This is in addition to the (at least) 3 letters of recommendation, one commenting on your teaching, which you are to have sent to each school. Dr. Coughlin was a help with my Teaching Philosophy while I was preparing my Teaching Portfolio (which is also good to have). On the research front, Dr. Zeilberger took my sorrowful first attempt at a Research Statement, and helped me turn it into a solid statement. As for the school-specific cover sheets, and the AMS cover sheet, you can contact me for some \LaTeX{} style files and tools which will help you do this with much less aggravation. Email me at aaron@math.temple.edu, or check for it on my webpage in a few months ([www.math.temple.edu/~aaron](http://www.math.temple.edu/~aaron)).

**Check your email:** This is probably how you will be contacted if a school is interested in
interviewing you at the Joint Meeting. At this point you’ve probably made the short list of about 40 candidates in whom they are interested. One school actually told me I was one of 12 candidates, 3 of which would be given campus interviews. Make sure you schedule your interviews with enough time between them, not just to make them on time, but to give yourself time to regroup and check out your research on the schools. Yes, it is imperative that you research the schools which requested interviews with you. After all, they’ve done their research on you. Check out their website. What is the school like in general? Are there people in your area of research? If so, read some of their papers. Ask your advisor if he’s heard of any of the members of their faculty. If so, read some of their papers. Dr. Zeilberger actually was able to tell me who was in their departments and for what they are known. (Sometimes I wonder if he and Shalosh aren’t actually the same person.) After you’ve prepared, its time for the …

Mob Scene. O.k. So you’ve done all of the prep work and you’ve prepared yourself for the 15 of so interview you have. But remember, you also registered for the Employment Register and you won’t find out until the morning of the second day of the meeting with whom you have the 15 minute interviews (very short). So let’s say you’ve managed to garner 20 interview in the 3 days of the meeting. Most of them will be 30-60 minutes, some just 15 minutes. So let’s say you have 7 each day, and they average 45 minutes, with only 15 minutes between interviews. Well, that’s 7 hours of repeating the same thing over and over, and again. But you have to be on your game. Try your hardest not to be exhausted, or at least act like you’re not exhausted. And try not to notice that there are 4000 mathematicians attending this conference, and probably 1000 candidates for jobs. And you’re in a room with 50 interviews being held simultaneously. And you also wanted to see some talks. And you’re also giving a talk, which you should practice once more, recalling the comments your advisor made when you practiced in front of him/her.

The Interviews: You should expect a large variety of questions while you’re interviewing, and your should be able to answer them well, i.e. don’t stumble over your words and know how to answer the questions beforehand without sounding canned. You should also be able to ask intelligent questions about the school. This is where your research pays off as they will see that in fact you are interested in their school. You can make up your own questions, and they should be questions in which you genuinely are interested in knowing the answer. How enthusiastic are their students for learning? How well attended are the colloquiums, if they have any. How is life in the city, town, village of Collegeville, USA?

Waiting: Most schools will tell you that within a few weeks they will be making their decisions on whom to invite to the campus for interviews. So now all you can do is sit back and wait, and hopefully you will be called. In the meantime, you should prepare to give a research talk, and a teaching talk at the campus interviews. Again, your advisor can help guide you here.

I would like to express my extreme gratitude to Doron Zeilberger for his extensive help with my job search and also for his invaluable research guidance. In fact, if it weren’t for him, I probably would have dropped out of grad school several years ago. But he sparked my interest (which I didn’t know I had) in combinatorics, and showed me that there is at least one very well respected mathematician with the same mathematical philosophies as I have.