

Solutions to Monthly Problems 11456 and 11457

David H. Bailey* Jonathan M. Borwein†

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The *Monthly* problem #11456 [1] asks to evaluate

$$\alpha = \lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} n \prod_{m=1}^n \left(1 - \frac{1}{m} + \frac{5}{4m^2} \right).$$

Numerical computations, using, say, $n = 10^9$, yields the numerical value 3.6898333... Using this value as input to the Inverse Symbolic Calculator 2.0 tool (available at <http://glooscap.cs.dal.ca:8087>, one of the output results is the tantalizingly simple expression

$$\alpha \stackrel{?}{=} \frac{e^\pi + e^{-\pi}}{2\pi}.$$

Indeed, this result can be established directly by typing the *Maple* command

```
n * product (1 - 1/m + 5/(4*m^2), m = 1..n);
```

which yields the expression

$$\frac{n\Gamma(n + 1/2 - i)\Gamma(n + 1/2 + i)}{\Gamma^2(n + 1)\Gamma(1/2 - i)\Gamma(1/2 + i)}.$$

After typing `limit(%,n=infinity);` this reduces to

$$\frac{1}{\Gamma(1/2 - i)\Gamma(1/2 + i)}$$

which, after `simplify(%)`, yields the final result:

$$\frac{\cosh \pi}{\pi}.$$

*Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA 94720, dhbailey@lbl.gov. Supported in part by the Director, Office of Computational and Technology Research, Division of Mathematical, Information, and Computational Sciences of the U.S. Department of Energy, under contract number DE-AC02-05CH11231.

†School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Australia, jonathan.borwein@newcastle.edu.au. Supported in part by the Australian Research Council.

The *Monthly* problem #11457 [2] asks to evaluate

$$F(a, b) = \int_a^b \arccos\left(\frac{x}{\sqrt{(a+b)x - ab}}\right) dx$$

Here again, computer experimentation (using either *Mathematica* or *Maple*) yields a number of specific results:

$$\begin{aligned} F[0, b] &= b\pi/4 && \text{for } b \geq 0, \\ F[1, b] &= \frac{(b-1)^2\pi}{4(b+1)} && \text{for } b \geq 1, \\ F[2, b] &= \frac{(b-2)^2\pi}{4(b+2)} && \text{for } b \geq 2, \\ F[3, b] &= \frac{(b-3)^2\pi}{4(b+3)} && \text{for } b \geq 3, \end{aligned}$$

which quickly suggest the “obvious” answer:

$$F[a, b] \stackrel{?}{=} \frac{(a-b)^2\pi}{4(a+b)}$$

This result can be established directly by the *Maple* command

```
factor(int(arccos(x/sqrt((a+b)*x - a*b)), x=a..b)) assuming a>0, a<b;
```

References

- [1] Raymond Mortini, “Problem 11456,” *American Mathematical Monthly*, vol. 116, no. 8 (Oct 2009), pg. 747.
- [2] M. L. Glasser, “Problem 11457,” *American Mathematical Monthly*, vol. 116, no. 8 (Oct 2009), pg. 747.