

Martin Gardner's little known collaborations with Paul Erdős & Nicolas Bourbaki

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Everyone knows of Martin Gardner's stimulating collaborations with artist Salvador Dalí, fractalist Benoit Mandelbrot, and numerologist Dr. Matrix. Less well known are his interactions with legendary Paul Erdős and the fabulous Nicolas Bourbaki.



Scientifically American

There is an online article in *Scientific American*, a reputable publication, called **John Conway Reminiscences about Dr. Matrix and Bourbaki** (see <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/john-conway-reminiscences-about-dr-matrix-and-bourbaki>). In it, there is a link to a video clip from 1 April 2015 in which John H. Conway discusses a meeting at Martin's house that he'd attended decades earlier where he'd met both Bourbaki and Mandelbrot (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mM6bc6Ogrjs>).



In a second clip, Conway discusses a paper Martin wrote with Bourbaki, dedicated to Erdős (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDPD7qtKFw0>). A third clip reveals that Martin also wrote a paper with Erdős, which was both deep and profound, and appeared in the *Kurdish Journal of Mathematics* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJHumNVgbxU>).

Aperiodically Humorous

Just today, *Aperiodical* reported on a previously unknown Erdős-Bacon collaboration. The article reveals that: “The brief footage of the collaboration was found in unused material filmed for the 1993 documentary *N Is a Number: A Portrait of Paul Erdős*” (see <http://aperiodical.com/2016/04/erdos-bacon-previously-unknown-collaboration>.)



Aperiodical is a good mathematical website so obviously the story is true.

China warns against April Fools’ Day jokes

A recent news item proclaimed, “An official of the Chinese Communist Party has slammed April Fools’ Day as an ideologically unsound Western conspiracy . . . We hope that everyone does not trust, make, or transfer rumours.” In 2013, the government there introduced a rule whereby anyone who tweeted something suspicious or seditious that was retweeted more than 500 times faced prosecution.

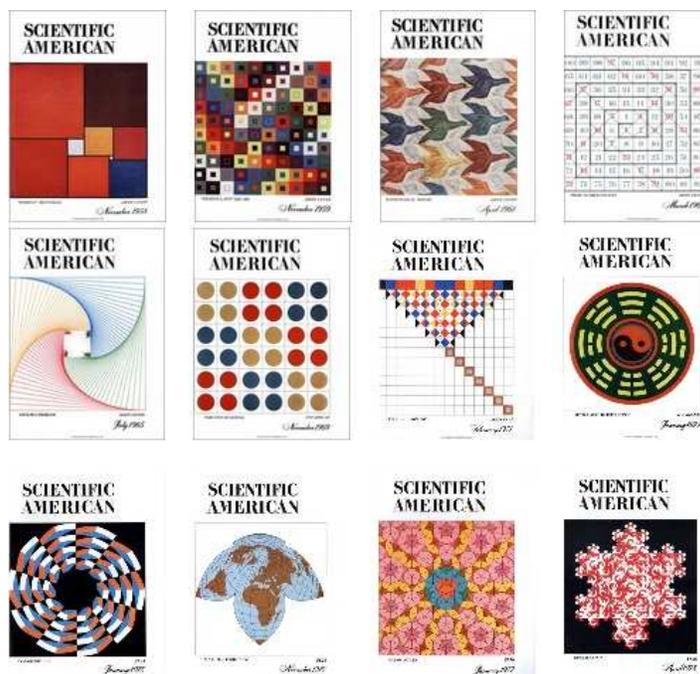
Spaghetti-Harvest in Ticino

One wonders if Martin knew about the famous hoax BBC *Paronama* newsreel from 1 April 1957, narrated by the very trustworthy Richard Dimbleby. In it, an exceptional heavy spaghetti harvest in Switzerland is featured (see http://hoaxes.org/archive/permalink/the_swiss_spaghetti_harvest).



Of course, one of Martin's more famous *Scientific American* columns was a brilliant April Fool's one from 1975; it's worth tracking down.

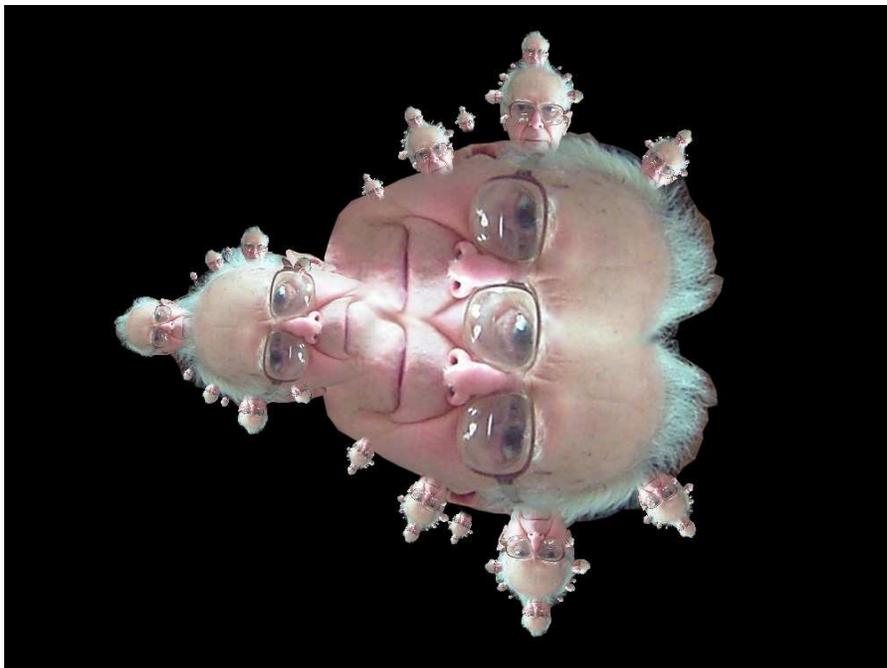
Martin's contribution to G4G12



As it happens, 12 is the number of *Scientific American* covers spawned by Martin's roughly 300 articles for the magazine, shown here in the order in which they appeared (see <http://www.martin-gardner.org/SciAm12.html>).

Mandelbrot's contribution to G4G12

“Given any Mandelbrot, B , there is a Euclidean neighbourhood of Martin, i.e., a neighbourhood N of Euclid Avenue, which contains B .” (Mandelbrot lived near Martin back in the 1970s.)



The above image was created by Henry Segerman & Craig Kaplan in the hour or two before the presentation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqB2r35RvAk> was given.

Twitter's contribution to G4G12

We recommend following both @WWMGT (“What would Martin Gardner Tweet?”) and @MGardner100th on Twitter; 2844 and 1605 people (respectfully) do. Just don't assume that $2844 + 1605 = 4449$: Twitter may be addictive, but it's sub-additive, rather than additive.