

THE MONTHLY PROBLEM NO. 11274.

MOGENS ESROM LARSEN
MARCH 27, 2007

Institut for Matematiske Fag
Københavns Universitet

In Monthly 114,2 page 165 Donald Knuth, Stanford, asks for a proof of the identity

$$S = \sum_{k=0}^m 2^k \binom{2m-k}{m+n} = 4^m - \sum_{j=1}^n \binom{2m+1}{m+j}$$

Partial summation of the left side summed backwards and omitting zeros yield

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{k=n}^m 2^{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+n} &= -\binom{2m+1}{m+n} + 2^{m-n+1} + \sum_{k=n}^m 2^{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+n-1} = \\ &= \sum_{k=n-1}^m 2^{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+n-1} - \binom{2m+1}{m+n} \end{aligned}$$

As the left side for $n = m$ gives 1, we get

$$\begin{aligned} \sum_{k=n}^m 2^{m-k} \binom{m+k}{m+n} &= 1 + \sum_{j=n+1}^m \binom{2m+1}{m+j} = \sum_{j=n+1}^{m+1} \binom{2m+1}{m+j} = \\ &= \sum_{j=1}^{m+1} \binom{2m+1}{m+j} - \sum_{j=1}^n \binom{2m+1}{m+j} = \frac{1}{2} 2^{2m+1} - \sum_{j=1}^n \binom{2m+1}{m+j} \end{aligned}$$

by the (half of) the binomial formula.