Math Hour

Wednesdays 4:30-6:00 in the math lounge,
Sept 19 on Quad (weather permitting)

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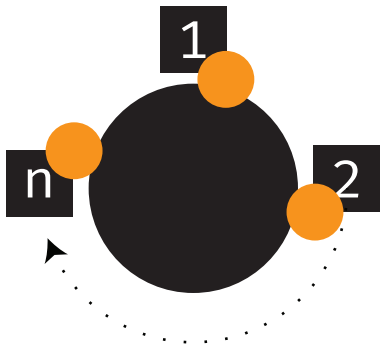
a puzzle for you:

Players 1, 2, 3, ..., n are seated around a table, each has a single penny.



Player 1 passes a penny to Player 2, who then passes two pennies to Player 3. Player 3 then passes one penny to player 4, who passes two pennies to Player 5, and so on, players alternately passing one penny or two to the next player who still has pennies.

A player who runs out of pennies drops out of the game and leaves the table. *Find an infinite set of numbers n for which some player ends up with all n pennies.*

—Putnam 1997

For more puzzles like this, as well as general math discussion and fun, come to math hour.