In This Issue

André Weil

Five articles in this issue are about André Weil and his mathematics. Weil, one of the leaders of twentieth-century mathematics, died in August 1998. The memorial article with "Prologue" in its title is a biographical essay about him, indicating where some of his mathematics fits into his personal and professional history. The other memorial article gives reminiscences by five people who knew him well; they write of their interactions with Weil over the years. A longer reminiscence by Goro Shimura appears as one of the two feature articles.
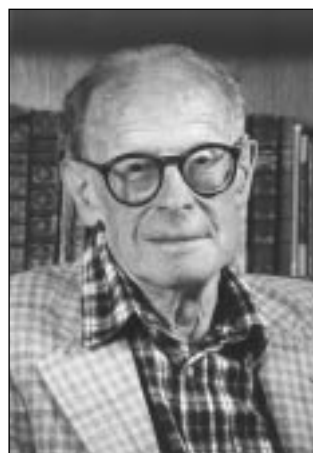
Weil's research profoundly influenced most areas of pure mathematics. In the other of the two feature articles, Armand Borel describes some of Weil's work in algebraic topology and the role it played. The plan is that articles in later issues will describe some of Weil's work in other areas.

In 1991 Weil published an autobiography in French of his life through 1947, the year he settled as a professor in the United States. This autobiography has been translated into English, German, Italian, and Japanese. V. S. Varadarajan reviews the 1992 English translation, *The Apprenticeship of a Mathematician*, in this issue.

For a 1968–69 guest lecture in topology, the audience was packed into the lecture room of Old Fine Hall in Princeton and included Weil and many other notables. At one point someone in the audience rose to object that the lecturer was not giving proper credit for a particular theorem. The questioner went on in impassioned tones for what seemed an eternity. Finally Weil rose, turned to the questioner, and said in a loud voice, "I am not interested in priorities!" The discussion was over, and the lecturer resumed without further interruption. This was the quintessential Weil. Mathematics to him was a collective enterprise.

—Anthony W. Knapp

About the Cover

Weil at the Time of Winning the Kyoto Prize

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