The 67th William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition
Saturday, December 2, 2006

A–1 Find the volume of the region of points (x,y,z) such that

$$(x^2+y^2+z^2+8)^2 \leq 36(x^2+y^2).$$

A–2 Alice and Bob play a game in which they take turns removing stones from a heap that initially has n stones. The number of stones removed at each turn must be one less than a prime number. The winner is the player who takes the last stone. Alice plays first. Prove that there are infinitely many n such that Bob has a winning strategy. (For example, if $n=17$, then Alice might take 6 leaving 11; then Bob might take 1 leaving 10; then Alice can take the remaining stones to win.)

A–3 Let $1,2,3,\dots,2005,2006,2007,2009,2012,2016,\dots$ be a sequence defined by $x_k = k$ for $k=1,2,\dots,2006$ and $x_{k+1} = x_k + x_{k-2005}$ for $k \geq 2006$. Show that the sequence has 2005 consecutive terms each divisible by 2006.

A–4 Let $S = \{1,2,\dots,n\}$ for some integer $n>1$. Say a permutation π of S has a local maximum at $k \in S$ if

(i) $\pi(k) > \pi(k+1)$ for $k=1$;

(ii) $\pi(k-1) < \pi(k)$ and $\pi(k) > \pi(k+1)$ for $1<k<n$;

(iii) $\pi(k-1) < \pi(k)$ for $k=n$.

(For example, if $n=5$ and π takes values at $1,2,3,4,5$ of $2,1,4,5,3$, then π has a local maximum of 2 at $k=1$, and a local maximum of 5 at $k=4$.) What is the average number of local maxima of a permutation of S, averaging over all permutations of S?

A–5 Let n be a positive odd integer and let θ be a real number such that θ/π is irrational. Set $a_k = \tan(\theta + k\pi/n)$, $k=1,2,\dots,n$. Prove that

$$\frac{a_1+a_2+\cdots+a_n}{a_1 a_2 \cdots a_n}$$

is an integer, and determine its value.

A–6 Four points are chosen uniformly and independently at random in the interior of a given circle. Find the probability that they are the vertices of a convex quadrilateral.

B–1 Show that the curve $x^3+3xy+y^3=1$ contains only one set of three distinct points, A, B, and C, which are vertices of an equilateral triangle, and find its area.

B–2 Prove that, for every set $X = \{x_1,x_2,\dots,x_n\}$ of n real numbers, there exists a non-empty subset S of X and an integer m such that

$$\left| m + \sum_{s\in S} s \right| \leq \frac{1}{n+1}.$$

B–3 Let S be a finite set of points in the plane. A linear partition of S is an unordered pair $\{A,B\}$ of subsets of S such that $A \cup B = S$, $A \cap B = \emptyset$, and A and B lie on opposite sides of some straight line disjoint from S (A or B may be empty). Let L_S be the number of linear partitions of S. For each positive integer n, find the maximum of L_S over all sets S of n points.

B–4 Let Z denote the set of points in $\mathbb{R}^n$ whose coordinates are 0 or 1. (Thus Z has 2^n elements, which are the vertices of a unit hypercube in $\mathbb{R}^n$.) Given a vector subspace V of $\mathbb{R}^n$, let $Z(V)$ denote the number of members of Z that lie in V. Let k be given, $0 \leq k \leq n$. Find the maximum, over all vector subspaces $V \subseteq \mathbb{R}^n$ of dimension k, of the number of points in $V \cap Z$. [Editorial note: the proposers probably intended to write $Z(V)$ instead of "the number of points in $V \cap Z$", but this changes nothing.]

B–5 For each continuous function $f:[0,1] \to \mathbb{R}$, let $I(f) = \int_0^1 x^2 f(x)\,dx$ and $J(x) = \int_0^1 x\,(f(x))^2\,dx$. Find the maximum value of $I(f) - J(f)$ over all such functions f.

B–6 Let k be an integer greater than 1. Suppose $a_0 > 0$, and define

$$a_{n+1} = a_n + \frac{1}{\sqrt[k]{a_n}}$$

for $n>0$. Evaluate

$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{a_n^{k+1}}{n^k}.$$