CLOSED FORMULA FOR POLY-BERNOULLI NUMBERS

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(Submitted August 2000-Final Revision April 2001)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the present note we shall give two proofs of a property of the poly-Bernoulli numbers, the closed formula for negative index poly-Bernoulli numbers given by Arakawa and Kaneko [1]. The first proof uses weighted Stirling numbers of the second kind (see [2], [3]). The second, much simpler, proof is due to Zeilberger.

In Kaneko's paper, "On Poly-Bernoulli Numbers" [5], the poly-Bernoulli numbers, which generalize the classical Bernoulli numbers, are defined and studied. For every integer k, called the index, we define a sequence of rational numbers B_n^k $(n = 0, 1, 2, \ldots)$, which we refer to as poly-Bernoulli numbers, by

$$\frac{1}{z}\mathrm{Li}_k(z)\big|_{z=1-e^{-x}} = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \mathrm{B}_n^k \frac{x^n}{n!}. \tag{1}$$

Here, for any integer k, $\mathrm{Li}_k(z)$ denotes the formal power series $\sum_{m=1}^{\infty} z^m / m^k$, which is the k^{th} polylogarithm if $k \geq 1$ and a rational function if $k \leq 0$. When $k = 1$, B_n^1 is the usual Bernoulli number (with $\mathrm{B}_1^1 = 1/2$). In [4] Kaneko obtained an explicit formula for B_n^k:

$$\mathrm{B}_n^k = (-1)^n \sum_{m=0}^{n} \frac{(-1)^m m!}{(m+1)^k} \left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}, \tag{2}$$

where $\left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}$ is an integer referred to as a Stirling number of the second kind [6].

2. CLOSED FORMULA

Theorem 2.1 (Closed Formula): For any $n, k \geq 0$, we have

$$\mathrm{B}_n^{-k} = \sum_{j=0} (j!)^2 \left\{ {n+1 \atop j+1} \right\} \left\{ {k+1 \atop j+1} \right\}. \tag{3}$$

We need two lemmas. We use the notation and numeration of the equations in Carlitz's paper [3].

Lemma 2.1:

$$\sum_{m=0}^{n} (-1)^m m! \binom{m}{\ell} \left\{ {n \atop m} \right\} = (-1)^n \ell! \left\{ {n+1 \atop \ell+1} \right\} = (-1)^n \ell! \,\mathrm{R}(n, \ell, 1), \tag{4}$$

where

$$\mathrm{R}(n, k, \lambda) = \sum_{m=0}^{n-k} \binom{n}{m} \left\{ {n-m \atop k} \right\} \lambda^m.$$

Proof: In order to prove this lemma, we calculate the generating function:

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \sum_{m=0}^{n} (-1)^m m! \binom{m}{\ell} \left\{ {n \atop m} \right\} \frac{z^n}{n!} = \sum_{m=0}^{\infty} (-1)^m \binom{m}{\ell} m! \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left\{ {n \atop m} \right\} \frac{z^n}{n!}$$

$$= \sum_{m=0}^{\infty}(-1)^m \binom{m}{\ell} m! \frac{(e^z-1)^m}{m!} = \frac{(1-e^z)^\ell}{(1-(1-e^z))^{\ell+1}}, \text{ by the generalized binomial theorem,}$$

$$= e^{-z}(e^{-z}-1)^\ell = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \ell!\,\mathrm{R}(n,\ell,1)(-1)^n \frac{z^n}{n!}, \quad \text{by [3], (3.9).}$$

Lemma 2.2:

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \mathrm{B}_n^{-k} x^n y^k = \sum_{j=0}^{\infty} p_j(x) p_j(y) \tag{5}$$

where $p_j(x) = j!\sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\mathrm{R}(n,j,1)x^n$.

Proof: By (2), we have

$$\sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\sum_{k=0}^{\infty} \mathrm{B}_n^{-k} x^n y^k = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{m=0}^{\infty}\left((-1)^n(-1)^m m! \left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}(m+1)^k\right)x^n y^k, \text{ by [3], (3.4),}$$

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}\sum_{m=0}^{\infty}\sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \ell!\binom{m}{\ell}\mathrm{R}(k,\ell,1)\left((-1)^n(-1)^m m!\left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}\right)x^n y^k$$

$$= \sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\sum_{m=0}^{\infty}\sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} \ell!\binom{m}{\ell}\left((-1)^n(-1)^m m!\left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}\right)\frac{p_\ell(y)}{\ell!}x^n$$

$$= \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty}\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} p_\ell(y)(-1)^n \sum_{m=0}^{\infty}\binom{m}{\ell}(-1)^m m!\left\{ {n \atop m} \right\}x^n, \text{ by Lemma 2.1,}$$

$$= \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty}\sum_{n=0}^{\infty} p_\ell(y)(-1)^n(-1)^n \ell!\,\mathrm{R}(n,\ell,1)\,x^n = \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} p_\ell(y)\ell!\sum_{n=0}^{\infty}\mathrm{R}(n,\ell,1)\,x^n = \sum_{\ell=0}^{\infty} p_\ell(x)p_\ell(y).$$

Proof of (3): To prove (3), we compare the coefficients on both sides of (5). In the course of Arakawa and Kaneko's proof they prove the following proposition.

Proposition 2.1: For $n > 0$,

$$\sum_{\ell=0}^{n}(-1)^\ell \mathrm{B}_{n-\ell}^{-\ell} = 0.$$

Proof: We offer a more direct proof:

$$\sum_{\ell=0}^{n}(-1)^\ell \mathrm{B}_{n-\ell}^{-\ell} = \sum_{\ell=0}^{n}(-1)^\ell(-1)^{n-\ell}\sum_{m=0}^{n-\ell}(-1)^m m!(m+1)^\ell \left\{ {n-\ell \atop m} \right\}$$

$$= (-1)^n \sum_{m=0}^{n}\sum_{\ell=0}^{n}(-1)^m m!(m+1)^\ell \left\{ {n-\ell \atop m} \right\}, \text{ by [4], (6.20),}$$

$$= (-1)^n \sum_{m=0}^{n}(-1)^m m!\left\{ {n+1 \atop m+1} \right\} = (-1)^n \delta_{1\,n+1} = 0.$$

3. ANOTHER PROOF

In Kaneko's paper [4], he obtained the *symmetric* formula:

$$\sum_{k\ge 0}\sum_{n\ge 0} \mathrm{B}_n^{-k}\frac{x^n}{n!}\frac{y^k}{k!} = \frac{e^{x+y}}{e^x+e^y-e^{x+y}}. \tag{6}$$

By using (6), D. Zeilberger gives a much simpler proof of (3) as follows:

$$\sum_{k\geq 0}\sum_{n\geq 0} B_n^{-k}\frac{x^n}{n!}\frac{y^k}{k!} = \frac{e^{x+y}}{e^x+e^y-e^{x+y}} = e^{x+y}\sum_{j\geq 0}(1-e^x)^j(1-e^y)^j$$
$$= \sum_{j\geq 0}\frac{1}{(1+j)^2}(j+1)(1-e^x)^j(-e^x)(j+1)(1-e^y)^j(-e^y)$$
$$= \sum_{j\geq 0}\frac{1}{(j+1)^2}D_x[(1-e^x)^{j+1}]D_y[(1-e^y)^{j+1}].$$

Now using the usual generating function for the Stirling numbers of the second kind $\left\{ {n \atop k} \right\}$, i.e.,

$$\sum_{n\geq k}\left\{ {n \atop k} \right\}\frac{u^n}{n!} = \frac{(e^u-1)^k}{k!},$$

he obtains:

$$\sum_{n\geq 0}\sum_{k\geq 0} B_n^{-k}\frac{x^n}{n!}\frac{y^k}{k!} = \sum_{j\geq 0}\frac{1}{(j+1)^2}D_x\left[(-1)^{j+1}(j+1)!\sum_{n\geq j+1}\left\{ {n \atop j+1} \right\}\frac{x^n}{n!}\right]$$
$$\times D_y\left[(-1)^{j+1}(j+1)!\sum_{k\geq j+1}\left\{ {k \atop j+1} \right\}\frac{y^k}{k!}\right]$$
$$= \sum_{j\geq 0} j!^2\sum_{n\geq j}\left\{ {n+1 \atop j+1} \right\}\frac{x^n}{n!}\sum_{k\geq j}\left\{ {k+1 \atop j+1} \right\}\frac{y^k}{k!}$$
$$= \sum_{n\geq 0}\sum_{k\geq 0}\frac{x^n}{n!}\frac{y^k}{k!}\sum_{j\geq 0} j!^2\left\{ {n+1 \atop j+1} \right\}\left\{ {k+1 \atop j+1} \right\}.$$

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author expresses his gratitude to D. Zeilberger for advising and permitting him to include the proof in this paper and he is very grateful to the anonymous referee for useful comments.

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AMS Classification Numbers: 11A07, 11B73

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