

1014-01-136

John F. Bukowski* (bukowski@juniata.edu), Department of Mathematics, Juniata College, 1700 Moore Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652. *Christiaan Huygens and the Problem of the Hanging Chain*. Preliminary report.

In the early seventeenth century, it was thought that a hanging chain took the form of a parabola. In a series of letters with the French monk Marin Mersenne, the 17-year-old Christiaan Huygens showed that the chain did not in fact hang as a parabola. We will discuss some of Huygens's geometrical arguments in detail, as well as the century-long history of the problem. (Received August 01, 2005)