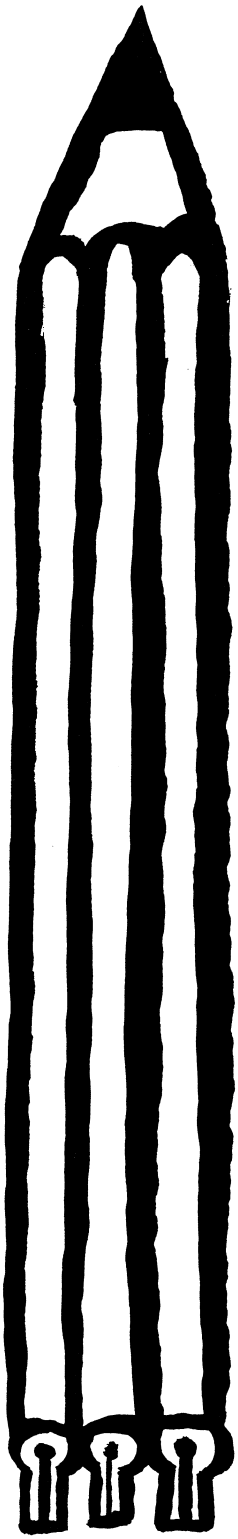
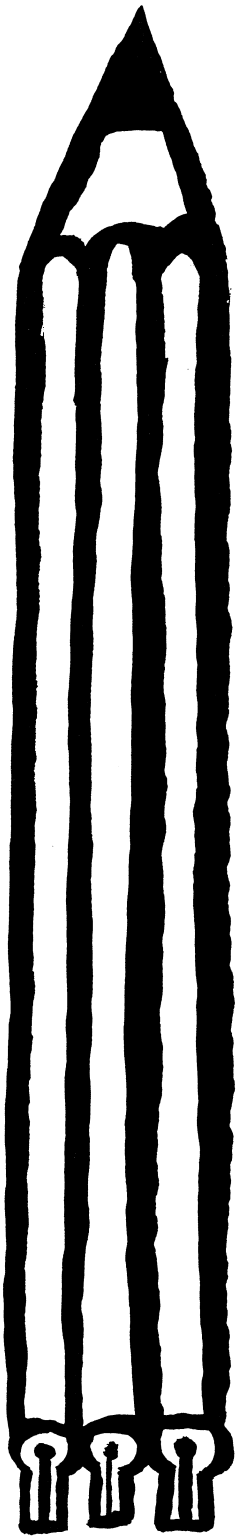


Dear Reader,

This issue includes the first Algorithmics Column by the new editor Thomas Erlebach, who succeeded Gerhard Woeginger. The column originally started with Josep Diaz as its editor in the Oct issue of 2001, No. 75, which is relatively new in the history of the columns. For instance, let's look at No. 33, in Oct 1987, which includes five columns: The computational geometry column by Herbert Edelsbrunner, the algebraic specification column by Hartmut Ehrig (see No. 119 for his obituary), the structural complexity column by Juris Hartmanis, the database theory column by Jan Paredaens and the formal language column by Arto Salomaa. Coming back to the Algorithmics column, we can see the column by Josep in No. 87, the Oct 2005 issue and in No. 89, the June 2006 issue, Gerhard started his editorialship. And now, this issue is a debut of Thomas. Gerhard, thank you very much for your this long contribution to BEATCS and Thomas, for your (probably not very easy) decision of continuing this column as an editor.

I ran into a NYTimes article, "James Holzhauer's Jeopardy! Streak Ends Just Shy of a Record," on June 3rd. As you know, Jeopardy! is a popular American TV quiz show. The news is about the contestant who just finished his winning streak in 33 games (episodes). The previous record is 74 games achieved by Ken Jennings in 2004. How different do you feel between a streak of 33 games and that of 74? This game does not need too match luck, but it does a bit. So, I made a small calculation about its



probability. If the probability for a single win is 0.9, the probability for 32 games in a row is some 0.034. This value is kind of reasonable; the show has some 230 episodes per year, having some 500 contestants per year and some 5000 in 10 years. If 1% of them are as strong as 90% win, it adds up for Holzhauer, who appeared for the first time in 10 years. But, 74 games in a row is only 0.0004, which may look to be a big difference. Well, it turns out that if we increase the single win probability by 5%, from 90 to 95, we can get a similar total success probability of 3%. The difference between 90 and 95 appears much less than 0.034 and 0.0004. This is yet another example of a trick of numbers.

It's nice to be a fan of probabilities, which definitely makes your life more amusing. See you at ICALP very soon!

Kazuo Iwama, Kyoto
June 2019