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# PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

11/18/14 due NOON 12/1/14

CAN YOU GIVE US A SOLUTION?

## Problem No. 12 (Fall 2014 Series)

If a set of real numbers is the union of a finite number of disjoint open intervals its measure is the sum of the lengths of these intervals. Find a sequence of subsets of  $(0,1)$ , each the union of a finite number of disjoint open intervals, and each having measure at least  $1/2$ , such that the measure of the intersection of any  $n$  of these sets does not exceed  $1/n$ .

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.

Solutions can be emailed only as a pdf attachment to: [sfchang@purdue.edu](mailto:sfchang@purdue.edu). Solutions can also be faxed to 765-496-3177 or sent by campus or U.S. mail to:

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK, **6th Floor**, Math Sciences Bldg., Purdue Univ.,  
150 North University St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2067

Please include your name, address and **status at your university or school** on your problem solutions.

The names of those who submitted correct solutions will be posted on the Problem of the Week website and 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 those Purdue undergraduates who have contributed at least six correct solutions for the thirteen problems in the Fall 2014 series.