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PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

11/15/11 due NOON 11/28/11

CAN YOU GIVE US A SOLUTION?

Problem No. 12 (Fall 2011 Series)

Let P_i , $1 \leq i \leq n$, be n distinct points in the plane, no three of which are in a straight line. Let $n \geq 3$. Prove that the shortest closed curve which goes through all of these points is a simple polygon, meaning a finite union of edges connected end to end, with each edge sharing each of its endpoints with exactly one other edge, and no other intersections of edges.

A panel in the Mathematics Department publishes a challenging problem once a week and invites college & pre-college students, faculty, and staff to submit solutions. The objective of this is to stimulate and cultivate interest in good mathematics, especially among younger students. Solutions are due within two weeks from the date of publication. They can be faxed to (765) 494-0548 or sent by campus or U.S. mail (no E-mail please) to:

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK, **5th Floor**, Math Sciences Bldg., Purdue Univ.,
150 North University St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2067

Solvers should include their name, address, and **status at the University or school**.

The names of those who submitted correct solutions will be posted in the Math. Library, along with the best solution. Every Purdue student who submits three or more correct solutions will receive a Certificate of Merit. A prize fund of \$300.00 will be distributed among the Purdue undergraduates who have contributed at least six correct solutions for the total Fall 2011 series.