PROOFS OF THREE GEODE CONJECTURES

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Abstract. In the May 2025 issue of the Amer. Math. Monthly, Norman J. Wildberger and Dean Rubine intoduced a new kind of multi-indexed numbers, that they call 'Geode numbers', obtained from the hyper-Catalan numbers. They posed three intriguing conjectures about them, that are proved in this note.

1. Introduction

In a recent captivating Monthly article [2], by Norman J. Wildberger and Deane Rubine, the authors utilize a generating series to solve the general univariate polynomial equation. They also explored a "curious factorization" of this hyper-Catalan generating series, and in the penultimate section, they made three conjectures about this algebraic object that they termed the *Geode array*.

In this note, we prove these three conjectures. At least as interesting as the actual statements of the conjectures (now theorems) is *how we proved them*, using several important *tools of the trade*.

The first tool is the *multinomial theorem*

$$(x_1 + \cdots + x_r)^n = \sum_{\substack{m_1,\ldots m_r \geq 0 \\ m_1+\cdots+m_r=n}} \binom{n}{m_1,\ldots,m_r} x_1^{m_1} \cdots x_r^{m_r}. \tag{1.1}$$

The second tool is *constant-term extraction*, the third is *Wilf-Zeilberger (WZ) algorithmic proof theory*[3] and the last-but-not-least tool is *Lagrange Inversion* [4] that states that: *if $u(t)$ and $\Phi(t)$ are formal Laurent series starting at t^1 and t^0, respectively, then $u(t) = t\Phi(u(t))$ implies*

$$[t^n]u(t) = \frac{1}{n}[z^{n-1}]\Phi(z)^n. \tag{1.2}$$

Here $[z^n]F(z)$ means the coefficient of z^n is the Laurent expansion of $F(z)$. We shall use the notation $\boldsymbol{CT}_z F(z)$ for the constant-term of $F(z)$.

We now bring in the relevant notation adopted in [2] with a caveat that indices are shifted slightly. Consider the equation $0 = 1 - \alpha + \sum_{k\geq 1} t_k \alpha^{k+1}$

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and denote its series solution by $\alpha = \boldsymbol{S}[t_1, t_2, \dots]$. Letting $\boldsymbol{S}_1 = t_1 + t_2 + \cdots$, Wildberger-Rubine proved [2, Theorem 12] the existence of a (remarkable!) factorization $\boldsymbol{S} - 1 = \boldsymbol{S}_1 \boldsymbol{G}$ and the factor $\boldsymbol{G}[t_1, t_2, \dots]$ (that they dubbed the *Geode series*). Furthermore, we opt to use $G[m_1, m_2, \dots]$ for the coefficient of $t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} \cdots$ in the polyseries $\boldsymbol{G}[t_1, t_2, \dots]$. We are now ready to state and prove the three conjectures from [2, p. 399]. For the sake of clarity, let's describe the first of these in some detail.

Suppose we are solving the polynomial equation $0 = 1 - \alpha + t_1\alpha^2 + t_2\alpha^3$ through the formal power series

$$\alpha = \boldsymbol{S}[t_1, t_2] = \sum_{m_1, m_2 \geq 0} C[m_1, m_2]\, t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2}.$$

Consequently, the corresponding Geode series becomes $\boldsymbol{G}[t_1, t_2] = \frac{\boldsymbol{S}[t_1,t_2]-1}{t_1+t_2}$. We follow closely [4] to engage the LagrangeInversion in the extraction of the coefficients $C[m_1, m_2]$ satisfying $n = m_1 + m_2$. Then, the amalgamation of such monomials is given by (1.2) in the form of

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{m_1+m_2=n} C[m_1, m_2]\, t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} &= [Y^n]\left(\sum_{k=1}^{3n+1} \frac{1}{k}\,[z^{k-1}]\left(1 + Yt_1z^2 + Yt_2z^3\right)^k\right) \\
&= [Y^n] \sum_{m_1, m_2 \geq 0} \frac{\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2}{m_1, m_2, 1+m_1+2m_2}}{1 + 2m_1 + 3m_2} Y^{m_1+m_2} t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} \\
&= \sum_{\substack{m_1, m_2 \geq 0 \\ m_1+m_2=n}} \frac{\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2}{m_1, m_2, 1+m_1+2m_2}}{1 + 2m_1 + 3m_2} t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} \\
&= \sum_{m_2=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{1+2n+m_2}{n-m_2, m_2, 1+n+m_2}}{1 + 2n + m_2} t_1^{n-m_2} t_2^{m_2} \\
&= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{2n+1+k}{n+1+k}}{2n + 1 + k} t_1^{n-k} t_1^{k}.
\end{aligned}$$

For example, the following reveal both coefficients $C[m_1, m_2]$ and $G[m_1, m_2]$:

$$\begin{aligned}
\sum_{m_1+m_2=3} C[m_1, m_2]\, t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} &= (t_1 + t_2)(5t_1^2 + 16t_1t_2 + 12t_2^2), \\
\sum_{m_1+m_2=4} C[m_1, m_2]\, t_1^{m_1} t_2^{m_2} &= (t_1 + t_2)(14t_1^3 + 70t_1^2t_2 + 110t_1t_2^2 + 55t_2^3).
\end{aligned}$$

As a first step, we reprove that the linear term $t_2 + t_3$ divides the polynomial

$$P_n(t_1, t_2) := \sum_{k=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{2n+1+k}{n+1+k}}{2n + 1 + k} t_1^{n-k} t_2^{k}.$$

This is equivalent to proving that $P_n(-t_2, t_2) = 0$, which, in turn, is equivalent to the following identity:

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n}(-1)^k \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{2n+1+k}{n+1+k}}{2n+1+k} = 0.$$

To continue, we invoke the role of the WZ method. Define the functions $F(n,k) := (-1)^k \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{2n+1+k}{n+1+k}}{2n+1+k}$ and also $H(n,k) := -F(n,k) \cdot \frac{k(n+1+k)}{n(2n+1)}$ to verify $F(n,k) = H(n,k+1) - H(n,k)$. The rest is routine [3].

Our next step will actually find $G[m_1, m_2]$. For that we perform the division $\frac{P_n(t_1,t_2)}{t_1+t_2}$ to obtain (algebraically) that

$$\begin{aligned}
[t_1^{n-1-i}t_2^i]\left(\frac{P_n(t_1,t_2)}{t_1+t_2}\right) &= \sum_{j=0}^{i}(-1)^{i-j}\frac{\binom{n}{j}\binom{2n+1+j}{n+1+j}}{2n+1+j} \\
&= (-1)^i[H(n,i+1) - H(n,0)] \\
&= (-1)^i H(n,i+1) \\
&= \frac{1}{2n+1}\binom{n-1}{i}\binom{2n+1+i}{n+1+i}
\end{aligned}$$

which leads to (an equivalent form of) the first conjecture [2] on $G[m_1, m_2]$. To wit:

Theorem 1.1. *For non-negative integers m_1 and m_2, we have*

$$G[m_1,m_2] = \frac{1}{(2m_1+2m_2+3)(m_1+m_2+1)}\frac{(2m_1+3m_2+3)!}{(m_1+2m_2+2)!m_1!m_2!}.$$

2. On the second conjecture

Now that the reader, hopefully, is getting accustomed to our proof-procedure as depicted in Section 1, let's move on to next conjecture [2, p. 399] which does generalize the one we just finished proving. For brevity, denote $\widetilde{G} = \widetilde{G}[m_a, m_{a+1}] = G[0,0,\ldots,m_a,m_{a+1}]$. Again, we revive the Lagrange Inversion (1.2). Suppose $n = m_a + m_{a+1}$. Then the total content of such

monomials is encapsulated by

$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{m_a+m_{a+1}=n} \widetilde{G}\, t_a^{m_2} t_{a+1}^{m_3} &= \frac{[Y^n]}{t_a+t_{a+1}} \sum_{k=1}^{(a+1)n+1} \frac{1}{k}\,[z^{k-1}]\left(1+Yt_a z^a + Yt_{a+1}z^{a+1}\right)^k \\ &= \frac{[Y^n]}{t_a+t_{a+1}} \sum_{m_a,m_{a+1}\ge 0} \frac{\binom{1+am_a+(a+1)m_{a+1}}{m_a,m_{a+1},1+(a-1)m_a+am_{a+1}} Y^{m_a+m_{a+1}} t_a^{m_a} t_{a+1}^{m_{a+1}}}{1+am_a+(a+1)m_{a+1}} \\ &= \sum_{\substack{m_a,m_{a+1}\ge 0\\ m_a+m_{a+1}=n}} \frac{\binom{1+am_a+(a+1)m_{a+1}}{m_a,m_{a+1},1+(a-1)m_a+am_{a+1}}}{1+am_a+(a+1)m_{a+1}} \frac{t_a^{m_a} t_{a+1}^{m_{a+1}}}{t_a+t_{a+1}} \\ &= \sum_{m_{a+1}=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{1+an+m_{a+1}}{n-m_{a+1},m_{a+1},1+(a-1)n+m_3}}{1+an+m_{a+1}} \frac{t_a^{n-m_{a+1}} t_{a+1}^{m_{a+1}}}{t_a+t_{a+1}} \\ &= \sum_{k=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{an+1+k}{(a-1)n+1+k}}{an+1+k} \frac{t_a^{n-k} t_{a+1}^{k}}{t_a+t_{a+1}}.\end{aligned}$$

As a first step, we justify that the linear term t_a+t_{a+1} divides the polynomial

$$P_n(t_a,t_{a+1}) := \sum_{k=0}^{n} \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{an+1+k}{(a-1)n+1+k}}{an+1+k} t_a^{n-k} t_{a+1}^{k}.$$

This is tantamount to $P_n(-t_{a+1},t_{a+1})=0$ which is equivalent to the identity that

$$\sum_{k=0}^{n} (-1)^k \frac{\binom{n}{k}\binom{an+1+k}{(a-1)n+1+k}}{an+1+k} = 0.$$

Again, apply the Wilf-Zeilberger approach with $F(n,k) := \frac{(-1)^k\binom{n}{k}\binom{an+1+k}{(a-1)n+1+k}}{an+1+k}$ and $H(n,k) := -F(n,k)\cdot\frac{k((a-1)n+1+k)}{n(an+1)}$ to verify $F(n,k)=H(n,k+1)-H(n,k)$. The rest is trivial.

Our next step will actually determine $\widetilde{G}[m_a,m_{a+1}]$. To this effect, let's divide $\frac{P_n(t_a,t_{a+1})}{t_a+t_{a+1}}$ to obtain (routinely) that

$$\begin{aligned}[t_a^{n-1-i}t_{a+1}^{i}]\left(\frac{P_n(t_a,t_{a+1})}{t_a+t_{a+1}}\right) &= \sum_{j=0}^{i} (-1)^{i-j} \frac{\binom{n}{j}\binom{an+1+j}{(a-1)n+1+j}}{an+1+j} \\ &= (-1)^i[H(n,i+1)-H(n,0)] = (-1)^i H(n,i+1) \\ &= \frac{1}{an+1}\binom{n-1}{i}\binom{an+1+i}{(a-1)n+1+i}\end{aligned}$$

which proves the desired conjecture on $\widetilde{G}[m_a,m_{a+1}]$. To wit:

Theorem 2.1. *Denote $m = m_a + m_{a+1}$. For integers $m_a, m_{a+1} \geq 0$ there holds*

$$\widetilde{G}[m_a, m_{a+1}] = \frac{(am_a + (a+1)(m_{a+1}+1))!}{(a(m+1)+1)(m+1)((a-1)m_a + a(m_{a+1}+1))!m_a!m_{a+1}!}.$$

3. On the third conjecture

The proof of the last conjecture [2, p. 399] is a bit more complicated.

Theorem 3.1. *For the $2a$-variate case, we have*

$$\boldsymbol{G}[-f, f, \ldots, -f, f] = \sum_n a^n f^n.$$

Proof. To begin, we make a slight alteration by writing $(-1)^i t_i$ instead of the customary plain t_i [2]. Thanks to the Lagrange Inversion (1.2), we have

$$[Y^n]\left(\sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{k}[z^{k-1}]\left(1 - Yt_1z^2 + Yt_2z^3 - \cdots - Yft_{2a-1}z^{2a} + Yt_{2a}z^{2a+1}\right)^k\right)$$

$$= [Y^n] \sum_{m_1,\ldots,m_{2a}\geq 0} \frac{(-1)^{m_1+\cdots+m_{2a-1}}\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}{m_1,m_2,\ldots,m_{2a},1+m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}}(Yt_1)^{m_1}\cdots(Yt_{2a})^{m_{2a}}}{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}$$

$$= \sum_{\substack{m_1,\ldots,m_{2a}\geq 0 \\ m_1+\cdots+m_{2a}=n}} \frac{(-1)^{m_1+\cdots+m_{2a-1}}\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}{m_1,m_2,\ldots,m_{2a},1+m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}} t_1^{m_1}\cdots t_{2a}^{m_{2a}}}{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}.$$

First, consider the case $a = 1$ and refer back to Theorem 1.1 (and its proof), to gather that if $t_1 = -f$ and $t_2 = f$ then, as expected, we arrive at

$$f^{n-1}\sum_{m=0}^{n-1} \frac{(-1)^{n-1-m}}{2n+1}\binom{n-1}{m}\binom{2n+1+m}{n+1+m} = f^{n-1}$$

as justified by the *WZ-certificate* [3] given by

$$R(n,m) := \frac{m(8mn + 10n^2 + 6m + 15n + 6)}{2(2n+3)(n+1)(n-m)}.$$

Second, we go back to study the above-posed calculations when $a > 1$. To set the stage, substitute $t_1 = t_2 = \cdots = t_{2a-1} = f$ while leaving out t_{2a} as an indeterminate. The outcome takes the form

$$\sum_{\substack{m_1,\ldots,m_{2a}\geq 0 \\ m_1+\cdots+m_{2a}=n}} \frac{(-1)^{m_1+m_3+\cdots+m_{2a-1}}\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}{m_1,m_2,\ldots,m_{2a},1+m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}} f^{n-m_{2a}} t_{2a}^{m_{2a}}}{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}.$$

At this point, divide out the current polynomial (in t_{2a}) by the linear factor

$$-t_1 + t_2 - \cdots - t_{2a-3} + t_{2a-1} - t_{2a-1} + t_{2a} = t_{2a} - f$$

and then replace t_{2a} by f. That leads to the sum

$$f^{n-1}\sum_{i=0}^{n-1}\sum_{m_{2a}=0}^{i}\sum_{\substack{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}\ge 0\\ m_1+\cdots+m_{2a}=n}}\frac{(-1)^{1+m_1+m_3+\cdots+m_{2a-1}}\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}{m_1,m_2,\dots,m_{2a},1+m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}}}{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}.$$

Therefore, our main task that remains is to prove the identity declared by

$$\sum_{i=0}^{n-1}\sum_{\substack{m_1,\dots,m_{2a-1}\ge 0\\ m_1+\cdots+m_{2a}=n\\ 0\le m_{2a}\le i}}\frac{(-1)^{1+m_1+m_3+\cdots+m_{2a-1}}\binom{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}{m_1,m_2,\dots,m_{2a},1+m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}}}{1+2m_1+3m_2+\cdots+(2a+1)m_{2a}}.=a^{n-1}.$$

To put this more succinctly, introduce some notation. Let $\mathcal{P}$ denote the set of all integer partitions λ, written as $\lambda=(\lambda_1,\lambda_2,\dots)$ or $\lambda=1^{m_1}2^{m_2}\dots(2a)^{m_{2a}}$. The size of λ is denoted by $|\lambda|=\lambda_1+\lambda_2+\cdots=m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}$ while we use $\ell(\lambda)=m_1+m_2+\cdots+m_{2a}$ for the length of the partition. So, the claim stands at

$$\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}}(-1)^{1+|\lambda|}\cdot\frac{(n-m_{2a})\binom{n}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+1}{|\lambda|+1}}{|\lambda|+n+1}=a^{n-1}. \tag{3.1}$$

We find it more convenient to split up this assertion into two separate claims

$$(-1)^1\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}}(-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n}{|\lambda|+1}=0, \tag{3.2}$$

$$\sum_{\substack{\mu\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\mu)=n-1\\ \mu_1\le 2a}}(-1)^{|\mu|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\mu|+2a+n}{|\mu|+2a+1}=a^{n-1}. \tag{3.3}$$

One arrives at (3.2) due to $\frac{n\binom{|\lambda+n+1}{|\lambda|+1}}{|\lambda+n+1}=\binom{|\lambda+n}{|\lambda|+1}$ and (3.3) arises because of $m_{2a}\binom{n}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\frac{(|\lambda+n)!}{(|\lambda+1)!n!}=\binom{n-1}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}-1}\binom{|\lambda|+n}{|\lambda|+1}$ and then we reindex $m'_{2a}=m_{2a}-1$ to convert $|\lambda|=|\mu|+2a$ where $\ell(\mu)=n-1$.

In fact, let's generalize (3.2) and (3.3) by introducing an extra parameter x.

Claim 1: For positive integers n,a and an indeterminate x, we have

$$\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}}(-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1}=0.$$

Claim 2: For positive integers n, a and an indeterminate x, we have

$$\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n-1\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\ldots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1} = a^{n-1}.$$

Claim 2 implies Claim 1: We apply the multinomial recurrence (assume $n = k_1 + \cdots + k_r$)

$$\binom{n}{k_1,\ldots,k_r} = \binom{n-1}{k_1-1,\ldots,k_r} + \cdots + \binom{n-1}{k_1,\ldots,k_r-1} \tag{3.4}$$

followed by appropriate reindexing so that

$$\begin{aligned}
&\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n}{m_1,\ldots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1}\\
&=\sum_{i=1}^{2a}\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\ldots,m_i-1,\ldots m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1}\\
&=\sum_{i=1}^{2a}\sum_{\substack{\mu\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\mu)=n-1\\ \mu_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\mu|+i}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\ldots,m_i',\ldots m_{2a}}\binom{|\mu|+n+(x+i)}{n-1}\\
&=\sum_{i=1}^{2a}(-1)^i\sum_{\substack{\mu\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\mu)=n-1\\ \mu_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\mu|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\ldots,m_i',\ldots m_{2a}}\binom{|\mu|+n+(x+i)}{n-1}\\
&=a^{n-1}\sum_{i=1}^{2a}(-1)^i\\
&=0.
\end{aligned}$$

Proof of Claim 2: Let's now utilize the multinomial theorem (1.1) and constant-term extraction. Start by noting the constant-term extraction

$$\begin{aligned}
\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1} &= \binom{m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}+n+x}{n-1}\\
&= \boldsymbol{CT}_z\left[\frac{(1+z)^{m_1+2m_2+\cdots+(2a)m_{2a}+n+x}}{z^{n-1}}\right].
\end{aligned}$$

Insert this into the left-hand side of Claim 2, take $\boldsymbol{CT}_z$ outside the sum, factor out the inside and reapply the multinomial theorem in reverse (1.1)

to get

$$\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n-1\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1}$$

$$=\boldsymbol{CT}_z\left[\frac{(1+z)^{n+x}}{z^{n-1}}\sum\binom{n-1}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}(-1-z)^{m_1}(-1-z)^{2m_2}\cdots(-1-z)^{(2a)m_{2a}}\right]$$

$$=\boldsymbol{CT}_z\left[\frac{(1+z)^{n+x}}{z^{n-1}}\left\{-(1+z)^1+(1+z)^2-(1+z)^3+\cdots+(1+z)^{2a}\right\}^{n-1}\right].$$

Next, follow through with the geometric series expansion to obtain

$$\sum_{\substack{\lambda\in\mathcal{P}\\ \ell(\lambda)=n-1\\ \lambda_1\le 2a}} (-1)^{|\lambda|}\binom{n-1}{m_1,\dots,m_{2a}}\binom{|\lambda|+n+x}{n-1}$$

$$=\boldsymbol{CT}_z\left[(-1)^{n-1}\frac{(1+z)^{2n+x-1}}{z^{n-1}}\left\{\frac{1-(1+z)^{2a}}{2+z}\right\}^{n-1}\right]$$

$$=\boldsymbol{CT}_z\left[\frac{(1+z)^{2n+x-1}}{(2z)^{n-1}}\left\{\frac{z\sum_{k=1}^{2a}\binom{2a}{k}z^{k-1}}{1+\frac{z}{2}}\right\}^{n-1}\right]=a^{n-1}.$$

The proof is indeed complete. □

Remark 3.2. On [2, p. 399], it is stated that *"With $k-2$ leading zeros, we conjecture that $G[0,\dots,m_k]$ is a two-parameter Fuss-Catalan number."* In light of the conjectures we already proved, the current claim is rather obvious (for further discussion on the topic the reader is directed to [1]).

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