The 76th William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition
Saturday, December 5, 2015

A1 Let A and B be points on the same branch of the hyperbola $xy = 1$. Suppose that P is a point lying between A and B on this hyperbola, such that the area of the triangle APB is as large as possible. Show that the region bounded by the hyperbola and the chord AP has the same area as the region bounded by the hyperbola and the chord PB.

A2 Let $a_0 = 1$, $a_1 = 2$, and $a_n = 4a_{n-1} - a_{n-2}$ for $n \geq 2$. Find an odd prime factor of a_{2015}.

A3 Compute

$$\log_2 \left(\prod_{a=1}^{2015} \prod_{b=1}^{2015} (1 + e^{2\pi iab/2015}) \right)$$

Here i is the imaginary unit (that is, $i^2 = -1$).

A4 For each real number x, let

$$f(x) = \sum_{n \in S_x} \frac{1}{2^n},$$

where S_x is the set of positive integers n for which $\lfloor nx \rfloor$ is even. What is the largest real number L such that $f(x) \geq L$ for all $x \in [0,1)$? (As usual, $\lfloor z \rfloor$ denotes the greatest integer less than or equal to z.)

A5 Let q be an odd positive integer, and let N_q denote the number of integers a such that $0 < a < q/4$ and $\gcd(a,q) = 1$. Show that N_q is odd if and only if q is of the form p^k with k a positive integer and p a prime congruent to 5 or 7 modulo 8.

A6 Let n be a positive integer. Suppose that A, B, and M are $n \times n$ matrices with real entries such that $AM = MB$, and such that A and B have the same characteristic polynomial. Prove that $\det(A - MX) = \det(B - XM)$ for every $n \times n$ matrix X with real entries.

B1 Let f be a three times differentiable function (defined on $\mathbb{R}$ and real-valued) such that f has at least five distinct real zeros. Prove that $f + 6f' + 12f'' + 8f'''$ has at least two distinct real zeros.

B2 Given a list of the positive integers $1, 2, 3, 4, \ldots$, take the first three numbers $1, 2, 3$ and their sum 6 and cross all four numbers off the list. Repeat with the three smallest remaining numbers $4, 5, 7$ and their sum 16. Continue in this way, crossing off the three smallest remaining numbers and their sum, and consider the sequence of sums produced: $6, 16, 27, 36, \ldots$. Prove or disprove that there is some number in the sequence whose base 10 representation ends with 2015.

B3 Let S be the set of all 2×2 real matrices

$$M = \begin{pmatrix} a & b \\ c & d \end{pmatrix}$$

whose entries a, b, c, d (in that order) form an arithmetic progression. Find all matrices M in S for which there is some integer $k > 1$ such that M^k is also in S.

B4 Let T be the set of all triples (a, b, c) of positive integers for which there exist triangles with side lengths a, b, c. Express

$$\sum_{(a,b,c) \in T} \frac{2^a}{3^b 5^c}$$

as a rational number in lowest terms.

B5 Let P_n be the number of permutations π of $\{1, 2, \ldots, n\}$ such that

$$|i - j| = 1 \text{ implies } |\pi(i) - \pi(j)| \leq 2$$

for all i, j in $\{1, 2, \ldots, n\}$. Show that for $n \geq 2$, the quantity

$$P_{n+5} - P_{n+4} - P_{n+3} + P_n$$

does not depend on n, and find its value.

B6 For each positive integer k, let $A(k)$ be the number of odd divisors of k in the interval $[1, \sqrt{2k})$. Evaluate

$$\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} (-1)^{k-1} \frac{A(k)}{k}.$$