

# 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.

**Membership Renewal:** If you have an annual Mensa membership, your membership will be expiring at the end of April. You should have received a renewal notice in the mail in January. You can return that form or visit [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org) to renew.

## ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE

going back to 2000 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.

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**SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR MAY**

Friday, May 6, 7:20 p.m.

**Mensa Goes to the Movies**

Join us at the (fantastically restored!) Avon in downtown Stamford for THE SMARTEST GUYS IN THE ROOM (unrated). Directed by Alex Gibney, this is the inside story of one of history's greatest business scandals, in which top executives of America's 7th largest company walked away with over one billion dollars while investors and employees lost everything. Based on the best-selling book The Smartest Guys in the Room by Fortune reporters Bethany McLean and Peter Elkind and featuring insider accounts and incendiary corporate audio and videotapes, Gibney reveals the almost unimaginable personal excesses of the Enron hierarchy and the utter moral vacuum that posed as corporate philosophy. The film comes to a harrowing dénouement as we hear Enron traders' own voices as they wring hundreds of millions of dollars in profits out of the California energy crisis. As a result, we come to understand how the avarice of Enron's traders and their bosses had a shocking and profound domino effect that may shape the face of our economy for years to come. Writer/producer/director Alex Gibney will be present to answer questions at a talkback following the screening. Tickets: members/seniors \$6, non-members \$9, now on sale at the box office or call 203-967-3660 during showtimes. Coffee/victuals/ etc. afterwards at local diner, coffeeshop, or restaurant (by consensus). RSVP. For further information contact Catherine Musor at 203-856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (please put Mensa in the subject line). <http://avontheatre.com> or [www.enronmovie.com](http://www.enronmovie.com)

Friday, May 13, beginning at 5:30/6:00

**Mensa Happy Hour**

The Black Bear Saloon, 80 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT (203) 299-0711. The Fairfield County Happy Hour returns! Join us for the scintillating dialogue or just because you have to eat eventually, so it might as well be here.

<http://www.blackbearsono.com> For details, contact Catherine Musor at rin@optonline.net (put MENSA in the subject line) or (203) 856-6316

Friday, May 13, 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, May 21, 11-4

**Artists Studio Tour**

From Studio to Street: Artists in our Midst, sponsored by Westport Arts Center <http://www.westportartscenter.org> or 203-222-7070. Tickets \$20. For RSVP and/or further information contact Catherine Musor at 203-856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (please include MENSA in the subject line.) The studio of internationally collected painter David Barton, our speaker for the June monthly dinner, is featured on this tour.

Saturday, May 21, 7:00.

**Monthly Dinner**

Glenn Butler will speak on **"Technology Transfer - Or How NOAA Undersea Diver Enriched Air Technology helped repair the Hubble Space Telescope."** This PPT lecture will include lots of GREAT launch and space photos. Glenn has more than 35 years experience in military and commercial diving, and clinical hyperbaric operations. He has developed and / or operated over a dozen major hospital-based Hyperbaric Medicine programs internationally. He is currently the President and CEO of Life Support Technologies, a company that has, for over ten years, specialized in the clinical application of hospital based Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medical Services. Before the presentation, we will enjoy dinner in our private dining room at the

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. 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.

Stony Hill Inn, 46 Stony Hill Road (right off Exit 8 on Rte. 84), Bethel, CT 06801, (203-743-5533). Dress is casual. Contact Nancy O'Neil, Nancy-oneil@aol.com, 203-791-1668, for information and reservations. You MUST call and MAKE RESERVATIONS by Friday, May 20 so we can assure that the restaurant can provide seating. If you make reservations and can't attend, PLEASE call and cancel.

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 if eastbound or a right if westbound. 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.

Sunday, May 22, 7 pm

### **The Good News Gospel Choir in concert**

This 50-voice, multi-denominational singing group performs nearly every weekend at churches, festivals, fundraisers and various community events throughout the state of Connecticut. The group has released two albums, 1997's Joy, Unspeakable Joy and most recently, Light a Candle. For tickets (\$15 adult, \$10 senior/children) and further information contact catherine musor at 203-856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (please include MENSA in the subject line.) This performance will take place at the Saugatuck Congregational Church, 245 Post Road East, Westport CT.

Friday, May 27, 9-11:30 pm

**JAZZ** Join us for a rousing evening with the ever-impressive Chris Coogan Quintet at the historic Silvermine Tavern, 194 Perry Avenue, Norwalk, CT, <http://silverminetavern.com>. This popular combo's repertoire includes strait-ahead jazz, New Orleans second line, Dixieland, blues, bebop, ragtime, gospel, funk and fusion-- you won't be disappointed! \$5 cover (no charge for dinner guests -- for reservations call the Tavern at 203-847-4558. If there is enough interest expressed we'll get a table together for dinner beforehand.) To RSVP and for further information contact Catherine Musor at 203-856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (please include MENSA in the subject line.)

### **EVENT FOR YOUNG OR SINGLE MENSANS**

As a relatively new member of the CWM chapter, I have attended a few events and been surprised at the low turnout of young members. I am offering to start a monthly event that would appeal to the younger crowd, and also, am considering planning an event for singles only. Without an idea of how many people would be interested, it is difficult to plan. Please email me at winginit04L8@aol.com or call me at 860-309-2554 if you would be interested in either event. I will happy to organize it if there is enough interest.

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR JUNE**

Friday, June 10, 7:00.

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

See above listing for details.

Saturday, June 18, 7:00.

#### **Monthly Dinner.**

See above listing for details.

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### **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.

There's also the [CWM-Announce] upcoming events reminder email list, which I send out \*approximately\* weekly. Subscribe and unsubscribe options are located at <http://lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/cwm-announce> for your convenience. Any Mensan who wants to notify their fellow M's about any late-breaking event s/he wants to share with our delightful chapter, please email me ASAP with the details and I'll get it out to the list. You may also check the website [www.cwm.us.mensa.org](http://www.cwm.us.mensa.org) for our calendar updates. - 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](http://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. weekly on 91.3 FM, WWUH, in West Hartford. The name of the program is "What You Will" and its focus is chamber music.

**MAY**

1 Sunday 3:30 pm

**Book Discussion Group** (floating, this time in Woodbridge, CT, west of New Haven) The first meeting of C&WM Mensa's newest book discussion group will focus on Ken Follett's historical novel *The Pillars of the Earth*. This long and complex page turner is available in most libraries and in paperback and trade paper. If you prefer audio-books, it's available in both unabridged and abridged versions? do yourself (and your fellow discussants) a favor and listen to the unabridged one if at all possible. Amazon's write-up is available here: [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0451166892/qid=1060826692/sr=2-1/ref=sr\\_2\\_1/104-8477391-9634349](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0451166892/qid=1060826692/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/104-8477391-9634349) Or try <http://www.ken-follett.com/bibliography/pillars.html> For further information, contact our first meeting's host Manny Ratafia at [manny@ratafia.net](mailto:manny@ratafia.net)

5 Wednesday 6:30 pm

**¡Come celebrate Cinco de Mayo!** There will be room for a total of ten Mensans and guests at Puerto Vallarta (a great, reasonably-priced Mexican restaurant in Middletown, CT). To join the dinner celebration, please contact Ernest Adams by email at [CTMnsn@Comcast.Net](mailto:CTMnsn@Comcast.Net), (860) 445-1786 (Groton, CT), or (860) 543-2334 (Hartford, CT; cell phone). Directions will be cheerfully provided.

5, 12, 19, 26 Thursdays 7:00 pm

**Scrabble** (WE) at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford. Ellen Leonard, (860) 667-1966 Canceled on the 28th for Passover.

6 Friday 5:30 pm

**May's Rolling Card Party** will be held at the home of Pamela Guinan in Wethersfield, CT. For RSVPs and directions, call 860-563-5761 or email [Pamela.Guinan@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Pamela.Guinan@po.state.ct.us) (email is available during business hours only). BYOB and bring a small munchie to share.

15 Sunday 12 noon

**Guided Tour of Elephants!**

Exhibition at Yale Peabody Museum, New Haven. Gail Trowbridge sponsors this special tour for up to 20 Mensans. Tour is free and includes general admission to the museum. Mensa families with kids over age 5 are welcome. RSVP required for reservation by May 1. We may go out for dinner afterwards, RSVP for that, too. Contact Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or [Gail.Trowbridge@att.net](mailto:Gail.Trowbridge@att.net). For info about the exhibition itself, see [www.peabody.yale.edu/exhibits/elephants.html](http://www.peabody.yale.edu/exhibits/elephants.html).

15 Sunday 1:35 pm

**Mensa Goes to a Baseball Game**

Meet in Section 213 of New Britain Stadium to watch the home team, the Rock Cats, host the Akron Aeros (Cleveland Indian's Double-A farm team.) Need more info? [tom.thomas@the-spa.com](mailto:tom.thomas@the-spa.com) or [www.rockcats.com](http://www.rockcats.com)

15 Sunday 5:15 pm

**Theater Event: Guys and Dolls**

at New Britain Rep Theater. The original production of this musical ran on Broadway for 1200 performances and includes timeless songs like "Luck Be a Lady," and "Sit Down, You're Rockin' The Boat." Just like last month, we will be meeting before the performance for a late lunch / early dinner. Tickets are \$18, but only \$15 for seniors. In order to guarantee sitting together, call Barb Holstein immediately at 860-632-7873 or email [BarbCPA@att.net](mailto:BarbCPA@att.net) now! Hope you can join us!

20 Friday 6pm - 8pm or so

**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.



Please contact Nicole Michaud at (860) 434-7329 or email [nirimi@snet.net](mailto:nirimi@snet.net), Subject: Diner Dinner.

21 Saturday 4:00 pm

**Bluegrass concert by Barbara Shaw's band**

**Shoregrass** [www.shoregrass.com](http://www.shoregrass.com) : 5th Annual Armed Forces Day Tribute, Edmonds Town Hall, Main Street, Newtown, CT Info & early-bird tickets: Marty Maciag (203) 426-4817 (evenings) or (203) 267-5445 (days) Back again for a tribute on Armed Forces Day, ShoreGrass. performs along with the Roger Sprung Band and others. Held this year in the beautiful town hall auditorium (past years have been in the gym). Refreshments available. \$10

27 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 are now reserving the middle tables on the left as you walk in the bar. Dinner is a possibility if enough people are interested. Come on down and join us this month, we'd love to see ya. Contact Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or [Gail.Trowbridge@att.net](mailto:Gail.Trowbridge@att.net).

29 Sunday 12:30 pm

**Mensa Memorial Day Cookout** at Beth and Charlie's in Wallingford. Since it's warm out, no limit on how many people can join the fun and camaraderie. BYOB and a dish to share. Please RSVP to 203-294-0503 and leave a message, or [player.piano@juno.com](mailto:player.piano@juno.com) Day of the party, phone 203-294-1994 for last minute questions / updates. Rain date of Monday 5/30. Wethersfield, CT. For RSVPs and directions, call 860-563-5761 or email [Pamela.Guinan@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Pamela.Guinan@po.state.ct.us) (email is available during business hours only). BYOB and bring a small munchie to share.

## REGIONAL GATHERINGS

July 6-10

**Laissez le bon temps roulez! Annual Gathering 2005** will take over New Orleans July 6-10. Adult registration is \$75 until April 8, which is a savings of \$15 from the door rate. Young Mensan registration is free for ages 4 and under, \$30 for ages 4-12 and \$50 for ages 13-20.

And what do you get for your money? Fun for both sides of your brain! Access to all the food, music and culture New Orleans is known for, plus the inimitable experience of spending a long weekend with more than a thousand of your favorite Mensans:

- Take high tea at the Longue Vue house and gardens.
- Tour the Stennis Space Center and the Southern Regional Research Center.
- Step back in time at two of the plantations on the River Road.
- Play golf to raise money for the Mensa Education & Research Foundation.
- Ride a Segway.
- See the largest hypnotic production show in the world.
- Hear the secrets of "the Canal Street Madam," the Countess Pontalba and the voodoo queens.
- Learn about baseball, fencing and tae kwon do; about reality, adult stem cells, digital forensics, ancient Egyptian measurement of the planet...

...And more activities are being added all the time. Don't forget about the full schedule of Leadership Development Workshops designed to make the jobs of Local Group officers easier. Workshops will focus on banking changes since 9/11, Web design, mailing newsletters and member privacy issues - and that's just for starters. Check it all out for yourself at [www.ag.us.mensa.org](http://www.ag.us.mensa.org), and while you're there, register online. We'll see you in the Big Easy!

## 2005 Post-AG Cruise

The 2005 Annual Gathering in New Orleans will end with a Mensa cruise to Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Cozumel. Extra-special pricing until August 5, 2004. Details at <http://www.suitecruising.com/ag2.htm>

## THE APRIL DINNER

Our speaker at the April dinner was Susan Addiss, a board member of Environment and Human Health, Inc. (EHHI), who spoke on the risks of lawn pesticides. Mensans enjoyed dinner in their private room at the Stony Hill Inn, and then listened to Susan talk for a half-hour on the most common pesticides used in lawn care and the dangers they pose to humans and wildlife.

At the outset, Susan noted that pesticides are toxic substances used to kill a variety of "pests" and so fall into different categories - insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, repellants, and disinfectants. Nearly 75% of American households used some type of pesticide, and 56% of them use insecticides, which make up 39% of total pesticide sales. There are over 200 different pesticides used on lawn care, with 35 of them applied in over 90% of the cases. Lawns typically have ten times the pesticides per acre that farms do.

Our speaker listed the most commonly used active ingredients in pesticides, the top five being 2,4-D, Glyphosate, MCPP, Dicamba, and Diazinon. Epidemiological studies have associated these five with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma disease, and four of the five have been associated with birth problems. These pesticides, singularly or in combination with other ingredients, may damage the nervous system, kidneys, and liver of humans, and may kill wildlife such as birds. Only one pellet of diazinon, for example, can kill a bird.

Pesticides used on lawns may seep into groundwater and wells. One study found 11% of wells had traces of lawn care products. Runoff from lawns and golf courses may also carry pesticides into rivers. The U.S. Geological Survey detected pesticide residues in 96% of fish sampled in major rivers and streams.

Susan stated that children are particularly vulnerable to pesticides because their organ systems are still developing, and their cells are reproducing more rapidly. They take in more pesticides relative to body weight than adults do, and exposure increases their risk of cancer since cancer develops over time.

Also noted were the differences in how long pesticides endure. While most products in pesticides have short half-lives, some such as Lindane and Chlordane, can last 20 to 30 years. These ingredients have been found in wells.

Ms. Addiss spoke about some of the actions taken against pesticides in Canada, and by the national and state governments in the U.S. She feels that packaging and labeling remain problems, because packages are too porous and easily torn, and the information on labels is too technical and printed too small.

Susan finished up by taking some questions from the audience on some of the data presented, and on possible organic alternatives to pesticides. She also provided a sheet that listed websites and phone numbers of organizations that have information on pesticides, and a book by EHHI discussing the topics in her lecture in further detail.

**FROM THE VICE CHAIR**

Marghretta McBean

March came in like a lion and left...like a lion. The weather here has been ghastly, but hopefully the balmy days of spring are not too far away.

Tucson Arizona was the setting of Mensa's Colloquium 2005, "Earth in Mind: Fueling the Future". As a participant and facilitator, I can say the event was an overwhelming success. For those who feel that Mensa doesn't offer opportunities for intelligent discourse and debate, a Colloquium is the answer. Over 150 of us gathered to listen, discuss and of course, disagree, but in a highly energized and focused forum. In addition to presentations on alternative fuel sources (pro & con) and the future of the earth resources, we got to ogle the latest in hybrid cars. Hopefully Region 1 will be presenting a Colloquium on Cosmology in 2006, hosted by Mensa of Northeastern New York. Stay tuned for more details....

As a board member of American Mensa, I attend its quarterly meetings. The most recent was held in Columbus Ohio in mid-March. As the Chair of the Ad-Hoc Funding Committee, I am pleased to say that the Committee's motion to pool and then equally divide RVC (Regional Vice Chair) discretionary funds was passed. Each year American Mensa designates funds for use by its RVCs based on the number of groups within a region, and to a lesser extent by the number of members within a region. While my Committee was unable to come up with a more equitable funding formula, we were able to address the "budget overflow" problem that many RVCs face at the end of a fiscal year. Ten percent of the funds will be set aside for emergencies, with RVCs approving usage. Typical expenses incurred by RVCs include RG registration and hotel fees, travel to group activities and funding of group or special events.

If you are reading this, you are probably a current member, since Mensa's membership year begins April 1. Please exercise your constitutional right and vote in our national and regional elections. Details are in the April Bulletin. I would like to continue working for Region 1, but I

need your help to do so.

Passover begins April 24. I have always liked the cuisine of the Sephardic Jews, since it includes foods, spices and herbs that seem anathema to the Ashkenazi. A mina (or maïena in Egypt) is a pie, consisting of layered matzos, vegetables and cheese. Minas are common at Sephardic Seders. An Italian Sephardic friend of mine calls minas "Passover lasagnas".

**MINA (SPINACH & POTATO MATZO PIE)**

8 medium potatoes  
 2 10 oz. packages frozen chopped spinach or kale, thawed and squeezed  
 4 to 6 scallions, diced  
 15 oz. container ricotta cheese (or 1 lb. farmer cheese)  
 Juice of 1 lemon  
 1 tsp. nutmeg  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 6 to 8 matzos  
 1-1/2 cups vegetable stock  
 2 cups grated white cheese (e.g. mozzarella, Monterey Jack or white cheddar)  
 Olive oil

1. Steam the potatoes in their skins until tender; cool. Peel and cut into 1/4" thick slices.
2. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the spinach, scallions, ricotta cheese, lemon juice, and seasonings.
4. Soak the matzos in room temperature vegetable stock in a shallow container until pliable but not mushy, about 2 minutes; drain.
5. Lightly oil two 9" x 9" (or one 13" x 9") pans; line the bottoms with a layer of matzos. Layer each with the spinach mixture, potato slices, more matzos and about 1/2 cup grated white cheese. Repeat until all ingredients are used. Finish with a layer of matzo, topped with grated cheese.
6. Bake until golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Cut into squares to serve.

**PUZZLES & QUESTIONS**

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

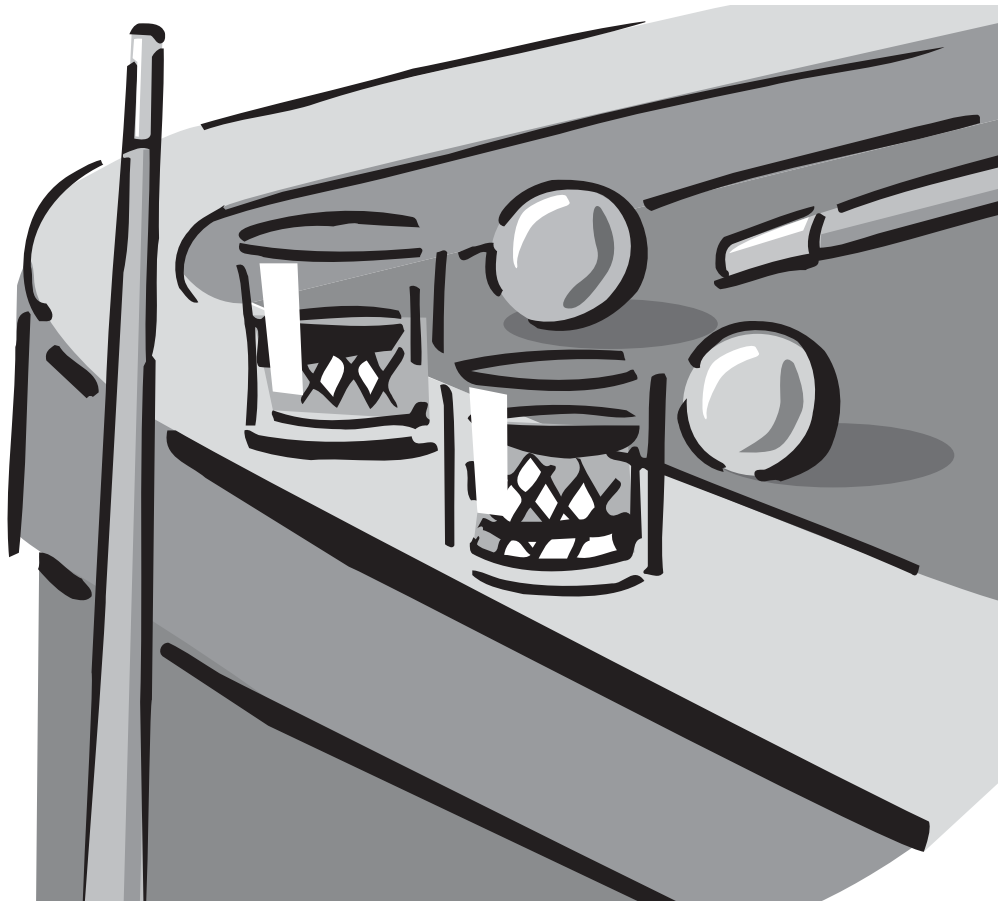
1. Give some examples of quick thinking that you have observed lately.
2. Is there a difference between wit and wise-cracking?
3. State the essentials of tragedy.
4. What are effective and ineffective ways of complaining?
5. Compare and contrast two civil wars.
6. Give a history of Sparta.
7. List the largest countries by area.
8. Which state has the oldest population?

**ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:**

1. What is the probability of rolling at least one six in six rolls of a die?
- A: The probability of rolling one or more sixes in six rolls of a die is 1 minus the probability of NOT rolling a six on each toss. The probability of not rolling a six on each roll is  $5/6$  or 83.333%. Multiplying this six times gives about  $1/3$ . Subtracting this from 1 gives the answer, about  $2/3$ .

6. How much wool do we get from an average sheep in a year?

A: We can get about 8 pounds of wool each year from an average sheep, although some sheep have produced up to 35 pounds a year.





## MIND AND MONEY

### COMPULSIVE SPENDING

Common estimates are that somewhere from 2% to 8% of U.S. citizens are compulsive spenders. Many others may have spending impulses that, while not compulsive, cause great regret. What's behind these cravings and what ways have people found to combat them? Psychologists and financial planners have many insights into the causes and the remedies for this problem.

Research seems to show that chronic shoppers get a temporary high from shopping that is like other types of addictive highs. Buying switches on pleasure centers in their brain, giving them a fix. Hence, compulsive shoppers often use shopping as therapy for depression, anger, frustration, or loneliness. They don't necessarily enjoy owning or using things, just buying them. Buying makes them feel better - for a moment.

Some spending addicts spend to try to make up for a lack of achievement. It doesn't take much to spend, so some people who don't achieve their goals toss money around to make themselves feel worthwhile or to console themselves. If they can't make much money, they may try to act as if they have money anyway. Even if they don't earn as much as their colleagues, they can still spend as much. Spending strokes their egos even as it erodes their savings.

Some people spend more than they have because they don't like planning, budgeting, or even doing basic arithmetic. These people don't know how much they're spending and may not want to know. Budgeting means placing limits on themselves, and they resent any idea of limits as a restraint on their freedom or spontaneity. They don't do any accounting because they don't like to be held accountable. They don't like to add up purchases because they prefer to think that choices don't really have a cost, that it's all a free lunch. To actually tabulate their expenditures would mean thinking ahead, taking account of their choices, and restraining their impulses. Denying costs is their way of denying reality.

One fundamental reason that people may overspend is that goods are concrete while money is abstract. Acquiring something gives immediate tangible gratification, which may simply be more vivid and compelling than the deferred satisfaction of saving. To shopaholics, goods are more colorful, more conspicuous, and more attractive than dry bank balances. They always prefer the visible and immediate to the intangible and delayed.

If someone spends compulsively, how can they stop? Psychologists have both philosophical advice and specific measures for spendthrifts to take. Most of their counsel aims at getting sufferers to change their focus in order to change their habits.

One way careless spenders can start to control their habit is by taking an inventory of their thoughts and actions. They can begin by asking themselves how much time they spend thinking about shopping and worrying about debt and how much time they spend juggling accounts to keep up with spending. If they're constantly thinking about buying, then they are wasting time as well as money. If they don't care about money, they must at least realize that time is precious, and this can shock them into action.

Consumers can also ask themselves more specific questions about their habits: Do I buy bargains that I don't use? When I get more money, do I spend all or almost all of it? Do I save carefully only to blow it all on a spending spree? Do I always buy on credit? Do I go shopping for one item and end up buying ten? Do I look at my investments, retirement savings, or bank balances? All of these questions can uncover disturbing patterns.

Shoppers can find many reasons to rationalize buying things on the spur of the moment, so economic psychologists often recommend that people pause and ask themselves why they are buying something. What am I seeking from this product or service - novelty, convenience, pride, aesthetic appeal? What are the advantages and disadvantages of buying this? What emotional reason do I have for this purchase? By asking these questions whenever the buying impulse

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strikes, consumers may realize that many of their reasons for spending are trivial, frivolous, or wishful and unrealistic. The more conscious they are of these irrational motives, the more they can resist them.

There are many other questions consumers can pose to themselves to check their spending: How many times will I actually use this? How many times have I used many of my other purchases? Were those expenditures justified? If not, how can I be so sure about this one? Where will I put this? How many hours will I have to work to pay for this? All these questions push one to consider decisions less emotionally and more objectively.

Sometimes big spenders have to reframe the way they look at decisions. If they always give in to cravings to get something, they are probably framing the choice poorly. They reason, "I will either get Door Number 1 (the pleasure of this item) or I will walk away with nothing." But if they alter their thinking to say, "I will either get the item or walk away with \$50 (the money I would have spent)", they will make better decisions. They need to think of what they are gaining from refraining, not just what they are losing. To encourage themselves to resist cravings, binge buyers can tabulate the total amount of purchases they passed up, and congratulate themselves on what they have "won."

Changing from a spender to a saver requires an emotional and philosophical turnabout. Those with a problem should realize they are not giving up spontaneous fun, they are just abandoning whims. They are not losing their freedom, they are freeing themselves from worry.

Besides changing their thinking, shopping addicts can change many of their habits that place them in temptation's way. They need to avoid situations that trigger their impulses. This could mean putting credit cards away, taking only as much cash as they are planning to spend, avoiding browsing, and not shopping alone. They can enlist friends to keep them on track. Perhaps most importantly, they should substitute free activities for recreational shopping. They probably

have several hobbies that their compulsive shopping has prevented them from enjoying. They should schedule time for these activities, and let shopping fall by the wayside.

There are other effective steps compulsive shoppers can take to restrain themselves when they shop. If they find themselves buying more things than they planned to, they can pull their shopping cart over to a quiet part of the store and look at everything they have purchased. Away from the hubbub, they can better see the big picture instead of treating each purchase in isolation. Then they should take as many purchases as they can out, and put them back on the shelves. This concrete action will reinforce their will, and they can thank themselves on how many fewer bags they have to carry.

Most of the changes psychologists suggest make people spend more consciously and deliberately. To improve the habit of saving, spenders need to make their savings more prominent in their minds. They need to start collecting money in the same way that they have collected goods. They must substitute savings habits for shopping habits. Instead of browsing stores, they should learn to take pleasure in watching their investments grow. Instead of reading ads, they should read financial papers and magazines. In short, they have to surround themselves with savings reminders rather than spending triggers.

Those who spend themselves into debt can change their thinking and ways. Economic psychologists have come up with many ideas to help them, and make them see that the urge to splurge can be controlled. Their insights can go a long way towards making buying a choice, not a compulsion.

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## WORD ORIGINS

Many English words and phrases dealing with food have interesting derivations. Here are a few of them.

**Barbecue** - This word originated with Caribbean Indians and came to English via Spanish. The Indians of Guiana used the word "babracot" and the Haitians used "barbacoa" to refer to a raised wooden or metal frame used for curing meats or sleeping upon. The Spanish took the Haitian word, from whence it entered English.

**Cookie** - This word comes from the Dutch *kaekje*, meaning "small cake."

**Hot dog** - This term first appear in the Yale Record of October 19, 1895, which mentions people eating hot dogs. They were called "dogs" because this was a slang term for sausages, deriving from an old insinuation that sausage-makers used dog meat.

**Egg on** - This phrase is not taken in any way from the eggs that we eat.

"Egg" here is a verb deriving from the Old Norse word "eggja", meaning to urge, incite, or encourage. The phrase to "egg on" goes back to the 16th century.

**Free lunch** - Many people think that the late science fiction author Robert Heinlein invented the adage "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch" in his 1966 novel *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. But Heinlein didn't coin this maxim, he merely popularized it. The first print record of the sentence is in the June 1, 1949 edition of the *San Francisco News*. This piece may be a reprint of a 1938 editorial. The acronym for this saying, TANSTAAFL, dates back to 1949 as well.

The first written record of the term "free lunch" also comes from San Francisco, appearing in the publication *Wide West* on November 23, 1854.

It referred to the practice of saloons giving free meals to attract clientele and then charging high prices for the drinks to cover the cost.

**French fry** - French-fried potatoes don't come from France. "French" here means cut into narrow strips before cooking. Some meats and vegetables are also frenched.

**French toast** - French toast did originate in France. In France, it was known as "ameritte" or "pain perdu".

**Recipe** - The words recipe and receipt both come from the Latin word "recipere", meaning "to take back or receive." Recipe is the present tense, "take." "Receipt" meant "that which has been received." Junior cooks got "receipts" from senior cooks, so these list of ingredients became known as "recipes." "Recipe" is also the first word in the pharmaceutical abbreviation Rx.

**Sandwich** - The sandwich gets its name from the fourth Earl of Sandwich, John Montague. Montague was a chronic gambler who frequented the court of George III. He didn't like to stop gambling even for meals. Sohe would order his servant to bring him pieces of meat placed slices of bread. The term soon became the common name for this food.

**Spud** - Contrary to one story, this word for potato is not an acronym. It comes from the tool used to dig potatoes out of the ground. We don't know how the tool got that name, but in the mid 19th century, the name came to be used for the potato itself.

### 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.

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## NOTED AND QUOTED

If I miss one day's practice, I notice it. If I miss two days, the critics note it. If I miss three days, the audience notices it. - *Ignace Paderowski, (1860 - 1941), Polish pianist and statesman*

What a big gap there is between advice and help. - *Anonymous*

Retirement takes all the fun out of Saturdays.  
- *Duke Gmahle*

The weirder you're going to behave, the more normal you should look. It works in reverse, too. When I see a kid with three or four rings in his nose, I know there is absolutely nothing extraordinary about that person.  
- *P.J. O'Rourke, (1947 - ), humorist*

Civilizations die from suicide, not by murder.  
- *Arnold Toynbee, (1889 - 1975), historian, philosopher*

Little by little, one travels far.  
- *J. R. R. Tolkien, (1892 - 1973)*

I'm looking forward to looking back on all this.  
- *Sandra Knell*

Let every man divide his money into three parts, and invest a third in land, a third in business, and a third let him keep in reserve. - *Talmud*

Only the shallow know themselves.  
- *Oscar Wilde, (1856 - 1900)*

When the terrain differs from the map, believe the terrain. - *the Norwegian Boy Scout Handbook*

Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get. - *Anonymous*

Could five hundred men have painted the Sistine Chapel? - *William Lear, (1902 ^ 1978), inventor*

We do not explore to cheat death. We explore to celebrate life. - *Croatian Explorers' Club*

War is a series of catastrophes that results in victory. - *Georges Clemenceau, (1841 - 1929), French prime minister (1906-09, 1917-20)*

There is no man so good, who, were he to submit all his thoughts and actions to the laws, would not deserve hanging ten times in his life.  
- *Montaigne, (1533 - 1592), Of Vanity*

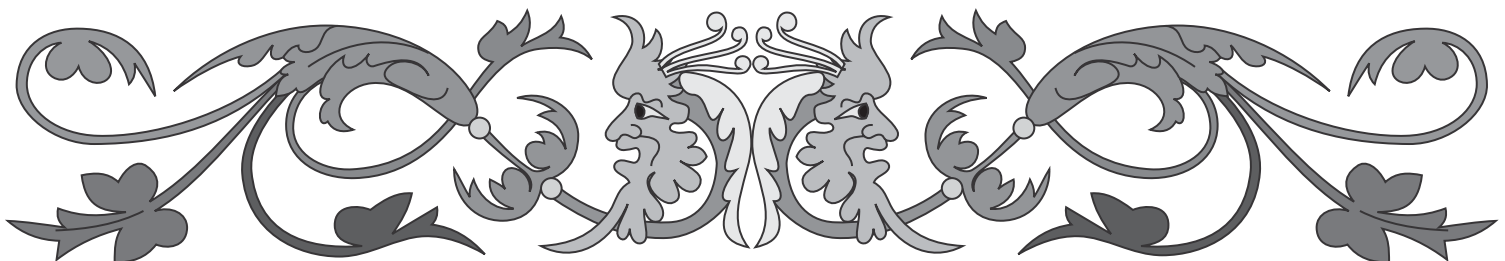
I live in the crowd of jollity, not so much to enjoy company as to shun myself.  
- *Samuel Johnson, (1709 - 1784), Rasselas*

When I played pro football, I never set out to hurt anybody deliberately ... unless it was, you know, important like a league game or something. - *Dick Butkus, (1942 - ), Chicago Bears all-star linebacker, 1965 - 1973*

... to produce a mighty book you must choose a mighty theme.  
- *Herman Melville, (1819 - 1891), Moby Dick*

The vagabond, when rich, is called a tourist.  
- *Paul Richard, American writer*

The charm of history and its enigmatic lesson consist in the fact that, from age to age, nothing changes and yet everything is completely different.  
- *Aldous Huxley, (1894 - 1963)*





## RUMINATIONS

### ON THE SUBLIME

*from Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature  
August Wilhelm Schlegel, (1767 - 1845)*

"MAN is never obliged to say, I must--must," says the Jew Nathan [Lessing's play, "Nathan the Wise," act i. scene 3.] to the dervish; and this expression is true in a wider sense than man might be tempted to suppose. The will is the specific character of man, and reason itself is only the eternal rule of his will. All nature acts reasonably; all our prerogative is to act reasonably, with consciousness and with will. All other objects obey necessity; man is the being who wills.

It is exactly for this reason that there is nothing more inconsistent with the dignity of man than to suffer violence, for violence effaces him. He who does violence to us disputes nothing less than our humanity; he who submits in a cowardly spirit to the violence abdicates his quality of man. But this pretension to remain absolutely free from all that is violence seems to imply a being in possession of a force sufficiently great to keep off all other forces. But if this pretension is found in a being who, in the order of forces, cannot claim the first rank, the result is an unfortunate contradiction between his instinct and his power.

Man is precisely in this case. Surrounded by numberless forces, which are all superior to him and hold sway over him, he aspires by his nature not to have to suffer any injury at their hands. It is true that by his intelligence he adds artificially to his natural forces, and that up to a certain point he actually succeeds in reigning physically over everything that is physical. The proverb says, "there is a remedy for everything except death;" but this exception, if it is one in the strictest acceptance of the term, would suffice to entirely ruin the very idea of our nature. Never will man be the cause that wills, if there is a case, a single case, in which, with or without his consent, he is forced to what he does not wish. This single terrible exception, to be or to do what is necessary and not what he wishes, this idea will pursue him as a phantom; and as we see in fact among the greater part of men, it will give him up a prey to the blind terrors of imagination. His boasted liberty is nothing, if there is a single point where he is under constraint and bound. It is education that must give back liberty to man, and help him to

complete the whole idea of his nature. It ought, therefore, to make him capable of making his will prevail, for, I repeat it, man is the being who wills.

It is possible to reach this end in two ways: either really, by opposing force to force, by commanding nature, as nature yourself; or by the idea, issuing from nature, and by thus destroying in relation to self the very idea of violence. All that helps man really to hold sway over nature is what is styled physical education. Man cultivates his understanding and develops his physical force, either to convert the forces of nature, according to their proper laws, into the instruments of his will, or to secure himself against their effects when he cannot direct them. But the forces of nature can only be directed or turned aside up to a certain point; beyond that point they withdraw from the influence of man and place him under theirs.

Thus beyond the point in question his freedom would be lost, were he only susceptible of physical education. But he must be man in the full sense of the term, and consequently he must have nothing to endure, in any case, contrary to his will. Accordingly, when he can no longer oppose to the physical forces any proportional physical force, only one resource remains to him to avoid suffering any violence: that is, to cause to cease entirely that relation which is so fatal to him. It is, in short, to annihilate as an idea the violence he is obliged to suffer in fact. The education that fits man for this is called moral education.

The man fashioned by moral education, and he only, is entirely free. He is either superior to nature as a power, or he is in harmony with her. None of the actions that she brings to bear upon him is violence, for before reaching him it has become an act of his own will, and dynamic nature could never touch him, because he spontaneously keeps away from all to which she can reach. But to attain to this state of mind, which morality designates as resignation to necessary things, and religion styles absolute submission to the counsels of Providence, to reach this by an effort of his free will and with reflection, a certain clearness is required in thought, and a certain energy in the will, superior to what man commonly possesses in



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active life. Happily for him, man finds here not only in his rational nature a moral aptitude that can be developed by the understanding, but also in his reasonable and sensible nature--that is, in his human nature--an aesthetic tendency which seems to have been placed there expressly: a faculty awakens of itself in the presence of certain sensuous objects, and which, after our feelings are purified, can be cultivated to such a point as to become a powerful ideal development. This aptitude, I grant, is idealistic in its principle and in its essence, but one which even the realist allows to be seen clearly enough in his conduct, though he does not acknowledge this in theory. I am now about to discuss this faculty.

I admit that the sense of the beautiful, when it is developed by culture, suffices of itself even to make us, in a certain sense, independent of nature as far as it is a force. A mind that has ennobled itself sufficiently to be more sensible of the form than of the matter of things, contains in itself a plenitude of existence that nothing could make it lose, especially as it does not trouble itself about the possession of the things in question, and finds a very liberal pleasure in the mere contemplation of the phenomenon. As this mind has no want to appropriate the objects in the midst of which it lives, it has no fear of being deprived of them. But it is nevertheless necessary that these phenomena should have a body, through which they manifest themselves; and, consequently, as long as we feel the want even only of finding a beautiful appearance or a beautiful phenomenon, this want implies that of the existence of certain objects; and it follows that our satisfaction still depends on nature, considered as a force, because it is nature who disposes of all existence in a sovereign manner. It is a different thing, in fact, to feel in yourself the want of objects endowed with beauty and goodness, or simply to require that the objects which surround us are good and beautiful. This last desire is compatible with the most perfect freedom of the soul; but it is not so with the other. We are entitled to require that the object before us should be beautiful and good, but we can only wish that the beautiful and the good should be realized objectively before us. Now the disposition of mind is, par excellence, called grand and sublime, in which no attention is given to the question of knowing if the beautiful, the good, and the perfect exist; but when it is rigorously

required that that which exists should be good, beautiful and perfect, this character of mind is called sublime, because it contains in it positively all the characteristics of a fine mind without sharing its negative features. A sign by which beautiful and good minds, but having weaknesses, are recognized, is the aspiring always to find their moral ideal realized in the world of facts, and their being painfully affected by all that places an obstacle to it. A mind thus constituted is reduced to a sad state of dependence in relation to chance, and it may always be predicted of it, without fear of deception, that it will give too large a share to the matter in moral and aesthetic things, and that it will not sustain the more critical trials of character and taste. Moral imperfections ought not to be to us a cause of suffering and of pain: suffering and pain bespeak rather an ungratified wish than an unsatisfied moral want. An unsatisfied moral want ought to be accompanied by a more manly feeling, and fortify our mind and confirm it in its energy rather than make us unhappy and pusillanimous.

Nature has given to us two genii as companions in our life in this lower world. The one, amiable and of good companionship, shortens the troubles of the journey by the gayety of its plays. It makes the chains of necessity light to us, and leads us amidst joy and laughter, to the most perilous spots, where we must act as pure spirits and strip ourselves of all that is body, on the knowledge of the true and the practice of duty. Once when we are there, it abandons us, for its realm is limited to the world of sense; its earthly wings could not carry it beyond. But at this moment the other companion steps upon the stage, silent and grave, and with his powerful arm carries us beyond the precipice that made us giddy.

In the former of these genii we recognize the feeling of the beautiful, in the other the feeling of the sublime. No doubt the beautiful itself is already an expression of liberty. This liberty is not the kind that raises us above the power of nature, and that sets us free from all bodily influence, but it is only the liberty which we enjoy as men, without issuing from the limits of nature. In the presence of beauty we feel ourselves free, because the sensuous instincts are in harmony with the laws of reason. In presence of the sublime we feel ourselves sublime, because the sensuous instincts have no influence over the ju-

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isdiction of reason, because it is then the pure spirit that acts in us as if it were not absolutely subject to any other laws than its own.

The feeling of the sublime is a mixed feeling. It is at once a painful state, which in its paroxysm is manifested by a kind of shudder, and a joyous state, that may rise to rapture, and which, without being properly a pleasure, is greatly preferred to every kind of pleasure by delicate souls. This union of two contrary sensations in one and the same feeling proves in a peremptory manner our moral independence. For as it is absolutely impossible that the same object should be with us in two opposite relations, it follows that it is we ourselves who sustain two different relations with the object. It follows that these two opposed natures should be united in us, which, on the idea of this object, are brought into play in two perfectly opposite ways. Thus we experience by the feeling of the beautiful that the state of our spiritual nature is not necessarily determined by the state of our sensuous nature; that the laws of nature are not necessarily our laws; and that there is in us an autonomous principle independent of all sensuous impressions.

The sublime object may be considered in two lights. We either represent it to our comprehension, and we try in vain to make an image or idea of it, or we refer it to our vital force, and we consider it as a power before which ours is nothing. But though in both cases we experience in connection with this object the painful feeling of our limits, yet we do not seek to avoid it; on the contrary we are attracted to it by an irresistible force. Could this be the case if the limits of our imagination were at the same time those of our comprehension? Should we be willingly called back to the feeling of the omnipotence of the forces of nature if we had not in us some thing that cannot be a prey of these forces. We are pleased with the spectacle of the sensuous infinite, because we are able to attain by thought what the senses can no longer embrace and what the understanding cannot grasp. The sight of a terrible object transports us with enthusiasm, because we are capable of willing what the instincts reject with horror, and of rejecting what they desire. We willingly allow our imagination to find something in the world of phenomena that passes beyond it; because, after all, it is only one sensuous force that triumphs

over another sensuous force, but nature, notwithstanding all her infinity, cannot attain to the absolute grandeur which is in ourselves. We submit willingly to physical necessity both our well-being and our existence. This is because the very power reminds us that there are in us principles that escape its empire. Man is in the hands of nature, but the will of man is in his own hands.

Nature herself has actually used a sensuous means to teach us that we are something more than mere sensuous natures. She has even known how to make use of our sensations to put us on the track of this discovery-- that we are by no means subject as slaves to the violence of the sensations. And this is quite a different effect from that which can be produced by the beautiful; I mean the beautiful of the real world, for the sublime itself is surpassed by the ideal. In the presence of beauty, reason and sense are in harmony, and it is only on account of this harmony that the beautiful has attraction for us. Consequently, beauty alone could never teach us that our destination is to act as pure intelligences, and that we are capable of showing ourselves such. In the presence of the sublime, on the contrary, reason and the sensuous are not in harmony, and it is precisely this contradiction between the two which makes the charm of the sublime-- its irresistible action on our minds. Here the physical man and the moral man separate in the most marked manner; for it is exactly in the presence of objects that make us feel at once how limited the former is that the other makes the experience of its force. The very thing that lowers one to the earth is precisely that which raises the other to the infinite.

Let us imagine a man endowed with all the virtues of which the union constitutes a fine character. Let us suppose a man who finds his delight in practising justice, beneficence, moderation, constancy, and good faith. All the duties whose accomplishment is prescribed to him by circumstances are only a play to him, and I admit that fortune favors him in such wise that none of the actions which his good heart may demand of him will be hard to him. Who would not be charmed with such a delightful harmony between the instincts of nature and the prescriptions of reason? and who could help admiring such a man? Nevertheless, though he may inspire us with affection, are we quite sure that he is really virtuous? Or in general that he has anything

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that corresponds to the idea of virtue? If this man had only in view to obtain agreeable sensations, unless he were mad he could not act in any other possible way; and he would have to be his own enemy to wish to be vicious. Perhaps the principle of his actions is pure, but this is a question to be discussed between himself and his conscience. For our part, we see nothing of it; we do not see him do anything more than a simply clever man would do who had no other god than pleasure. Thus all his virtue is a phenomenon that is explained by reasons derived from the sensuous order, and we are by no means driven to seek for reasons beyond the world of sense.

Let us suppose that this same man falls suddenly under misfortune. He is deprived of his possessions; his reputation is destroyed; he is chained to his bed by sickness and suffering; he is robbed by death of all those he loves; he is forsaken in his distress by all in whom he had trusted. Let us under these circumstances again seek him, and demand the practice of the same virtues under trial as he formerly had practised during the period of his prosperity. If he is found to be absolutely the same as before, if his poverty has not deteriorated his benevolence, or ingratitude his kindly offices of good-will, or bodily suffering his equanimity, or adversity his joy in the happiness of others; if his change of fortune is perceptible in externals, but not in his habits, in the matter, but not in the form of his conduct; then, doubtless, his virtue could not be explained by any reason drawn from the physical order; the idea of nature--which always necessarily supposes that actual phenomena rest upon some anterior phenomenon, as effects upon cause-- this idea no longer suffices to enable us to comprehend this man; because there is nothing more contradictory than to admit that effect can remain the same when the cause has changed to its contrary. We must then give up all natural explanation or thought of finding the reason of his acts in his condition; we must of necessity go beyond the physical order, and seek the principle of his conduct in quite another world, to which the reason can indeed raise itself with its ideas, but which the understanding cannot grasp by its conceptions. It is this revelation of the absolute moral power which is subjected to no condition of nature, it is this which gives to the melancholy feeling that seizes our heart at the sight of such

a man that peculiar, inexpressible charm, which no delight of the senses, however refined, could arouse in us to the same extent as the sublime.

Thus the sublime opens to us a road to overstep the limits of the world of sense, in which the feeling of the beautiful would forever imprison us. It is not little by little (for between absolute dependence and absolute liberty there is no possible transition), it is suddenly and by a shock that the sublime wrenches our spiritual and independent nature away from the net which feeling has spun round us, and which enchains the soul the more tightly because of its subtle texture. Whatever may be the extent to which feeling has gained a mastery over men by the latent influence of a softening taste, when even it should have succeeded in penetrating into the most secret recesses of moral jurisdiction under the deceptive envelope of spiritual beauty, and there poisoning the holiness of principle at its source--one single sublime emotion often suffices to break all this tissue of imposture, at one blow to give freedom to the fettered elasticity of spiritual nature, to reveal its true destination, and to oblige it to conceive, for one instant at least, the feeling of its liberty. Beauty, under the shape of the divine Calypso, bewitched the virtuous son of Ulysses, and the power of her charms held him long a prisoner in her island. For long he believed he was obeying an immortal divinity, whilst he was only the slave of sense; but suddenly an impression of the sublime in the form of Mentor seizes him; he remembers that he is called to a higher destiny--he throws himself into the waves, and is free.

The sublime, like the beautiful, is spread profusely throughout nature, and the faculty to feel both one and the other has been given to all men; but the germ does not develop equally; it is necessary that art should lend its aid. The aim of nature supposes already that we ought spontaneously to advance towards the beautiful, although we still avoid the sublime: for the beautiful is like the nurse of our childhood, and it is for her to refine our soul in withdrawing it from the rude state of nature. But though she is our first affection, and our faculty of feeling is first developed for her, nature has so provided, nevertheless, that this faculty ripens slowly and awaits its full development until the understanding and the heart are formed. If taste attains its full maturity before truth and morality have been es-

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established in our heart by a better road than that which taste would take, the sensuous world would remain the limit of our aspirations. We should not know, either in our ideas or in our feelings, how to pass beyond the world of sense, and all that imagination failed to represent would be without reality to us. But happily it enters into the plan of nature, that taste, although it first comes into bloom, is the last to ripen of all the faculties of the mind. During this interval, man has time to store up in his mind a provision of ideas, a treasure of principles in his heart, and then to develop especially, in drawing from reason, his feeling for the great and the sublime.

As long as man was only the slave of physical necessity, while he had found no issue to escape from the narrow circle of his appetites, and while he as yet felt none of that superior liberty which connects him with the angels, nature, so far as she is incomprehensible, could not fail to impress him with the insufficiency of his imagination, and again, as far as she is a destructive force, to recall his physical powerlessness. He is forced then to pass timidly towards one, and to turn away with affright from the other. But scarcely has free contemplation assured him against the blind oppression of the forces of nature--scarcely has he recognized amidst the tide of phenomena something permanent in his own being--than at once the coarse agglomeration of nature that surrounds him begins to speak in another language to his heart, and the relative grandeur which is without becomes for him a mirror in which he contemplates the absolute greatness which is within himself. He approaches without fear, and with a thrill of pleasure, those pictures which terrified his imagination, and intentionally makes an appeal to the whole strength of that faculty by which we represent the infinite perceived by the senses, in order if she fails in this attempt, to feel all the more vividly how much these ideas are superior to all that the highest sensuous faculty can give. The sight of a distant infinity--of heights beyond vision, this vast ocean which is at his feet, that other ocean still more vast which stretches above his head, transport and ravish his mind beyond the narrow circle of the real, beyond this narrow and oppressive prison of physical life. The simple majesty of nature offers him a less circumscribed measure for estimating its grandeur, and, surrounded by the grand outlines which it presents

to him, he can no longer bear anything mean in his way of thinking. Who can tell how many luminous ideas, how many heroic resolutions, which would never have been conceived in the dark study of the imprisoned man of science, nor in the saloons where the people of society elbow each other, have been inspired on a sudden during a walk, only by the contact and the generous struggle of the soul with the great spirit of nature? Who knows if it is not owing to a less frequent intercourse with this sublime spirit that we must partially attribute the narrowness of mind so common to the dwellers in towns, always bent under the minutiae which dwarf and wither their soul, whilst the soul of the nomad remains open and free as the firmament beneath which he pitches his tent?

But it is not only the unimaginable or the sublime in quantity, it is also the incomprehensible, that which escapes the understanding and that which troubles it, which can serve to give us an idea of the super-sensuous infinity. As soon as this element attains the grandiose and announces itself to us as the work of nature (for otherwise it is only despicable), it then aids the soul to represent to itself the ideal, and imprints upon it a noble development. Who does not love the eloquent disorder of natural scenery to the insipid regularity of a French garden? Who does not admire in the plains of Sicily the marvellous combat of nature with herself--of her creative force and her destructive power? Who does not prefer to feast his eyes upon the wild streams and waterfalls of Scotland, upon its misty mountains, upon that romantic nature from which Ossian drew his inspiration--rather than to grow enthusiastic in this stiff Holland, before the laborious triumph of patience over the most stubborn of elements? No one will deny that in the rich grazing-grounds of Holland, things are not better ordered for the wants of physical man than upon the perfid crater of Vesuvius, and that the understanding which likes to comprehend and arrange all things, does not find its requirements rather in the regularly planted farm-garden than in the uncultivated beauty of natural scenery. But man has requirements which go beyond those of natural life and comfort or well-being; he has another destiny than merely to comprehend the phenomena which surround him.

In the same manner as for the observant trav-



**RUMINATIONS CONT.**

eller, the strange wildness of nature is so attractive in physical nature--thus, and for the same reason, every soul capable of enthusiasm finds even in the regrettable anarchy found in the moral world a source of singular pleasure. Without doubt he who sees the grand economy of nature only from the impoverished light of the understanding; he who has never any other thought than to reform its defiant disorder and to substitute harmony, such a one could not find pleasure in a world which seems given up to the caprice of chance rather than governed according to a wise ordination, and where merit and fortune are for the most part in opposition. He desires that the whole world throughout its vast space should be ruled like a house well regulated; and when this much-desired regularity is not found, he has no other resource than to defer to a future life, and to another and better nature, the satisfaction which is his due, but which neither the present nor the past afford him. On the contrary, he renounces willingly the pretension of restoring this chaos of phenomena to one single notion; he regains on another side, and with interest, what he loses on this side. Just this want of connection, this anarchy, in the phenomena, making them useless to the understanding, is what makes them valuable to reason. The more they are disorderly the more they represent the freedom of nature. In a sense, if you suppress all connection, you have independence. Thus, under the idea of liberty, reason brings back to unity of thought that which the understanding could not bring to unity of notion. It thus shows its superiority over the understanding, as a faculty subject to the conditions of a sensuous order. When we consider of what value it is to a rational being to be independent of natural laws, we see how much man finds in the liberty of sublime objects as a set-off against the checks of his cognitive faculty. Liberty, with all its drawbacks, is everywhere vastly more attractive to a noble soul than good social order without it--than society like a flock of sheep, or a machine working like a watch. This mechanism makes of man only a product; liberty makes him the citizen of a better world.

It is only thus viewed that history is sublime to me. The world, as a historic object, is only the strife of natural forces; with one another and with man's freedom. History registers more actions referable to nature than to free will; it is

only in a few cases, like Cato and Phocion, that reason has made its power felt. If we expect a treasury of knowledge in history how we are deceived! All attempts of philosophy to reconcile what the moral world demands with what the real world gives is belied by experience, and nature seems as illogical in history as she is logical in the organic kingdoms.

But if we give up explanation it is different. Nature, in being capricious and defying logic, in pulling down great and little, in crushing the noblest works of man, taking centuries to form--nature, by deviating from intellectual laws, proves that you cannot explain nature by nature's laws themselves, and this sight drives the mind to the world of ideas, to the absolute.

But though nature as a sensuous activity drives us to the ideal, it throws us still more into the world of ideas by the terrible. Our highest aspiration is to be in good relations with physical nature, without violating morality. But it is not always convenient to serve two masters; and though duty and the appetites should never be at strife, physical necessity is peremptory, and nothing can save men from evil destiny. Happy is he who learns to bear what he cannot change! There are cases where fate overpowers all ram-parts, and where the only resistance is, like a pure spirit, to throw freely off all interest of sense, and strip yourself of your body. Now this force comes from sublime emotions, and a frequent commerce with destructive nature. Pathos is a sort of artificial misfortune, and brings us to the spiritual law that commands our soul. Real misfortune does not always choose its time opportunely, while pathos finds us armed at all points. By frequently renewing this exercise of its own activity the mind controls the sensuous, so that when real misfortune comes, it can treat it as an artificial suffering, and make it a sublime emotion. Thus pathos takes away some of the malignity of destiny, and wards off its blows.

Away then with that false theory which supposes falsely a harmony binding well being and well doing. Let evil destiny show its face. Our safety is not in blindness, but in facing our dangers. What can do so better than familiarity with the splendid and terrible evolution of events, or than pictures showing man in conflict with chance; evil triumphant, security deceived--pictures shown us



**RUMINATIONS CONT.**

throughout history, and placed before us by tragedy? Whoever passes in review the terrible fate of Mithridates, of Syracuse, and Carthage, cannot help keeping his appetite in check, at least for a time, and, seeing the vanity of things, strive after that which is permanent. The capacity of the sublime is one of the noblest aptitudes of man. Beauty is useful, but does not go beyond man. The sublime applies to the pure spirit. The sublime must be joined to the beautiful to complete the aesthetic education, and to enlarge man's heart beyond the sensuous world.

Without the beautiful there would be an eternal strife between our natural and rational destiny. If we only thought of our vocation as spirits we should be strangers to this sphere of life. Without the sublime, beauty would make us forget our dignity. Enervated--wedded to this transient state, we should lose sight of our true country.

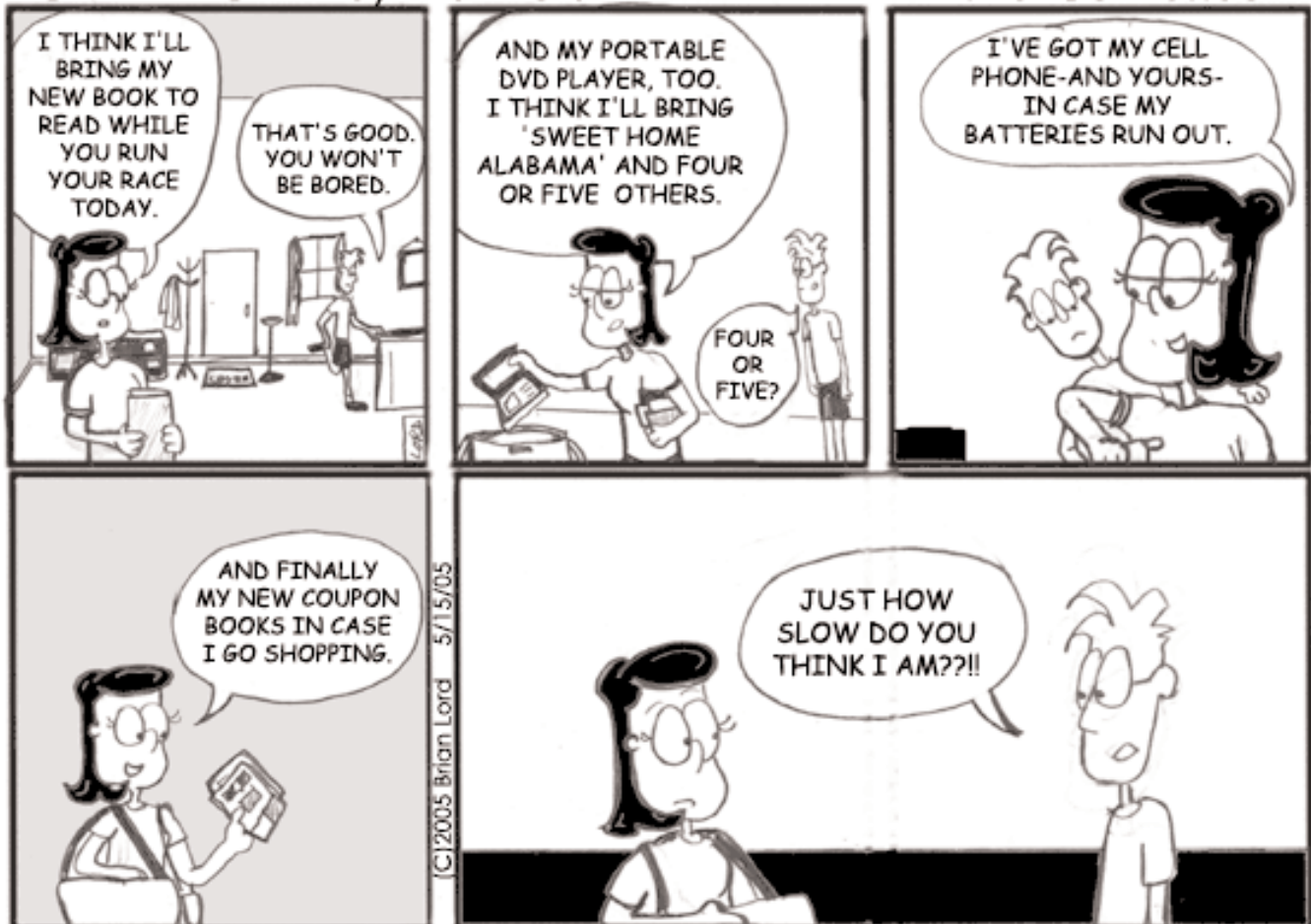
We are only perfect citizens of nature when the sublime is wedded to the beautiful.

Many things in nature offer man the beautiful and sublime. But here again he is better served at second-hand. He prefers to have them ready-made in art rather than seek them painfully in nature. This instinct for imitation in art has the advantage of being able to make those points essential that nature has made secondary. While nature suffers violence in the organic world, or exercises violence, working with power upon man, though she can only be aesthetical as an object of pure contemplation, art, plastic art, is fully free, because it throws off all accidental restrictions and leaves the mind free, because it imitates the appearance, not the reality of objects. As all sublimity and beauty consists in the appearance, and not in the value of the object, it follows that art has all the advantages of nature without her shackles.

**KICK IRRATIONAL** 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

[www.KickComics.com](http://www.KickComics.com)



## POETRY CORNER

**May**

Helen Hunt Jackson, (1830 - 1885)s

O Month when they who love must love and  
wed!  
Were one to go to worlds where May is naught,  
And seek to tell the memories he had brought  
From earth of thee, what were most fitly said?  
I know not if the rosy showers shed  
From apple-boughs, or if the soft green wrought  
In fields, or if the robin's call be fraught  
The most with thy delight. Perhaps they read  
Thee best who in the ancient time did say  
Thou wert the sacred month unto the old:  
No blossom blooms upon thy brightest day  
So subtly sweet as memories which unfold  
In aged hearts which in thy sunshine lie,  
To sun themselves once more before they die.

**Before the Rain**

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, (1836-1906)

WE knew it would rain, for all the morn  
A spirit on slender ropes of mist  
Was lowering its golden buckets down  
Into the vapory amethyst.  
Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens--  
Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,  
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,  
To sprinkle them over the land in showers.  
We knew it would rain, for the poplars showed  
The white of their leaves, the amber grain  
Shrunk in the wind--and the lightning now  
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain!

**Song for a Little House**

Christopher Morley, (1890 - 1957)

I'M glad our house is a little house,  
Not too tall nor too wide:  
I'm glad the hovering butterflies  
Feel free to come inside.

Our little house is a friendly house.  
It is not shy or vain;  
It gossips with the talking trees,  
And makes friends with the rain.

And quick leaves cast a shimmer of green  
Against our whited walls,  
And in the phlox, the dutious bees  
Are paying duty calls.

**City Trees**

Edna St. Vincent Millay, (1892 - 1950)

THE trees along this city street  
Save for the traffic and the trains,  
Would make a sound as thin and sweet  
As trees in country lanes.

And people standing in their shade  
Out of a shower, undoubtedly  
Would hear such music as is made  
Upon a country tree.

Oh, little leaves that are so dumb  
Against the shrieking city air,  
I watch you when the wind has come,--  
I know what sound is there.

## MENTAL MATTERS

### THE FORGETTING CURVE

To forget is human but it may surprise you to learn how fast and how much humans forget when they make no special effort to remember. Psychologists have known for over a hundred years that people begin forgetting new material at an exponential rate, and often remember very little after a month or so. Their research has provided some advice for people who want to fight this natural forgetting curve and preserve what they learn.

The first psychologist to study the rate at which we forget was the German experimenter Hermann Ebbinghaus in the 1880s. Ebbinghaus tested his own ability to remember in serial order short nonsense syllables of three letters each. He used nonsense words to eliminate the possibility of prior learning from biasing the test. First, Ebbinghaus practiced recalling the lists until he could repeat them twice without error and recorded the time it took him to do this. Then he waited for various intervals and did the same tests again, again noting how long it took him to succeed. He found that he forgot more at each interval, although the time it took him to relearn a list declined.

How steep was Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve? The chart below (Table 1) shows that at first his success at remembering dropped quite rapidly, and then leveled off. He forgot about half of what he had learned after one hour, and retained only about one-fifth of the material after one month. What he called his 'memory savings', the improvement in relearning speed, also flattened as he went along. Ebbinghaus also found that he consistently remembered the words at the beginning and end of the list better than the words in the middle. This tendency to better remember earlier items in a list has become known as the primacy effect; the tendency to recall end items better is termed the recency effect.

Many other researchers have repeated Ebbinghaus's experiments and found a similar pattern: if people don't try to encode memories or rehearse them, they will consistently forget about 75% of new material after two days. These results change somewhat depending on the difficulty of the material, the attention of the learners, and the stress they feel, but the shape of the

forgetting curve remains much the same. While Ebbinghaus experiments tested long-term memory, later experimenters have found that people's working memory fades in the same way.

Experiments by Ebbinghaus and other psychologists have shown that people can sharply improve their recall by encoding material better, such as through mnemonics, and repeatedly reviewing it. Learners using these general techniques can remember with less effort and for a longer time. For instance, in one educational study, students who reviewed their class notes within a day retained about 75% of the information after nine weeks, while those who didn't lost more than 50% of what they learned after one day, and 80% after nine weeks. When students expose themselves to the same information again, they seem to bring it to the surface again and make it easier to activate the memory the next time.

Research on the forgetting curve demonstrates that while students can benefit from cramming before a test, they can do much better by following a regular plan of reviewing daily. Although stress or excitement can boost memory, worrying because you haven't studied will cut away at the actual study time. While cramming can do a little good just before an exam, the forgetting curve ensures that the effort won't help you retain ideas later for a final exam or over the longer run.

Any attempt to remember must take into account the forgetting curve. Humans forget and they forget quite quickly unless they review things. Unless we make that special effort, we will slide down the forgetting curve.

TABLE 1

TIME INTERVAL	RETENTION RATE
20 min.	58%
60 min.	44%
1 day	34%
2 days	28%
1 month	21%

**BOOK REVIEW**

Rick D'Amico

Blog Understanding the Information Reformation That's Changing Your World  
*by Hugh Hewitt*

During the 2004 Presidential Election, people started becoming familiar with a new word, "BLOG." Hugh Hewitt, a law school professor and talk show host, describes how a blog works, what impacts blogging has had, how to participate in blogging (as well as how to start a blog of one's own), and the future of the blogosphere, or the world of blogs.

Interestingly, one of the first things that Hewitt does is give a historical summary of the Protestant Reformation. He compares the situation that led to the Protestant Reformation, in the 16th Century, to conditions that in the late 20th-21st Century paved the way for blogging. Both were in the aftermath of important communications inventions: the printing press in the 16th Century, and the Internet in the 20th Century.

However, just as the Protestant Reformation didn't mean the end of the Catholic Church, Hewitt contends that the mainstream media is far from dead. It's just that the truth is now more transparent because of the bloggers. That doesn't mean, however, that circulation of printed media and network television viewership hasn't been affected by blogs; readership and viewership of mainstream media has dropped over the years. Yes, there is a mainstream media meltdown in progress.

While most people think of blogging as a conservative activity, the author points out that the first high-profile person hit by the blogosphere was Trent Lott, a very prominent conservative. When he spoke at Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party and made the comment that America would have been better off had Thurmond's Presidential campaign as a "Dixiecrat" been successful, initially the mainstream media overlooked it. It was the bloggers who brought the story into prominence, and the mainstream media had no choice but to follow the bloggers' lead. After that, the blogosphere gave rise to the Jayson Blair/New York Times incident, "Rathergate," and the Swift Boat Veterans.

Hewitt also examines who bloggers are and why they blog. For one, despite the image that some mainstream media types project, bloggers are not a bunch of guys hanging around the house in their pajamas.

The book also contains information on how to start and use a blog. Hewitt illustrates the number of uses for blogs in one chapter entitled, "A Dozen Blogs I Would Launch If I Were ..." Examples include a publisher, a fisherman, General Motors, and a Cleveland Browns fan, just to give a few.

I would strongly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in blogs, the media, politics, or the communications revolution that has taken place during the past ten years or so.



## MENSA INTERNATIONAL - MINI TUTORIAL

Ever wonder about the structure of Mensa and its membership outside of the U.S.? Well, perhaps I'm a bit slow, but it took me several years of membership to realize the extensiveness of the worldwide Mensa organization. American Mensa was fairly easy to fathom --- one hundred and thirty-something local groups with a total membership of about 55,000. And although I knew that Mensa was an international society, I was unaware of just how pervasive it was. For those of you who have not yet delved into the mystique of Mensa International (generally called MIL for Mensa International, Ltd.), here is a short tutorial that should bring you up to speed.

### Countries and Membership

Similar to American Mensa, members outside the U.S. are grouped by country. As of the last official reporting period, June 2004, there were 30 "National" Mensa countries (including the U.S.) and 7 "Provisional" National Mensa countries with a total of just under 100,000 members. To be officially recognized as a "National Mensa", a country must have more than 250 members and have met a number of requirements as specified in the International Constitution, such as: an approved national constitution, a testing program, scheduled activities and a national publication. "Provisional National Mensas" may have met some of the requirements, but have not yet met all of them.

In addition, there are presently 14 "Emerging National Mensas" --- an informal category assigned to countries with fifty-plus members who are trying to get their act together and begin to meet the requirements for provisional status.

To summarize, MIL is comprised of 51 recognized countries and about 110,000 members.

### Governing Bodies and Elected Officials

There are two primary MIL governing bodies, the International General Council (IGC) and the International Board of Directors (IBD). The IGC is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer of each National Mensa and the International Chairman. The IGC meets annually to provide a forum for

the exchange of ideas and information and to review and evaluate Mensa's policies and programs. The IGC provides recommendations to the IBD and may place items for consideration on the IBD agenda.

The IBD, which also meets annually, is comprised of the four International Elected Officers and National Representatives from the National Mensas. Each country is assigned a number of votes based on the country's membership. A country with fewer than 1,000 members has one vote; countries with 1,000 to 4,999 members have two votes; each country with 5,000 or more members has three votes plus one vote for each additional 5,000 members. As an example, American Mensa, with an officially recognized membership of 45,000, has eleven votes --- three for the initial 5,000 members, plus eight more for the additional 40,000 members. The number of National Representatives is determined by the requirement that no Representative may have more than three votes. Thus, American Mensa has four Representatives.

As mentioned above, the four International Elected Officers are also members of the IBD. They include the Chairman, the Director of Administration, the Director of Development and the Treasurer. The Chairman acts as the Chair of both the IGC and the IBD. The Elected Officers generally act as the day-to-day MIL managers.

To summarize, MIL is governed by the IGC and the IBD and has four elected officers.

### Election of Officers

Elected officers serve for a term of two years, but may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. Candidates may be nominated by petition or by the Boards of National Mensa countries. Although only one nomination is necessary, candidates often vie for nominations from a number of National Mensas. Any Mensa member in good standing is considered eligible to serve as an international officer.

Candidates in the international election run on slates more often than seen in American Mensa elections. Similar to American Mensa, slates may pool their candidates' campaign statements, thereby submitting a common platform of ideas and intentions. Voting is also similar to that in



**GOOD WINE CHEAP**

(and good food to go with it)

By John Grover

This month's column is dedicated to French food, Spanish wine and the "Crock-Pot". About a month ago we dined upon the recipe found below. In spite of having developed a real appreciation for seafood over the years, I am still secretly wary of fish dishes. I think that this ingrained fear is based upon the periodic culinary tragedies of my childhood (Sorry Mom.). Once again the Boss proved these fears had no basis. The Bouillabaisse that came out of the slow cooker that night was an absolute delight.

The wine this month is a white from the Valencia Region of Southern Spain. The 2001 "El Copero" is a well-balanced blend of Macabeo, Merseguera and Moscatel grapes. It's nose hints of spice and fruit, followed by a fresh citrus flavor. Like so many Spanish white wines, this one seems to be made for seafood. I paid \$5 a bottle for this on sale.

**MENSA INTERNATIONAL CONT.**

American Mensa elections --- a preferential voting system is used, where each member may vote for any individual candidate, even those attached to slates, and may indicate a declining preference when more than two candidates vie for an office.

The next election is scheduled for mid-April through May of this year, concurrent with the American Mensa Elections.

To summarize, International Officers are elected every two years through a preferential voting process.

The author, Jim Werdell, is currently AMC Treasurer and Mensa International Director of Administration.

**BOUILLABAISSE**

(from an old torn Rival "Crock-Pot" cookbook published in the 1970's)

First Ingredients:

1/2 cup olive oil  
 1/2 cup chopped onion  
 1 tbsp chopped garlic  
 1/2 cup chopped celery  
 1 can (1 lb.) tomatoes  
 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce  
 2 tsp. salt  
 1 tbsp paprika  
 1/2 cup dry sherry or white wine.

Seafood:

1 1/2 lbs. medium or large shrimp  
 3 sea bass or halibut steaks cut in 1 inch pieces  
 1 lb. crabmeat  
 4 medium lobster tails (optional or substitutes:  
 1 lb. clams or scallops)

Put all the ingredients except the seafood into the slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for 2 to 4 hours. Then add all seafood. Cover and cook 1 to 3 hours on high. You can vary the amounts and types of seafood to your taste and to what you have in the freezer. We happened to have had tilapia on hand that night instead of other fish. I would recommend serving this dish with a crusty French bread. A good cooking hint from the Boss is to add only half of the salt called for at the beginning; then add to taste later.

## THE ELECTORATE'S LAMENT

By: Jim Werdell

AML Treasurer and MIL Director of Administration

Okay, it's May. The robins have arrived, the cherry blossoms are falling from the trees, April Fool's Day is but a distant chuckle and Christmas is still 330 or so days away. All this, and you probably have not yet even thought seriously about voting in the Mensa elections.

The election materials and ballots have been out for a couple of weeks now. And you probably have not yet made up your mind whether or not to invest the time and effort. Well --- been there, felt that way. Reading 200-word campaign statements is not my idea of the best way to spend my free time either. It could be worse. You might have had to write one.

We Mensans pride ourselves for our logical thinking, our imaginations and our ability to speak intelligently on any subject that arises. We consistently outguess the contestants on Jeopardy or Who Wants to be a Millionaire. We relish the thought of burying ourselves in a Dan Brown novel like the Da Vinci Code. The New York Times crossword puzzle is a worthwhile effort, even if a couple of three-letter words escape us.

But I have to admit that bullying our way through the myriad of election issues and candidates is a daunting dilemma. After all, there are AMC candidates, MIL candidates, AML By-Laws changes and MIL Constitution changes. And after ploughing through all that, you still have to tear out a couple of ballots, find and attach some stamps and wend your way to the mailbox in time to beat the May 31 deadline. (Did you know that if one of the MIL Constitution changes passes, you will likely be able to vote electronically in the next election?)

Well, consider it a challenge. I have found that Mensans are very good at sifting through hype (I thought of using another noun, but decided against it) and culling the truth while discarding the fluff. Make it a challenge. Find something you want to change or someone you want in office. Your perspective is important and is translated into action by your vote. Don't let someone else decide what or who is best for you. So, please take the time to read the various motions and candidate statements, both American and Mensa International. Come to your own conclusions and support them with your vote.

## HOW TO CORRUPT A POLITICIAN - AMC OR OTHERWISE

For decades now (I joined in 1966) I have wondered about what the possible motivation could be for corruption and ugly politics at the national (and international) level of Mensa governance, namely the (A)merican (M)ensa (C)ommittee. I think I finally got it and this, being national election season, is the time to illustrate it.

First we have to define what Mensa is. This won't take long. The vast majority of members (85% of incoming new members) will drop out within the first two years. Most of these new members do not place a strain on our "resources" but they do, according to the four dropout studies that we have done in the last forty years, express a dissatisfaction with the quality, or lack thereof, of what Mensa has to offer. They certainly tell us, in no uncertain terms, that Mensa, in no way lives up to its promise. Now that opinion comes from the dropouts who bothered to reply to the questionnaire. I suspect that another goodly percentage of the dropouts simply paid the testing fee and the first annual dues in order to get the membership card and whatever "bragging rights" went along with it. In short we have a "dues mill", which brings in over two and a half million dollars.

Our national Chairman Jean Becker constantly likes to compare us to AARP, which is a first class joke and a world-class misnomer. AARP has a much higher retention rate and actually provides a tremendous number of services to its membership. It is a service corporation and a very professional corporation. I'm sure Ms. Becker would like to think we are heading in that direction, Mensa never has been anything like AARP, but I want the reader to keep that image in the back of their mind as we flesh in the rest of this picture.

The final figures are this; of your \$52 annual dues \$8.15 come back to your local group, ostensibly to pay for the cost of your local newsletter (which it rarely does), thus leaving your local group to scramble on it's own for any other benefit your local might provide. Simply put, the AMC and the national office keep 84% of your dues to fund "their operations" and a National

Bulletin, which is getting less Mensa-like every month. They have now taken to featuring ad hominem attacks about a tattooed member on the front cover. The ramping up of the national office (despite flat membership figures for the last 25 years) has taken on epic proportions. One example being the assumption of the running of our Annual Gathering by the national office staff, instead of Mensa member volunteers that used to do it in the past. The last two AG's saw the entire national office staff in attendance (air fare and hotel paid for on your dime) and the next three AG's are not run by local groups anymore - it's the national office!

OK, I'll try to shorten this up because it IS tedious and could go on for many more pages. I like to think of this as "the national trough" and I will use that metaphor from now on. National officers are wont to tell you how selflessly they serve and how much uncompensated time they expend in your service. I've heard this for years. Yet every one of the national officers are running again this term, most of them "stepping up" to more exalted positions. If these jobs are so onerous why are they continuing to run? It's the trough. My personal metaphor for the perks they all get. Paid hotel and travel quarterly to "destination cities" for AMC meetings, which I have to comment are totally unnecessary since most of the business is conducted by email (and is "business foregone" at that).

And then we have the Executive Director who finds it necessary to visit the destination cities that our next AG's will be hosted at, not once but at least three times each. I could go on for considerably more length but it just gets more and more depressing. Some of us who would have liked to back Sander Rubin have tried mightily to get him to come out against these abuses but he refuses to do so and I have just learned why. He has been approached and been offered a deal. And it is simply to agree that no changes will be made during his term. There are two reasons for this. Everybody is fully aware that Russ Bakke is not the real candidate - his wife Cookie is! Russ's Parkinson's condition is affecting him (for that matter, both he and Cookie have serious clinical conditions), and TPTB simply don't want to crawl into bed with this. Sander, on the other hand, is something of a known quantity. What you are going to see in the run-

**HOW TO CORRUPT A POLITICIAN CONT.**

up to this election are AMC officers quietly endorsing Sander to anyone who asks. And, of course Sander will say nothing, promise nothing, and eventually...do nothing.

False crises (invented by Risk Management) and vast increases in national office staff are predicted and talked about by the AMC who are calculating that dues will have to go up even higher (a figure of \$100 has been bandied as the make or break point). Of course what all this is doing is just extending the trough and refilling it at a faster rate.

The way a new AMC officer is brought into line is very similar to the way it is done in Washington DC. Some AMC officer approaches the newcomer and tries to ascertain what they want from the experience. A simple invitation to "join the inner circle" of the people who "really run Mensa" will usually turn the trick. In the case of my own RVC it was a chance to have airfare and hotel accommodations picked up for all the RG's he wanted to attend and then bask in the glow of his title. A lot of these people are classic "geek types" who have stood hungrily outside of ANY circle and this one is certainly no exception. And he was, of course, told that if he behaved himself as a "team player" he could move on up the ladder. He is standing now for 2nd Vice Chair unsuccessfully, thank God) and it was no secret that he really believed he could eventually become Chairman. Or so he was told.

And when it rarely happens that some new AMC officer (like Dan Wilterding) manages to keep his integrity, the powers that be sideline him into non-jobs, like Site Selection, which is the only thing he has ever done. And he, of course, has dropped off the Mensa horizon.

Whatever needs to be employed, will be employed. The back alley thug tactics of an ex-union operative who became Chairman are legendary - like running extensive background checks on incoming AMC officers and then black-mailing them with the information, two that we know of for sure.

As to why this happens? The trough is a powerful tool for control - it's that simple. Suborning a member, who by definition is likely to have the self-image problems that a lot of "underachievers" have, isn't that difficult to imagine. Can we do ANYTHING about it? Short of starting completely over, as Sander himself once suggested, there just might be. At each election there is a half-hearted attempt at formulating some questions to put to all of the candidates. This rarely works to anybody's benefit but if the current candidates were forced into a public confrontation, asked the really hard questions, and then had their answers published in the local newsletters this just might make up the memberships mind as to how badly they are being screwed, and have been for quite some time. I would be glad to help with something like this and I would go anywhere at anytime to assist.

Darrell Bross  
April 2005

## RUSS BAKKE FOR AMC CHAIRMAN

My name is Russ Bakke and I'm hoping you'll vote for me to be the next Chairman of the American Mensa Committee (AMC), the group of representatives speaking for you, the member.

Mensa is a living, growing, changing entity, and it needs a leader who will bring a knowledge of the past and a vision of the future to bear on the present. I believe I am the person best qualified to represent the changing membership of American Mensa.

I've been a member of Mensa since 1970, and actively involved in its leadership for most of those 35 years. I'm currently in my eighth consecutive term on the AMC, so I believe I have an understanding of Mensa greater than that of many other officers. I understand its concept, its history, and its potential. I know the issues facing us today and, as a life member, I truly care about Mensa's future.

Today's Mensa is not the Mensa of 40 years ago, 20 years ago, or even five years ago. We're 50 thousand members strong and we have a \$3M-dollar yearly budget. We face daily decisions that require both an in-depth knowledge of our history and a vision of our future. We need AMC representatives who know how and why to continue our past 8 years of steady growth. I believe I am one who can, as your next Chairman of the AMC, do just that.

No substitute exists for experience and a proven track record. Whoever becomes the next Chairman of the AMC must recognize the here-and-now of our organization, deal with the fact that it is changing, and accept that its leaders must be prepared to lead within the framework of that change. I believe I am the one who can, as your next Chairman of the AMC, do just that.

American Mensa as a group has been growing, until recently, older. Our average age has been that of the baby boomers. Now, particularly with the advent of the Internet, we've made ourselves more accessible to younger people and they are joining in greater numbers. As a result, our average age has been decreasing, and many of our local groups have thriving Gen-X groups.

I strongly advocate prideful growth. With the changing face of Mensa, our leadership must stay ahead of the curve to retain current members and recruit new members. With each new member comes another opinion, another chance to learn something new and, perhaps, another new friend. Expanding technology, however,

and most specifically the Internet, has led to a social phenomenon sometimes referred to as cocooning. It's often easier to sit at a keyboard munching Doritos while enjoying social interaction by email, chat groups, or e-lists, instead of getting dressed and driving across town to a face-to-face Happy Hour event. The hoped-for outcome is, of course, that members will get to know each other on-line and feel compelled to put names to faces at enjoyable in-person events. As Chairman of the AMC, I'll do everything I can to encourage this activity.

The AMC necessarily takes its business seriously, but we can do that and still enjoy what we do. I plan to put more fun in the function of leading our membership into the next generation. I'm certainly not going to do this all by myself!

One of my prized strengths is delegation. I can - and will - form a team of capable advisors who have not only the relevant strengths their tasks require, but the ability to work within and maintain a cordial volunteer environment.

I'll build consensus in all ways possible - the old-fashioned way, by talking person-to-person or by phone, and the current way, by email. By knowing ahead of time where the differences lie among AMC members and why, I'll be better equipped during meetings at negotiating agreement. We'll discuss issues cogently, come to agreement, solve problems, and do so in a non-contentious manner.

In order to do this effectively, though, I'll need your participation. First of all, VOTE in this election. That action alone will empower you to become a happier member of Mensa. It's a small action, but it's powerful. Second, after the election is over, talk to your local AMC representative, your Regional Vice Chair. Let him or her know what you think, regardless of subject or opinion. Explain why something matters to you and what request or solution would make you happy.

Join me in the next generation of Mensa!

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Ps. Don't know how to vote? Look for a ballot in the April Mensa Bulletin, which you'll receive about April 20. Follow the instructions, it's due back May 31.



## REGION 1 2005 VICE-CHAIRMEN CAMPAIGN LETTERS

As Region 1's representative to Mensa's national board of directors (the American Mensa Committee), I am asking that you allow me to continue the work which I began in 2003.

Since taking office I have constantly sought to make our region the best in governance, membership growth and group stability.

As an outspoken AMC member, I have striven to eliminate the layers of bureaucracy and obfuscation that have burdened the management of Mensa.

Being a Regional Vice Chair is more than just attending an RG; it is working months before with the planning committee, resolving problems, reviewing contracts, approving the application and acting as a liaison to the national staff should problems arise, as I have done.

It is strongly encouraging a group that has never done so to consider hosting a regional or national Mensa event, be it a RG, LDW, Colloquium or an AMC meeting, and providing ongoing support and resources, as I have done.

Effectively working as Region 1's RVC is more than using a bookstore's toll-free telephone number: it is reading and responding to the two to three dozen email messages received daily. 90% of all RVC and AMC communication is via email. 95% of AMC documents: forms, minutes, reports, etc. are delivered in digital format. Anyone who is unwilling to use a computer or unable to conduct business online cannot perform the duties of a RVC.

A RVC must be able to work well in a corporate board setting, with people who often have diverse ideas and business methodologies. My twenty years' board (corporate and non-profit) experience is invaluable.

A great sense of humour, stamina, and extraordinary attention to detail have stood me well in my term as your RVC. Please help me, with your vote, to make it another term!

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

Some notes by your alternative candidate.

Hi ... I've met many of you at RGs and at the Leadership Workshop, etc.: but, many more of you are as yet un-met friends I can only reach via print. Our Region has about 6,500 members, so you can see it is not easy to meet each of you, at least in a short period of time.

Who am I and what am I doing here? I'm a motivated, dedicated, competent 25-year member, active on many levels during the past 14 years, hosting many events and dinners; currently also NH/ME vice-president and RG co-Chairman. (By the time you read this, many of you will know I can produce a large, fun RG.) Behind the scenes, I solve short and long-term problems, without delay, to help both sides gain fruitful resolution. I have also been a long-term Mensa philanthropist. I have written numerous published articles, bringing humor and (common?) sense to often prickly subjects.

Personally, I am a widower (but promise not to disappear if I meet 'the one'); and, have been a self-employed businessman since age 11, founding and owning a rare bookstore at the same location in Portsmouth, NH for the past 32 years, dealing with individuals, professionals, institutions in America and abroad. I am a person who shares Elvis' motto of "TCB" (Taking Care of Business - for decades, he wore a necklace with "TCB"). I often travel 500 to 1,000 miles for Mensa per month, expecting more travel if I am elected as your RVC1. I have reliable transportation, and have provided transportation for others as well.

I am attentive and even-tempered. It is easy to reach me day or night; and, I have a DEDICATED TOLL FREE PHONE FOR MENSA which is (877) 436-7250. I promise to bring insight, philosophy, humane humanism to all conduct and writings. And last, but not least, I promise NO recipes or sports. Please consider me for your VOTE in the April election (ballot and envelope will be in the April "Mensa Bulletin").

With Care,  
 Walter Wakefield

**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

If you would like to organize or sponsor a Mensa event, please contact Activities Coordinator Nancy O'Neil at NancyOneil@aol.com or 203-791-1668. 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**

Please allow four weeks for the change in MENSA Bulletin (the National Magazine) delivery, and eight weeks for the Chronicle Remember to give your membership number to facilitate this process (This number appears on your membership card and labels affixed to the Chronicle and MENSA Bulletin.)

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