

Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455
October 14, 1968

TO: All those attending the Section Officers Meeting in Madison

FROM: Arnold Wendt, chairman, Illinois Section

It should be of interest to those who are concerned about the effectiveness of the MAA Contest in determining who has mathematical talent that two of the top five contestants in the 1967 national Putman Competition are former first place winners in the Illinois Section MAA contest. They are Dennis Hejhal and Richard Schroepel. See page 732 of the Aug.-Sept., 1968, MONTHLY.

Someone at the Section Officers Meeting wanted to know why the Illinois Section can make money on the MAA Contest while some other sections would prefer to raise the fees. I have talked to our contest chairman for the past few years, Walter McCurdy of Bradley University, a private institution. He informed me that except for the typing of address labels in triplicate by the Continental Insurance Company in Chicago, the contest has not been subsidized. All sections charging the fees set by the National Committee--and none charge less to my knowledge--sell the contest booklets and awards for a little more than they pay for them, assuming the section does its own mailing. The mailing of the thousands--23,541 booklets to 344 schools in 1968--has been accomplished by Mr. and Mrs. McCurdy for the sum of \$200. And I am sure that an analysis of the financial reports of other contests of sections will show that this secretarial cost is very low. From one point of view this cheap labor is a subsidation of the contest. Next year we will have a new chairman for the contest committee, and he may not be able to arrange for such cheap labor. After donating \$150 to the National Contest Committee, the Illinois Section Contest showed a profit of \$440.

We publish no fancy, printed summary. Our report and a minimal statistical analysis are mimeographed. Nor do we have the expense of conducting a follow-up competition, as some sections have.

Anyone desiring a copy of the complete financial report of the contest may contact me. These financial reports are also on file with the National Committee.