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Math Genius Snubs Academy of Sciences

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Reclusive math genius Grigory Perelman has de facto refused to join the ranks of the Russian Academy of Sciences by not replying to a membership invitation, Interfax reported Monday.

"He hasn't responded to our telegrams or phone calls. And he has not made any attempt to communicate with us either," said an official with the St. Petersburg-based Steklov Institute of Mathematics, which proposed Perelman's candidacy.

Perelman, 44, worked for the institute in the mid-1980s before he traveled to the United States for postdoctoral research. In 2002, he proved the Poincare conjecture, and the Clay Mathematics Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts, recognized this with a $1 million prize in 2006. But Perelman refused to collect it.

The institute official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, told Interfax that the list of candidates for the academy seats had to be submitted by a Tuesday deadline.

The Academy of Sciences faced an internal division in 2010 after several leading members praised Viktor Petrik, a scientist who claimed to have invented filters that turn radioactive water into pure drinking water. Petrik is not a member of the academy, and other members denounced his work as bogus.

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