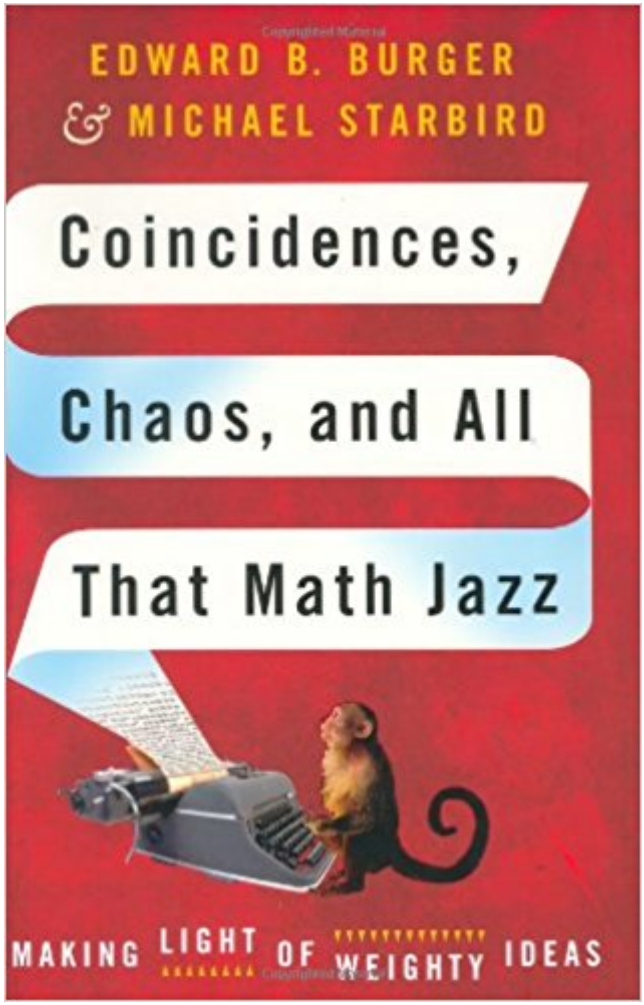
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Coincidences, Chaos, And All That Math Jazz: Making Light Of Weighty Ideas



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Synopsis

By starting in the familiar world and using a few simple steps of imagination, Edward B. Burger and Michael Starbird sneak up on weighty mathematical ideas. The spirals on a pineapple quickly lead to the famous Fibonacci numbers and the alluring Golden Ratio, and from there to aesthetic forms in nature, art and music. The edge of a twisted strip of paper leads to an image of the shape of the universe. Playing with the notion of probability shows that surprising coincidences such as the amazing parallels between the Lincoln and Kennedy assassinations are sure to happen. These and other foreign and familiar mysteries are all explained with great humour and clarity in this irreverent, entertaining and readable book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As if they were comedy-club stand-ups, Burger and Starbird employ puns and silly scenarios to tickle those who wouldn't ordinarily pick up a math book. Everyone, however fearful of the topic, uses math in daily life. Two popular fixations with numbers that the authors home in on include the amazing similarities between John Kennedy and Abraham Lincoln and playing the lottery. Describing the easy math beneath superficially wondrous things, often no more complicated than enumeration and arithmetic, Burger and Starbird dispel the astounding to reveal what a little logical rigor can do, and they use their schtick to keep things light. Avoiding alarming announcements, they never charge headlong into a topic such as the Golden Ratio, but circumscribe it by counting swirls on pineapples and noting the ratio's frequent appearance in nature and in art. Likewise, Burger and Starbird don't bludgeon readers with number theory, geometry, or topology; they take up origami or

spin a yarn about a tsetse fly. A profusely illustrated, bemusingly unorthodox introduction to math. Gilbert TaylorCopyright Ã Â© American Library Association. All rights reserved

Informative, intelligent, and refreshingly irreverent. A roller-coaster ride along the frontiers of today's mathematics. I enjoyed it immensely. -- Ian Stewart, author of Flatterland

Michael Starbird and Edward Burger have created a duality in this book. On one hand it is a masterpiece of clearly explained math for the non-technically inclined, on the other hand it is a concise summary of some of the most complex mathematical concepts in the contemporary world. The ability to explain extraordinarily complex subjects in clear, nontechnical terms and using interesting and often amusing examples is what truly sets this book apart from most any other math book.I like math, and was a relatively good math student, but I never really understood many of the subtleties underlying advanced mathematical principles; rather, I just memorized them as a chore, and applied them. No more. This book has helped open my eyes to some of the mathematical world's underlying beauty and mystery.The book ranges widely over numerous subjects, but the ones I found most interesting were the discussions of chaos theory, the aesthetics of the Golden Ratio (and Fibonacci numbers), and the peculiarities and curiosities of topology. Using examples that are deceptively simple, like paper folding ("Origami For The Origamically Challenged"), ancient Greek architecture and the related "Golden Rectangles" ("Their proportions are breathtaking to behold. Such a rectangle is the quintessence of rectangularity, the sine qua non of rectangleosity, the sexiest rectangle ever."), pineapples, and tavern puzzles, Starbird and Burger manage to simultaneously entertain and educate any audience, regardless of previous mathematical proclivities.The authors have a great sense of fun, clearly love writing, teaching, and entertaining, and they are never above poking fun at themselves, as in this example from a discussion of the topology of knots: "A mathematical knot is simply a closed loop of string that may or may not be knotted. The simplest knot is a loop that contains no knot at all and is called the unknot. (The fact that the math community refers to the unknot as a knot is reason #73 why people tend to avoid socializing with mathematicians.)"I love this book, and found eminently readable, enjoyable, and educational. As an aside, I have previously watched (and reviewed) Dr. Starbird's "Meaning From Data: Statistics Made Clear" on DVD, and highly endorse that as well. Clearly Starbird and Burger are talented mathematicians, brilliant minds, and great teachers: I wish I had had math teachers like them. I can't recommend this book highly enough.

Title says it all. I got this book as a required reading for a math theory class. I love it. It explains tough concepts in a way anybody can understand and is really cleverly written. I found myself chuckling quite a few times while reading and I can say with earnest I have never had that sort of relationship with math. Even after class ended I was picking it back up to reread sections I found really interesting.If you're like me and it's not your thing and you think you're too dumb for this kind of stuff, please pick up this book up. If you're a math genius, please pick this book up

This is a really interesting book, just chock full of brilliant mathematics disguised as puzzlers games, and riddles. This Edward Burger is co-author of several books with one of the best mathematics professors, Michael Starbird. They have a real command of the concepts of mathematics, as well as a skill at transmitting that knowledge in ways that are clear, and memorable.

I did not find this book very interesting. I think the book is meant for people who really find understanding mathematics difficult. Being and engineer, I am find maths very interesting and was expecting the book to talk about some difficult topics.Giving 3 stars because it did not meet expectations.

Great book. Fascinating overview of unique mathematical principles.

I am not a math freak ! I have always awed math and admired mathematicians for the ability they have ! so i got this book because all reviews said this was a light hearty read .... and none of those reviews were wrong .The chapter on chaos theory was the best I read ... made me think so much about how human life and its eventual end can be put into context by studying the chaos theory of math.Its definitely a good book to have for now and for future generations so they dont grow up fearing math but rather enjoying its magic !

A very fun and easy read - really enjoyed ut.

I bought this as a gift for my room-mate who is a math junkie....he enjoyed the read and thought others would too.

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