

## S o u t h e r n C o n n e c t i c u t m e n s a

### SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR AUGUST

**Fri., Aug. 4 - Sun., Aug. 6. Jazz Festivals** - Mensa Jazz SIG leader and WPKN radio host Janine Bujalski wants to remind people of two important events coming up - the Great CT Jazz Fest at the Sunrise Resort in the Moodus section of Haddam, CT, and the Litchfield Jazz Festival in Goshen CT, both happening the first weekend of August. Janine will be emceeing at the GCJF on Friday, and staffing WPKN's table at the LJF on Saturday and Sunday. This is not a Mensa event, but members who want to meet up with other Mensans there can contact Janine at [72764.2451@compuserve.com](mailto:72764.2451@compuserve.com), or (203) 624-3701 to find out about other members who will be going. For more info, look up [www.litchfieldjazzfest.com](http://www.litchfieldjazzfest.com) or call 1-860-567-4162, and [www.ctjazzfest.com](http://www.ctjazzfest.com) or call 1-800-HOT EVENT (1-800-468-3836).

**Wednesday, August 9, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.** This regular dinner is now being held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at the Old Sorrento Restaurant, Newtown Road, Danbury, CT. Interested Mensans should contact Ward Mazzucco at (203) 744-1929, ext. 25, [wjm@danburylaw.com](mailto:wjm@danburylaw.com), or Rev. Bill Loring at (203) 794-1389.

**Saturday, August 19, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport.** Southern Connecticut Mensan Bruce Campbell will be speaking on etymology and word origins. See the feature on page 3 for a preview of what will be in store.

Please call Lee Steuber at 203-730-1634 for information and reservations. Dinner is \$10.00 and includes everything but the cash bar. Dress is casual and guests are welcome.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

**Wednesday, Sept. 13, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.** See above listing for details.

**Saturday, Sept. 16, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport.** Southern Connecticut Mensa has a new gifted children coordinator – Jim Wood!!!! Jim has a BA in Biology, an MA in Clinical Psychology, and a Ph.D. in Neurophysiology, and has worked professionally in the biological and psychological sciences. He recently held the position of Director of the Gifted Child Program for Chicago Mensa while continuing his extensive studies of the literature from the major gifted children research centers around the world. Jim is interested in disseminating this information to the community at large, encouraging private and State agencies to expand school programs for the gifted, and getting parents and teachers more directly involved with the intellectual and psychological development of exceptional children. He will be speaking about his research and efforts in these areas at the September dinner, and welcomes your ideas and assistance in rebuilding our chapter's program for gifted youngsters.

## **Big Brother is Upon Us** **(and he's not who you think he is)**

An article in the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Connecticut Post by the Associated Press stated that the leading software manufacturer was unveiling an "Ambitious new effort" to transform their software products into web based applications. Their reasoning is that this would allow people to access their documents from any Internet connected device. With the advances in PDA's, Web phones and such, this may appeal to businesses that are looking to be more "networked". I also feel that with the proliferation of writeable CD's, they are looking to release new software, as well as upgrades, as web based applications only to try to cut down on the growing piracy element.

I think we, as a society, should be concerned for a couple of reasons.

This company has, by far, the Lion's share of operating and application software, and yes, they are being scrutinized for their "Monopoly" by the government, but it remains to be seen what will be done and what affect it will have. If anywhere near the percentage of people and businesses that use their products now migrate to web based applications and storage of their documents on a "Central Computer", this company will have access to information on the vast majority of businesses.

If users need to access their programs, or even operating systems, on their web site, why would they want to pay for any additional Internet service? That would mean virtual control of the Internet, or at least the majority of it.

I consider myself a law-abiding person, and I will admit that I use mostly products made by this company, but this scares me.

George Harris  
goharris321@netscape.net

If you wish to submit material, please write or e-mail Jim Mizera at PMB #181, 7365 Main St., Stratford, CT. 06614-1300, [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com). E-mail submissions are preferred. Please include your name, address, and telephone number. Anonymous material will be rejected, although names will be withheld on request. Items will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Currently, the deadline for postal submissions is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication, and the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for e-mail submissions.

**Do you know the original meaning of these words?**

Many English words originally had different and curious meanings. Bruce Campbell, who will be speaking on this subject at the August meeting, has given us a list of some of these words and their original meaning. Come to the August dinner to hear Bruce delve into many other intriguing or humorous word origins.

Accurate - done with care

Advertise - warning

Bill and coo - hook bladed weapon

Bizarre - beard (changed into the meaning of handsome, brave)

Career - road or racetrack for wheeled vehicles

Dawn - daying (day break)

Dozen - Latin duodecim (12)

Fight - pull someone's hair

Flan - flat cake, cowpat

Geezer - someone in disguise

Idea - the look of something

Make - kneading

Nice - stupid

Nymph - bride

Plus fours - pants four inches longer than the knee

Pudding - sausage

Sesquipedalian - words that are a foot and a half long, pompous

Sphere - round pellet of dung

Thousand - many hundreds

Twenty - two tens

Zodiac - circle of little animals

**(The following article is reprinted from brain.com, the Internet destination for all those interested in the brain and brain health and fitness.)**

IQ and Intelligence  
James Adams

Intelligence is one of those elusive concepts – we can recognize it, but trying to pin it down to a single definition is difficult. Used in its broadest sense, intelligence is what people use to solve problems, understand complex ideas, learn and remember, and in general, to deal effectively with the world around them through various forms of thought and reasoning. Intelligence means different things to different people, from being able to think quickly in a stressful situation to learning new languages to mastering a new musical instrument. Even the experts don't agree completely on the nature of intelligence – one survey in the late 1980s asked two dozen experts to define intelligence and received two dozen different definitions.

The mental functions involved vary from the objective, such as logical problem solving, to the much more subjective areas of creativity. People differ from one another in their ability to carry out these functions and any given individual's intellectual performance can vary somewhat from day to day, depending upon the situation and the criteria used to judge that performance. Intellectual ability is a complex phenomenon, influenced by factors both environmental and biological, during development from child to adult, and throughout adulthood. It is this complex state of affairs and the questions it raises that researchers and theorists in the field of intelligence studies are trying to address. What is the nature of intelligence? Can intelligence be optimized? Can it be measured? What do the differences in measured intelligence between people mean?

The dominant method of studying intelligence in this century has been the psychometric approach. Researchers using this approach believe that intelligence can be measured through the administration of various forms of IQ tests. IQ comes from "Intelligence Quotient," which was once obtained by dividing a person's "mental age" by their actual age, and while this particular procedure is no longer being practiced, the term IQ is still commonly used to refer to the scores obtained on intelligence tests and to the tests themselves. Scores on intelligence tests are normally converted to a scale where the mean is 100 and standard deviation is 15. Ninety-five percent of the population scores within two standard deviations above and below the mean (70-130).

There are many different types of IQ tests. Some focus on verbal skills, some on spatial skills, and others on mathematical and analytical skills. Some tests depend on reaction time or the time it takes to recognize a given visual stimulus. A number of IQ tests incorporate multiple subtests, each testing a specific skill. Whatever the nature of the IQ test, many researchers believe that a general statistical factor (g) can be extracted from the results of multiple IQ tests by using a method called factor analysis, and that this factor is a general measurement of intelligence. There is evidence that g correlates with academic success and, to some extent, to measurements of accomplishment outside of school.

Despite the fact that it is widely accepted, not all researchers agree, in whole or even in part, with the concept of a general, measurable intelligence factor. Some experts believe that g does measure some types of intelligence, such as analytical problem solving, but there are other types of intelligence, such as creativity and practical intelligence, that g does not address. Other theorists have completely dismissed the idea of accurately measuring something as complex as intelligence. In their views, there are multiple kinds of intelligence (one researcher suggests as many as 150) that can't be measured with pen and paper tests.

There is some additional controversy surrounding the idea of g because IQ scores have been shown to differ among ethnic groups, and some have attempted to use this

observation, along with an argument that intelligence is genetically determined, to classify some ethnic groups as less intelligent than others. The American Psychological Association (APA) conducted an extensive task force study in 1995 to address these controversies. In summary, the APA found that while IQ (g) scores did differ between groups, there was no reliable evidence concerning the cause of these differences, genetic or otherwise. Environmental (including cultural) factors play a large role in the development of human intelligence, and could be at the root of these differences. Considerable research is needed to assess the meaning and cause of these observations.

One thing that the experts do tend to agree on is that little is currently known about the specific neurobiological processes that are involved in human intelligence. Current research focusing on brain anatomy and physiology suggests that a number of brain structures and properties may be associated with intelligence. These include the degree of branching of cortical neurons or the number of connections between neurons—a larger number of branches and connections seem to be associated with higher levels of cognitive functioning—and brain metabolism and the speed with which nerves conduct signals may be important factors. In other words, a more efficient brain, one that requires less energy to function and carries out those functions at a higher speed, may also be a more intelligent brain. Brain structures that are important in learning and memory and sensory processing are very likely to be major components of intelligence. Also, studies have begun to uncover genes that are important in learning and memory. In one recent study, researchers at Princeton were able to enhance the abilities of mice to solve certain problems through the manipulation of a single gene. It is very likely that the mental abilities we call intelligence rely on a large and diverse collection of neurobiological and genetic factors. Continuing research in the neurosciences will undoubtedly advance our understanding of these factors and how they relate to, and are influenced by, the environment in which they function.

Can IQs be increased? Some studies have shown that young children exposed to environments rich in stimulation for one to two years as preschoolers had IQ scores higher than their peers who were not exposed to similar environments. These increases were by several IQ points, but were found to be temporary, fading by the time the children had finished elementary school. However, there is evidence that even though measured IQ was not permanently raised, children having gone through these programs tended to perform better in school, were less likely to need special education, and were more likely to finish school than a control group. So, while permanent IQ increases were not achieved, it would appear that some cognitive functions were improved, and apparently something that could be called quality of life was also enhanced. The fact that IQ increases faded after a few years may not be the salient point here, rather it should be noted that these children did show improved IQ and intellectual performance when exposed to enriched environments, suggesting that stimulation is a key factor in increasing cognitive performance, whether an increase in measurable IQ is detected or not. Could continued exposure to enriched environments prolong this positive effect? It is a suggestive possibility. Recent studies in neuroscience have shown that, at least in the visual system, neuronal synapses that are presented with high levels of stimulation tend to grow and expand, as opposed to those that receive only background "static" input. Also synapses are believed to grow stronger with regular stimulation, suggesting that an environment rich in variety, stimulation, and activity may improve cognitive function.

Another suggestive study that has received a considerable amount of attention is that of the Mozart effect. Researchers showed that college students that listened to Mozart's Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, a piece chosen for its complexity, before taking a spatial-temporal reasoning test, performed better on the test than controls. The effect, however, lasted only 15 minutes and seems to be very specific to the piece of music—there is no known Beethoven effect, for instance — and to experimental

Conditions – replicating the results is difficult. Although these results are limited to very specific circumstances, they still hold promise. The results were temporary, but one can make an analogy between these effects and the effects of physical exercise, which are also largely temporary. Forms of mental exercise may be key in maintaining and potentially improving cognitive function. Solving puzzles, reading, learning new languages, or even a musical instrument may all have positive effects for adults as well as children. Again, the important point may not be in increasing measured IQ scores – research shows that they tend to be relatively stable after childhood – but in optimizing overall cognitive function.

To stretch the analogy to physical exercise even further, it's quite clear that exercise provides optimal results when combined with a proper diet. The same is likely to be true for mental exercises. It's known that severe malnutrition during a child's development can have negative effects on intelligence, and the brain requires nutrients to function properly on a daily basis. Also, physical exercise itself seems to have a positive effect on mental performance. It's not clear exactly what causes the effect, but aerobic exercise appears to increase memory retention and has been shown to improve some types of creative problem solving, not to mention the positive effects on general well-being. Also, exercise can help relieve stress. Stress has been shown to have a negative impact on learning and memory. Other relaxation techniques, such as meditation, are also useful.

Overall, while it seems unlikely that, based on current knowledge, measured IQ can be increased permanently, other supporting factors of cognitive function might be enhanced, thus optimizing overall mental performance. Combining physical and mental activities to provide an active, stimulating environment, along with the proper intake of required nutrients, is currently the most solid advice on how to maintain and potentially improve cognitive function.

In summary, intelligence is a complex concept with many factors that contribute to that complexity – from neurobiology to psychology, genetics to environment, individual to social. Considerable progress is being made in the study of mental abilities and their roles in human life. Further studies in the nature and function of intelligence will undoubtedly yield many surprising and fascinating observations, both in the internal functioning of the human brain and in how that brain is used to interact with the outside world.

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