

1125-97-1

Arsalan Wares* (awares@valdosta.edu). *A Twist on an Old Mathematical Puzzle.*

The emphasis on problem solving has always been a hallmark of a reformed mathematics classroom. However, it is not always easy for teachers to find problems that are challenging enough that their students can persevere in solving. Traditional textbooks are full of bite-size problems- that would be more accurately called “tasks.” Rich mathematical problems are still rare in US contemporary textbooks of mathematics. It is always a challenge for teachers to find mathematical problems that absolutely refuse to leave one’s head.

The purpose of this talk is to introduce and discuss a large-scale mathematical problem in the area of number theory. The problem that we will discuss was inspired by a well-known problem commonly known as the Monkey and the Coconuts problem. Martin Gardner, the American puzzle enthusiast, described the Monkey and the Coconuts problem as “the most tried and least solved problem in the world.” (p. 3, Gardner, 2001). The problem discussed in this talk is like (but not parallel to) the Monkey and the Coconuts problem. Knowledge of high-school mathematics can be employed to solve the problem.

Gardner, M. (2001). *The Colossal Book of Mathematics: Classic Puzzles, Paradoxes, and Problems.* New York : W. W. Norton & Company. (Received April 12, 2016)