About the Cover

Martin Gardner 1914 - 2010
The cover accompanies the memorial article for Martin Gardner in this issue. According to the records available from the Stanford archive of Gardner’s papers (which you can locate by running “Stanford archives Martin Gardner” through Google), his principal correspondent was Don Knuth (followed by Solomon Golomb), so when we contemplated using one of Gardner’s letters as the basis of the cover we asked Knuth what he could suggest. He very generously spent quite a bit of time and effort in producing the image we have used. Knuth tells us:

I doubt that I received more mail from Martin than anybody else. Possibly Stan Isaacs listed me more often in the database, when he did the first pass over Martin's papers, because he knows me and we see each other fairly often. He didn’t have time to index everything.

Anyway, I do have copies of more than 100 letters that I wrote to Martin since 1970, and most of them start with “Thanks for your letter!” Looking through the files just now, I found one from him dated “8 Jan 76”, when he was in full stride, and I think … it perfectly reveals his working style and, in addition, refers to many other people.

When you see it, you’ll know why I forwarded a copy of it at the time to John McCarthy and Patrick Suppes and also to Karel de Leeuw (who as you probably know was shockingly murdered two-and-a-half years later).

We are extremely grateful to Knuth for his efforts, and also to Martin’s son Jim Gardner for help in locating photographs of his father for our use in the memorial article as well as for permission to reproduce the cover image.

—Bill Casselman
Graphics Editor
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