

# SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Activities Coordinator Nancy O'Neil at NancyOneil@aol.com or 203-791-1668. The dinner is held the third Saturday of the month.

**AMERICAN MENSA LTD. NEEDS YOUR HELP** to correct a technical inconsistency in its Certificate of Incorporation. The Board of Directors of AML wants to change the Articles of Incorporation to permit elections and referenda to be conducted by mail. In order to do so, they need your proxy vote. So please take time **NOW** to give your proxy by visiting <http://proxy.us.mensa.org>.

## ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE

going back to July 2002 are available on the Internet at <http://www.solarandthermal.com/mensa>. You can download the latest e-mail version of the Chronicle there, as well as previous issues. All issues are in read-only Adobe Acrobat format so there is no chance of viruses accompanying the files.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Schedule of Southern Connecticut Mensa Events  
Schedule of Connecticut and Western Mass Mensa Events  
Happy Hours & Get Together's
- 4 Regional Gatherings  
President's Column
- 5 From The Vice Chairman
- 6 Poetry Corner
- 7 On the 20th Century
- 10 Word Origins  
Kick Irrational Comic
- 11 Noted and Quoted
- 12 Ruminations
- 15 Puzzles and Questions
- 16 Chapter Notes  
Member Advertisements  
Change of Address Form
- 17 List of Officers



**SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR JULY**

Friday, July 9, 7:00

**Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner**

Monthly dinner at the Old Sorrento Restaurant, Newtown Road, DANBURY, CT Interested Mensans should contact Ward Mazzucco at (203) 744-1929, ext 25, wjm@danburylaw.com, or Rev Bill Loring at (203) 794-1389, frbill@mags.net.

Saturday, July 17, 7:00.

**Monthly Dinner**

We have a **new meeting place** for the July dinner - The Stony Hill Inn, 46 Stony Hill Road (right off Exit 8 on I-84), Bethel, CT 06801 (203-743-5533). Our speaker will be noted hypnotherapist Dr. Len Kaplan. Dress is casual. Please contact Nancy O'Neil, Nancyoneil@aol.com, 203-791-1668, for information and reservations.

Directions from New Haven or Bridgeport: Take Route 25 into Newtown, where it becomes Route 6 West. OR take I-84 and get off at Exit 9 (Route 25 Brookfield). At the end of the ramp take a left. At the first light take a right on to Route 6 West. The hotel is located 2 miles on the right, not far over the Bethel line. From Stamford/Norwalk: Take Route 7 to I-84 and follow the above directions, turning right after exiting I-84.

Saturday, July 24, 7:30.

**Theater Event: Rodgers and Hammerstein's State Fair**

performed by Musicals at Richter, located on the back lawn of the Richter Arts Center, 100 Aunt Hack Road, in Danbury, CT (www.musical-satrichter.org). This is an outdoor show so arrive early and bring your chair. Tickets are Adults - \$18.00, Seniors - \$15.00, Student/Child - \$12.00. Please call a few days ahead to assure tickets. Contact Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959, mizera@hotmail.com, for info or reservations.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR AUGUST**

Saturday, August 1, 8:00.

**THEATRE EVENT: Shakespeare's A Midsummer's Night Dream**

performed by Bridgeport Free Shakespeare, at the Beardsley Zoo, 1875 Noble Ave., Bridgeport, CT 06610. This is an outdoor show so arrive early and bring your chair or blanket. Free, donation suggested. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959 or e-mail Jmizera@hotmail.com.

Friday, August 13, 7:00.

**Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.**

See above listing for details.

Saturday, August 21, 7:00.

**Monthly Dinner.**

See above listing for details.

Saturday, August 28, 8:00.

**Theater Event: William Shakespeare's Richard III**, performed by the Elm Shakespeare Company (www.elmshakespeare.org) outdoors in Edgerton Park, Whitney Ave, New Haven, near the Hamden town line. This is an outdoor show so arrive early and bring your chair or blanket. Free, donation suggested. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959 or e-mail Jmizera@hotmail.com.

**CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS MENSA CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS**

This is not a complete listing WE - Weekly Event, ME - Monthly Event, YE - Yearly Event CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor Gisela Rodriguez, (860) 872-3106, email: lilith@snet.net,

**Mensans on the Radio:**

C&WM Mensan Janine Bujalski is on the airwaves every 1st & 3rd Friday 6-10 a.m. on 89.5FM, WPKN in Bridgeport, CT. There is a limited internet broadcast - about 25 can listen simultaneously at www.wpkn.org . From 6-9 AM there's jazz, blues & music from Brazil and from 9-10 AM the music is from Louisiana, mostly Cajun & zydeco.

Vice LocSec Will Mackey is hosting Friday evening Classics from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

*Admitted in CT, NY & OR*

**Sharon Oberst DeFala, Esq.**  
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weekly on 91.3 FM, WWUH, in West Hartford. The name of the program is "What You Will" and its focus is chamber music.

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## JULY

1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Thursday 7:00 pm

**Scrabble (WE)** at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Mogan Drive, West Hartford. Ellen Leonard, (860) 667-1966 (Please call first to make sure this is happening today).

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2 Friday 5:30-7:00 pm

### Happy Hour (ME, 1st Friday)

in Meriden. Ann Polanski (contact her at 203-269-4565 or ann.polanski@rfsworld.com) hosts us at Jacoby's Restaurant, 1388 East Main Street, Meriden, CT (203) 634-3222. From I-91 Northbound: Exit 16. Turn right at end of exit and continue on East Main Street for 0.7 mi. Jacoby's is on the left. From I-91 Southbound: (Same exit as for the former Ramada.) Exit 17. Turn left at end of exit and continue as above.

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3 Saturday 7:00 PM

### Mensa Goes to a Ballgame

Watch the New Britain Rock Cats, Double-A farm team of the Minnesota Twins, host the Trenton Thunder, the Double-A farm team of the New York Yankees. Buy a general admission ticket (\$5), turn left and go to section 213, climb to about six rows from the top and join other Mensans for an evening at the ballpark. More info? Contact Tom Thomas tom.thomas@the-spa.com To confirm starting time (and possible fireworks) check your local newspaper or rockcats.com the day of the game.

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16 Friday 6:00 PM

### Diner Dinner (ME, 3rd Friday)

at Olympia Diner, Rte 5, Newington, just north of the Berlin town line and North East Utilities. Menu ranges from toasted cheese sandwich to steak and fish dinners. Basic bar menu available, no happy hour prices, but the food is good and very reasonable. This month's contact is our LocSec Bob Smith at 860-872-3106 or BoboRobDOS@snet.net, Subject: Diner Dinner

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17 Saturday 10 am

**Butterfly Walk** at John Flaherty Field Trial Area, East Windsor. Join the Connecticut Butterfly Association as we look for summer butterflies. Over 25 species possible including Horace's Duskywing. We will be walking through uncut fields--dress appropriately! Directions: From I-91 take exit 44, go south on Rte. 5 for 1.1 miles, make left on Tromley Rd. Go 0.7 miles to entrance on left. For more info or to confirm, contact Diane Adams (860) 526-1993, ButterflyPR@comcast.net. I'll be there with something yellow in my hair.

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17 Saturday 2:30PM

**Matinee at the River Rep at Ivoryton and dinner** at a restaurant nearby to be discussed among the attendees. We will be seeing Moss Hart's Light Up the Sky. Tickets are \$25 but if we have 12-15 we can get a discount. Respond quickly so we get seating. Directions and payment will be discussed when you RSVP. To Barb Holstein- Bar-bCPA@att.net or Neal Alderman- Neal.alderman@uconn.edu

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23 Friday 5:00 pm

**Happy Hour**, (ME, 4th Friday) Colonial Tymes, 2389 Dixwell Ave, Hamden. Located about 1/2 mile north of Exit 60, Wilbur Cross Parkway. We have been able to sit at a nice big table and enjoy the good free food for a few months now. Come on down and join us. We also seem to be going out to dinner after, so if you plan to come and want dinner, too, let us know so we can reserve. Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.com .

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26 Saturday 12:00 noon

### Carnivale Fest! Part III

Episodes 9 through 12 will be screened. See May 22 listing for description. RSVP to Gisela Rodriguez 860-872-3106 or Lilith@snet.net so I can plan munchies and absinthe. Adults only, please.

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28 Wednesday 12:00 noon

**Middlebury Luncy** (ME, last Wednesday) at Maggie McFly's in Middlebury, visible on the right from Rte. 63 just south of the Rte 63 and Rte 64 intersection. This intersection is at the end of a

long ramp at Exit 17 on Rte 84 west. From this exit, turn left at the 63/64 intersection. If you use Exit 17 on Rte. 84 east (heading toward Hartford), turn left off the exit ramp and see Maggie McFly's on your left. Please call Richard Fogg at 860-274-2370 if you will attend for the first time.

## REGIONAL GATHERINGS

### POW-OWL CAMP

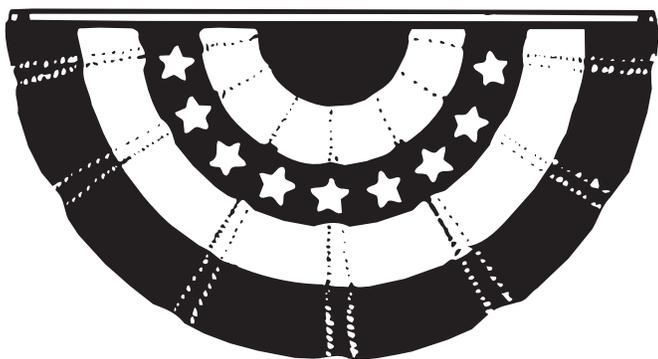
August 20-22 at Buffalo Gap Camp  
(off Rt. 50, west of Winchester, VA)

Only \$165 until May 28th, then \$185 to 7/19,  
\$205 to 8/13.

\$50 deposit (non-ref); balance by 7/19  
Kids 13-17 @75%, 6-12 @50%, <6 free

Includes pleasant cabin space (private room extra), tasty meals/snacks from Fri. dinner to Sun. lunch, and all the fun you can handle!

This delightful new annual event is kinda like a mini-summer camp for Mensans and friends/family of all ages. (Yes, including children by popular demand-there will be a cluster of family cabins.) The place is wonderful and the food is excellent. Planned activities include a variety of RG-like programs, a dance sampler series making use of the fine floor, and traditional camp stuff like swimming and singing/s'mores around the campfire. Cabins will be set aside for games, a book swap, and the children's clubhouse. All we need is YOU! For more info, contact event sponsor Jenny Foster: [pinc@xecu.net](mailto:pinc@xecu.net) or 301-371-4312 (email preferred).



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### OUR NEW MEETING PLACE

What a long, strange trip it's been~Robert Hunter, "Truckin'"

For the last year or so we've been looking for a new meeting place for our monthly dinner. The Three Door Restaurant in Bridgeport served us well for years, however, it has been sold, and as I write this column, it has been leveled to the ground.

We held several meetings at Pellicci's in Stamford. While the food was great, the ambience was definitely not suited to a meeting. Also, Stamford was a geographic problem for some of our members from the northern portion of the chapter's range.

Then we tried John's Best in Norwalk. Again, the food was good, and the price was right, but it was not a place where we'd want to invite (or listen to) a speaker. While Mensa meetings were historically about members sitting around a table and having discussions, after a while, the group tired of it. Attendance at meetings seriously dwindled, and we had to do something.

This brings us to the Stony Hill Inn, located in Bethel. It comes highly recommended by members who are familiar with it, and we'll be able to have our own meeting room. They have a varied menu and the entree prices range from \$13.95 and up. We're going to have our July meeting there.

Perhaps best of all, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A SPEAKER this month!!! This month, we're privileged to have Dr. Len Kaplan for our speaker. Anyone who's ever heard Len before knows that he gives a riveting presentation. (I may find him particularly riveting, since, as his hypnotherapy patient, I lost 60 lbs.)

So, come on over to Stony Hill Inn for this month's meeting. I'm sure it'll be an entertaining and intriguing evening.

Rick D'Amico  
Loc. Sec., Southern Connecticut Mensa

**FROM THE VICE CHAIR**

Marghretta McBean

Region 1 has a treasure trove of talent! The 2004 PRP (Publication Recognition Programme) Contribution Award Nominations have been announced and our nominees are:

In the category of Fiction and Poetry,

- "Murder at the Chessboard", by Stanley Smith. (Beacon, newsletter of Boston Mensa, Lynn MacDonald editor. May 2003.)
- "The Joshua Twin", and "The Pond" by John McGondel. (Momentum, newsletter of New Hampshire Mensa, Claire T. Natola editor. March 2004 and November 2003, respectively.) There are five nominees in this category and two of them are John! New Hampshire air must be good for poets.

In the category of Non-Fiction (Mensa themed),

- "My First Autumn in New York", by Jeff Jones. (Mid-Mensan, newsletter of Mid-Hudson Mensa, Angela Tremain, editor. October 2003.). Jeff wrote about attending his first RG, Mid-Hudson Mensa's unique camp-style RG held on the beautiful grounds of the Ashokan Reservoir.

In the category of Continuing Item,

- "Five-Minute Mini-Mysteries", by Stanley Smith. (Beacon, newsletter of Boston Mensa, Lynn MacDonald editor. April 2003, May 2003, July 2003, September 2003, January 2004.) Yes, Stan is nominated in two (!!) categories. Very mysterious .....
- "Mmmm," by Victoria Monroe. (Empire, newsletter of Central New York Mensa, Paul Baxter editor. August 2003, September 2003, November 2003.) Victoria's column, sometimes hilarious, always interesting, reveals an eye for the things that often pass without comment - until she writes about them.

As your RVC, I get all of the newsletters in our region and read every one, cover to cover. They keep me fairly up to date on group happenings, politics and just the joie de vivre that is Mensa.

In other congratulatory news, 16 year-old Life Member Kathryn McNickle of Greater New York Mensa was accepted into the prestigious MIT Summer Mathematics programme. Students from around the country spend about six weeks at the MIT campus studying various fields of mathematics. Her proud grandmother, Clotilde Cepeda, is Greater New York Mensa's award winning proctor coordinator.

I had a lovely visit to Albany and Troy, meeting with the members of Mensa of Northeastern New York. Joe O'Malley, who works in the state senate, gave me an insider's tour of the beautiful Capitol building and Empire State Plaza. The gold leaf accents, intricate woodwork and marble floors made me (briefly!) feel that my tax dollars were well spent. After crossing the Hudson to neighbouring Troy (the "Shirt Collar Capital of the World"), about dozen and a half MoN-NYers met for dinner at a landmark restaurant. Members got to ask me questions about the workings of the AMC (American Mensa Committee, Mensa's Board of Directors) and current issues.

At dessert time, the lights went out and I was presented with an enormous whipped cream covered cake, candles blazing, as a late birthday celebration! What a surprise! Everyone had big slices (natch!) and I took the remainder back home, where it lasted three whole days - by limiting myself to one slice per day. Thanks a million to President/LocSec Judy Keating and her friendly group!

*continued on next page*



As the weather warms up, here's something cool to eat:

### BITTER CHOCOLATE SORBET

1 cup milk  
 3 / 4 cup sugar  
 1 / 4 cup good cocoa powder  
 5 ounces bittersweet chocolate (e.g. Valrhona, Scharffen Berger, Callebaut)  
 2 cups water

Bring milk and sugar to just under a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally.

Reduce heat to low, and whisk in cocoa powder until smooth. Cook at a gentle simmer for 15 minutes, stirring often. Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Slowly whisk in the cocoa mixture and water.

Chill thoroughly (set over ice water to speed this up). Transfer to ice-cream machine and process. (You can also partially freeze the mixture, then beat it smooth and return to freezer.)

Marghretta McBean, Region 1 Vice Chair,  
<http://region1.us.mensa.org/>,  
 American Mensa Ltd.



### POETRY CORNER

#### SUMMER IN THE SOUTH

Paul Laurence Dunbar, (1872 - 1904)

THE Oriole sings in the greening grove  
 As if he were half-way waiting,  
 The rosebuds peep from their hoods of green,  
 Timid, and hesitating.  
 The rain comes down in a torrent sweep  
 And the nights smell warm and pinety,  
 The garden thrives, but the tender shoots  
 Are yellow-green and tiny.  
 Then a flash of sun on a waiting hill,  
 Streams laugh that erst were quiet,  
 The sky smiles down with a dazzling blue  
 And the woods run mad with riot.

#### A CALENDAR OF SONNETS: JULY

Helen Hunt Jackson, (1830 - 1885)

Some flowers are withered and some joys have died;  
 The garden reeks with an East Indian scent  
 From beds where gillyflowers stand weak and spent;  
 The white heat pales the skies from side to side;  
 But in still lakes and rivers, cool, content,  
 Like starry blooms on a new firmament,  
 White lilies float and regally abide.  
 In vain the cruel skies their hot rays shed;  
 The lily does not feel their brazen glare.  
 In vain the pallid clouds refuse to share  
 Their dews, the lily feels no thirst, no dread.  
 Unharmed she lifts her queenly face and head;  
 She drinks of living waters and keeps fair.

#### THE SUMMER SUN SHONE ROUND ME

Robert Louis Stevenson, (1850 - 1894)

THE summer sun shone round me,  
 The folded valley lay  
 In a stream of sun and odour,  
 That sultry summer day.

The tall trees stood in the sunlight  
 As still as still could be,  
 But the deep grass sighed and rustled  
 And bowed and beckoned me.

The deep grass moved and whispered  
 And bowed and brushed my face.  
 It whispered in the sunshine:  
 "The winter comes apace."

## ON THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### THE AUTOMOBILE

### AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS

The world made great strides in growing food in the 20th century. The Western world increased yields by building on 19th century advances that replaced muscle power with machine power and by using chemical fertilizers and other scientific and technological improvements. Advances in breeding, seeding, irrigating, packaging, and transportation all boosted food supplies. There were agricultural disasters during the 20th century in war torn and totalitarian countries, and mankind learned grim lessons from these events. But in the 2nd half of the century, Westerners exported their successful agricultural practices to the Third World, enabling farmers in countries like China and India to dramatically improve the nutrition of their people. Some regions of the world still have not caught on to the agricultural revolution, so there is great room for growth in the 21st century.

The scientific-technological revolution in farming probably can be said to have begun in the early 1700s when farmers began selectively breeding livestock earnestly. At the same time, inventors were improving tools like the plow and the seed drill. The 19th century saw more advances. Cyrus McCormick's invented the reaper in 1831, and farmers began using sprays to kill insects, better fertilizers to enrich the soil, and cultivating disease-resistant plants. Roads, canals, and trains allowed farmers to get supplies more quickly and sell their crops to wider markets. In the late 19th century, refrigerated transportation made farm products even more marketable. Because of bigger markets, farmers became more specialized, producing only the crops they were best at. The result was that the proportion of workers working on farms decreased, falling by half in the U.S.. (See Table 1). But at the dawn of the 20th century, it still took many workers weeks to plant and harvest a single crop and the average farmer produced only enough to feed 2.5 people.

In the 20th century, the pace of agricultural progress quickened. One of the biggest improvements was the tractor. The internal combustion engine was no less revolutionary on the

farm that it was in the city. In 1907, there were only about 600 tractors in use in the United States; by 1950, that number had jumped to almost 3,400,000. The power and versatility of these machines also increased, producing enormous vehicles that can pull several plows.

Several other machines complemented or augmented the power of the tractor. One was the grain combine, a machine that cuts grain and separates the kernels from the straw. This machine was invented in the 19th century, but the first combines had to be pulled by teams of horses. Later steam engines powered the machines, but in 1912 the gas engine revolutionized the combine. Self-propelled combines boosted grain production enormously after World War II. Other machines that automated the cutting, planting, shredding, spraying, and sorting of various crops like cotton and tomatoes sparked similar gains.

Manufactured fertilizers were also a great boon to farmers worldwide. Although European scientists in the mid-19th century discovered the benefit of phosphates and nitrogen to soil quality, in the early 1900s, most farmers were still using organic fertilizers or leaving land unfarmed for it to recover nitrogen. The German company BASF built the first ammonia plant in 1913, but the two world wars and the Depression hindered the spread of nitrogen derived from this ammonia on farms. But after World War II, this indispensable nutrient became commonplace. Some scientists estimate that 40% of the world's current population is alive thanks to nitrogen fertilizer.

The development of crossbreeding and new hybrid plants was another great 20th innovation. In 1926, Henry Wallace started the first hybrid-seed company, devoted to hybrid corn-seed enhanced by mixing two pairs of inbred lines and then crossbreeding. By 1960, 96% of the corn planted in the U.S. came from hybrid seed. Yields boomed, going from about 23 bushels/acre in the early 1930s, to 83 bushels/acre by 1980. Using techniques like these with other crops like sorghum, agronomists were able to develop lines with specialized traits for regions with different climates, soils, and growing seasons.

Irrigation has become much better in the last

century, despite many obstacles to optimizing water use. Dams have made farms more fertile in many areas of the world while controlling flooding. In more advanced countries, sprinklers became the means of irrigating crops. The spread of irrigation has paralleled other agricultural gains. In 1900, there were about 16 million acres of irrigated land in the U.S. Today, there are over 62 million acres, and farmers can automatically irrigate areas from 150 to 600 acres. Since most of the world's water is used to irrigate crops, more efficient use of water is sorely needed. But because the price of water is subsidized for farmers in many parts of the world, farmers waste much water. Tubes that can deliver water more precisely and that can tap underground water may mitigate some of these problems in the 21st century.

In the years after World War II, Westerners made efforts to export their scientific advances in agriculture to the poorer nations of the world. This movement became known as the Green Revolution. It started in 1944, when the Rockefeller Foundation founded an institute to help Mexican farmers. Its efforts succeeded spectacularly, in twenty years turning Mexico from a country that imported half its wheat to a country that exported wheat. From there, the Revolution spread to other countries, notably India, Pakistan, and after Mao's death, to China. The Green Revolution concentrated on exporting the same technologies that had benefited the West during the first half of the century - new plant varieties, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, machinery, and irrigation. The revolution paid off quickly in India and Pakistan just as it had in Mexico. From 1965 - 1970, Pakistan boosted its wheat production from 4.6 million tons to 8.4 millions, and India raised its output from 12.3 million tons to 20 million tons. These countries were now able to increase their crop output faster than their populations were growing, and their citizen's diets improved. Although not all Asians were reached by the Green Revolution, the threat of famine faded in this region. The Green Revolution's striking success won its leader, Dr. Norman Borlaug of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970.

Because of the new technologies and practices developed during the past 100 years, the average yield per acre multiplied, and the number of

man-hours required to harvest crops plummeted. In 1900, an average European farm yielded about 960 kilograms of cereal grain per hectare. By 1935, the average yield climbed to over 1,400, and by 1990 it reached 3,600 kg./hectare. The amount of labor required to produce and harvest similar crops fell by more than 75%. In the U.S. mid-west, machines permit farmers to plant the entire corn crop in 10 days and to harvest it in 20 days. One American farmer can now feed over 130 people worldwide, compared to about 2.5 in 1900. Crop yields outside the U.S. for wheat, rice, and grains are also increasing, rising 2 - 3% per year. Gains have been spread widely across the globe. Worldwide, cereal yields rose by approximately 150% from 1950 - 2000, doubling or better in diverse Third World countries such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, China, and Kenya.

Because farms are so much more productive today than a century ago, the number of farms and farm workers has declined. The number of farms in the U.S., for instance, has dropped by two-thirds. Fewer than 2% of Americans and Canadians now work on farms, compared to almost 40% at the beginning of the 20th century (see Table 1). Farms have more than tripled in size, going from about 150 acres in 1900 to almost 500 acres today. The total amount of land devoted to crops in the U.S has declined by about 20%, freeing up land for many other uses.

Amidst the great advances in agriculture in the

**TABLE 1.**  
Decline in U.S. Farm Workers, 1820 - 1994.

Year	Percentage of Labor Force Employed in Agriculture
1820	71.8%
1840	68.6%
1860	58.9%
1880	57.1%
1900	37.5%
1920	27.0%
1940	17.4%
1960	6.1%
1980	2.7%
1994	2.5%

\*\* Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

20th century stood some of the worst disasters in human history. In 1921 ^ 1922, the collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union produced a famine that killed about 4 million people. The Soviet's forced famine in the Ukraine from 1930 - 1932 killed somewhere between 7 and 10 million citizens. But Mao Tse-Tung eclipsed even these horrific numbers with his Great Leap Forward in China from 1958 ^ 1961. This takeover of Chinese farms produced starvation that claimed 27 million lives.

In the last two decades of the century, famine hit Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia. But tyranny and civil war, not nature, caused these disasters. These evils kept Africa backward agriculturally, and the continent's farmers failed to find the money or credit to buy better seeds, fertilizers, irrigating systems, and machinery for planting and harvesting. Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa's soil nutrient levels declined at the same time that Europe and North America's increased. While the farming minority in the West used lobbies to keep prices of many crops artificially high and to keep Third World farm products out of the U.S., the urban minority in Africa pressured governments to keep agricultural prices artificially low, discouraging supplies. Hence, the agricultural potential of Africa remained largely untapped.

Like Africa, some countries in Asia such as Bangladesh have failed to exploit the Green Revolution. These areas, however, could gain enormously from relatively simple technology. Some agronomists estimate these regions they could multiply their production just through efficient watering of crops. Better storage and fertilizers could also work wonders, as 20% or more of the Third World's produce is lost to parasites, predators, and spoilage. New roads in isolated areas could boost farm production by one-third. If the Green Revolution could be extended to the impoverished countries of Africa and Asia, they could not only wipe out hunger, but they might be able to feed the world several times over.

Despite disastrous economic experiments in the communist world and low productivity in Africa and parts of Asia, world agriculture greatly improved the lot of consumers in the 20th century. Food is more plentiful than ever, and the annual growth in food production has easily exceeded

the growth in population. In the last three decades of the century, the Third World increased the amount of food per person by 25% while devoting about the same amount of land to farming. Food prices have been falling for more than a century, and they declined relative to wages by about 75% in the second half of the century. There are still about 800 million malnourished people on the planet. But although there are four times as many people today as a century ago, fewer people are starving. The poor in the Third World are not only consuming more calories, they are eating better quality food. They are getting fewer of their calories from starchy staples like rice, wheat, and potatoes and more from meat, fruits, and vegetables. As a result, they are living longer and healthier lives.

Agriculture was a success story in the 20th century. For the first time, man became less vulnerable to the whims of nature for his existence. Man is working better, eating better, and taking it a little easier. Still, about 42% of the world's people remain on farms (see Table 2), which is about the percentage the United States had in 1890. Although this is much less than in 1900, there is huge room for improvement in the Third World. In Africa and Asia, more than 60% of the population works the land. If these peoples can adopt the farming practices of the rest of the world, they will free up hundreds of millions of their people to produce other goods at a higher standard of living. If they can repeat the progress of advanced farmers during the 20th century, less than 5% of the world should be working the soil in 2100.

**TABLE 2**

Approximate Percentage of Work Force Employed in Agriculture by Region, 2000

Africa	64%
Asia	61%
South America	24%
Eastern Europe	15%
Western Europe	7%
Canada and U.S.	2%
Global Total	42%

## WORD ORIGINS

Many words for foods and drinks have interesting origins.

Here are a few of them.

**chow** - This slang word for food was taken from the Chinese word ch'ao, which means "to fry or cook." Americans probably first heard it from Chinese workers on the transcontinental railroad.

**hash** - Hash is a dish of chopped meat and vegetables. The French verb "hacher" means "to chop." This word descends from "hache" for "ax."

**goulash** - This word comes to us from Hungary. The Hungarian word "gulyas" originally meant "shepherd", but it eventually came to mean the food that shepherds ate - a stew made of beef or veal, with vegetables added.

**martini** - A martini is a cocktail of gin and dry vermouth that originated in the late 19th century. The name comes from the name of the company that made vermouth, Martini and Rossi.

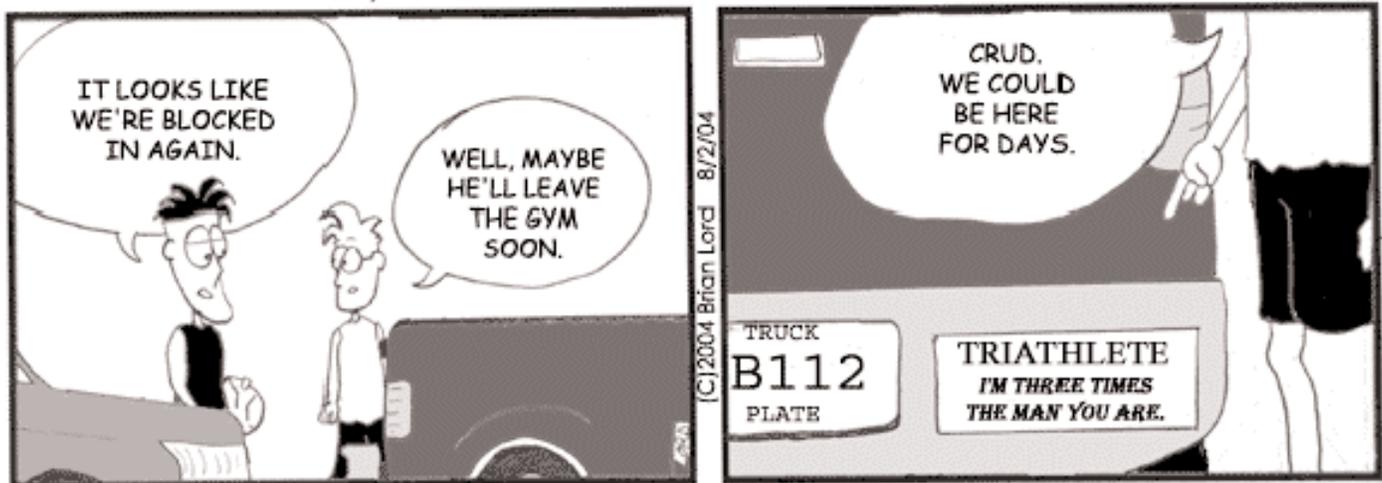
**marmalade** - A marmalade is a preserve containing pieces of fruit. It came into English via French during the era of the Norman Conquest. Ultimately, however, it can be traced to ancient Greece, where the word "melimelon" meant "sweet apple."

**tangerine** - A tangerine is a small, loose-skinned orange with an orange-reddish color. The first tangerines came from the Moroccan seaport Tangiers, hence the name.

**sundae** - A sundae is ice cream topped with syrup and fruit. It was developed in ice cream parlor of in Wisconsin in the 1890's. The dish spread to surrounding communities, where one ice cream parlor proprietor, George Giffy, charged extra for this specialty and served it only on Sundays. But one weekday a little girl ordered it, and when Giffy told her he only served it on Sundays, the child said, "Then it must be Sunday." Giffy relented and gave the dish the name Sunday, which eventually became Sundae.

Brian Lord is a cartoonist and member of Middle Tennessee Mensa (Nashville area). His cartoon Kick Irrational is read weekly by people in 192 cities, 46 states and 9 countries via the Internet. You can see the Kick Irrational comics page at [www.kickirrational.com](http://www.kickirrational.com)

### KICK IRRATIONAL by Brian Lord



If you wish to comment on articles or 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 e-mail address or 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 15th of the month preceding publication, and the 20th of the month for e-mail submissions.

## NOTED AND QUOTED

A person should want to live, if only out of curiosity. - *Yiddish Proverb*

God made the world round so we would never be able to see too far down the road.  
- *Isak Dinesen, (1885-1962), Danish short-story writer*

Look twice before you leap.  
- *Charlotte Bronte, (1816-1855)*

When planning for a year, plant corn. When planning for a decade, plant trees. When planning for life, train and educate people.  
- *Chinese Proverb*

An idealist believes the short run doesn't count. A cynic believes the long run doesn't matter. A realist believes that what is done or left undone in the short run determines the long run.  
- *Sydney J. Harris, (1917 ^ 1986), newspaper columnist*

Life is a sum of all your choices.  
- *Albert Camus, (1913 ^ 1969)*

Intellectuals are people who believe that ideas are of more importance than values. That is to say, their own ideas and other people's values.  
- *Gerald Brenan, (1894 ^ 1987), English writer*

On the whole, human beings want to be good, but not too good, and not quite all the time.  
- *George Orwell, (1903 ^ 1950)*

Love of beauty is Taste...The creation of beauty is Art. - *Ralph Waldo Emerson, (1803 ^ 1882)*

Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account.  
- *Oscar Wilde,, (1856 ^ 1900)*

Several excuses are always less convincing than one. - *Aldous Huxley, (1894 ^ 1963)*

There is nothing so fatal to character as half-finished tasks. - *David Lloyd George, (1863 - 1945), prime Minister of England, 1916 ^ 1922.*

The past actually happened but history is only what someone wrote down.  
- *A. Whitney Brown, (1952 - )*

Avoid reality at all costs. - *Anonymous*

Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.  
- *Vince Lombardi, (1913 -1970)*

A good dog deserves a good bone. - *Proverb*

Death and taxes are both certain...but death isn't annual. - *Anonymous*

1st graffitiist: QUESTION AUTHORITY! 2nd graffitiist: Why? - *Anonymous*

Art for art's sake makes no more sense than gin for gin's sake. - *W. Somerset Maugham, (1874 ^ 1965), English novelist*

## THE READING EDGE ^ WHAT'S YOUR READING SPEED?

Do you know what your reading speed is? There is an online test that can give you a quick estimate. The Reading Edge, a Wallingford, CT company, has a test at their website [www.the-reading-edge.com](http://www.the-reading-edge.com). The tests take only a minute and calculate your reading speed instantly. For a more comprehensive test, the company a free demo that you can download that will test not only your speed but also your comprehension. The software can be set for different grade levels to test children as well as adults.

The company reports that the average person reads at a speed of between 200-300 words a minute but that people who enjoy reading can read more than 400 words per minute, and that some people can even read well at more than 800 words a minute.

The Reading Edge also offers books, tapes, tele-classes, and personal lessons to help people read faster and more efficiently. For more information, visit their website at [www.the-reading-edge.com](http://www.the-reading-edge.com) or contact them at [info@the-reading-edge.com](mailto:info@the-reading-edge.com)

## RUMINATIONS

## JUVENILIA

By Arthur Conan Doyle (1897)

It is very well for the master craftsman with twenty triumphs behind him to look down the vista of his successes, and to recall how he picked out the path which has led him to fame, but for the tiro whose first book is perilously near to his last one it becomes a more invidious matter. His past presses too closely upon his present, and his reminiscences, unmellowed by the flight of Tears, are apt to be rawly and crudely personal. And yet even time helps me when I speak of my first work, for it was written seven-and- twenty years ago.

I was six at the time, and have a very distinct recollection of the achievement. It was written, I remember, upon foolscap paper, in what might be called a fine bold hand-four words to the line, and was illustrated by marginal pen-and-ink sketches by the author. There was a man in it, and there was a tiger. I forget which was the hero, but it didn't matter much, for they became blended into one about the time when the tiger met the man. I was a realist in the age of the Romanticists I described at some length, both verbally and pictorially the untimely end of that wayfarer. But when the tiger had absorbed him, I found myself slightly embarrassed as to how my story was to go on. 'It is very easy to get people into scrapes, and very hard to get them out again,' I remarked, and I have often had cause to repeat the precocious aphorism of my childhood. On this occasion the situation was beyond me, and my book, like my man, was engulfed in my tiger. There is an old family bureau with secret drawers, in which lie little locks of hair tied up in circles, and black silhouettes and dim daguerreotypes, and letters which seem to have been written in the lightest of straw coloured inks. Some-

where there lies my primitive manuscript, where my tiger, like a many-hooped barrel with a tail to it, still envelops the hapless stranger whom he has taken in.

Then came my second book, which was told and not written, but which was a much more ambitious effort than the first. Between the two, four years had elapsed, which were mainly spent in reading. It is rumoured that a special meeting of a library committee was held in my honour, at which a bye-law was passed that no subscriber should be permitted to change his book more than three times a day. Yet, even with these limitations, by the aid of a well-stocked bookcase at home, I managed to enter my tenth year with a good deal in my head that I could never have learned in the class-rooms.

I do not think that life has any joy to offer so complete, so soul-filling as that which comes upon the imaginative lad, whose spare time is limited, but who is able to snuggle down into a corner with his book knowing that the next hour is all his own. And how vivid and fresh it all is! Your very heart and soul are out on the prairies and the oceans with your hero. It is you who act and suffer and enjoy. You carry the long small-bore Kentucky rifle with which such egregious things are done, and you lie out upon the topsail yard, and get jerked by the flap of the sail into the Pacific, where you cling on to the leg of an albatross, and so keep afloat until the comic boatswain turns up with his crew of volunteers to handspike you into safety. What a magic it is, this stirring of the boyish heart and mind! Long ere I came to my teens I had traversed every sea and knew the Rockies like my own back garden. How often had I sprung upon the back of the charging buffalo and so escaped him! It was an everyday emergency to have to set the prairie on fire in front of me in order to escape from the fire behind, or to run a mile down a brook to

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throw the bloodhounds off my trail. I had creased horses, I had shot down rapids, I had strapped on my mocassins hindforemost to conceal my tracks, I had lain under water with a reed in my mouth, and I had feigned madness to escape the torture. As to the Indian braves whom I slew in single combats, I could have stocked a large graveyard, and, fortunately enough, though I was a good deal chipped about in these affairs, no real harm ever came of it and I was always nursed back into health by a very fascinating young squaw. It was all more real than the reality. Since those days I have in very truth both shot bears and harpooned whales, but the performance was flat compared with the first time that I did it with Mr. Ballantyne or Captain Mayne Reid at my elbow.

In the fulness of time I was packed off to a public school, and in some way it was discovered by my playmates that I had more than my share of the lore after which they hankered. There was my debut as a story-teller. On a wet half-holiday I have been elevated on to a desk, and with an audience of little boys all squatting on the floor, with their chins upon their hands, I have talked myself husky over the misfortunes of my heroes. Week in and week out those unhappy men have battled and striven and groaned for the amusement of that little circle. I was bribed with pastry to continue these efforts, and I remember that I always stipulated for tarts down and strict business, which shows that I was born to be a member of the Authors' Society. Sometimes, too, I would stop dead in the very thrill of a crisis, and could only be set agoing again by apples. When I had got as far as 'With his left hand in her glossy locks, he was waving the blood-stained knife above her head, when----' or 'Slowly, slowly, the door turned upon its hinges, and with eyes which were dilated with horror, the wicked Marquis saw----' I knew that I had my audience in my power. And thus my second book was evolved.

It may be that my literary experiences would have ended there had there not come a time in my early manhood when that good old harsh-faced schoolmistress, *Hard Times*, took me by the hand. I wrote, and with amazement I found that my writing was accepted. *Chambers's Journal* it was which rose to the occasion, and I have had a

kindly feeling for its mustard-coloured back ever since. Fifty little cylinders of manuscript did I send out during eight years, which described irregular orbits among publishers, and usually came back like paper boomerangs to the place that they had started from. Yet in time they all lodged somewhere or other. Mr. Hogg, of London Society, was one of the most constant of my patrons and Mr. James Payn wasted hours of his valuable time in encouraging me to persevere. Knowing as I did that he was one of the busiest men in London, I never received one of his shrewd and kindly and most illegible letters without a feeling of gratitude and wonder.

I have heard folk talk as though there were some hidden back door by which one may creep into literature, but I can say myself that I never had an introduction to any editor or publisher before doing business with them, and that I do not think that I suffered on that account. Yet my apprenticeship was a long and trying one. During ten years of hard work, I averaged less than fifty pounds a year from my pen. I won my way into the best journals, *Cornhill*, *Temple Bar*, and so on; but what is the use of that when the contributions to those journals must be anonymous? It is a system which tells very hardly against young authors. I saw with astonishment and pride that 'Habakuk Jephson's Statement' in the *Cornhill* was attributed by critic after critic to Stevenson, but, overwhelmed as I was by the compliment, a word of the most lukewarm praise sent straight to my own address would have been of greater use to me. After ten years of such work I was as unknown as if I had never dipped a pen into an inkbottle. Sometimes, of course, the anonymous system may screen you from blame as well as rob you of praise. How well I can see a dear old friend running after me in the street, waving a London evening paper in his hand! 'Have you seen what they say about your *Cornhill* story?' he shouted. 'No, no. What is it?' 'Here it is! Here it is!' Eagerly he turned over the column, while I, trembling with excitement, but determined to bear my honours meekly, peeped over his shoulder. 'The *Cornhill* this month,' said the critic, 'has a story in it which would have made Thackeray turn in his grave.' There were several witnesses about, and the Portsmouth bench are severe upon assaults, so

my friend escaped unscathed. Then first I realised that British criticism had fallen into a shocking state of decay, though when some one has a pat on the back for you you understand that, after all, there are some very smart people upon the literary Press.

And so at last it was brought home to me that a man may put the very best that is in him into magazine work for years and years and reap no benefit from it, save, of course, the inherent benefits of literary practice. So I wrote another of my first books and sent it off to the publishers. Alas for the dreadful thing that happened! The publishers never received it, the Post Office sent countless blue forms to say that they knew nothing about it, and from that day to this no word has ever been heard of it. Of course it was the best thing I ever wrote. Who ever lost a manuscript that wasn't? But I must in all honesty confess that my shock at its disappearance would be as nothing to my horror if it were suddenly to appear again--in print. If one or two other of my earlier efforts had also been lost in the post, my conscience would have been the lighter. This one was called 'The Narrative of John Smith,' and it was of a personal-social-political complexion. Had it appeared I should have probably awakened to find myself infamous, for it steered, as I remember it, perilously near to the libellous. However, it was safely lost, and that was the end of another of my first books.

Then I started upon an exceedingly sensational novel, which interested me extremely at the time, though I have never heard that it had the same effect upon anyone else afterwards. I may urge in extenuation of all shortcomings that it was written in the intervals of a busy though ill-paying practice. And a man must try that and combine it with literary work before he quite knows what it means. How often have I rejoiced to find a clear morning before me, and settled down to my task, or rather, dashed ferociously at it, as knowing how precious were those hours of quiet! Then to me enter my housekeeper, with tidings of dismay. 'Mrs. Thurston's little boy wants to see you, doctor.' 'Show him in,' say I, striving to fix my scene in my mind that I may splice it when this trouble is over. 'Well, my boy?' 'Please, doctor, mother wants to know if she is to add water to that medicine.' 'Certainly, certainly.'

Not that it matters in the least, but it is well to answer with decision. Exit the little boy, and the splice is about half accomplished when he suddenly bursts into the room again. 'Please, doctor, when I got back mother had taken the medicine without the water.' 'Tut, tut!' I answer. 'It really does not matter in the least.' The youth withdraws with a suspicious glance, and one more paragraph has been written when the husband puts in an appearance. 'There seems to have been some misunderstanding about that medicine,' he remarks coldly. 'Not at all,' I say, 'it really didn't matter.' 'Well, then, why did you tell the boy that it should be taken with water?' And then I try to disentangle the business, and the husband shakes his head gloomily at me. 'She feels very queer,' says he; 'we should all be easier in our minds if you came and looked at her.' So I leave my heroine in the four-foot way with an express thundering towards her, and trudge sadly off, with the feeling that another morning has been wasted, and another seam left visible to the critic's eye in my unhappy novel. Such was the genesis of my sensational romance, and when publishers wrote to say that they could see no merit in it, I was, heart and soul, of the same way of thinking.

And then, under more favourable circumstances, I wrote 'Micah Clarke,' for patients had become more tractable, and I had married, and in every way I was a brighter man. A year's reading and five months' writing finished it, and I thought I had a tool in my hands that would cut a path for me. So I had, but the first thing that I cut with it was my finger. I sent it to a friend, whose opinion I deeply respected, in London, who read for one of the leading houses, but he had been bitten by the historical novel, and very naturally he distrusted it. From him it went to house after house, and house after house would have none of it. Blackwood found that the people did not talk so in the seventeenth century; Bentley that its principal defect was that there was a complete absence of interest; Cassells that experience had shown that an historical novel could never be a commercial success. I remember smoking over my dog-eared manuscript when it returned for a whiff of country air after one of its descents upon town, and wondering what I should do if some sporting reckless kind of publisher were suddenly to stride in and make me a bid of

forty shillings or so for the lot. And then suddenly I bethought me to send it to Messrs. Longmans, where it was fortunate enough to fall into the hands of Mr. Andrew Lang. From that day the way was smoothed to it, and, as things turned out, I was spared that keenest sting of ill-success, that those who had believed in your work should suffer pecuniarily for their belief. A door had been opened for me into the temple of the Muses, and it only remained that I should find something that was worthy of being borne through it.



## PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

(Answers may be in next month's Chronicle.)

1. Which is better: to read 300 words per minute with 90% comprehension or to read 500 words per minute with 70% comprehension?
2. If you were on a planet with a totally dark sky, could you tell if it was rotating?
3. How many public charities are there in the United States?
4. What is the most confusing financial issue?

## ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

1. Estimate the distance from Boston to the following cities: New York, Atlanta, New Orleans, Dallas, Detroit, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, and Seattle.  
 A: To New York, 206 mi.; Atlanta, 1037 mi.; New Orleans, 1,507 mi.; Dallas, 1748 mi.; Detroit, 695 mi.; Chicago, 963 mi.; Denver, 1,949 mi.; Los Angeles, 2,979 mi.; Seattle, 2,976 mi.
2. What percentage of U.S. charity goes outside the country?  
 A: Only about 2% of U.S. charity donations, a little over \$4 billion, goes outside the country.

## KICK IRRATIONAL by Brian Lord

www.KickComics.com



**CHAPTER NOTES**

Southern Connecticut Mensa has an e-mail server list on Topica where members can discuss topics with other Mensans on the list To subscribe, just send a blank e-mail to:  
MensaSCT- subscribe@topica.com

**BETHEL CINEMA FILM GROUP** The Bethel Cinema is an independent art house movie theater in the town of Bethel, CT, just outside Danbury The Cinema will be running a Freudian Flicks psychological-film discussion group from now until May or June Meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at 11:00 am (Bethel Cinema 778-2100) If you are interested in participating in a Mensa group to see films in this series or any of the films on the theater's regular schedule, please contact Nancy O'Neil at Nancyoneil@aol.com.

**If you would like to organize or sponsor a Mensa event**, please contact Jim Mizera at Jmizera@hotmail.com The event can be posted in the Chronicle and announced at monthly dinners It can also be listed in the newsletter of the Connecticut and Western Massachusetts Mensa chapter, the Media, if enough lead-time is available.

**Change of Address**  
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