

Math Problem of the Fortnight

Stone Age Math

There is a pile of 20 stones sitting on the ledge of a chalk board. You split the pile into two parts a and b and write the product ab on the board. You repeat this with each of the remaining piles until there are 20 piles of 1 stone each along the edge of the board. What is the maximum sum of the numbers written on the board?



The Problem of the Fortnight is open to all undergraduate students, regardless of major. Submit your written solution, along with your name and e-mail address, to the Math Department office (Avery Hall 203) by 2:00 p.m. on Friday, November 6, 2009. The submitters of the best solution(s) will be given gift certificates to the Dairy Store. The best solution(s) will be posted on Monday, November 8.

The best solutions for the last Question of the Fortnight were submitted by Rob Brase and Ryan Gunderson. Their solutions are presented online and on the bulletin board outside Avery 203.

This problem can also be found online at

<http://www.math.unl.edu/~math-club/>

Disclaimer: Trivial solutions, although valid, run the risk of not being the best solution.