1 Problems

Putnam 1988/B4. Prove that if $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} a_n$ is a convergent series of positive real numbers, then so is $\sum_{n=1}^{\infty} (a_n)^{n/(n+1)}$.

Putnam 1988/B5. For positive integers $n$, let $M_n$ be the $2n + 1$ by $2n + 1$ skew-symmetric matrix for which each entry in the first $n$ subdiagonals below the main diagonal is 1 and each of the remaining entries below the main diagonal is -1. Find, with proof, the rank of $M_n$. (According to one definition, the rank of a matrix is the largest $k$ such that there is a $k \times k$ submatrix with nonzero determinant.) One may note that

$M_1 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

$M_2 = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -1 & -1 & 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 & 0 & -1 & -1 \\ -1 & 1 & 1 & 0 & -1 \\ -1 & -1 & 1 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$

Putnam 1988/B6. Prove that there exist an infinite number of ordered pairs $(a, b)$ of integers such that for every positive integer $t$, the number $at + b$ is a triangular number if and only if $t$ is a triangular number. (The triangular numbers are the $t_n = n(n+1)/2$ with $n$ in $\{0, 1, 2, \ldots\}$.)