

Ami Harten was truly an original. Whenever he needed something new in Mathematics, he would simply invent it. And if it already existed, he would re-invent it. The result would be something new, bold, and interesting.

In the spring of 1982, I visited Ami in Tel-Aviv. This was an experience. Every day he would whisk me out of my hotel room and outdo Egged tours. After two weeks, I felt unable to re-enter the world without him. A typical work day with Ami would consist of the two of us shrieking insults at one another about some obscure mathematical topic. We would end our argument by planning a huge dinner and the next day's activities. In fact, my relationship with him was like that: insults followed by camaraderie.

At someone else's lecture, Ami was a sight to behold. At one point, we, at UCLA, seriously considered installing seat belts in lecture halls to keep him from advancing to the blackboard and grabbing the chalk out of the speaker's hand. (He was, by the way, invariably kind to young people.)

Ami and I happened to go through a similar personal crisis at the same time. His basic analysis of human relations--once he decided the subject worthy of study--deserved an International Congress invitation. He was warm and generous, perceptive and blunt.

He never had to reinvent himself because he had his own style. The world embraced it, he reciprocated. As Peter Lax said, "Ami was larger than life--and louder too." Whatever he did was to excess. He passionately loved his family and friends, and indulged in habits that weren't so good for him: food, cigarettes, coffee, working around the clock.

Most of all, Ami was there. As far as I'm concerned, he will always be there. His friends confess that they still talk to him. I know-- I do too.

This is Ami's legacy.

Stan Osher, Los Angeles, July, 1995.