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# PROBLEM OF THE WEEK

1/30/01 due NOON 2/13/01

CAN YOU GIVE US A SOLUTION?

## Problem No. 4 (Spring 2001 Series)

Suppose  $f$  is a polynomial in  $n$  variables, of degree  $\leq n - 1$  ( $n = 2, 3, \dots$ ). Prove the identity

$$\sum (-1)^{\epsilon_1 + \epsilon_2 + \dots + \epsilon_n} f(\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_n) = 0,$$

where  $\epsilon_i$  is either 1 or 0 and the sum is over all of the  $2^n$  combinations.

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 and should be sent by campus or U.S. mail to:

PROBLEM OF THE WEEK, **8th Floor**, Math Sciences Bldg., Purdue Univ.,  
West Lafayette, IN 47907

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 \$150.00 will be distributed among the Purdue undergraduates who have contributed at least six correct solutions for the total spring 2001 series.