



## Mathematical Bafflers (Dover Recreational Math)

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Let the puzzlist beware: *Mathematical Bafflers* will disappoint those seeking the simple, straightforward, drudge-rewarding problem: it will delight those who have despaired of a truly challenging collection of mind-teasers. Beginners are advised to look elsewhere — the 158 conundrums offered here were designed by experts for experts — and many experts were, simply, baffled.

*Mathematical Bafflers* gathers the prime problems from twelve years of the esteemed weekly *Problematical Recreations* which appeared in *Aviation Week* and *Electronic News* — periodicals read by mathematicians, engineers, computer programmers, and over the years, by serious puzzlists who heard about the special section. To keep the quality at a peak, Angela Dunn and a team of mathematicians invented their own puzzles and gleaned the best submissions from an enormous reader response. Criteria were conceptual originality, ingenuity of approach, elegance of solution, with preference given to the kind of puzzle more vulnerable to a flash of inspiration than mere persistence. Categories include algebra, geometry, diophantine equations, logic and deduction, probability, insight, and number theory. Each chapter provides solutions to all problems plus a selection of correspondence with readers containing complaints, pleas, commentary, and further speculation. Original woodcut illustrations add to the charm.

Advanced mathematical skills are only sporadically required — the majority of problems are accessible to anyone wanting the challenge. Those mentally fit enough to find 1,000 consecutive nonprime numbers (page 164) or discover on what days of the week the first day of a new century can fall (page 210), apply within; all others enjoy the bafflement anyway.

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